

THE WASHINGTON VOLUNTEER

PUGET SOUND CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
HTTP://WWW.PSCWRT.ORG/

SEPTEMBER 2016

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, September 8, 2016

China Harbor, 2040 Westlake Avenue North, Seattle, Washington **Time:**
Social hour at **6 p.m.**; Dinner served at **7 p.m.**; Program at **8 p.m.**

MENU CHOICES: Mongolian Beef, Chicken, Salmon or Vegetarian

Dinner includes: salad, vegetable delight, General Tso's chicken, fried rice and fresh fruit.
Cost is \$21 for adults and \$10 for minors and college students, payable at the door, but reservations and meal choices are required. See below. \$5 if you are not ordering a meal

To make reservations and meal choices, use one of these options (most preferred listed first):

Click on <http://www.pscwrt.org/about/dinner-reservations.php>

Email **Rod Cameron** at: rodcam@comcast.net

Or lastly, call **Rod Cameron** at **206-524-4434**

Deadline for reservations is 12 NOON on Tuesday, September 6, 2016.

NOTE: Remember to turn off cell phones before the meeting so there are no distractions for the speaker. Thank you!



Berkeley, California.

T. J. STILES WILL DISCUSS HIS LATEST BOOK, *CUSTER'S TRIALS: A LIFE ON THE FRONTIER OF A NEW AMERICA*, WINNER OF THE 2016 PULITZER PRIZE IN HISTORY. Mr. Stiles will emphasize Custer's Civil War career. Mr. Stiles is also the author of *Jesse James: Last Rebel of the Civil War*, and of *The First Tycoon: The Epic Life of Cornelius Vanderbilt*, winner of the 2009 National Book Award in Nonfiction and the 2010 Pulitzer Prize in Biography. A member of the Society of American Historians and a former Guggenheim Fellow, he lives in

IMPORTANT DISPATCHES

The New Round Table Season is Upon Us! Have you Re-Enlisted?

Welcome to a new season of the Puget Sound Civil War Round Table! If you and/or your family were members last year, you should have received a letter within the past month regarding membership dues. As you know, the PSCWRT depend mainly on your dues as our main source of income. Treasurer Jeff Rombauer has made it easy for you, including a self-addressed stamped envelope so all you need to do is put your check in, seal it up and drop it into the nearest mailbox. Dues are still \$20 for an individual, \$25 for a couple.

For those of you who prefer to do things online, you can pay online using PayPal! If you are registered with PayPal, simply go to our website (www.pscwrt.org) and click on "Join PSCWRT Now!" There is a small fee for this, but you can instantly become a member in good standing. Our goal is to have 100% of our member's dues paid by the September 2016 meeting. **Thank you for re-enlisting!**

PSCWRT Dues Policy Officially Adopted

At the August Board Meeting, by a vote of 7-1, the board has officially put in writing a procedure for paying dues that has been followed over the past several seasons:

Dues Payment – Existing Members

Existing members of the PSCWRT are expected to renew their membership on or before the first meeting in September. Those who members who fail to renew their membership by December will be struck from the membership roster.

Dues Payment – New Members

The PSCWRT encourages the recruitment and retention of new members. For new members who join from September through February, their dues shall follow the regular schedule published on the website. For new members who join in March, April or May of the PSCWRT season, their dues payment shall carry over and be counted toward the next or succeeding season.

If you have any questions about this policy, please see a board member and ask them.

Puget Sound Civil War Round Table Programs, 2016-2017

Editor's Note: Below is the complete schedule of monthly programs for the Round Table year as planned by our VP of Programming, Pat Brady. We owe Pat a huge debt of thanks for bringing some very good speakers and presentations to our meetings! Write these dates on your calendars and keep them clear. **Please note that changes may take place at any time. We will make every effort to communicate this to you if it happens.**

For the sake of space, descriptions have been abridged. For the full description of each presentation go to: <http://www.pscwrt.org/pscwrt/meetings/speakers/2015-16.html>

SEPTEMBER 8, 2016 T. J. Stiles (See description on page one)

OCTOBER 13, 2016 Thomas D. Mays will discuss his book, *Cumberland Blood: Champ Ferguson's Civil War*. Besides Capt. Henry Wirz of Andersonville fame, Ferguson was the only other person convicted and hung for war crimes after the Civil War.

NOVEMBER 10, 2016 Carver Gayton will discuss his book, *When Owing a Shilling Costs a Dollar: The Saga of Lewis G. Clarke, Born a 'White' Slave*. Clarke was a runaway slave and an Anti-Slavery activist before the Civil War. Mr. Gayton is his great-great grandson.

DECEMBER 8, 2016 Michael Schein will discuss his book, *John Surratt: The Lincoln Assassin Who Got Away*, a Finalist for the Foreword Review Indiefab History Book of the Year.

JANUARY 12, 2017 **James Shipman** will discuss *Going Home*, his novel based on the true story of his great-great grandfather, an Irishman who fought in the Civil War.

FEBRUARY 9, 2017 **Ethan S. Rafuse** will discuss William T. Sherman, Helmuth von Moltke, and the Transnational Challenges of Command in the 19th Century.

MARCH 9, 2017 **John F. (Jeff) McLaughlin** will discuss *Crossing Antietam: The Civil War Letters of Captain Henry Augustus Sand: Company A, 103rd New York Volunteers*, a work he edited with Peter H. Sand as a labor of love and a fascination with families.

APRIL 13, 2017 **Michael C.C. Adams** will discuss his latest book, *Living Hell: The Dark Side of the Civil War*, a study of the human costs of the war.

MAY 11, 2017 **Major General John Hemphill** will discuss Granville Haller, a controversial Union officer who was also involved in the history of the Pacific Northwest, both before and after the war.



KEN
Ken Bertrand

(example above)

NEW NAME TAGS!

Last May, the PSCWRT board decided that a change in name tags was in order. There were several reasons for the change including the following:

- The cost of \$18 each for the plastic variety.
- This cost has neither been recovered, nor sought over the past many years.
- PSCWRT members should be responsible to remember to bring their own name tags.

- The box containing the plastic name tags usually arrives after many, if not most, members have already arrived.
- The names on the plastic name tags are difficult to read across the tables. Hence, they are useless for their purpose.

The new name tags will be distributed to members at the first meeting in September. Be sure to pick up yours and wear them at all subsequent meetings.

EVENTS COMING SOON!

Monday, October 10, 2016 Topic: “Sea Miner: The U.S. Navy’s Top Secret Rocket Torpedo Program of 1863” by Historian Chuck Veit.

Location: Ballard Branch, Seattle Public Library, 5614 22nd Avenue NW, Seattle, WA

98107 Time: 6:00-7:45 P.M. Free Admission.

NOTE THAT THIS IS NOT THE OCTOBER MEETING OF THE PSCWRT. This is an experiment to promote Civil War topics in a different venue and to introduce a wider audience to the PSCWRT and what we do. More on this next month.

Saturday, October 15, 2016 Topic: “Amiable Scoundrel” by Historian Paul Kahan. Online presentation from 6-8 P.M.

This is another experiment by the PSCWRT to expand our audience using the Internet as our venue. Author & Historian Paul Kahan will conduct an online presentation about Lincoln's first Secretary of War, Simon Cameron of Pennsylvania. Cameron is widely regarded as corrupt. Professor Kahan will paint a more complex picture of the political, economic and logistical challenges faced by the Secretary.

To receive the password for this event, register at <http://www.pscwrt.org/pscwrt/paul-kahan.php>

Thursday, October 20, 2016 Rededication of GAR Monument for Hiram Randall Gale. Evergreen Washelli Cemetery 1 P.M. More information next month

Behind the Lines: A Civilian Topics Forum

By Marilyn Rexilius

Have you wondered what happened behind the battle lines of the civil war? Are you curious to know what was happening during this dynamic era that did not involve military battles or military officers? There are so many other topics that can be explored that might be of interest to history devotees, avid readers, and those who are interesting in investigating the 1860's from a different perspective.

The board members of the PSCWRT are proposing to offer an expanded view of life in America behind the lines during the civil war period. We are considering meeting once or twice a year at a separate venue. A presentation might include food, customs, influential people, entertainment, the many different roles women played, inventions etc.

To determine if there is interest could you please attend a brief discussion directly after the regular meeting concludes on September 8 at the China Harbor Restaurant?

Bring your ideas and questions. If you cannot attend but want more details please

contact Marilyn at 425 258 3246 or email: Marilyn.rexilius@frontier.com

Or, Patty Clayton at 206 527 2149, email: cpsclayton@msn.com

Report: Haller House Field Trip

By Mark Terry



On the morning of June 11, 2016, PSCWRT Members Marilyn Rexilius, Judy Henricksen, Mike Movius, Jeff McLoughlin, Pat Eakins, John Hough and Mark Terry met at the quaint town of Coupeville on Whidbey Island. Our mission was to tour the Granville Haller House. We were soon joined by our host Ms. Lynn Hyde of the organization Historic Whidbey. Granville Haller led an amazing life, fighting in the Seminole War & Mexican War before being stationed in Washington Territory in

1852. When the Civil War began, he was called back east and became part of Gen. George McClellan's Headquarters. Falsely accused of treachery against Lincoln, Haller was dismissed from the service. That is when he and his wife moved back to Washington Territory and settled in Coupeville. There he built the house in 1866. The amazing thing about the house is that it has fundamentally not been changed, even though it has been lived in by several families over the course of that time. It has been uninhabited since 2004, with only some rodents and raccoons to call it home today. The goal of Historic Whidbey was to raise the funds to purchase the property in order to conserve and eventually restore it. Unfortunately, on August 26, 2016, Lynn Hyde wrote in the website that their efforts to raise enough support had failed. What this probably means is that the Haller House will be torn down. For more information about Historic Whidbey's plans and the eventual outcome, go to: <http://www.historicwhidbey.org/>. Please also note that Major Haller will be the subject of speaker John Hemphill's talk at the May 2017 meeting of the Round Table.

Who are the people on the PSCWRT Board of Directors? What are their backgrounds, interests and passions? Over the course of the next several issues of the Washington Volunteer, we will be offering short biographies of your board. The first in that series is Mike Movius.

PSCWRT President – Mike Movius

Mike is a fourth generation Washingtonian from Port Townsend. He has an undergraduate degree from the University of Washington, and holds a Master in Public Administration degree from The Evergreen State College. Mike worked in state government for twenty-five years most of which was in the Washington State Patrol. He served as a trooper and sergeant, was on the Thurston County fatal accident investigation squad, was a member of the SWAT team and received the state's highest award for valor, the Award of Honor.

Mike was staff director of the Governor's Economic Development Cabinet during the Gardner administration where he developed partnerships, sought solutions to problems and developed legislation with other state and local officials to enhance the economic dimensions of the state. In fact, his master thesis was entitled, Public Opinion and Economic Development in Washington State.

Mike is passionate about youth development. He serves as a senior staff member on Evergreen Boys State where he teaches court operations and local government functions. He is vice chair of the Scouting Alumni Association, is on the executive board of his local BSA council in Tacoma, chairs his National Eagle Scout Association committee and will be on staff at the 2017 BSA National Jamboree. Mike is the recipient of the prestigious Outstanding Eagle Scout Award.

He is very interested and engaged in the Civil War era. He's a member of the Civil War Trust, Washington State Historical Society, the Lincoln Forum and the Society of Civil War Historians. He has traveled extensively to battlefields, museums, historical sites and cities and towns made famous during the war. Mike is dedicated to expanding the membership and reach of the Puget Sound Civil War Roundtable.

Mike has been married to his wife, Denise for twenty-five years and has two sons, Steve and Kelsey, both of whom are Eagle Scouts.

RUFFIN THOMSON

Confederate States Army and Marine Corps

By John W. Hough

In a shady grove of oak trees on the grounds of Ft. Simcoe State Park in eastern Washington lies Confederate veteran Ruffin Thomson. The fort was once a remote outpost of the U.S. Army during the Indian turmoil of the 1850's and later became the site of the first federal Indian Agency for the confederate tribes and bands of the Yakama Nation.

Ruffin Thomson was born on a farm in the Pearl River delta area of Mississippi on August 4, 1841. When the Civil war broke out he was a student at the University of North Carolina. Thomson enlisted as a private in the 18th Mississippi Volunteer Infantry Regiment. He fought with his regiment at First Manassas/Bull Run, Malvern Hill and Sharpsburg/Antietam. Thomson was wounded at Gettysburg, apparently seriously, as his regiment attacked through the Peach Orchard.

We next find Thompson as a second lieutenant in the Confederate States Marine Corps. It is not known how he transitioned from the army to the Marines. The CSM was a small force created at the start of the war patterned after the U.S. Marine Corps. Confederate Marines mainly guarded naval facilities and manned the big guns of shore defenses. Perhaps the most well-known Confederate Marine was Captain Becket Howell, a brother of Confederate First Lady Varina Howell Davis. Becket sailed with the famed Captain Raphael Semmes aboard the commerce raiders *CSS Sumter* and *CSS Alabama*.

Lt. Thompson's wounds likely kept him out of the field, but he could handle a less taxing duty. He was ordnance officer at the gun battery on Drewry's Bluff, perched above the James River to defend Richmond. The large guns dominating the river were rigged navy fashion, aimed by block and tackle. Hence, sailors and Marines, accustomed to the arrangement, manned the guns.

With the fall of Richmond on April 2, 1865, the sailors and Marines from Drewry's Bluff became infantry under Navy Commander J. R. Tucker. With his army experience, Thompson would have adjusted more quickly than the others. Tucker's men were part of the rear guard as General Robert E. Lee fled west from Petersburg. But the rear guard was trapped by Union soldiers at Saylor's Creek on April 6, 1865. After stout resistance, the Confederate commander, General Custis Lee, surrendered and ordered his men to cease fire. However, Commander Tucker thought the order a ruse and his men continued to fight. Only after a second order arrived did the sailors and Marines lay down their arms. The Union soldiers cheered the Rebel sailors and Marines as they stacked their rifles. Tucker later said that he had never been in a land battle before and thought things were going rather well. Thompson was paroled a few days later along with the rest of his unit.

After the war, Thompson attended medical school in New Orleans and set up practice in Florida. Several years later he accepted a position with the Indian Agency established at Ft. Simcoe after the army left. Perhaps his practice was not going well, or he was bored with civilian life. In any

event, his long journey to the remote outpost took him around Cape Horn to San Francisco. Next sailed up the coast to Portland and then by paddlewheel steamer up the Columbia River to The Dalles. From there it was a three to four day journey on horseback over a rough road to Fort Simcoe.

Fort Simcoe is remote, but in a pretty spot. It sits near a rushing creek nestled against pine-covered hills. Snowcapped Mt. Adams peaks over a western hilltop. Thomson became ill after only a few months at the fort. He passed away March 7, 1888, at 46 years old. As he lay dying, he asked to be laid to rest “where the sun shines brightly from heaven and I can hear the birds sing over my grave.”

Today Fort Simcoe is a state park and several buildings have been restored. Thompson must have lived in one of the four white officer’s houses that still front the parade ground. His grave is now no longer open to the sky, but shaded by several oak trees. Next to his tombstone is planted a small, fresh U.S. Marine Corps flag.

Sources:

- Abstract of the Ruffin Thompson Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Web.
- Obituary, Ruffin Thompson’s gravesite, Ft. Simcoe State Park, WA. Visited by author April 26, 2016.
- Parker, William H., *Recollections of a Naval Officer*, 1883. Intro. Craig L. Symonds, ed. Annapolis, MD: Classics of Naval Literature-United States Naval Institute, 1985.

Obituary for Horton Smith, past PSCWRT Member

Rear Admiral Horton Smith, 90, passed away in Seattle, Washington April 29, 2016. He was born in Seattle on June 1, 1925 to Della & Mabel Smith. Admiral Horton Smith was a lifetime resident of the Seattle area, and worked in many roles including Attorney, King County Superior Court Judge, and most notably as a Rear Admiral in the United States Navy. RADM Smith is survived by his wife Leillah Smith, his son Vern, and his daughters Caroline and Corenne. He will forever be loved and missed by those he leaves behind, and known far and wide for the incredible career and legacy he created.

We regret that the notice of Admiral Smith’s passing could not be included in the May 2016 Washington Volunteer. The Editor

PRESIDENT’S CORNER

From Mike Movius, Our New Round Table President

I am honored to be the president of our round table for the next two years. Thank you for your confidence and support. There are several things that I am interested in doing during my term such as using technology for improved efficiency and effectiveness, developing community partnerships, expanding our membership through marketing, becoming more active and finding creative ways to improve our program, reach and community. Let me briefly tell you of the approaches we will use.

On August 9th, the board held its first online board meeting using a facility called zoom.us. It wasn't the smoothest meeting ever, but it came off none-the-less. I have to report that there was some resistance to the idea, but for the most part we overcame it and will continue to use zoom to reduce travel, save time and improve communication.

Last year, we elected two members to new board positions: Susan Martin (VP Marketing) and Steve Clayton (VP Partnerships). They have undertaken to use their expertise to improve our reach for new members through social media marketing and establishing partnerships with entities throughout the Puget Sound.

As two examples of social media marketing and partnerships, you will notice that we will be holding a meeting on Monday, October 10th at the Ballard branch of the Seattle Public Library. The program of this non-dinner meeting has been widely publicized by the library and a host of other entities we have yet-to-fore involved. On Saturday, October 15th we'll be hosting an online presentation by an author on the East Coast. We have invited members of the Civil War community throughout the world to be a part of this historic occasion.

Finally, I have been working with several CWRTs around the country to establish a national CWRT Congress whose purpose is to tell each other about their successes in terms of membership expansion, community reach and Civil War education. We are currently establishing a planning group to explore this concept.

As you can readily see, I am very interested in seeing to it that the PSCWRT remains relevant, available to Civil War enthusiasts and serves as a public education platform for the next thirty years. It's going to take your support and interest to make it happen.

Mike Movius, President

THE LAST WORD

Welcome Back!

By Mark Terry

Welcome back- to another terrific series of speakers and topics for the 2016-2017 season of the Puget Sound Civil War Round Table! On top of that, there are several new things the Round Table is working on as you can see if you've read this far. I'm excited that we are branching out and trying new things to attract a wider audience. Next month, in addition to our regular meeting on October 13th, we are also hosting a separate speaker at the Ballard Branch of the Seattle Public Library on Monday, October 10th. This will be a free admission event with no dinner. Then, on Saturday, October 15th, we are hosting an online event- that will be a first for the PSCWRT. It will be interesting to see what kind of opportunities this will open up and hopefully attract people interested in Civil War history to join us on a regular basis. Additionally, members Marilyn Rexilius and Patty Clayton are looking into the possibility of creating a forum on Civilian topics related to the Civil War that would also appeal to a wider audience. Please check out Rex's article above for more details.

Beyond all that, PLEASE "re-enlist" as a member of the Puget Sound Civil War Round Table, preferably before the September meeting. **We need you to make all of this happen!**

DUES & DONATIONS

The PSCWRT season goes from September to the following May. Dues should be paid in September. Dues are payable either at the meeting or by mail: \$20 per individual, \$25 for a couple. Also, donations are gratefully accepted. These will help secure speakers for our meetings. Please note that all donations are tax deductible as the PSCWRT is a 501(c)3 organization. Mail to: Jeff Rombauer, Treasurer, 22306 255th Ave. SE, Maple Valley, WA 98038-7626. Call 425-432-1346 or email: jeffrombauer@foxinternet.com.

We welcome your article or research submissions for the newsletter, but they may be edited for space. The deadline for the September 2016 Washington Volunteer is Monday, August 22, 2016. Please have it in Mark Terry's hands via email or snailmail by then. Thank you!

2016-2017 OFFICERS

Elected:*

President: Mike Movius, president@pscwr.org

Vice-President-Successor: Nick K. Adams, carmodnick@comcast.net

Past-President: Rick Solomon, ricksolo@ricksolo.com

Treasurer: Jeff Rombauer, jeffrombauer@foxinternet.com

Vice-President-Programming: Pat Brady, patsbrady@comcast.net

Vice-President- Membership: Marilyn Rexilius, marilyn.rexilius@frontier.com

Vice-President- Marketing: Susan Martin, susanmartin@pacificwest.com

Vice-President- Partnerships: Steve Clayton, cpsclayton@msn.com

Vice President-Reservations: Rod Cameron, 206-524-4434, rodcam@comcast.net

Vice-President-Editor: Mark Terry, markimlor@comcast.net

Secretary: Larry Jilbert, LJilbert.CJilbert@comcast.net

Vice President-Social Media: Vacant

**All, except for Past President, an automatic position.*