

When Abraham Lincoln took the oath of office as President on March 4, 1861, the nation was on the verge of a momentous civil war. In four months Lincoln went from being, what one historian described as, “a country lawyer with a fund of charming rural tales to the status of a dictator.” With the firing on Fort Sumter, Lincoln called an emergency meeting of his cabinet. The Constitution specifies that only Congress can declare war, but Congress was not in session, and could not assemble quickly. Lincoln would have to act immediately, without waiting for congressional approval.

During the next few days, Lincoln proceeded with growing confidence concerning his presidential powers. On Saturday, April 20, he personally authorized a raid on all important telegraph offices in the North. The marshals seized and, in time, scanned every wire sent during the previous year. The next day the administration, meeting secretly in the Navy Department, away from inquisitive eyes, removed vast funds from the Treasury. Then with little historical precedent, Lincoln’s government offered certain New York merchants carte blanche to purchase items for the federal government. Other questions remained pertaining to Lincoln’s decisions: Was the blockade he placed around the Confederacy legal? Could Lincoln gather a volunteer army and send it into the Confederacy without the consent of Congress? Could he arrest suspicious civilians and hold them indefinitely?

Lincoln would later attempt to justify such actions, saying he was only fulfilling his constitutional duty to suppress insurrection, and hoped, or assumed, that Congress, when it met, would sanction his decisions. His July message to Congress would include this sentence: “*These measures, whether strictly legal or not, were ventured upon under what appeared to be a popular demand and a public necessity, trusting then, as now, that Congress would readily ratify them.*” The President was saying that he had been forced to act, and act alone, because Congress was not in session and “*existing exigencies*” and “*popular demand*” insisted on it. In August Congress voted to legalize all actions Lincoln had taken since April, but later, federal courts would question some of his decisions.

On **MONDAY, APRIL 26**, the Michigan Regimental will welcome back as our guest speaker, **Dr. John Todd**, who will present “*Lincoln and the Constitution.*” Dr. Todd, a professor at Rochester College, has spoken to our group in the past, but it has been many years since he graced us with his presence. He is currently teaching business law but has retained a great interest in the legalities of the Civil War. This presentation will tackle a controversial subject that has been debated for well over a century—did President Lincoln deserve the criticism he sometimes receives for his handling of the war effort and the violation of citizens’ rights. We welcome John back and look forward to a most provocative program.

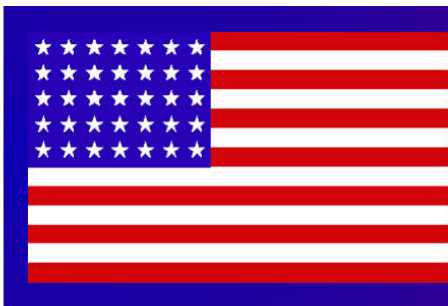
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The MRRT wishes to thank last month’s speaker, **George Gouth**, for his fine program, “*Those Spencers Who Won the War: Christopher M. Spencer and His Wonderful Repeating Rifle.*” George’s presentation was highly informative and the displays of weaponry and accessories made the talk entertaining and interesting.

The **FALL FIELD TRIP** to Wilderness/Spotsylvania is scheduled for the weekend of Saturday/Sunday, October 16-17. Once again we will be led around by the incomparable Frank O’Reilly. Last month thirty-six people signed up for the trip so there’s still plenty of room on the bus. The sign-up sheet will be passed around again at this month’s meeting along with the motel information for your stay. [Remember we will not have a regular meeting in the month of May.]

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Preservation Chairman Joe Epstein has announced that the Round Table is invited to visit the flag we have adopted in Lansing on Sunday, June 27. The address of the building is 720 W. Kalamazoo. The showing of the many flags in the Capital will be at 1:00 P.M.



The **50th ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE** will again be in session at 5:30 P.M. before the regular meeting commences at 6:30. **TICKETS** for the dinner and all-day affair [four guest speakers, a dinner, authentic Civil War displays, snacks during the day, door prizes, a book sale, and much more] on **SATURDAY, MAY 15** can be purchased from Ron Cleveland for a check of merely \$35. You can mail him a check (made out to Jerry Maxwell) or simply bring a check to this month's meeting. Please remember that tickets cannot be purchased at the door! Therefore, this will be the last MRRT meeting before the celebration. Please bring your checks to this meeting so we can guarantee a successful event. Non-MRRT folks are also welcome!

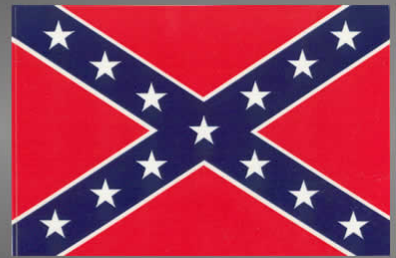
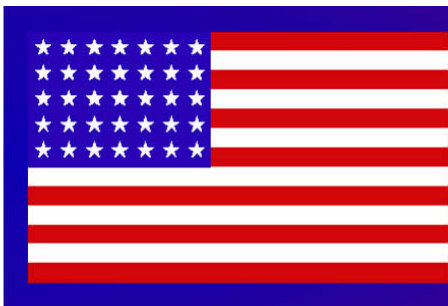
QUIZ: The Constitution and the Civil War.....

1. How did the Confederate Constitution differ from the U.S. Constitution in regards to the Presidential term of office?
2. Which of these is NOT true of the Confederate Constitution? A) contained a presidential line-item veto B) overseas slave trade was outlawed C) President must be at least 30 years old D) Congress could not abridge freedom of speech or press
3. Which of these majority opinions is NOT true of the Dred Scott Decision of 1857? A) Dred Scott was declared freed B) The Missouri Compromise 36 30' was unconstitutional C) Blacks are not citizens and cannot sue in a Federal Court D) The Constitution was written for White people only
4. Which Supreme Court Chief Justice swore Abraham Lincoln in as President on March 4, 1861? And, which Chief Justice swore him in exactly four years later?
5. In 1861, Lincoln authorized the arrest of a Baltimore secessionist who was a threat to end Maryland's allegiance to the Union. Who was this man and which right did he claim was being violated?
6. What did the Supreme Court decide in the *Prize Cases of 1863*?
7. Which noted Copperhead did Lincoln have "deported" to the Confederacy, and how did this man die in 1871?
8. Following the Civil War, the U.S. demanded that Great Britain owed us money for the destruction of our ships during the war. What was this called and what did an International Tribunal determine?
9. In late 1861, which two Confederate emissaries were seized from the British steamer *Trent*? And, how was war with England avoided?
10. Which battle caused the formation of the Joint Committee of the Conduct of the War? And, which 3 Radical Republicans led the group?

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At the outbreak of the Civil War the 10-square mile District of Columbia was pinned against the Potomac River and engulfed on all other sides by the slave state of Maryland. If Maryland seceded from the Union, strangely Washington D.C. would be surrounded by a Confederate state. Northerners had little reason to think that Maryland would stay in the Union. In the presidential election of 1860, Abraham Lincoln received fewer than 3,000 of the 92,000 votes cast in the state; the city of Baltimore, where rail lines from the north and west connected with the single line to Washington, gave Lincoln just a little more than 1,000 of its 31,000 votes. Furthermore, Baltimore had long been infamous for an ugly tendency toward violence, as evidenced by its nickname "*Mobtown*." By the 1850's the city's reputation reached its nadir as gangs of thugs wandered the streets and literally tore control away from the authorities.

Federal soldiers now were ordered to Washington D.C. in order to protect the capital city, and the natural route was via the railroad through Baltimore. One of the first regiments to be brought through "*Mobtown*" was the 6th Massachusetts Infantry, commanded by 32-year-old Colonel Edward F. Jones. The 6th Massachusetts boarded a train for New York on April 17 and arrived the next day to a tumultuous reception. The men marched down Broadway, cheered by thousands of onlookers, then were treated to a lavish meal at the Astor House. That night they continued their journey via Philadelphia,



intent upon completing the trip to Washington on the morrow. In the early hours of Friday, April 19, Col. Jones loaded his regiment on 10 coaches in the Philadelphia rail yards. Learning that the Baltimoreans planned to physically resist their passage, Jones ordered his men to load their Springfields. Most of the Massachusetts volunteers had been store clerks and farmers only two days earlier. Many had never fired a rifle.

The train reached Baltimore's President Street station before noon. At this station passengers heading further south had to transfer to another station a mile-and-a-half away. Horses would pull their railroad cars over a track through the city to the Camden Street station, where the Baltimore & Ohio line to Washington commenced. The first seven cars arrived at the Camden Street station without mishap, but the last three cars were slowed by a crowd of perhaps 8,000. As the horse-drawn cars passed through an angry mob, one volunteer remembered the faces outside as "*wild, terrible, and venomous.*" Suddenly, a shot rang out and a shout emerged from the middle of the car. A private held up his hand. Blood ran down his arm. His thumb had been shot off. An officer ordered the men to "*Fire at will!*" Soon another officer ordered the men to disembark from the cars in order to march the remaining blocks to the station. Along the way the mob shouted insults, including the term "*white niggers.*" People in the surrounding buildings began pelting the soldiers with lumps of coal, dishes, and jars. Some of the people in the mob started firing pistols, one bullet hitting a soldier in the thigh, another in the nape of the neck. One civilian, James "*Mickey*" Clark, went berserk screaming at an officer, hitting him, and flinging a soggy chaw of tobacco in his face. The officer shot the crazed Clark in the eye.

The first soldier to die was 17-year-old Private Luther C. Ladd who was struck in the head by a heavy object, crumpling him on the ground. Someone then snatched his gun and shot him in the leg. Sympathetic Unionists picked him up and carried him to an infirmary. People there tried without success to stop the bleeding. When his body was returned to Boston, a newspaperman stated, "*His face was somewhat swollen, and gave much evidence of rough usage.*" Three other members of the 6th were killed by the mob; another wounded soldier lingered for eight days before dying. Before escaping the regiment suffered not only these 5 dead, but another 50 badly wounded. Civilian losses remain fuzzy. Historians place the number at a dozen killed and perhaps 100 wounded. When the train finally pulled into the capital at 5:00 P.M., Lincoln was there to shake Colonel Jones' hand. "*Thank God you have come,*" remarked the President.

QUIZ ANSWERS:

1. One 6-year term with no re-election as compared to unlimited terms of four years
2. C) The President must be at least 30 years of age. [He had to be at least 35.]
3. A) Dred Scott was declared free. [Dred Scott was ultimately freed by his owner, worked in a St. Louis hotel as a janitor, and died of tuberculosis on September 17, 1858.]
4. Roger Brooke Taney and Salmon P. Chase
5. John Merryman [*Ex Parte Merryman Case*] and the right to habeas corpus
6. That Lincoln's authorization of the naval blockade around the Confederacy was legal.
7. Clement L. Vallandigham and accidentally shot himself while showing an "unloaded" pistol in an Lebanon, Ohio courtroom
8. "*Alabama*" Claims and that Great Britain must pay the United States \$15,500,000.
9. James M. Mason and John Slidell/and Lincoln ordered the two Confederate emissaries released
10. Ball's Bluff and Benjamin Wade of Ohio, Zachariah Chandler of Michigan, Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania

Make certain you attend this month's fourth meeting of our Golden Anniversary Year—**MONDAY, APRIL 26**. You'll be delighted to hear **Dr. John Todd** discuss the topic "*Lincoln and the Constitution.*" As always, we will start the meeting at 6:30 P.M. at the Farmington Public Library (Grand River and Farmington Road). Hope to see you there. Also try our website: <http://www.farmlib.org/mrrt/>.