



SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR
General Alfred Pleasonton Camp 24

GUIDON NEWSLETTER
AUGUST 2023

Camp Commander: Gary Hormel
Editor: Steve Johnson, Camp Secretary

Welcome to a New Member

Our newest brother joined Camp 24 this past month and he lives in San Francisco. William Matthew Brooks was born in Oakland and raised in San Leandro. He has always been interested in his family's history and found out that his second great-grandfather, Leonard Perkins Brown, served in Company B of the 9th Michigan Infantry Regiment. Born in 1842 in Ohio, Leonard moved with his family to Cass County, Michigan, around 1850. In August of 1861 he enlisted for three years at the age of 19 in Berrien County, about 18 miles from his family's home. He was first sent to Camp Chase - a Union prison camp for Confederate soldiers - in Ohio where, according to service cards, he was a hospital nurse for 2 months at the beginning of 1862. Apparently he was serving in Tennessee when his company was captured by General Nathan Bedford Forrest in July of 1862. He was eventually paroled and sent home. He then joined a group of teamsters who were recruited to aid the Union Army. However, he was arrested for deserting from the Michigan Infantry and had to prove that he had been pardoned as a prisoner and went on to serve as a teamster. After the war he moved with his wife to Modoc County and later Shasta County where he worked as a jeweler and clock repairman. After the death of his wife he ended up in Los Angeles, where he died in 1906 of typhoid. We welcome our new brother and hope to have a formal investiture for him in the fall.



Commander's Message About the National Encampment

Commander Gary Hormel attended the National Encampment held in Nashua, New Hampshire on August 2 - 5. He was one of 11 delegates from the Department of California and Pacific. Of course the biggest issue was the proposal to change the by-laws to allow "only biological males" to join (and remain) in the organization. While some of the most conservative brothers wanted to pass this resolution, many other brothers had misgivings

both legally and ethically about the term “biological”. The Commander in Chief , Bruce Frail, proposed a wording that “a brother who has been duly elected as a member shall not be disqualified from membership or subsequently discharged solely because of the brother’s change in gender or sexual identification”. But the delegates were still confused over the legal ramifications of this whole issue and it was decided to refer this to a committee which will submit a report at the next National Encampment (to be held in Lexington, Kentucky in July 2024). On the issue of dues, the Commander in Chief reported that the SUVCW had not raised its dues for 10 years and was running a deficit. Expenses have included \$40,000 to develop a new website, \$5,000 to purchase audio/video equipment to record national encampments and other events, hiring an executive assistant, and continuing to mail a printed copy of *The Banner* to all members. He also reported that the SUVCW has invested over a million dollars through an investment firm and like all investments in the stock market varies in profits and losses each year. By 2024, he said, the SUVCW will not have a deficit.

Brother Gary said that the overall experience was a good one -- he was able to talk with brothers from all over the U.S. and learn how the national organization works by means of its many committees, congressional liaison, and its outreach to camps-at-large in Toronto and London. For questions about the national encampment and to hear more about his experience there, please come to the camp meeting on August 19th. Brother Gary remains very grateful for those brothers who contributed to his trip to represent us at the National Encampment.

Camp Meeting on August 19th in Fremont

Due to some scheduling conflicts Brother Brad Hatton had to change our lunch meeting to a dinner meeting at his house at 35296 Cano Court in Fremont. The social hour will start at 4 p.m., the camp meeting at 5 p.m., and dinner at 6 p.m. After dinner, for those who wish to stay, Brother Steve will give a presentation on “Women in the Civil War”, a short summary of the nurses, spies, and women soldiers who were part of the Civil War story. This may be of interest to your wives who are warmly invited to join us that evening. Please email me if you are planning to come so Brother Brad knows how much food to prepare.

Fort Point Living History Day on Saturday, August 12th

The rangers at Fort Point are expecting a large crowd to attend the Living History Day at Fort Point this coming Saturday. We could use help in manning the SUVCW information table during the day. While there you can take a tour of the fort by military historian John Martini, hear the music of the Wandering Bow String Band, watch cannon demonstrations, and meet the re-enactors of the 20th Maine. You can stay as long as you are able, and any help would be appreciated. Be sure to bring warm clothes and a lunch. Coffee and snacks will be provided during the day. Arrive by 9:30 so you can get your parking pass for the Crissy Field lot; a shuttle will bring you to the fort.

“Ways & Means, Lincoln and His Cabinet and the Financing of the Civil War” — a book review by Brother William Jensen

Published last year, Roger Lowenstein’s “Ways & Means, Lincoln and His Cabinet and the Financing of the Civil War”, is an informative and compelling study of the Union’s financial operations during the war.

Well known as a chronicler of Wall Street and the financial industry (see his “When Genius Failed” covering the rise and fall of the Long-Term Capital hedge fund), Lowenstein here turns his powers of research and analysis to describe how the Union grappled with the unprecedented demands of financing the war effort at a time when capital markets were much smaller and dominated by a small group of bankers centered in New York. Parallel to his account of the Union’s efforts Lowenstein surveys the Confederacy’s generally inadequate attempts to establish credit and finance its goal of independence. As the war progressed, it became clear that the smart money, as it were, was with the Union. Economically weaker than the North at the onset of the war, the South committed successive financial blunders that doomed its cause.

As Secretary of the Treasury, the ambitious Salmon Chase is a central figure throughout much of the book. While his desire for the presidency and rivalry with President Lincoln is well known, here Lowenstein gives an in-depth account of Chase’s untiring efforts to stabilize, then expand the Federal government’s ability to pay for the war while striving to avoid damaging its credit. There were two significant financial innovations to emerge during the war. The first was the creation of the greenback as legal tender (in 1861 all Federal government paper paid some rate of interest). Sponsored by Rep. Spaulding in the House and Sen. Fessenden in the Senate, the Legal Tender Act required deep changes in attitudes and beliefs about what constituted money and the role of gold. With no channels open to borrow money during the winter of 1861 and 1862, Chase became an ardent supporter after initially harboring strong reservations.

The second innovation, and chiefly Chase’s idea, was the creation of a system of National Banks. These were designed to be buyers of U.S. government securities and to replace the numerous state banks, small and mainly centered in the East, as the source of the nation’s money supply. Both innovations continued past the war’s end and shaped the nation’s financial and economic development well after the war.

A key player in Chase’s success in placing bonds and thus providing the funding for the war was the Philadelphia financier, Jay Cooke. Lowenstein illuminates Cooke’s role in detail and posits that Cooke may have influenced Lincoln’s decision to dismiss General George McClellan for good in November 1862 because the plodding general was a risk to the nation’s credit both at home and overseas (and to Cooke’s efforts to place the bonds).

In contrast to the slow but steady improvement in the North's finances, Lowenstein describes the dire situation in the South in depth and through multiple primary sources. The Confederacy made successive errors during the conflict which severely constrained its ability to finance the war. Chief among these was the decision to shut down exports of cotton at the onset of the war when the Union blockade was weak. Had the Confederacy shipped and sold more cotton in the early stages of the war, or shipped it and held it as future collateral for loans, its financial situation would have been much better positioned to engage in a prolonged conflict. Yet, believing that restricting supplies and holding England's and France's spinning industries hostage would force those countries to recognize the Confederacy in exchange proved to be a serious misjudgment.

Finally, a third theme of the book is the unprecedented expansion of Federal involvement in the nation's economic development. Forced to respond to the rebellious Southern states, the Union issued record amounts of debt and fostered major financial innovations. As Lowenstein demonstrates, Lincoln and the Republican Congress supported bills and acts designed to raise economic opportunities for Americans. The Homestead Act, The Transcontinental Railroad, the establishment of the Department of Agriculture, college land grants and support for immigrations all originated during the Civil War. Such acts would never have advanced prior to the conflict as Southern interests in Congress were staunchly opposed to the idea of an activist Federal government that would inevitably have favored the North to the detriment of the slave states.

"Ways & Means, Lincoln and His Cabinet and the Financing of the Civil War" is an engaging and thought-provoking work and an indispensable addition to the library of any serious student of that conflict.



Cannon drill at Fort Point

Brother Frank Avila shows his medical display



"I hold, that in contemplation of universal law, and of the Constitution, the Union of these States is perpetual."
-Abraham Lincoln, 1st inaugural address, March 1861