

Mississippi was admitted to the Union in 1817 as the 20<sup>th</sup> state and was the second to secede from the United States on 9 January 1861 by a vote of 84-15. As the ordinance of secession passed, an eyewitness wrote: “A great wave of excitement swept the audience, and grave and dignified men, swayed by a common impulse, joined in the deafening applause. In an instant the hall was a scene of wild tumult” and outside a shout went up. An immense blue silk banner with a single white star was carried through the crowd. This flag was said to have inspired the patriotic song of the South, “Bonnie Blue Flag.” A second state had now joined South Carolina in leaving the Union.

Mississippi’s population in 1860 totaled 791,305 which included 436,631 slaves and 773 freed Blacks. With a total of 70,295 white males of military age, the state sent 80,000 men, boys, and elders to the war; no more than 20,000 returned. Five Mississippians reached the rank of major general, including Earl Van Dorn who was killed by an irate husband on May 8, 1863, and William Henry Chase Whiting who was mortally wounded at Fort Fisher on January 15, 1865. Twentyfive from the state became brigadier generals, including William Barksdale who was mortally wounded at Gettysburg, Carnot Posey who was wounded at Bristoe Station and died a month later from infection, and Hiram Granbury who was killed at Franklin. That Mississippi’s manhood suffered severely during the war is evidenced by the fact that in 1866, 1/5 of the state’s budget was spent on artificial limbs.

Put under Military Reconstruction following the war, Mississippi was readmitted to the Union in February of 1870.

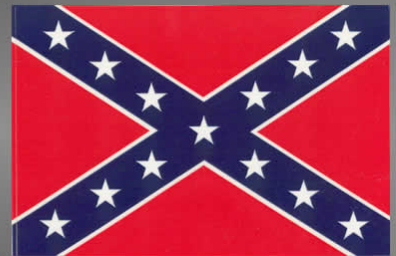
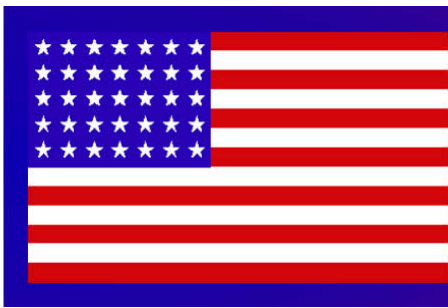
This month on **MONDAY, MARCH 30**, the Michigan Regimental will welcome guest speaker, **Dave Ingall**, with the topic: “Traveling *Civil War Mississippi*.” Dave’s talk will be a virtual tour of the state’s Civil War history and sites, covering people, museums, cemeteries, monuments, forts and battlefields. Dave’s listed topics will include: Jefferson Davis’ homes and presidential museum, prominent generals, Mississippi battle commanders, Corinth and Battery Robinett, Grierson’s Raid, Port Gibson and Windsor Plantation, Raymond and DeGoyler’s Battery, Jackson and the old capital museum, Champion Hill, Vicksburg, Brice’s Cross Roads, and the beautiful antebellum city of Natchez. Born in Monroe, Dave is currently the Assistant Director of the Monroe County Historical Museums. His interests focus on the War of 1812, Michigan in the Civil War, and George Armstrong Custer. He has also researched over 20 of his own relatives from the Civil War. You will most definitely want to be in attendance for this special presentation. Circle that date on your calendar now.....

\* \* \* \* \*

If you weren’t in the audience for last month’s program—**Weldon Petz** presenting “*That Great Face*”—you missed a classic! Once again Weldon captivated his listeners with photographs and descriptions of Abraham Lincoln’s magnificent facial features. The MRRT thanks Weldon for another spectacular program.

**FALL FIELD TRIP:** Our trip to Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville is planned for the weekend of Saturday/Sunday, October 17-18. Guiding us around will be the premier expert on this area, historian Frank O’Reilly. We will visit the upper pontoon crossing of the Rappahannock, Chatham Manor, the Slaughter Pen Farm, Marye’s Heights, the Lee/Jackson bivouac site, Jackson’s Flank March and Catherine’s Furnace, Hazel Grove, and Jackson’s wounding site. Of special interest we will be given a Saturday night candle-light tour of Guiney Station where Jackson died. To be a part of this, you’ll want to be at this month’s meeting to **SIGN UP** for what sounds like a phenomenal trip!

The **50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE** will again be in session at 5:30 P.M. before our regular meeting.

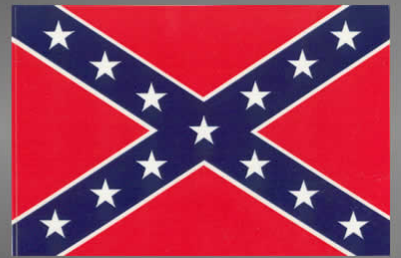
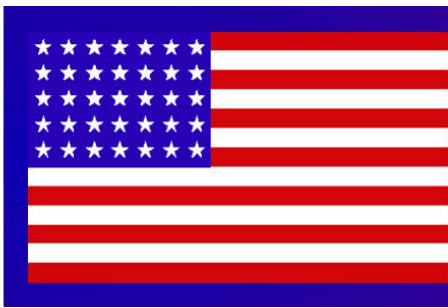
**QUIZ: All questions pertain to the State of Mississippi.....**

1. Which city was known as “Chimneyville” and why?
2. What was the significance of the home known as “The Briars” near Natchez? And, who was Constance Cary, born near Port Gibson?
3. Which Mississippi county has a disputed record of secession from the rest of the state? And, which naval commander was born in the town of Gautier?
4. Which South Carolina-born general had a home in Columbus, Mississippi where in the post-war he served as the first President of Mississippi Agricultural and Mechanical College? And, which company from the University of Mississippi served heroically at the Battle of Gettysburg?
5. What was Jefferson Davis’ last home in Mississippi called? And, what was his plantation of 800 acres named?
6. Which battle, fought on 19 September 1862, was called the “Battle of the Wrong Wind”? And, which two generals opposed one another at this battle?
7. What was the official name of the well-known “Mississippi Rifle,” carried by Jefferson Davis’ forces during the Mexican War and later by Confederates during the Civil War? And, which notorious battalion carried this weapon?
8. Which building, still standing in Corinth, served as the headquarters for both Braxton Bragg and Earl Van Dorn? And, which home, still standing in the same town, was the place that Albert Sidney Johnston’s body was taken after he was killed at the Battle of Shiloh?
9. Which Mississippi landmark was painted black after the Lincoln assassination? And, which church in the same area still has a Confederate flag draped on the pew where Jefferson Davis and his family worshipped?
10. Which Confederate general had a brother, Jeffrey, killed by a bullet through the neck at the Battle of Okolona in February of 1864? And, which Union general later had a custom-made uniform tailored for this Confederate general?

\* \* \* \* \*

Historians have often called Jefferson Davis’ plantation, Brierfield, the “*Model Plantation*.” The Davis brothers, Jefferson and the older Joseph, strove to make their adjacent plantations different from the others. Joseph established slave juries to try offenses of slaves on his plantation, a system that Jefferson would soon accept. The older and more responsible slaves held trials of accused slaves and sentenced them. Frequently the Davis brothers reduced the sentences of the slave juries or pardoned the convicted culprits. Jefferson was such a mild master that the neighboring planters said that his slaves were spoiled.

Joseph even permitted one of his slaves, Ben Montgomery, to keep a variety store on the plantation in which he sold goods to other slaves and the white family. Ben, who could read and write, was not entirely different in this regard from many of the other Blacks owned by the Davis families. The Davis plantations were perhaps exceptional in respect to having literate slaves. Contrary to the usual practice of planters, Jefferson Davis did not keep a lock on the corn crib, but allowed the slaves to help themselves to as much corn as they wished to feed their families and the chickens they could keep to supplement their regular food allowance or to sell. The paternalism of the master was also shown in providing feasts at slave funerals, weddings, Christmas, and other occasions. He also made certain that slaves were provided with ample amounts of coffee, sugar, molasses, and flour. Jefferson further solicitously cared for the old, the sick, and the handicapped slaves on his plantation. He even employed a dentist to come from Vicksburg to care for their teeth. He once sent a sick field hand, whom he described as “*a good girl in every sense of the word*,” to the celebrated Dr. Cartwright in New Orleans to be cured. In order to take proper care of his slaves in sickness Jefferson Davis even studied medicine.



Such kindly relations were established with his slaves that when Jefferson went to their quarters, slaves greeted him affectionately as he shook their hands all around. The Davis brothers hunted deer and bear with their slaves. Joseph had ten or twelve guns in his house which he gave to the slaves when master and slaves were hunting and the master spoke proudly of their marksmanship. There supposedly was not the slightest hint of a fear of insurrection in the Davis households. It was against Mississippi law for slaves to possess firearms but the Davis brothers had a cavalier attitude toward the slave laws and violated them when it suited their interests to do so.

Jefferson kept a Black overseer, Jim Pemberton, a man of wisdom and character, to tend to his 113 slaves. Varina Davis wrote of the relationship between her husband and Pemberton: *“They were devoted friends, and always observed the utmost courtesy and politeness in their intercourse, and at parting, a cigar was always presented by Mr. Davis to him.”* From the available records there is no indication that Davis ever sold a slave. It was further reported that any type of whip or flogging device was outlawed on his plantation. Consequently, none of his slaves ever ran away or revolted. When Jefferson Davis, as President of the Confederacy, learned that some of his slaves fled his plantation when Federal troops neared, he supposedly wept. Following the war Davis heard of one of his slaves, Old Bob, losing his cabin to the abuse of a carpetbagger. From his own incarceration at Fort Monroe, Davis wrote his wife: *“What a beast he must have been who turned Uncle Bob out of his house, to find where he could a shelter.....”*

#### QUIZ ANSWERS:

1. Jackson, the capital and it was nearly totally destroyed by the forces of William T. Sherman
2. Home of Varina Howell Davis and she made the first Confederate battleflag
3. Jones County and the birthplace of Admiral David Glasgow Farragut
4. Stephen Dill Lee and the “University Grays”
5. Beauvoir and Brierfield
6. Iuka and William Rosecrans v. Sterling Price
7. U.S. Rifle, Model 1841 and Rob Wheat’s “Louisiana Tigers”
8. Curlee House and the William Inge House (“Rose Cottage”)
9. Biloxi Lighthouse and Church of the Redeemer
10. Nathan Bedford Forrest and Cadwallader Washburn

\* \* \* \* \*

A last reminder for this month’s meeting—**MONDAY, MARCH 30**—as **Dave Ingall** will present *“Traveling Civil War Mississippi.”* It’s one you won’t want to miss. The meeting starts at 6:30 P.M. at the Farmington Public Library (Grand River and Farmington Road). See you there.....

Also try our website: <http://www.farmlib.org/mrrt/>.