

MEMBER RENEWAL

The MRRT celebrates its 60th year in 2020 – 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**; or simply bought to the meeting and given to Jeanie. Cash is always welcomed.

Our next meeting will be on Monday, February 24, 2020. 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 member Ken Baumann, who will speak on “65 Years with the Military History Hobby and Dumb Luck has been my best collecting tool”. Please visit our website at <http://www.farmlib.org/mrrt>

Our February meeting will feature the first vote (and possibly the final vote) on our 2020 field trip destination. Proposals for the 2020 field trip include **Gettysburg, Virginia – Brandy Station, Cedar Mountain**, member Brian Mayer has had contact with Clark “Bud” Hall—who lead the effort to preserve the Brandy Station battlefield, **Carnifax, West Virginia, Bentonville, NC, and Alabama – Spanish Ford and Beakly**. If you would like to vote but will be unable to attend our February 24, 2020 meeting please contact Mollie at mmgalate@gmail.com or 313.530.8516.



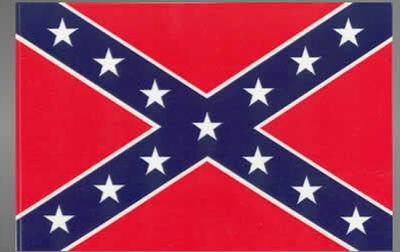
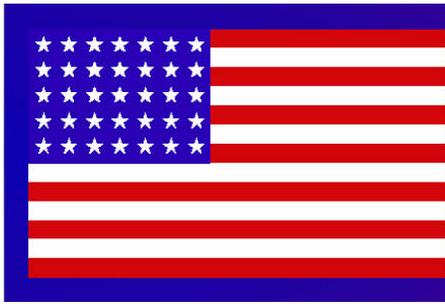
The Roundtable welcomes back member Ken Baumann for his presentation on “65 Years with the Military History Hobby and Dumb Luck has been my best collecting tool”.

Knowing Ken as we do, his presentation will be entertaining and informative, even funny at times. **He is the Roundtable’s acknowledged expert on artillery and the state of Illinois during the Civil War.** Ken’s extensive travels in the Western Theater of the Civil War has resulted in some great discoveries and probably some not so great experiences that he will share with us.

Ken is now a gentleman farmer after retiring as a horticulturist from the Milan Federal Prison (not an inmate!). He is the author of *Arming the Suckers 1861-1865: A Compilation of Illinois Civil War Weapons*. He has finished his second book, *The Hillsdale Soldier* and is working on publishing the book. Ken has served three terms as President of the Roundtable during his almost 50 years of membership! Presently, he is the President of the Ann Arbor Civil War Roundtable. He has spoken to the group on several topics, including *Fort Powell and the Battle of Mobile Bay*. **Please join us as this will be a great presentation!**

The MRRT is most appreciative of President Lincoln/Ron Carley’s fascinating presentation of interesting facts about US presidents. It was particularly laudable as Ron was a last minute substitute for the scheduled presenter. Ron cast his talk as if Lincoln visited the Library of Congress in order to learn about his counterparts; given his limited political experience prior to becoming president (his sole achievement before his election was moving Illinois’ capital to Springfield). Among the trivia he discussed were:

- The Declaration of Independence is celebrated on July 4 (although first signed 2 days earlier). **The 2nd president, John Adams, and 3rd president, Thomas Jefferson, both died on July 4, in 1826 – exactly 50 years later.** James Monroe, the fifth president, died on July 4, 1831. Presidents Madison and Taylor each died within a few days of July 4. Calvin Coolidge was born on July 4.



- **Teddy Roosevelt was the youngest president when sworn in after McKinley died, but Kennedy was the youngest when elected. Trump is the oldest president.**
- **Teddy Roosevelt first referred to the president's mansion as the White House.**
- **Martin Van Buren was the first president born after the US gained independence from Britain.**



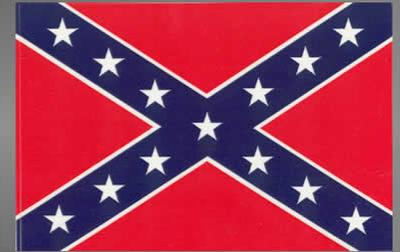
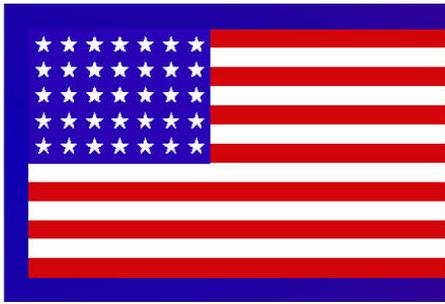
- Confederate president Jefferson Davis was the son-in-law of President Zackary Taylor.
 - Eisenhower was the last president before Trump to serve without having held a prior political office.
 - Gerald Ford worked as a model when he was young. George W. Bush was once a cheerleader.
 - Jimmy Carter is the oldest surviving former president.
 - **Ohio has the most native sons as presidents (7).**
 - William H. Harrison was the first president to die in office; Zackary Taylor was the second.
 - Andrew Jackson, once called a jackass, liked the imagery so much the jackass became the Democratic Party symbol.
- Abraham Lincoln's birthday, 2/12/1809 is the same as naturalist Charles Darwin's. **Lincoln first appeared on the US penny in 1909 to mark the centennial of his birth.**
 - **Lincoln signed the Secret Service Act on the day he was shot – his last official act.** The Secret Service was intended to fight counterfeiting of US currency.
 - As a youth, Lincoln was kicked in the head by a mule. This caused a slight drooping in one eye.
 - **Lincoln disliked being called "Abe", even by his wife.**
 - Harry S. Truman (the "S" in his name meant nothing) was the first president to receive a pension.
 - **James Madison was the shortest president; Lincoln and L. B. Johnson tied as the tallest.**
 - Brooks Brothers and Johnson & Murphy have had long histories as suppliers of presidential suits and shoes.
 - **Andrew Jackson was the president when the US last had no National Debt.**

Ron also related several experiences he has had as a Lincoln reenactor:

- **He was mobbed by tourists seeking his picture when he visited the Lincoln Memorial dressed as Lincoln.**
- When he returned to the Memorial at night, he was detained by the Park Police for trespassing.
- **He was stopped and ticketed for speeding in Virginia while in Lincoln costume** with an R. E. Lee reenactor in the back seat of his car.
- He has attended celebrations at Westfield, N.Y., **the home town of little Grace Bedell whose letter to him convinced Lincoln to grow a beard.**

Finally, Ron insisted that, when offered the choice of a table or a booth at a restaurant, he never chooses a booth!

Civil War Nugget – Between late 1862 and mid-1863 the cost of hiring a substitute in Confederate Tennessee rose from \$1,500 to almost \$5,000, a 333% increase!



Quiz Questions: This month's questions celebrate the birthday of Abraham Lincoln

1. What prompted Lincoln's only visit to the state of Michigan?
2. What did Lincoln refer to as a "wet blanket"?
3. Who said, "Next to the destruction of the Confederacy, the death of Abraham Lincoln was the darkest day the South has ever known"?
4. To what was Abraham Lincoln referring to when he said in his youth, "If ever I get a chance to hit that thing, I'll hit it hard"?
5. Who said; "(Lincoln) is the strong man of his party-full of wit, facts, dates-and the best stump speaker...in the West?

Our thanks to "Old Sarge" for his help celebrating the birthday of Abraham Lincoln.

Civil War Essentials – Richmond Bread Riot By the spring of 1863, Richmond, Virginia was experiencing significant shortages of food, firewood, coal, and housing. **During the first three years of the war Richmond's population had tripled from 38,000 in 1860 to over 100,000 by 1863, causing severe housing and food shortages.** The 1862 drought resulted in a poor harvest that added to the food shortage.

The Confederate army was also experiencing the same food shortages. The Army took food stocks to satisfy its own needs thus increasing the shortages for civilians. Also, the Confederate dollar was devalued, creating major inflation in the cost of goods and services.

A pound of butter that cost \$0.25 in 1860 cost \$2 in January 1863. A barrel of flour rose in cost from \$6.50 in 1860 to \$13.50 in mid-1862. The cost of a pound of bacon had increased from \$0.125 in 1860 to \$1.25 in January 1863. Sometimes no food, especially meat, was available at any price. Even salt, the only practical meat preservative was very expensive because it usually had to go through the Union blockade.

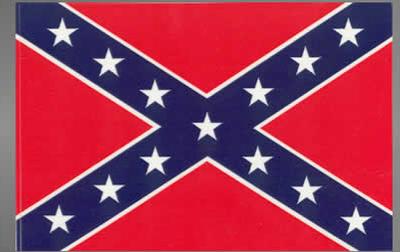
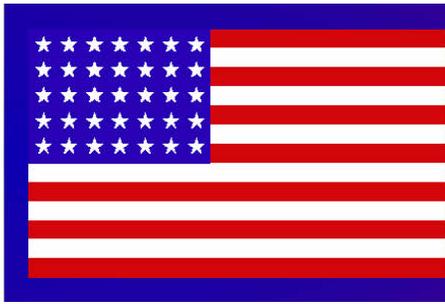


Mary Jackson, a house painter's wife and mother of four, led 300 women who gathered together on April 2, 1863 to protest the food shortages. They were primarily lower-class women that were armed with axes, hatchets, knives, and even a few pistols. One woman said "*As soon as enough of us get together, we are going to the bakeries and each of us will take a loaf of bread*". If their demands were not met, the women would take the food by force.

First, the women met with Virginia's governor, John Letcher, who told them to disperse and go home. This was unacceptable, so the women began marching toward the government food storehouses. The crowd increased to 1,000 as men joined the crowd. A journalist described the crowd as "*a handful of prostitutes, professional thieves, Irish and Yankee hags, gallows birds from all lands but our own*".

The crowd surged down Ninth Street toward the food markets on Cary Street, chanting "Bread! Bread!" The rioters broke into the locked store doors. Using aprons and baskets, all the available food was carried away. Fireman hosed down the mob. The crowd moved to another area where it broke plate glass windows, and took clothing and jewelry.

President Jefferson Davis then climbed on top of an overturned wagon and tried to reason with the angry mob. He told them that what they were doing would only make the food shortages worse. "You say you are hungry and no money-here is all I have" as the President threw the coins in his pocket at the crowd. He then looked at his



watch and gave angry crowd five minutes to disperse before he would order soldiers to fire on them. Slowly, the crowd dispersed. Two to three dozen businesses were looted. There were only a few minor injuries.

Approximately 70 participants were arrested. Half of them were convicted of misdemeanors; the rest were acquitted. Richmond newspaper editors waited 24 hours before they included the story in their newspapers.

Richmond authorities then tried to limit future violence. Beginning in early July 1863, 200 volunteers were organized as police auxiliaries. For several months they patrolled Richmond on a nightly basis. The city council appropriated \$20,000 to assist indigent wives and children of soldiers serving in the Army. A city-operated market was set up where the “worthy” poor could pick up a weekly ration of food. Relief was expanded as the war went on.

Richmond was not the only Southern city that experienced riots. Several Georgia cities, including Atlanta, Augusta, Columbus, and Macon, had armed mobs attacking stores and warehouses. In North Carolina, mobs destroyed dry goods and grocery stores.

Answers to President Lincoln Quiz:

1. On August 27, 1856 he visited Kalamazoo to campaign for the Republican Presidential candidate, John C. Fremont.
2. The Gettysburg Address—“that speech fell on the audience like a wet blanket”.
3. Former Confederate President Jefferson Davis
4. Slavery – he made this comment while observing a slave auction in New Orleans.
5. Stephen Douglas during their famous 1858 debates.

Civil War Essentials – The Army Marching David Thompson of the 9th New York described the Army of the Potomac marching as “*The gathering of such a multitude is a swarm, its march a vast migration...The advancing forces cut a broad swath with long ammunition and supply trains disposed for safety along the inner roads, infantry and artillery next in order outwardly, feelers of cavalry all along its front and far out on its flank; while behind, trailing along for miles...are the rabble of stragglers-laggards through sickness or exhaustion, squads of recruits, convalescents from the hospitals.*” (Picture below – the Army of the Potomac’s Mud March in January 1863)



The average speed of a moving army was about two and one half miles per hour. The men marched four abreast because that was the width limit on most country roads. The roads created layers of dust for those in the rear of the marching column. Marching behind the cavalry was another problem.

For most soldiers, the worst part of marching was the common stop-and-go, bringing the men to a halt before the army started moving again. A Vermont soldier on his way to Gettysburg wrote, “*Marching by rods is like dying by inches, and it gets an impatient man in misery... We rarely halted long enough to sit down, but if we did the column*

would invariably start just as were fairly seated...”

Thirst was a problem for the marching army. Soldiers would scoop a handful of water from ponds and or puddles that they passed by.

Most soldiers were very happy to survive another march. Theodore Barclay of the Fourth Virginia wrote, “*Well, here I am at the old camp near Winchester, broken down, halt, lame, blind, crippled and whatever else you can think of-but I am still kicking.*”