



Bugle Calls



SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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President's Message

By overwhelming consensus we are moving to the Denny's Restaurant in Clovis on Shaw just east of Willow. We are guaranteed the banquet room at the rear. It is closed off from the rest of the facility and we should no longer have to tolerate the banging of pots and pans in the kitchen and the chatter of employees and customers at the cash register.

Our program on Thursday, March 11, begins at 7 pm so please arrive at 6 pm and order from the menu immediately. This will allow the cooks to prepare meals as orders are made and allow us to complete our eating (and pay our checks) before 7 pm. We want to avoid having the servers disrupt the presentation by distributing checks and taking payment.

Ron Vaughn of Tulare, a long-time member of the SJVC-WRT, is our speaker on March 11. He will discuss the issue of arming men of color from the perspectives of white soldiers who resisted this and of the black soldiers who knew that they would not win acceptance as free men if they didn't do their part to preserve the Union and secure for themselves the end of slavery. This will be a very interesting talk.

Elsewhere in this issue your president has a book review detailing the experience of the 4th Colored U.S. Infantry, a unit formed in Baltimore.

I look forward to seeing you at Denny's in Clovis on Shaw just east of Willow at 6pm on Thursday, March 11, 2010.

David D

AFTER ACTION REPORT SJVCWRT MEETING OF 2/11/10

By Ron Vaughan

Eighteen persons were present for our 2nd and last meeting at the Blackstone Dennys. We had the separate room, but there was too much background noise from the kitchen and customers coming and going. The group voted to move to Dennys on Shaw and First. (This was later changed to Dennys on Shaw and Willow, due to the former being booked up.) I hope all the members can keep up with the changes.

Wayne Scott announced that there will be a special Lincoln Memorabilia Exhibit at Oakhurst's King Vintage Museum, March 6th through April 1st, 2010, Mon. - Sat. 9:30-4 & Sun. 12-4pm. Ideas were solicited for membership recruiting, as only 18 members are currently enrolled. Some ideas were free quarterly radio announcements on 99.3 FM; posters at various locations, business cards that members could distribute, a Facebook page (Bryce K. has already taken steps to implement the latter.).

The program was a DVD of Allen Guelzo speaking about Lincoln's early years in Springfield. He mentioned that Abe played a lot of town-ball (for-runner of baseball), which I had never heard anyone mention before. He was a member of a literary society. At the meeting, members enjoyed his humorous stories. This public exposure probably helped with his election to the legislature.

In 1839 he was introduced to Mary Todd, who set her cap to catch him, and succeeded with marriage in 1842. In 1842 he successfully ran as the Whig Party candidate for Congress, carrying 8 of 11 counties. He spoke out against the "Democrat's War" with Mexico. He demanded to be shown the spot where American blood was shed on American soil. The press and many people laughed and called him "Spotty Lincoln!"

He lost his re-election bid. Lincoln returned to his private law practice, which by 1855 doubled. He enjoyed his work life, but not so much his married life. Mary resorted to tantrums when upset, and little Eddie died at age three. He began to think about a return to politics, even though his prospects seemed poor.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

I have been "volunteered" to help with the position of editor. Since I have positions in five different Tulare Community organizations, as well as re-enacting several time periods, I often burn the candle at both ends. So, hopefully some of you will help out with your contributions: news, book reviews, ect.

Due to a problem with the schedule of our March speaker, I will be making a presentation: "Fighting For Their Freedom: African American Resistance in the Civil War."

CIVIL WAR HUMOR

From "The Blue & Gray Laughing"

Colonel Oglesby's 8th Illinois was in Winter Camp at Bird's Point, Mo. One day his fife and drum major went in to the woods to practice a new tune. Attracted no doubt by the melody, a fine fat pig came near, alas too near for the safety of his bacon. But how to get the deceased porker into camp? After considerable discussion, an idea strikes the drummer: "We will put him in the drum." "jus the thing, by hokey!" said the fifer. One drum head was removed, and the hog stowed in, and our heroes started for their quarters carrying the drum between them.

In the meantime, the regiment went out for dress parade, and the Colonel was somewhat vexed at the absence of the principal musicians. As soon as he saw the gents, in a voice of reprimand, he ordered them to take their places. The drum bearers looked at each other, then at the Colonel, but never said a word. The Colonel repeated his order in a style so emphatic that it couldn't be misunderstood. The drummer gingerly approached the Colonel, and in a low voice made him acquainted with the state of affairs, winding up with, "We 'low, Colonel, to bring the best quarter over to your mess." "Sick, eh?" thundered the Colonel, "Why didn't you say so at first?"

Book Review

Your president has recently completed reading *A Regiment of Slaves* by Edward G. Longacre (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2003). It is heartily recommended. This 200 page work is the history of the 4th United States Colored Infantry raised in Maryland mostly from among the free colored population of Baltimore. Opposition to the Emancipation Proclamation had contributed to a decline in white volunteers and a draft had been authorized. Moreover, African-American soldiers were already serving as volunteers in state affiliated units, notably the 54th Massachusetts. So, recruiting began in the summer of 1863 when the need for soldiers for the Regular United States Army was demonstrable.

After a period of training th 4th USCI was posted to Yorktown, Virginia, as part of what would eventually be called the Army of the James under by Benjamin Butler. Here they encampment near "Slabtown", a community of "contraband of war", the runaway slaves, which General Butler declined to return to their masters. Since many of the 4th's men could read and write, several helped the unit's chaplain establish a school for both soldiers and civilians.

Within a month the 4th became part of a reconnaissance in force in the county across the York River. Using Gloucester Point as their base, the 4th participated in a raid of Mathews County. The 11th PA Cav and 1st NY Mounted Rifles rounded up livestock and a few uniformed Rebels for several days while the 4th served as guards to what had been corralled. This became typical for the 4th and other Colored units much to the dismay of its officers and men. They wanted to fight, but the attitudes of the higher ups was that Colored soldiers were to be used in a supporting role. For many this was little different than being used to build Baltimore's defensive works in the months before they enlisted. This was their lot until the Spring of 1864.

When Grant took the offensive against Lee in 1864 the 4th and other Colored units had a role. General Butler was ordered to advance up the James and Appomattox Rivers to break the the Richmond and Petersburg Railroad. The Army of the James was transported by ship to the Bermuda Hundred but the 4th found itself first on guard duty at City Point, the supply base for the expedition, and then digging entrenchments for the white soldiers who would occupy Spring Hill the southern end of a pontoon bridge which spanned the Appomattox at Point of Rocks. While doing so the unit experienced its first combat casualties. They were then placed in reserve on Bermuda Hundred.

In June the 4th was to see real action. The entire Union army was shifting southward and the Army of the James was to move southward about fifteen miles to make room on the north for the Army of the Potomac. This move would require close combat with Confederate forces in a series of Lunettes along Harrison Creek. They put the Rebels to flight in spirited fighting.

Fresno Morning Republican, p2
March 13, 1902.

HOW SHAFTER JOINED THE REGULARS

Some of the Kansas papers a relating how, at the close of the civil war, General Shafter was an applicant for a first lieutenancy in the reorganized army, and working in his behalf [was] a congressman whose knowledge of army affairs was very limited. One day this congressman sent the following message:

“Dear Shafter – I have just returned from a visit to the secretary of war. I find it will be impossible to have you appointed a first lieutenant as that rank is now full. However, the secretary is willing to appoint you a lieutenant colonel, which is the next best thing. Will that do?”

Fresno Morning Republican p. 5
March 21, 1905

A Veteran's "Campfire"

Atlanta Post of the Grand Army of the republic held a "camp fire" Wednesday night at there residence of John and William Sewall, two of the members, about four miles from town. The "vets" were accompanied by their wives and daughters, and one of the most enjoyable evenings was spent that they have experienced in a long time. The time was passed in the playing of games, and in conversation and music. At 11 o'clock a fine supper was served. The old soldiers were out for a night of revelry and they stayed with

They were next detailed to train for the Battle of the Crater, but higher ups lost their nerve. The attack which would follow the massive explosion would not be led by Colored soldiers after all. And as we all know the white soldiers plunged into the Crater rather than fighting their way around it. The day was lost. And the 4th returned to camp.

Grant next planned a two-prong attack south of Richmond at Chaffin's Bluff and New Market Heights. Chaffin's Bluff the more important target was assigned to white troops; the 4th and other Colored Units carried out the attack on the latter. The Confederate position was fronted by a swamp formed by four mile creek and by "chevaux-de-friese". The attack bogged down but Sgt. Alfred B. Hilton charged forward with the national colors in one hand and the regimental flag in the other. The men rallied. Hilton was shot in the leg and fell but Sgt. Christian Fleetwood and Corp. Charles Veal held the colors aloft and continued toward the Rebel lines. But the 4th did not carry the position. No unit had been detailed to support it. The 6th USCI fighting alongside suffered the same fate. Over 500 of the 2000 men engaged were killed. Hilton's widow received the medal of honor. Fleetwood and Veal did likewise. Fleetwood was also recommended for promotion to lieutenant. Secretary of War Stanton returned it disapproved without comment.

Wilmington, North Carolina, was the next destination of the 4th USCI. Here Fort Fisher protected the approaches to the city at what was originally called Federal Point. Under General Terry's leadership Union forces would attempt to capture Fort Fisher and thereby close off the Confederacy's last sea port. 7,500 men landed on a narrow strip of land separating the Cape Fear River from the Atlantic Ocean. To their south lay Fort Fisher at the tip of the peninsula. To their north were 8,000 soldiers under General Bragg. The 4th was placed on the left of the Union line with White troops from New Hampshire and Connecticut to their right stretching to the Ocean. General Terry and 2,200 soldiers and marines then attacked the 2,000 men at Fort Fisher while the 4th and their White comrades repulsed the relief column from the north. The plan worked. Fort Fisher was taken and the Confederate reinforcements were driven back.

Within days Wilmington was taken. Among those who greeted the Colored soldiers who marched in was the mother of a corporal in the 4th. On March 5, 1865, Chaplain Hunter became the first black man to deliver a sermon in the African-American Church in Wilmington. A few days later the 4th marched toward Goldsboro where General Terry had been ordered to rendezvous with General Sherman. By mid-April the war was unofficially over.

The 4th expected to return home but as a three-year regiment of the regular army they were detailed to New Bern, NC, and then to Washington, D.C.. Many of its officers resigned their commissions and returned home by year's end, but the rank and file of

it until 2 o'clock in the morning. Over fifty were present.

Fresno Weekly Expositor March 11, 1895

THE CIVIL WAR ALL OVER AGAIN

The civil war was fought again on Mariposa Street Saturday, the results being identical with those now in history. A Confederate and Union veteran met in front of the National saloon and in the course of a very brief conversation gave vent to expressions embodying some of their old time prejudices. A free fight resulted, in which the blue attired combatant applied the heavy end of a loaded cane to the cranium of his Confederate antagonist with vigor, cutting the scalp badly. Both were under the influence of liquor.

the 4th remained on active duty until it was mustered out in May, 1866.

This book was a good read with only two problems. First, it needed more and better maps. Reference was often made to places not identified on the maps that are part of the book. Second, the author used "up" river when referring to movement downstream in relation to the deployment of the 4th along the Appomattox River.

Our Own Wayne Scott aka Abe Lincoln Is involved with this presentation in Oakhurst



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