

The MRRT mourns the loss of long-term member Joseph M. Shellhaas. Joseph, age 83, passed away February 24, 2015. He is survived by his wife Margaret (60 years of marriage), daughters Deborah and Cynthia, and son Joseph. He was a Korean War era veteran. His daughter, Cynthia, noted that Joseph looked forward to and enjoyed his time with the MRRT. Rest in Peace Joseph. For further info you can visit the funeral home's website: <http://www.legacy.com/link.asp?i=ls000174241470>



The Roundtable would like thank our long-term member, Civil war naval expert, and Alabamian in 'exile' Larry Hathcock, for his excellent three years served as President.

Taking over from Larry is **Wayne Smith**, shown here receiving the gavel. Job well done Larry! Congratulations, President Wayne!

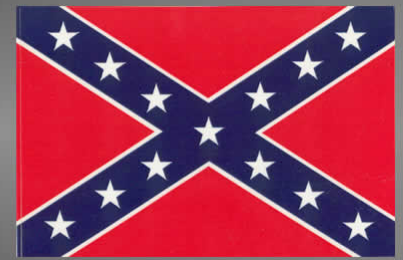
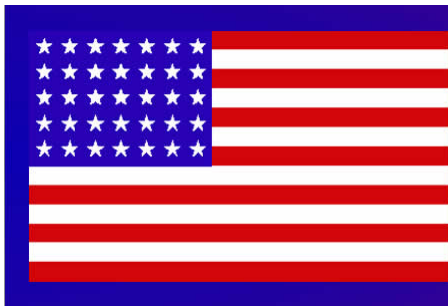
Last call (although not last opportunity) to continue your support for the Roundtable, if you have not already done so, by renewing your membership. Annual membership remains \$20 annually, or \$5 for students. Checks should be made out to **Don Kadar** and can be mailed to his home at **61895 Fairland Drive, South Lyon, MI 48178**; or simply brought to the meeting and given to Don or Jeanie Graham. Cash is always welcomed.



The Roundtable would like to thank Jim Burroughs for scheduling and conducting the February Auction. It's been many years (perhaps too many) since the last one, and as always, a fun evening and an excellent way to buy at bargain prices a book or other Civil War item, and support the Roundtable at the same time. Jim and members had fun bartering, if it can be called that, for the many items ranging from a painting, lithograph, VHS tapes (almost Civil War era in and of themselves), and of course, books. In total, the Roundtable earned \$181 for the night.



On MONDAY, March 30th, the MRRT welcomes back friend Bill Christen, who will present "Re-winding the Bobbin", a study of photographic images of the 17th and 24th Michigan Infantry. These images have been misidentified by several historians over the years. Bill and his fellow historian/collector, Dale Niesen, realized that several Civil War photographs required updated identification after helping one of the photograph owners write an article on a photograph. Bill will describe the



process that was followed to establish the correct identification of the various photographs. The photograph to the left on Page 1, from the Michigan State Archives, was incorrectly identified as being taken at Grass Lake, Michigan during the late summer of 1865. Bill will also discuss the stories of several of the soldiers in the photographs. We will all enjoy Bill's discussion on the importance of modern-day detective work on the Civil War and the people involved in the war.

Bill retired after 37 years of dedicated service to General Motors as an automotive engineer. He attended Kettering University in Flint and the Center for Creative Studies in Detroit. After retirement, he was a substitute teacher in the Warren Consolidated Schools. Bill has written a biography of actress and spy Pauline Cushman, Pauline Cushman: Spy of the Cumberland. He has spoken to our Roundtable on both Pauline Cushman and the Battle of South Mountain.

He is a long-time Civil War reenactor who has studied and collected men's clothing from the 1850-1875 period. Presently, Bills portrays civilians rather than soldiers. He and his wife, Glenna Jo, have a collection of 500 documents and a dozen diaries from Connecticut regiments belonging to a Connecticut family. Bill has also extensively researched several Civil War regiments, including the 17th Michigan.

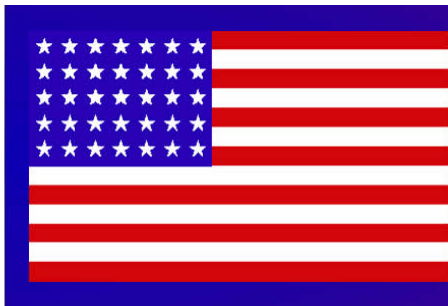


MRRT Minutes for February 23, 2015: The **Call to Order** 25 present for business meeting, with several later arrivals. The **Pledge** was dedicated to the six Littleton brothers of Toolesboro, Iowa, who all gave their lives fighting for the Union. **Secretary's Report** accepted. **Newsletter** Bob read from the NYC Dispatch and Cincinnati Cannister. **Preservation** Joe reported that the Battle of Shephardstown will be included with either Harpers Ferry or Antietam battlefield parks in the near future. **TRIP** After two run-off votes, Perryville, Kentucky will be our destination this fall. Linda, Mollie, and Jeanie are handling the arrangements and desire to have a progress report at the March meeting. **ITEMS OF INTEREST** The 5th Michigan Regimental Band has been invited to Springfield, IL for the anniversary of Lincoln's funeral. Seats on the bus are available for \$150 round trip, but accommodations in Springfield are scarce for that time. **OLD BUSINESS** Elections were held and Wayne Smith was unanimously elected President. Jeanie remains as Vice President, Mollie as Secretary, and Don as Treasurer. The group thanked Larry Hathcock for his two years as President. He replied it helped to enhance his resume, or obituary. **MONTHLY PROGRAM** We would like to thank all of the members for participating in our very successful auction.

FALL TRIP We have a fall trip! Linda has arranged for Chuck Lott and Darryl Smith to be our guides for a tour of the Perrysville, Kentucky battlefield on **October 10–11, 2015**. Additional information will be forthcoming on itinerary, dinner, and hotel at the April meeting. A sign-up sheet will be passed around at the April meeting. **Mark your calendar now for October 10–11, Perryville, Kentucky.** The trip will be great!

Quiz Questions: This month's questions and answers pertain to the 17th Michigan Volunteer Infantry:

1. What is the connection between two of the Seventeenth's officers and the hanging of the Lincoln assassination conspirators?
2. What was the regiment's nickname?
3. What was Company E's nickname?



4. What Detroit Cultural attraction did William Brearley of the Seventeenth help establish?
5. How many Medals of Honor were awarded to soldiers from the 17th Michigan?

Civil War Essentials-Railroads Union and Confederate railroads were in similar condition when the war began. Philadelphia’s and Richmond’s numerous railroad companies had no physical connections between each other in the city. Railroads were used to bring farm commerce into the city. Actual railroad use was not considered to be a way to make money.

Neither side required standard railroad gauges. Railroad builders picked their own gauge, resulting in 11 gauges in the North. Changing the gauges required only 2 days. However, it was very expensive to change the rolling stock to be compatible with the new gauge.

The North developed a superior organization to run the military railroads during the war.

The U.S. Congress in June, 1861, allowed President Lincoln to seize the Northern railroads and the telegraph to support the military effort. As a result, a military railroad commission was established. Very importantly, handling military traffic became more profitable for the railroads than civilian traffic was.

Thomas Scott, Assistant Secretary of War for the railroads, negotiated with the civilian railroads for reasonable prices or the threat of a government takeover of the railroad. Overall, civilian railroad men cooperated well with the war effort. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was the only railroad that went directly into Washington, D.C. The railroad’s President, John Garrett, had a direct line to the Secretary of War. During the war, the Baltimore & Ohio was involved in 15 military operations. (Map to right includes Baltimore & Ohio route)

Conversely, in 1863 the Confederate Congress allowed President Davis to seize the railroads and telegraph for military use. President Davis did not do that. Furthermore, no military railroad commission was established. During the war years, civilian traffic was more profitable than military traffic because the railroads knew that there was little chance of a government takeover.

The Confederates initial railroad leader, William Ash, held only the rank of major with no staff working for him. His proposed replacement, William Wadley, a railroad president, was not confirmed as a colonel by the Confederate Congress. The 3rd railroad leader, Frederick Sims, led General Longstreet’s move from Virginia to Tennessee. He was able to finally establish a railroad bureau.

The North’s railroads were more usable for a large-scale war.

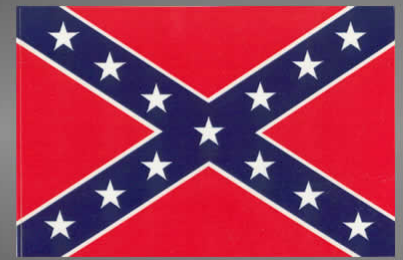
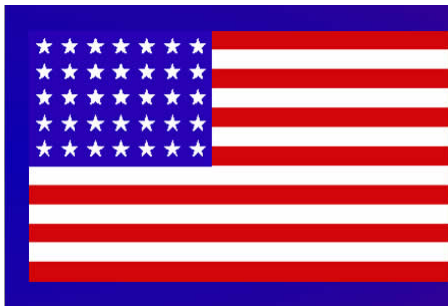
The North had four railroads that went across the Appalachians to inter-connect war theaters while the South had none. Also, the North added 5,000 miles of railroads during the war while the South added almost none.

Most Southern railroads were feeder lines to water transportation. There were over 100 railroad companies with the average railroad less than 90 miles long.



Civil War Sesquicentennial (March 1865): **2 Mar:** Robert E. Lee sends a note to Grant suggesting they meet to try to reach “*a satisfactory adjustment of the present unhappy difficulties.*” In the Shenandoah Valley, Custer routes CSA Jubal Early in the Battle of Waynesborough, marking the last campaign of this hotly contested theater. **3 Mar:** Grant receives Lincoln’s reply on Lee’s request. In short, Lincoln tells Grant short of surrender, he is not to address political questions. **4 Mar:** Lincoln is inaugurated for his second term . . . “*With malice toward none; with charity toward all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation’s wounds . . . to do all which may achieve a just, and lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.*” **8 Mar:** CSA Braxton Bragg attacks troops commanded by Gen





Jacob Cox outside of Kinston, NC. The goal is to prevent Cox from linking-up with Sherman's army that's on the move towards Goldsboro. Braxton will ultimately fail in this effort. **9 Mar:** CSA Wade Hampton and Joseph Wheeler attack Gen Judson Kilpatrick at Solemn Grove and Monroe's Cross Roads. The Federals are surprised and give way initially but the veteran Yankees stiffen and repulse the Confederates. **13 Mar:** The Confederate Congress sends Jefferson Davis a bill authorizing the arming of black slaves. He signs it but by now it's far too late to impact the war effort. **16 Mar:** On Sherman's departure from Fayetteville, NC, Slocum leading Sherman's left wing is attacked by CSA Hardee at the Battle of Averasborough. Both sides loose approximately 700 men; troops the Confederates can't replace. **19 Mar:** Slocum advancing on Bentonville, NC, is again attacked, this time the cavalry under CSA Wade Hampton is augmented by Joseph Johnston sending into the fray an additional 20,000 troops. Slocum holds but both sides entrench while



Sherman's other wings begin a march to his aid. **21 Mar:** At Bentonville, Sherman attempts to block and defeat in detail the 20,000 troops under Johnston. Johnston detects Sherman's plans and avoids being trapped but the general engagements fought over the 3 days results in Federal casualties of over 1,600 men but the Confederates losses are 2,600. This day represents the last major attempt by the Confederates to block Sherman's advance. **23 Mar:** Lincoln, wife and son depart Washington for City Point. On this day, the forces of Sherman reach Goldsboro, NC. **25 Mar:** At the Petersburg siege, CSA John Gordon attacks Fort Steedman. Although initially a success, the Federals counterattack and recover the lost fort and ground. Federal casualties are 1,150 and Confederates 4,000. **26 Mar:** Robert E. Lee advises Davis that he doubts Confederate forces can prevent Grant and Sherman's forces from

linking-up, making it advisable for the Army of Northern Virginia to move. On this day, Sheridan rejoins Grant. **27 Mar:** At City Point, Lincoln confers with Grant, Sherman and Porter. During these talks, Lincoln discusses his plans of reconstruction. **29 Mar:** The noose in Petersburg tightens as Grant sends Sheridan to cut off the Southside Railroad, the last rail line supplying the rebels, and shut the door on a Confederate escape avenue. Sheridan and infantry clash with CSA Pickett and Fitzhugh Lee at the crossing of Quaker and Boynton Roads. Rains hamper movements and continue to do so the following day. **31 Mar:** At Petersburg the rain ends and Sheridan and Warren attack the Confederate positions around White Oak Road and Dinwiddie Court House. Outnumbered almost 5 to 1, the Confederates initially succeed but as evening arrives, Pickett fearing his position and weak strength falls back to Five Forks. The end is soon near for the Army of Northern Virginia. For info on Michigan sesquicentennial events, visit seekingmichigan.org/civil-war.

Quiz Answers:

1. Christian Rath and Richard Watts witnessed the execution.
2. The Stonewall Regiment
3. The Singing Company
4. The Detroit Institute of Arts
5. Nine Medals of Honor were awarded to the 17th – Andrew Kelley, Irwin Shepard, Charles Thompson, Joseph Brandle, Frederick Alber, Frederic Swift, Daniel McFall, William Withington, and James Christaincy.

This should be a great meeting, with Bill Christen discussing his research on Civil War photographs at the Farmington Community Library. The meeting will begin at 6:30 pm. Also, check-out our website at <http://history.farmlib.org/mrrt/>.