

# NEWSLETTER

## Friends of Civil War Alcatraz

October 2018

Steve Johnson, Editor

**Election Results** Ballots were mailed to members in August to elect officers and members of the board. The results of the balloting were as follows: Gary Hormel and Steve Johnson were elected as co-chairmen, Constance Smith elected as the Secretary/Treasurer, Evelyn Mar as the Membership Chairperson, and Members of the Board at Large elected were Brad Schall, Jeffrey Vaillant, John Fitzpatrick, Greg Tracy, Phil Blake, John Martini, John Nevins, Jayeson Vance, and Fred Bohmfalk. The chairmen will be announcing the first meeting of the new board soon by e-mail, and all members will be invited to attend.

**Living History Day on Alcatraz** The fall Living History Day on Alcatraz will take place on Saturday, October 6th. Members Gary Hormel, John Nevins, Greg Tracy, and Brad Schall have all worked hard to make sure all is prepared for the occasion - setting up the schedule, ordering the lunches, and co-ordinating the logistics with the island's rangers. The Third Artillery Band — Alcatraz's very own Civil War Band — will be coming, as well as the inveterate and dedicated artillery men from Nevada. Member Constance Smith and Gary Hormel — as Capt. Stewart — will be giving Fort Alcatraz tours, and newest member Michell Hall will be portraying Harriet Beecher Stowe who will be giving a lecture about her novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. As if this weren't enough, Saturday happens to be the day of the Air Show during Fleet Week, and the Blue Angels will be flying around the island in the afternoon. It should be a very full day!

**1859 - A Very Consequential Year** The year 1859 was a year of major events for Alcatraz, for San Francisco, for California, and for the nation. Here is a timeline of those events, and why they had far-reaching consequences:

**February 1859** - Oregon enters the Union as a free state. Another free state entering the Union added to the fears of the South that it would lose its power in Congress. Later, in 1861, Oregon's second senator, Edward Baker, raised troops in Pennsylvania and credited their number as part of California's quota for troops; he called it the California Brigade.

**April 1859** - Henry Comstock acquires the Ophir mine, which eventually becomes recognized as the greatest deposit of silver-bearing ore in the country. This provided a bonanza for San Francisco, whose banks, investors, engineers, and businesses all benefitted from the wealth of silver production coming through the city from the Nevada territory.

### Dates to Remember

**Saturday, October 6, 2018**

Alcatraz Living History Day

**Tuesday, Oct. 16, 2018**

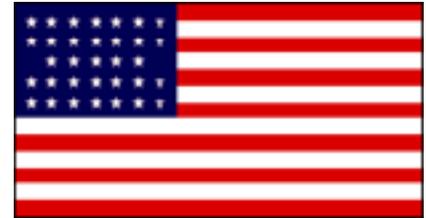
Peninsula CW Roundtable  
Lecture, "Battle of Spotsylvania  
Court House" by Walter Day,  
11:30 a.m. at Harry's Hoffbrau,  
Redwood City

**Thursday, Oct. 18, 2018**

San Francisco CW Roundtable  
Lecture is on Indian territory  
and the Civil War, presented by  
Alex Stern 6 pm Irish Cultural  
Center, San Francisco

**June 1859** - The “Pig War” occurs on San Juan Island. The island was part of the disputed boundary between the United States and British North America; both sides claimed sovereignty and both had troops stationed there. When a pig from a farm on the British side wandered over to the American side and began eating an American farmer’s garden, that farmer had it for dinner. The outraged British farmer demanded recompense and when none was received he requested help from the British troops. The situation escalated, with British warships moving to the island and American reinforcements coming up from Oregon under the command of Captain George Pickett. Finally, cooler heads prevailed and the number of troops on both sides was reduced to 100; the border was eventually settled in 1872.

**July 4, 1859** - It has been the custom that when a new state is admitted to the Union, a star is added to the flag on the next July 4th. Oregon was admitted in February as the 33rd state, and as it turned out the 33-star flag was the first US flag the Union troops fought under at the beginning of the Civil War



**July 5, 1859** - After many months of bloodshed between abolitionist and pro-slavery factions in Kansas, the fourth Constitutional Convention meets in Wyandotte to craft a constitution that will bring Kansas into the Union as a free state.

**September 1859** - “Free Soil” Senator David Broderick is killed in a duel by pro-slavery Chief Justice David Terry at Lake Merced. Broderick’s death makes him a martyr to the abolitionists and moves many Californians over to their cause.

**October 16, 1859** - John Brown seizes the US Armory at Harper’s Ferry as part of his plan to incite a slave revolt in Virginia. Col. Robert E. Lee is sent to capture Brown, which happens after a prolonged gunfight. Brown is later hanged, but his actions spark fear and anger among Southerners, and inspire abolitionists to work harder to eliminate slavery,

**December 1859** - Fort Alcatraz is officially garrisoned by Company H, 3rd US Artillery, under the command of Captain Joseph Stewart. By now there are 94 cannons ringing the island, including 10-inch Columbiads.

### **Resources:**

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

<http://www.peninsulacivilwarroundtable.org>

*Midnight Rising* by Tony Horwitz The full story of John Brown’s raid and its consequences

*The Rock: A History of Alcatraz island, 1847-1972 Historic Resource Study for the GGNRA* by Erwin Thompson

Wikipedia: 1859 in the United States