

MEMBER RENEWAL

The MRRT celebrates its 59th year in 2019 – and this month is a great time to show your support by renewing your membership! (Or become a new member!). Membership is \$25 a year (\$5 increase to support preservation) – or \$5 for students. Checks should be made out to Treasurer **Jeanie Graham** (the bank does not like checks made out to the RoundTable) and can be mailed to her home at **29835 Northbrook, Farmington Hills, MI 48334-2326**; or simply bought to the meeting and given to Jeanie. Cash is always welcomed.

Sadly, long-time member Robert Newill, 93, passed away on January 16, 2019. Robert and his wife Anna enjoyed our field trips and meetings for many years. His sons, Robert and William, are members of the Roundtable.

Our next meeting will be Monday, January 28, 2019. We meet in the basement of the Farmington Library (corner of Grand River Avenue and Farmington Road) at 6:30 pm. Our speaker will be President Abraham Lincoln (Fred Priebe) who will discuss “The Election of 1864”!

Please visit our website at <http://www.farmlib.org/mrrt>

We will be electing new officers in February! Mollie is retiring as Secretary after many years of service and George will be retiring as coffee sergeant. All of our positions, including President, will be up for a vote. Your participation with the Roundtable will be greatly appreciated.

Our January meeting will begin the process of selecting our 2019 trip destination. Please bring your trip ideas for our consideration. Voting will begin during the February 25th meeting, with the final vote occurring at the March 25th meeting.

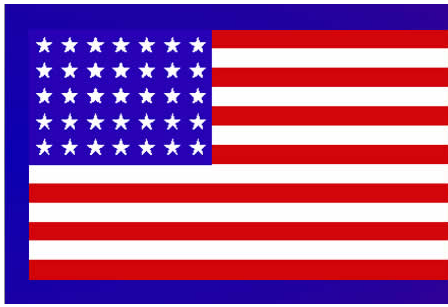
Recent field trips include: 2006-Franklin and Nashville, 2007-Gettysburg, 2008-Vicksburg, 2009-Chancellorsville & Fredericksburg, 2010-Wilderness & Spotsylvania, 2011-Springfield, Illinois, 2012-1st and 2nd Bull Run, 2013-Charleston, SC, 2014-Appomattox, 2015-Perryville, 2016-Antietam & Harper’s Ferry, 2017 – Shiloh, and 2018 – Chickamauga & Chattanooga

Our Monday, January 28, 2019 program will feature President Abraham Lincoln (Fred Priebe) who will discuss his 1864 Re-election campaign. The 1864 Election was the first time a country held an election during the midst of a Civil War. President Lincoln’s opponent was General George McClellan, hero of the Army of the Republic. The two parties were split on the war with Republicans (National Union Party) pursuing the war until the Confederates surrendered and the Democrats desiring a negotiated settlement with the South. There were few limits on election poster contents and other media.

Fred Priebe has been doing President Lincoln first-person presentations since 1966. He has spoken to numerous audiences in several states and four countries, including Australia, Canada, England, and France. Fred has won the award for “*Best Abraham Lincoln*” by the Association of Lincoln Presenters. He is a member of several Lincoln societies. He previously spoke to our Roundtable on “*Why Did Wait So Long?*” a discussion of the Emancipation Proclamation.



The Roundtable thanks Ms. Shayne Davidson of Ann Arbor very much for her unique and educational presentation on “A Photo Album of United States Colored Troops (USCT) Soldiers”. Captain William Prickitt (1839-1929) commander of Company G of the 25th United States Colored Troops (USCT) kept a small photo album of the African-American soldiers that he commanded during the Civil War.



Captain Prickitt was born in New Jersey. He enlisted in the 14th New Jersey, soon becoming a sergeant. He accepted a position as a Captain in a USCT regiment, the 25th. Captain Prickitt interviewed for the promotion in Washington. After the Civil War, he was a U.S. Ambassador in France and New Zealand.

The photo album was less than 3 inches tall with 18 photos of the 17 soldiers who served in the company. One soldier is shown twice, with and without a gun. Each photo included the soldier's name and rank, probably written by Captain Prickitt. Captain Prickitt's soldiers took care of him after he became very ill with dysentery in 1864 at one of the Florida forts they were stationed at. His great-granddaughter, Aneita Gates, said that "*The men saved my great-grandfather's life*". The African- American soldiers garrisoned the forts along the Gulf of Mexico so that more white soldiers were available for fighting. The forts are presently part of the Pensacola Naval Air Station.

Where did the soldiers come from? Seven soldiers came from Delaware, six from Union states, two Confederate states, and one from the District of Columbia. Delaware slaveholders received a bounty for slaves that enlisted. Most of the soldiers enlisted in Pennsylvania. The 25th U.S.C.T. trained at Fort William Penn, near Philadelphia. This fort was the first location in the North dedicated to the training of African American soldiers. Today, all that is left of the fort is the gate.



The photo album was kept in the Prickitt family for several generations. Eventually, Aneita Gates eventually took possession of the album, storing it in a box on a laundry room shelf. She became aware of the significance of the album when a military magazine published a story about it.

Shayne used her talents as an artist and amateur genealogist to draw portraits of the soldiers and learn about their lives. She built a family tree for each soldier on Ancestry.com. Approximately half of the soldiers had pension records. Military records and census information was very useful. Shayne ended up with a fair amount of information on each soldier.

Shayne enlarged each of the small photos to life size. Each drawing required approximately two weeks. The photos held up well during the process. The long process was applied to each one of the 17 drawings – one for each man. The soldiers probably paid itinerant photographers for their photo. The going rate for photos was \$2.

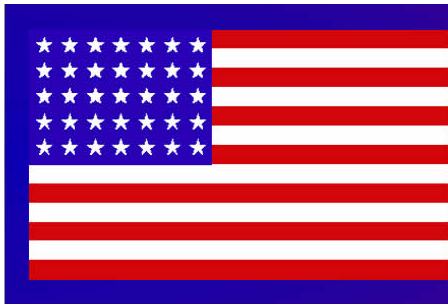
During her research on the soldier's backgrounds, she met some of the descendants of the soldiers. Vanessa Tall Bryant is the granddaughter of James Tall, one of the soldiers. James was in his 70's when Vanessa's father (1922-2012) was born. James escaped from slavery near Murfreesboro, Tennessee to join the Union army, eventually ending up in the 25th U.S.C.T.

Shayne's work was shown at the Art Prize in Grand Rapids, MI. The very popular project is presently being shown at a GAR museum in Maryland, one of two remaining African-American posts.

The Gates family donated the original photo album to the Museum of African-American History in Washington, D.C. The family felt that the Smithsonian was too large for the album.

Quiz Questions: This month's questions and answers pertain to the Election of 1864:

1. What was the Presidential election voting results among Union soldiers?
2. Who were the candidates for Vice-President for the two major parties?
3. What did the final results of the 1864 Election signify to President Lincoln?
4. What percentage of the vote was for President Lincoln? Which states did General McClellan win?
5. Who were some of the men that wanted to replace President Lincoln as Republican candidate?



MRRT Minutes for the Nov. 26, 2018 Meeting Call to Order: 6:40 pm, about 25 people present **Pledge** dedicated to George Falk, 36th Field Artillery **Introduction of Guests and New Members** None **Treasurer's Report** Our \$25 dues can be paid to Jeanie at the February meeting or sent in the mail **Secretary's Report** September 2018 minutes were approved **Preservation** Joe Epstein did not have a report **Roundtable Newsletter Report** Bob shared with us the Indianapolis Hardtack and Cincinnati Canister newsletters **Web** Website is up-to-date with latest newsletter **Program** The 2019 speaker program has been completed. **TRIP** We had another excellent trip in 2018 with an outstanding guide and enjoyed great weather. The trip committee will begin discussions about the trip destination in February 2019. Our destination depends greatly upon finding an excellent guide. **An item of Interest** Larry Hathcock was very impressed with the Civil War Museum in Bardstown, KY. George Crouch said that, after watching CSPAN 3, suggested that we do not take the "experts" opinions at face value. Our research will generate our own opinions. **New Business** None **Old Business** None

Civil War Essentials - Civil War in the Smokies – Part 1

Today, the Great Smoky Mountains region on the North Carolina/Tennessee border is known for its beautiful vistas and serenity. Most of us have visited its wonderful national park. However, like almost all regions of the South, it did not escape the effects of the Civil War. No famous battles were fought there and the Smokies added little to the Confederacy's military power – arms, ammunition, etc. Nonetheless these 4 North Carolina and 3 Tennessee counties became a place where neighbors, former friends, and even relatives fought each other over the main themes of the war – the Union and slavery – as well as settling private scores.

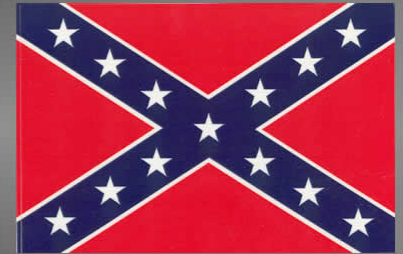
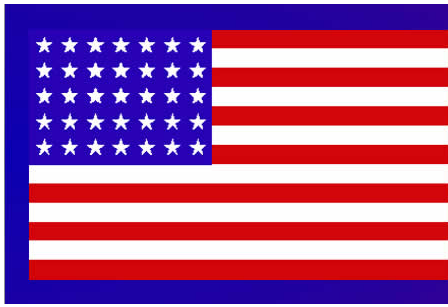


The terrain of the area proved to be a mixed blessing. The mountains made maneuvering large armies difficult. In addition, there were no main railroads, industrial centers or other strategic targets to attract Yankee interest. The inhabitants were therefore spared the horrors of large scale warfare visited on other areas of the South. But its isolation made it a magnet for deserters, draft dodgers and others wishing to avoid contact with authority. And, having little to begin with, most of the inhabitants were hard pressed to withstand the ravages of war.

These inhabitants had inherited a history of personal and organized violence. The Indians had long resisted the incursion of white settlers into the area. During the Revolutionary War, they sided with the British. Bloody

battles, large and small, were fought. "Over mountain" men from the area helped achieve the Patriot victory over American loyalists at King's Mountain in 1780. After the war, settlers poured into the North Carolina Smokies (Tennessee only became a separate state in 1796). The Indian Removal Acts of the Jacksonian era resulted in the forced eviction of most of the Cherokees from the area. Inevitably there was conflict between the new settlers over land claims, given the lax land registering practices and poor surveying methods of the era.

The terrain, climate, and bad roads meant that the only practical cash crop that could be pursued in the Smokies was wheat which was not as lucrative as cotton or tobacco. **Few families attained the wealth or owned the slaves that plantation owners elsewhere in the South had.** The largest land holdings (and slave ownership) tended to be located in the river valleys. Raising hogs and cattle for sale in South Carolina and Georgia was another source of income for Smokies' residents.



As the country approached the brink in early 1861, the two states conducted votes on secession. **Although separation from the Union was approved in both states, 5 of the 7 counties (including all 3 in Tennessee) that constituted the Smokies rejected secession by clear majorities.**

The Smokies sections of both states had voted against secession, but the two reacted differently once the conflict became a reality. Initially at least the North Carolina side displayed enthusiasm for their new country. Companies of Confederate volunteers (including some of the remaining Cherokee) were quickly raised, usually by local leaders such as lawyers, public officials or wealthy individuals. Overt support for the Union was rare. **In Tennessee, things were different.** Although there were ardent secessionists and some volunteer units were raised, the sentiments of a large segment (perhaps the majority) of the population were clearly pro-Union. Those supporting the Union started to collect into Home Guard units for protection or to flee to the North if possible to enlist in the Union Army in Kentucky. **At first, there was little actual violence, but this would change after the first few months.**

The pattern of raid/counter raid began in the second half of 1861. As time went on and as the initial fervor for the Confederacy faded, numbers of deserters, mostly from the Confederate Army, added a new and more volatile element. **Few of these men joined the Unionists (or “Tories” as they were often called) against the local militias, but many became outlaws operating in independent bands using the absence of authority to prey on civilians** especially the wives of soldiers of both armies away at the front. This in turn increased the desertion rate and caused more local men to try to evade conscription as they sought to protect their families. **The Union loyalists and outlaws both used the states’ border to their advantage as local militia pursuing them would not cross over. Confederate resources were stretched thin so regular CSA troops were rarely available to try to root out the Tories or robber bands, particularly in Tennessee.** On the few occasions when Confederate regulars did attempt to destroy bands of Unionists, they had limited success in trying to surprise them since the local Unionists were often more familiar with the land. The few slaves in the area invariably supported the Unionists. By intent or not, the Unionists denied the CSA vital supplies and manpower it needed from the area.

Quiz Answers:

1. During the 1864 election 19 of 25 Union states allowed soldiers to vote from the field. Indiana soldiers were sent home on furlough to vote. Union soldiers cast 78% of their ballots for President Lincoln.
2. The Republican Party changed its name to the National Union Party to attract War Democrats. Andrew Johnson, soon to be President, was nominated for Vice President, replacing Ha Hamlin of Maine. The Democrats nominated George H. Pendleton of Ohio, who was the son-in-law of Francis Scott Key. He opposed continuing the war and the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery.
3. President Lincoln interpreted his victory as a mandate for unconditional victory and the end of slavery.
4. President Lincoln won 55% of the popular vote and carried the Electoral College, 212-21. General McClellan won New Jersey (his home state), Kentucky, and Delaware. Lincoln won Michigan with 55% of the vote.
5. Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase, Ben Butler, and John C. Fremont were proposed as replacements for President Lincoln. Most of the opposition felt that President Lincoln was not tough enough on slavery. General Grant was not interested in running for President.