

NEWSLETTER

Friends of Civil War Alcatraz

April 2018

Editor: Steve Johnson

San Francisco Civil War Street Names, Part 3 of 3

This is a continuation of a series about San Francisco Street names named after notable personages or events around the time of the Civil War.



Sloat Avenue John D. Sloat stated as a midshipman in the Navy and saw action in the War of 1812. For three decades he was the master of a number of ships, and in 1844 he was given the command of the Pacific Squadron. In 1846 he sailed into Monterey Bay at the start of the Mexican-American War and claimed California for the United States. He was the military governor of the state for less than a month, until succeeded by Admiral Stockton. He later helped plan the Navy Yard at Benicia.

Stockton Street Robert F. Stockton also started as a midshipman in the Navy and he too served in the War of 1812. Later he was the first naval officer to capture slave ships off the coast of Africa, and was the first commander of a screw-propelled naval steamship. He even designed large cannons for this ship, which unfortunately blew up and killed two cabinet secretaries. (He managed to avoid censure because of his political connections). He replaced Sloat as Commander of the Pacific Squadron and led his men into battle with General Kearny against the Californios who resisted the American take-over of Alta California. He later represented New Jersey as a senator, and in 1863 he commanded the New Jersey militia when the Confederates invaded Pennsylvania.



Thomas Avenue George Henry Thomas was born into a slave-owning family in Virginia. He graduated from West Point and served in the Third Artillery during the Mexican-American war. Ironically one of the officers he served with later became his foe - Confederate Captain Braxton Bragg. As an instructor at West Point in 1851 he became friends with another instructor, Robert E. Lee. He recommended one of his students to join the cavalry: J.E.B Stuart. In 1854, Thomas

Dates to Remember

Saturday, April 7, 2018
Alcatraz Living History Day

Tuesday, April 17th, 2018
Peninsula CW Roundtable
"A Virginian's Experience in
the Civil War" by Tom Roza
11:30 am

Thursday, April 19th, 2018
SF CW Roundtable Lecture
"Edwin Stanton" by Walter
Stahr 6:45 pm dinner, 7:45 pm
talk



Brady photo of Gen. Thomas

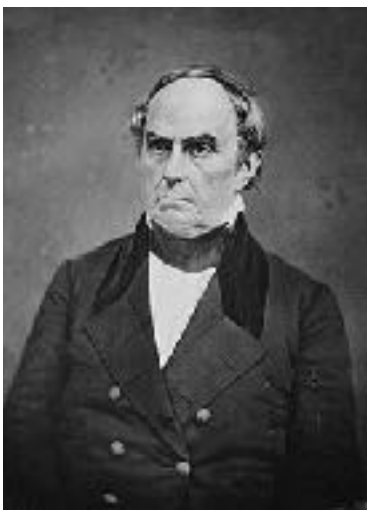
was commissioned to lead the Third Artillery to California, first to San Francisco, then led a detachment to Fort Yuma. He was appointed as a Major of the 2nd U.S. Cavalry. When the war started and he stayed loyal to the Union Army, his family never spoke to him again. In 1862, he won the first Union Victory of the war at Mill Springs, Kentucky, boosting Northern morale. He is best known as the “Rock of Chickamauga”, when he held his position and rallied his men in that battle against Bragg’s army. After the war as Major General he used his troops in Southern states to protect black freedmen from abuses. In his final years he was in charge of the Military Division of the Pacific, and lived in the Presidio.

Union Square became a public park in 1850. Before and during the Civil War it became a rallying spot for pro-Union speeches and demonstrations. It was dedicated by Mayor John Geary (see Geary Street) and was the site of many speeches by Thomas Starr King (see Starr King Street).

Photo of a Union rally in July, 1861, at Post, Montgomery, and Market Streets. Courtesy of the San Francisco Public Library Archives.



Vicksburg Street named after the victory of the battle of Vicksburg in July, 1863. This was a major boost to the morale of Unionists everywhere, who believed this was a turning point in the war: the Confederacy was split and the Union had control of the Mississippi.



Webster Street It was Daniel Webster who was mainly responsible for the Compromise of 1850, which resulted in California’s admission into the Union. The South was opposed to adding another free state to the Union, but agreed to it when part of the compromise was the Fugitive Slave Act, requiring citizens in the North to return fugitive slaves to the South. Webster was doing his best to keep the Union together, but this so-called compromise just added to the rift. The South realized more free states would probably be added, and Northerners in general despised the idea of returning slaves to the South. Webster was pilloried by abolitionists and failed to win the Whig party’s nomination for president in 1852. His son Fletcher was a colonel in the Massachusetts 12th Infantry and was killed in the Second Battle of Bull Run.

FOCWA Members Meet the Public The occasion was the San Francisco History Days at the Old Mint in the City, held on March 3 and 4. Thousands of people toured the Mint, which was filled with tables set up by various organizations, telling their piece of San Francisco's story. The FOCWA table was manned by Gary Hormel, Frank Avila, Chuck Gardali, Constance Smith, Greg Tracy, Evelyn Mar, Steve Johnson, and Brian Crites. Our table was filled with flyers, photos, 1860's toys, brochures, and business cards to explain our organization and especially to recruit new members. Thanks to the efforts of Steven and Gary Hormel, we collected the following statistics: 1) We had a total of 464 interactions with the public; 2) we gave out 500 business cards; 3) we gave out 200 flyers; 4) we had 7 adult visitors (and one 11-year old) who were very interested in joining. It's too early to tell how many of those contacts will prove to be new members, but we all felt the effort we put into this was definitely useful, and that we should have a table again next year.

(photo credit: Steven Hormel)



FOCWA Board Meeting Held on February 24th at Bldg. 989, near Fort Point. In attendance were Schall, Smith, Avila, Johnson, Hormel. Motions voted on and approved: 1) to propose an amendment to the by-laws to create a Director Emeritus, an honorary position whose first nominee shall be Fred Bohmfalk; 2) Constance Smith shall hold the position of treasurer as well as secretary; 3) \$500 will be transferred from the general account to savings. More detailed minutes of the meeting will be sent to the members by Constance.

Coming Events

Living History Day on Alcatraz on Saturday, April 7th. We will need members to man the FOCWA information table throughout the day. See the **Events** page of our website.

Memorial Day Parade and Ceremonies, Presidio of San Francisco, May 28th

Resources:

<https://www.facebook.com/SanFranciscoCivilWarRoundTable/>

<http://www.peninsulacivilwarroundtable.org>

wikipedia.org and <http://www.sfgenealogy.org/sf/history/hgstr.htm> for information on street names