

## The History of the Elk Grove CWRT

The Elk Grove Civil War Round Table was formed in May of 1993. It started out as a donut shop meeting between friends and evolved into what it is today---a meeting of people interested in the Civil War, meeting once a month with guest speakers, show and tells and Round Table discussions.

Bob Bundy, Chuck Davis, and Steve Von Bima, with occasional visits from Dave Smoot and Gary Adams, would get together at local donut shops to sit and “shoot the bull”, if you will. The topics would almost always center on the Civil War sometime during the meetings. A suggestion was made to form a Civil War Round Table in the Elk Grove area. Sacramento already had a CWRT, but everyone agreed that it would be nice to have one a little closer to home. Chuck went out and found a place for meetings. A newsletter was agreed upon with Bob as the first editor. Chuck took over the editor's job in 1995. “*The Haversack*” was the name agreed upon. Jenny Von Bima was enlisted to use her calligraphy skills to provide a masthead for the newsletter. Letters were sent to people with a known interest in the Civil War and flyers were placed at various locations around the area and phone calls were also made. The first meeting was small—seven people attended. Refreshments were served including a special “Round Table Cake” provided by Jacque Bundy. The Round Table's first meeting was held on June 17, 1993, at the American Legion Hall at the corner of Gerber Road and Elk Grove Florin Rd. Mr. Von Bima led the first meeting with "An Audio-Visual Tour of Gettysburg." The group soon moved to Frassinetti's Winery just south of Florin Rd. with the first meeting at the new location being held on January 18, 1994. We spent two years at Frassinetti's before moving very briefly to the Elk Grove Brewery, a new establishment that did not work out for our Round Table. On Tuesday April 16, 1996, we held our first meeting at Cassidy's Family Restaurant where Mr. Von Bima spoke on "Civil War Photography". We would spend nine years at Cassidy's before moving to nearby Denny's in the fall of 2006. (Cassidy's changed their hours and were no longer available for evening meetings).

Meetings often open with news items relating to the war. The guest speaker is then introduced, followed by a question-and-answer period. About two-thirds of talks at the Elk Grove CWRT are from the members themselves, with the other third being “outside guest speakers.”

In addition to the monthly meetings, many members are involved in community activities that relate to the war and the preservation of historic sites around the Sacramento area. Members of the Round Table have also written books, articles, and brochures on various topics of the period from 1861-1865. This group has also worked on organizing Memorial Day events, cemetery tours related to the war, planting, and preserving the Civil War Trees Memorial at Historic City Cemetery, provided proper signage for the Civil War Memorial Grove at the Capitol, and have set up information tables at various events. George Beitzel, past President of the Elk Grove CWRT has been an active member in supporting the West Coast Civil War Conference, which meets once a year at various locations throughout the state. The Round Table is free and has never charged dues.