

Vol LXIII, #2

Michigan Regimental Round Table Newsletter—Page 1

February 2023

MEMBER RENEWAL

The MRRT celebrates its 63rd year in 2023 – and now is a great time to show your support by renewing your membership! (Or become a new member!). Membership is \$25 a year – 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**. Cash to pay for membership is always welcome at our meetings.

Our February 2023 meeting will be on Monday, February 27, 2023, at 6:30 pm in the basement of the Farmington Library – corner of Grand River and Farmington Road. **Our speaker, Michael McCaffrey**, will probably begin his presentation shortly after 7:00 pm after a 6:30 pm business meeting. **We must leave the library by 8:45 pm.**

The Roundtable's great website is 20 years old in 2023. Please visit our website at <http://www.farmlib.org/mrrt>

The Roundtable is proud to welcome Michael McCaffrey, Director of the Dearborn Heights Library as our February 2023 speaker. will speak on "The Saga of the 24th Michigan Infantry". The 24th is probably Michigan's best-known Civil War regiment, primarily for its participation in the Battle of Gettysburg. Michael will cover the regiment from its inception during the summer of 1862 to the end of the war. **Its commander, Colonel Henry Morrow, deserved a lot of recognition for his leadership of the regiment.** Michael discovered that three members of the regiment were buried at the Little Red Schoolhouse in Dearborn. Like several members of our group Michael discovered his interest in the Civil War on a trip to Gettysburg.

This will be an interesting and educational presentation with Michael.

January 2023 Speaker-Jim Epperson- "Grant and Rosecrans --It all Started at Iuka"

The MRRT enjoyed Jim Epperson's presentation of "Grant and Rosecrans-it all started at Iuka". Jim discussed an interesting topic off the beaten path of Civil War literature.

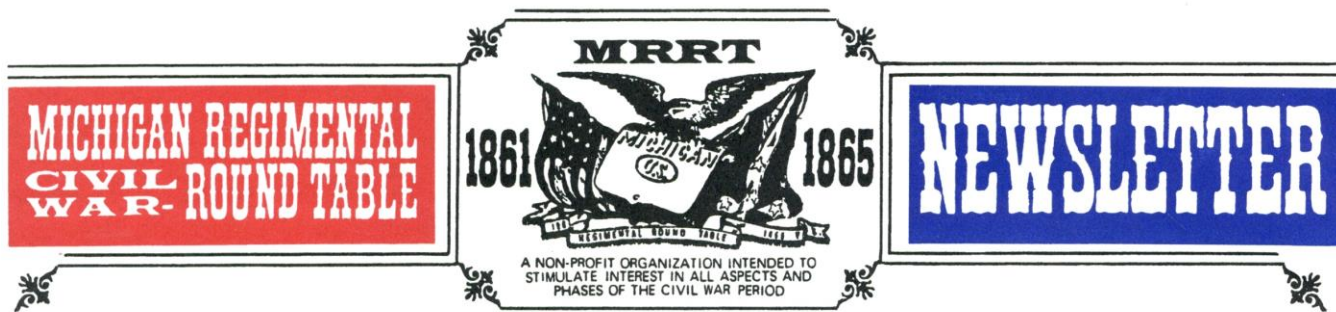
Initially, Union Generals U.S. Grant and William Rosecrans got along with each other during the summer of 1862. Grant became commander of the Army of the Tennessee in July 1862 and Rosecrans commanded the Army of the Mississippi. Grant valued teamwork as the #1 virtue of a commander. He had six divisions to defend the railroads and the critical Corinth area. Rosecrans had five divisions in his first independent command with a superior officer, Grant. William was brilliant and high-strung with a volcanic temper. He drove himself very hard. General Rosecrans became a fervent Catholic. His superior officers found that he would criticize them frequently.

Preliminaries to the Battle of Iuka, Mississippi

General Grant wanted to promote Rosecrans to Major General and have his army rebuild the defensive works around Corinth and guard the railroad from Corinth to Iuka. However, General Halleck in Washington wanted General Buell's Army reinforced. So, 3 of Rosecrans' 5 divisions were sent to Buell for the Perryville Campaign during the Fall of 1862. General Grant planned to go to Iuka from the Northwest and General Rosecrans approached Iuka from the South. This "converging columns" strategy rarely worked because of communication issues that limited coordination. For the Battle of Iuka Grant had 8,000 men and Rosecrans had 9,000 compared with Confederate commander, General Sterling Price's, 14,000 men.

The Union Army's problems began when a division traveling from Corinth joined General Rosecrans' army late on September 18, 1862. Grant did not receive word of this until the 19th. Therefore, he told General Ord, one of his division commanders, to wait up and let Rosecrans start the battle.

General Rosecrans received this order by courier. Two of General Grant's staffers joined Rosecrans during the afternoon of the 9th. Miscommunication resulted as General Rosecrans did not understand the courier's message regarding Ord's division.



Battle of Iuka – September 19, 1862



General Rosecrans' (pictured) army attacked Confederate General Little's men in their rear and General Little was killed. Both sides thought that they had won the battlefield. Casualties were 790 for the Union and 535 for the Confederates. **General Ord did nothing during the battle and moved further away, as he did not hear Rosecrans attack because of an "acoustic shadow". General Rosecrans was screaming, "Where is Grant?".** During the battle, one of General Rosecrans' subordinates, General Hamilton, did most of the fighting. General Rosecrans' two columns advanced on the Jacinto Road. **General Grant complained about Rosecrans' army not blocking another road, the Fulton Road, thus allowing the Confederates to escape. Once again, poor maps limited the Union Army's efforts. Pursuit of the Rebels from October 3rd to October 5th was fumbled.**

General Rosecrans had a reporter, William Bickham, from the *Cincinnati Commercial*, as a volunteer aide on his staff. After the battle, General Grant's aide, Colonel Legget, wrote to John Rawlins complaining about Bickham's reports in the *Commercial*. General Grant was furious. As a result, General Rosecrans became commander of the Army of the Ohio on October 24th.

Endgame after the war ended

Interactions after the war ended widened the breach. General Grant said in an April 14, 1865, Cabinet meeting (the day before the President Lincoln assassination) of General Rosecrans' victory at Stones River, "*That was not much of a victory.*"

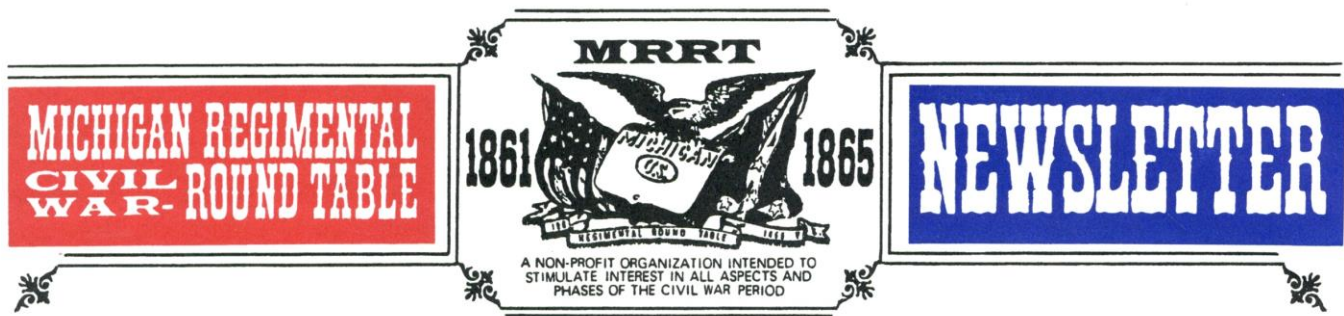
The Grant (the General's son, U.S. Grant, Jr.) and Ward Investment firm collapsed on May 6, 1884. Ferdinand Ward had run a vast "Ponzi" scheme. As a result, the former President and Commanding General of the Union Army was destitute and began to write his memoirs. Eventually, the memoirs would become one of the great books of the Civil War era. **A bill was introduced in the U.S. Congress to put Grant on the "retired" list which made him eligible for a \$13,500 per year pension. The bill passed the Senate quickly.**

The bill had to pass the U.S. House by March 4, 1885, or passage would have to start over. Congressman William Rosecrans of California held up passage of the bill. Eventually, the bill did pass by the deadline.

Quiz Questions: This month's questions pertain to the month of February during the Civil War.

1. On February 23, 1861, President-elect Abraham Lincoln arrived in Washington, D.C. What two famous bodyguards came with him?
2. On February 1, 1862, the *Atlantic Monthly* published new lyrics to the tune of "*John Brown's Body*." Who wrote the words to the new popular hit and what was the title of the song?
3. On February 24, 1864, despite objections, who did President Jefferson Davis promote to Commander-in-Chief of the Confederate Army? And, which Confederate general warned Davis that the promotion would be "*rewarding failure*"?
4. On February 16, 1862, General U.S. Grant captured a Confederate stronghold. Name it and the wounded naval Flag Officer whose fleet helped Grant complete the victory.
5. Federal forces captured an important state capital in a bloodless victory on February 25, 1862. Name the city and the Union general who captured it.

We thank "*Old Sarge*" for these questions and answers.



Civil War Essentials - Winfield Scott – the Old Soldier Makes His Last Contribution

If the Civil War had never occurred, the name Winfield Scott would still be heralded in American military history. Scott's contributions to the security of the US stretched out over a half-century before the Civil War began. He served under fourteen presidents during his long career.

Scott was born in 1786 in Virginia, just three years after Revolutionary War ended. **He studied law at the College of William & Mary and then apprenticed at a lawyer's office in Petersburg, Virginia.** After a brief time in a Virginia militia unit, Scott joined the Army as a captain in 1808. He rose to lieutenant colonel by the start of the War of 1812. In that war, Scott led troops in several major battles in what is now Canada. Promoted to brigadier general, he won the Battle of Lundy's Lane in 1814. **In memory of that battle in which his soldiers wore gray uniforms, the West Point Cadet dress uniform jacket is gray rather than blue.**



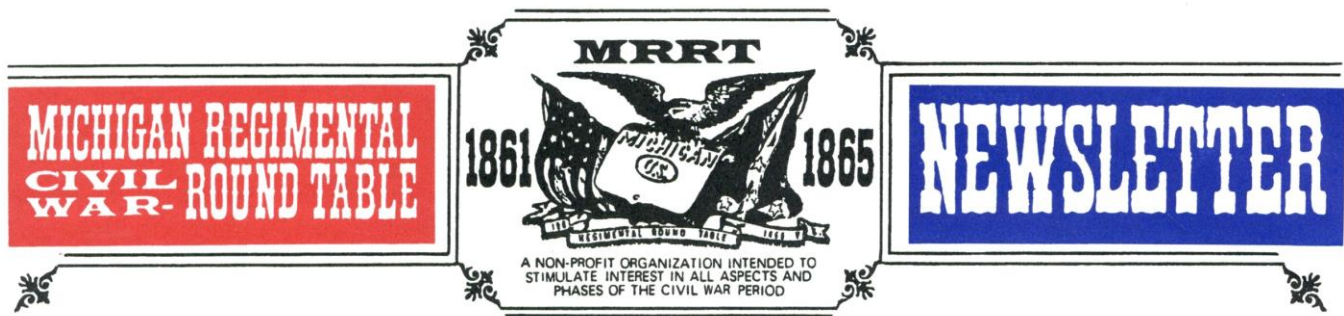
In the post-war period, Scott tried to redress his lack of formal military training by studying those subjects in Europe. After returning to the US, he authored an updated manual of army procedures. **It was during this period that he acquired the nickname "Old Fuss and Feathers".** He also became known as an advocate of a stronger regular federal army. This attitude was at odds with the prevailing American belief in militias. They were preferred to a so-called "standing army" which many Americans equated with European armies which were often used to oppress the civilian population rather than just fight the country's enemies. The frequently poor performance of American militias in the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and against the Indians had not diminished this widely held preference. **Andrew Jackson, a strong populist and anti-elitist, supported the militia system and therefore opposed Scott.**

In the early 1830s, Scott was sent to South Carolina to find a solution to the state's smoldering resentment of the high import tariffs which resulted in the "Nullification" crisis. The tariffs were lowered in 1833, partly as a result of Scott's diplomacy.

Scott was sent in 1836 to Florida to combat the stubbornly independent Seminole Indians. The campaign was a failure as were most attempts to tame the Seminoles. A Court of Inquiry acquitted Scott of responsibility. Nonetheless, Scott was not satisfied and exhibited a recurring trait which would negatively affect his career. **Not content with exoneration, he insisted on trying to fix the blame for the failure where he felt it belonged** which raised the ire of other officers and officials. After this he led the tragic forced removal of the Cherokee Nation from the southeast to the Oklahoma Indian Territory. After completing that lamentable task, he was sent to Maine where he was able to help peacefully settle a simmering dispute between US and Canadian lumber interests over the exact border location. **In June 1841, Scott was promoted to major general and made commander of the army.**

Mexican War - 1846

The war with Mexico in 1846-48 would prove to be the pinnacle of Winfield Scott's military career. It was not, however, without difficulties and drama for him, mostly due to his relationship with the president, James Knox Polk. Most of the trouble arose from the Democratic president's strong desire to avoid making Scott, a Whig, into a hero. Scott did not help his cause, however, by his obsession with trying to prove he was right in every dispute. As a result, Scott was passed over for command in the north along the Texas border. After Polk unsuccessfully tried to get Congress to place a



Democratic general above Scott, he reluctantly gave him command of the US force intended to attack Mexico from the Gulf of Mexico. Scott still had to deal with subordinates like Gideon Pillow, forced on him by Polk, during his epic campaign from Vera Cruz to Mexico City. Scott’s daring decision to abandon his supply line during this campaign prefigured what Grant and Sherman would do during the Civil War. **What he achieved caused the Duke of Wellington to call him “the greatest living general”.**

After the Mexico war, Scott attempted to gain political office but was defeated. In 1855, he was promoted to brevet lieutenant general, the first American soldier to reach that grade since George Washington [in 1864, US Grant would be the first to attain the full rank of lieutenant general – no brevet]. Jefferson Davis, then Secretary of War, who worked closely with Scott to modernize the army, found him to be vain and difficult to work with, an assessment echoed by others.

The Civil War - 1861

As the process of the disintegration of the Union began, Scott clearly felt his loyalty lay with his country, not his home state. He was frustrated with the passivity of President Buchanan and the apparent treasonous acts of Secretary of War John Floyd (*see October 2020 MRRT Newsletter*). He supported the decision to resist at Fort Sumter. After it was surrendered and Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers to suppress the rebellion, Virginia seceded, and this caused Robert E. Lee to resign his army commission. Lee had been Scott’s choice to head the army in the field during the coming war. Scott himself was now in his mid-seventies and suffered from *dropsy* [edema] so he could no longer lead an army in active campaigning – see photo.



His last contribution to his country was to recommend a strategy, ridiculed by others as the “Anaconda Plan” {cartoon}, which contained several key elements which would prove to be decisive in the eventual Union victory – the naval blockade and the reopening of the Mississippi River to split the Confederacy in two. But because this strategy would require time and massive forces to implement, he was criticized by those who were sure that the war could be won quickly and with fewer men by attacking the Confederacy’s new capital, Richmond, instead. The bloody 1861-63 Union defeats in the east, starting with 1st Manassas, were the results of this misjudgment.

After Manassas, George McClellan rose in influence and lobbied to replace Scott at the head of the army. **Scott retired in November, 1861 and published his memoirs later in the war. He lived just long enough to see the country reunited – he died in 1866 and is buried at West Point.**

Quiz Answers:

1. Allan Pinkerton and Ward Hill Lamon
2. Julia Ward Howe and “the Battle Hymn of the Republic”
3. Confederate Generals Braxton Bragg and James Longstreet
4. Fort Donelson and Flag Officer Andrew Foote
5. Nashville, Tennessee, and General Don Carlos Buell