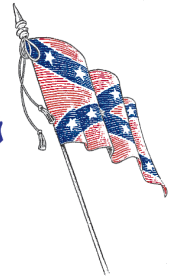




THE OFFICIAL RECORDS

OF THE ROBERT E. LEE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE OF CENTRAL NJ



MARCH 1, 2021 ZOOM MEETING

From the comfort of your own home, 7 pm

***Unfading Light:* the Sustaining Insight and Inspiration of Abraham Lincoln**

Speaker: Richard Fritzky

This month's presentation will be about Abraham Lincoln. Mr. Fritzky has interviewed 45 Lincoln scholars in preparation for writing his book. The information that he gleaned from those interviews is the basis of his talk. Be ready to hear about Lincoln's views on racism and race, his shadow-boxing with God, his faith, his exquisite humanity and extraordinary ability to lead, and so much more!

Our speaker this month is Richard Fritzky. A graduate of Seton Hall University, Richard is a member of the adjunct faculty of his alma mater. He is the author of *Unfading Light – the Sustaining Insight and Inspiration of Abraham Lincoln*, available at Amazon.

NEWS AND NOTES

* We want to hear from you! Any member who has recently taken an interesting Civil War related trip, or has read a good Civil War book should consider sharing the information with the rest of the RE Lee CWRT members. You can e-mail the information to newsletter editor Chris Luzhak at CJLuzhak@gmail.com or you can mail it in to the Round Table at R.E. Lee CWRT, 1162 St. George Avenue, Suite 194, Avenel, NJ 07001.

* Our Trivia and Who Am I columns will be going on temporary hiatus while we replenish our stock of submissions.

President's Column

Thank you, Gene Schmiel, for your interesting presentation about Civil War trailblazers and troublemakers. We wish you the best of luck as you write your next series of books on personalities who had an impact on the Civil War era.

Our next Zoom meeting will be on March 1st at 7 pm. The topic for that evening's presentation will deal with our 16th president, Abraham Lincoln. Also, thanks to Jay Jorgensen's persistence, "25 years to be exact," our special guest speaker for April will be well-noted historian, Gary Gallagher. Mark your

calendars for Monday, April 4 and be sure to ZOOM in on this meeting.

I wish all of you a Happy St. Patrick's Day and until we meet again:

May God give you
For every storm, a rainbow
For every tear, a smile
For every care, a promise
And a blessing in each trial.

—Tom Kuzma

This Month in the Civil War: 160 Years Ago

By Phil Kohn

On March 1, 1861, the Confederate government takes control of military affairs at Charleston, South Carolina. President Davis appoints Louisiana native and Mexican War veteran Pierre G.T. Beauregard a brigadier general and places him in command of the Charleston area, including Charleston Harbor. In Washington, D.C., Brig. Gen. David Twiggs is dismissed from the U.S. Army for "his treachery to the flag of his country" for agreeing in February to surrender forts and other U.S. property in Texas to state authorities.

In Washington on March 2, Kentucky Sen. John Crittenden tries to push a Constitutional amendment through the Senate that would hopefully quell the secession crisis. The attempt fails. The U.S. Congress passes, and President Buchanan approves, organic acts that create the Nevada and Dakota Territories.

On March 3, Winfield Scott, General-in-Chief of the U.S. Army, writes to William H. Seward, Lincoln's nominee as Secretary of State, indicating that relief of Fort Sumter is not practical.

In Washington, D.C., on March 4, Abraham Lincoln is inaugurated as the nation's 16th president. In his inaugural address, Lincoln states that he is not

opposed to slavery where it already exists. He also notes that states that secede are in error because "the Union of these States is perpetual." Declaring that actions against the Federal government are "insurrectionary," he vows to uphold the Union, stating to Southerners: ". . . in *your* hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in *mine*, is the momentous issue of civil war." Meanwhile, in Arkansas, the state's secession convention opens in Little Rock.

On March 5, President Lincoln and Gen. Scott meet to discuss Fort Sumter. Both agree that the issue of the Charleston fort must be confronted soon. In Montgomery, Alabama, the Confederate Congress commissions Albert Pike, an Arkansas attorney, to negotiate treaties with tribes in the Indian Territory.

The Confederate Congress on March 6 authorizes an army of 100,000 volunteers for a term of 12 months.

In Washington, Martin Crawford, John Forsyth and Andre Roman, sent by Confederate President Davis as emissaries to the U.S. capital, on March 7 continue to press their so-far-unsuccessful attempts to meet with President Lincoln or members of his administration. They also reach out to influential individuals who are known to favor peaceful negotiation with the South rather than armed conflict. In Florida, Brig. Gen. Braxton Bragg, of the newly formed Confederate Army, is placed in charge of defenses around Pensacola.

Despite a request from Lincoln that Virginia close its secession convention, it remains in session. On March 9, the convention releases a committee report that is vague about the state's right to secede but clearly condemns any use of force against any Southern state. In St. Louis, Missouri's secession convention votes 89-1 against seceding. However, as did Virginia, it declares that the Federal government must not use force to compel Southern states to remain in the Union.

On March 11, at Boggy Depot, in the Choctaw Nation in the southern part of Indian Territory, members of the Choctaw and Chickasaw tribes hold a convention to address the growing secession crisis. Commissioners from Texas address the meeting, and the convention votes to begin organizing a militia.

President Lincoln, averse to giving any legitimacy to Southern secession efforts, cautions Secretary of State Seward on March 13 to avoid meeting with the Confederate ambassadors. His hope is that by avoiding any meetings, he will sidestep the question of whether the Southern states have actually left the Union and are now a separate national entity. (Lincoln will continue to hold to this strategy.)

Secretary of State Seward on March 15 goes on record as being against the reinforcement of Fort Sumter, as that move, he feels, will definitely precipitate an armed response from the Confederacy.

In Mesilla, in southern New Mexico Territory, a convention representing residents of the southern half of the Territory is held on March 16 and votes to secede from the Union. This action is taken despite Ft. Fillmore — garrisoned by 700 U.S. troops — being located directly across the Rio Grande. (Residents of the Territory — which stretches from Texas to California — refer to the area below the 54th parallel as “Arizona” and as early as 1856 began petitioning Congress to separate the region from New Mexico.) In Montgomery, the Confederate government appoints commissioners to Great Britain, who are charged with seeking that nation’s recognition. In Arkansas, the state’s secession convention votes 39-35 against seceding. It warns, however, that if the Federal government attacks the South, Arkansas will secede. In Texas, the state’s secession convention deposes Governor Sam Houston for refusing to take the oath of allegiance to the Confederacy. President Lincoln offers Federal troops to help Houston retain office, but Houston declines.

President Davis on March 18 communicates with South Carolina governor Pickens about Fort Sumter. Davis says that while he hopes Federal troops will withdraw, he notes that it is unlikely that “the enemy would retire peacefully from your harbor.”

Withdrawals of Federal troops from forts in Texas have been taking place continuously since the agreement made by U.S. Brig. Gen. David Twiggs in February. Along the Rio Grande, Forts Duncan, McIntosh and Ringgold are abandoned and turned over to Texas militia as their garrisons march toward the Gulf Coast for transport to the East. Finally, Fort

Brown, at the mouth of the Rio Grande, is abandoned on March 20.

On March 26, President Lincoln meets with his Cabinet to discuss Fort Sumter and how to deal with the situation.

On the evening of March 28, Gen. Scott tells President Lincoln that he recommends evacuating both Forts Sumter and Pickens.

President Lincoln announces his plan for Fort Sumter on March 29. A force, to be ready as early as April 6th, is to be sent to re-supply and support the troops already at Charleston.

On March 31, Federal troops abandon Fort Bliss, at Franklin (now El Paso), Texas, opposite the Mexican city of El Paso del Norte (now Ciudad Juárez). In Washington, President Lincoln orders troops and supplies sent to relieve the garrison at Fort Pickens, near Pensacola, Florida.

GRAVE OF THE MONTH

Eugenia Levy-Phillips

By Judith Breistein

South Carolina’s original charter gave religious freedom to “Jews, heathens and dissenters.” By 1749, the Sephardic Congregation Kahal Kadush Beth Elohim had formed in Charleston. Its members were descendants of Jews expelled from Portugal and Spain in 1492. American builders had never seen a synagogue before so the *shul* was modeled after a church. By the year 1800, one thousand Jews lived in Charleston. There was little stigma on intermarriage between Christians and (wealthy, upper class) Jews at this time. The more isolated the community, the more freely Jews intermarried and were assimilated. Descendants today would have a hard time tracing their Jewish heritage.

The Levy family was members in good standing of the Charleston Jewish community. Joseph Levy, the son of Polish immigrants, owned a successful shop on busy King Street in the Jewish

Quarter for over 30 years. His wife, Fanny, originally from Liverpool, England, was a well-known actress on the Charleston stage. The couple was financially successful and part of the city's privileged elite. Their daughter, Eugenia Levy, born on October 24, 1819 was the third of seven children (six girls). At 16 years old, she married Philip Phillips, a prominent Jewish attorney 13 years her senior. Phillips's father had changed the family name from Pfeiffer to Phillips when they immigrated to this country from Bavaria. The young couple moved to Mobile, Alabama where Phillips had a thriving law practice. Phillips served one term in the House of Representatives (1853-1855) as a Democrat from Alabama. Deciding not to run again, he moved his family to Washington, D.C., where he started what promised to be a lucrative career in law.



Eugenia Levy-Phillips

Eugenia had given birth to seven children in Mobile. She had two more that were born in Washington, D.C. The Phillips, along with their four Irish house servants, lived in a large Greek revival mansion. Eugenia was sophisticated and welcomed into the highest social circles in Washington, D.C., which was essentially a Southern town. Life was good until rumblings of war began. Phillips was pro-Union while Eugenia was outspoken in her bias for

the Confederacy. On August 23, 1861, she found herself, both her daughters and her sister, Martha, under house arrest for having "Southern sympathies." The authorities later moved Eugenia to the attic of the home of Rose Greenhow, a good friend and another suspected Confederate spy.

Eugenia's husband was able to use his connections with his good friend, Edwin Stanton, to gain her freedom after three weeks. The family fled to Richmond. Later, Jefferson Davis claimed Eugenia had sent him Union maps and intelligence that helped the C.S.A. win at Bull Run. Seeking a safe haven, the family settled in New Orleans which fell to the Union soon after their arrival.

Federal General Benjamin Franklin Butler was having no problem with civilian Southern males in their acceptance of Northern rule. It was the belles of New Orleans who were giving him a headache. Upper class women would exit the streetcar if a Union soldier got on or leave church if an officer entered. They embroidered Confederate flags onto their clothing. If a Federal flag flew overhead, they'd step into a muddy street to avoid standing beneath it. Several women spit at soldiers. A chamber pot was emptied from a balcony onto Admiral David Farragut's head when he passed below.

On May 15, 1862, General Butler issued his infamous General Order #28, the "Woman Order." Some women whispered that Butler's wife, Sarah Jones Hildreth, had forced his hand because she was being ignored by the upper class New Orleans society.

The order read: "As the officers and soldiers of the United States have been subject to repeated insults from the women (calling themselves ladies) of New Orleans, in return for the most scrupulous non-interference and courtesy on our part, it is ordered that hereafter when any female shall, by word, gesture or movement, insult or show contempt for any officer or soldier of the United States, she shall be regarded and held liable to be treated as a woman of the town plying her avocation."

After the order was published, Butler became known as "Beast." All of New Orleans was outraged at the insult to their women. P.G.T. Beauregard said Butler had called their women "harlots." Jefferson Davis placed a bounty on Butler's head. The order

was discussed, written about and condemned as far away as France and England.

It was reported to Butler that Eugenia Levy Phillips had been caught laughing loudly as the funeral of Union Lieutenant George Coleman de Kay passed beneath her window in the French Quarter. Mrs. Phillips vehemently denied the charge. Many believed Eugenia was targeted because of her religion as Butler was a known anti-Semite. He had been overheard ranting against local smugglers saying, "They are Jews who betrayed their Savior & also have betrayed us." Others felt he just wanted to make an example of her.

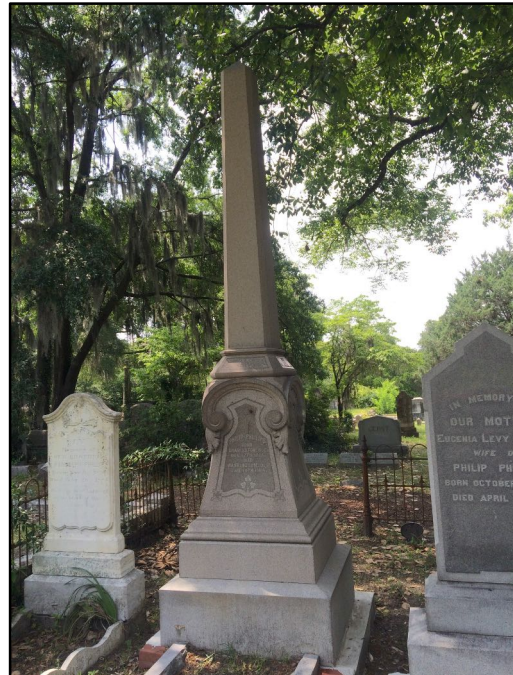
On June 30, 1862, Eugenia was summarily arrested, sentenced to three years imprisonment and sent to mosquito-infested Ship Island in the Gulf of Mexico. As she was led to the prison boat she was amazed to see "heads bowed, to offer me a silent ovation, some thirty of the oldest and most respected citizens of New Orleans."

Eugenia lived in a shack on the beach. The climate was hot and humid. Her food was leftover soldiers' rations. The guards were ordered to keep conversation with her to a bare minimum. Eugenia refused to ask for a commutation of her sentence and wrote to her husband, "Let me rot where I am."

Eugenia's behavior was turning her into a martyr. Her health had started to decline badly so after less than three months, Butler quietly sent her home. The Phillips family all reluctantly took the Oath of Allegiance to the United States on September 11, 1862. It was too little too late. They were not allowed to remain in New Orleans. They moved to LaGrange, GA. Phillips resumed the practice of law and Eugenia volunteered in the Confederate hospitals. At the end of the war, the family returned to Washington, D.C. where Mr. Phillips was able to start up his law practice again. He would argue 400 cases in front of the Supreme Court before his death in 1884.

Eugenia Levy Phillips died in Washington, D.C., on April 1, 1902, at the age of eighty-one. She is buried next to her husband in Laurel Grove Cemetery in Savannah, GA. Eugenia's sister, Phoebe Yates Levy Pember, was widowed after less than five years of marriage to her gentile husband, Thomas Pember, who had died of tuberculosis. Childless and wishing to get out of her father's

house, she served as head matron of Confederate Chimborazo Hospital. She stopped using her maiden name, Levy, as it was "too telling."



*The grave of Eugenia Levy-Phillips,
Laurel Grove Cemetery, Savannah*

Benjamin Butler had brought his brother, Colonel Andrew Jackson Butler, to serve with him in New Orleans. When Butler was removed from duty in the Crescent City, the two brothers were said to have carted off over two million dollars made from illicit trading with the Confederates. Andrew Jackson Butler offered General Nathaniel Banks \$100,000 to keep his crooked game going in New Orleans but Banks wasn't interested. Andrew Butler died in 1864 of yellow fever. After a bad showing at his next post, Fort Fisher, Benjamin, was relieved of command. He became a congressman and a one-time Governor of Massachusetts.

SIMPLE STEPS FOR CONNECTING TO THE ZOOM MEETING

1. Make sure your laptop, desktop, or smart device is on and connected to the Internet. You do not need any special equipment or to download any programs.
2. Look in your email inbox for the email from releecwrt@gmail. In it, you'll find a link under the heading "Join Zoom Meeting."
3. A few minutes before the meeting, click on the link to be taken to the meeting page. It will open in your web browser (e.g., Safari, Firefox, or Google Chrome).
4. Follow the on-screen instructions to set yourself up as a guest. Make sure your headset or speaker volume is up.
5. Relax and enjoy! After the meeting concludes, simply close your browser to disconnect.

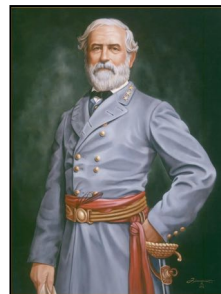
And after the meeting, we'd love your feedback. Please let us know how we did—and what we can do to improve—by sending your comments to: releecwrt@gmail.com

Vision Statement

With the Civil War being a defining event in the history of the United States and a continuing influence on our society in general, the Robert E. Lee Civil War Round Table of Central New Jersey is dedicated to preserving and expanding knowledge about — and understanding of — this seminal event.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to serve our members by striving to reach, with resources available, the goals set forward in the Vision Statement. This would be achieved, as finances allow, by: holding meetings, seminars and round tables; offering speakers who are experts in some aspect of the Civil War; encouraging nonpartisan, nonpolitical discussion and dialogue while honoring all those involved in the conflict; contributing toward the preservation of battlefields and important historical sites for future generations; providing eyes-on/hands-on/feet-on first-hand experiences by arranging field trips to battlefields and historical sites; and enhancing communication by publishing a newsletter and maintaining a website.



The Official Records is the monthly newsletter of the RE LEE CWRT of Central New Jersey.

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