



MEMBER RENEWAL

The MRRT celebrates its 58th year in 2018 – and this month is a great time to show your support by renewing your membership! (Or become a new member!). Membership remains \$20 a year – or \$5 for students. Checks should be made out to Treasurer **Jeanie Graham** (the bank will NOT accept 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. **Several members have not paid their dues for 2018!**

The Roundtable has voted to visit Chattanooga & Chickamauga this fall! The trip will be the weekend of November 3-4. Chattanooga’s average temperature then is in the 60’s. Our tour guide will be Rick Manion, who used to be the website manager/battlefield historian at the River Raison battlefield in Monroe. Now, he teaches history at several colleges in the Chattanooga area. The planned itinerary is Lookout Mountain and Chickamauga on Saturday, November 3rd, and Chattanooga on Sunday, November 4th. Further details will be coming.

Please visit our website at <http://www.farmlib.org/mrrt>

Our Monday, April 30, 2018 meeting begins at 6:30 pm in the basement of the Farmington Library. Our long-time friend Bill Grandstaff will share with us the mostly forgotten story of “The Other Battlefield – Women in the Civil War”. There are many roles and untold stories of women during the war. The wife left at home had to maintain the home, the farm, care for the children, or the family business. Some women worked in the factories of the day with often lethal results. Others worked in the world’s oldest profession, which produced some unexpected results. **Bill will try to answer the question, “Why did the newspapers by-pass stories of the heroic women at home?”**

Bill has spoken to our group several times on interesting topics. **He started the Isreal Richardson Roundtable in Rochester** and presently serves as President and newsletter writer. He helps Santa during the Christmas season.



The Roundtable thanks member Peter Gaudet and his wife, Veronica for their unique and very interesting presentation on “Gettysburg Past and Present: A View through the Lens.” Peter used his professional photography background to compare the 1863 and 2000’s photographs of well-known Gettysburg sites. **Veronica showed the 1863 photograph on the screen, and then overlapped it with today’s view of the particular site. She did a great job! Peter and Veronica went on their first date at the Gettysburg battlefield!**

The Civil War was the first war to be photographed. **Approximately 85% of the 1,000,000 photographs taken during the war were done in a studio.** Very few combat photographs were taken because the photographic process was too slow. Exposure time was 5 to 15 seconds, a significant improvement over prior processes.



The wet plate process was used to take photographs. Developing an image involved significant work. A meticulously cleaned glass plate with sanded edges was needed to take the picture. The image was posed, and then the exposure time was estimated before taking the picture. Processing the wet plate photograph required several chemicals and dark room conditions.

Wet plate processing was a significant improved over existing processes. The images were better with a faster exposure. The glass was relatively inexpensive. **Several conditions**



had to be overcome on the battlefield. The photographic process had to be completed before drying. Silver build-up in the camera was an issue. There was a limited chemical supply on the battlefield.

Matthew Brady was the most well-known photographer during the Civil War. He was considered the “father of photo journalism”. Mathew’s poor eyesight resulted in Alexander Gardner managing his Washington studio. During the war 20 field photographers were employed by Matthew Brady.

After the Battle of Antietam, Alexander Gardner showed the terrible reality of war with the “Dead of Antietam” exhibit in New York. The photos were captioned “Photograph by Brady”. Large crowds visited the exhibit.

Alexander Gardner soon started his own photographic studio. He shot photographs at Gettysburg on July 5th and 6th. As a result, all photos of bodies on the battlefield were done by Gardner. There were 97 images of dead soldiers on the battlefield. All of his photos have been digitally scanned at the Library of Congress.

Matthew Brady and his staff arrived two weeks later after the bodies had been buried. His photos were of the battlefield landscape.

Peter worked on his photographic project at Gettysburg for 10 years! He went through a very painstaking process to recreate where the 1863 photograph was taken and then record today’s image. Most images were taken during the fall.

Peter then took the Roundtable on a Gettysburg tour! Some of the sites studied included:

- The Lutheran Seminary
- General Lee’s Headquarters
- The three captured Confederate soldiers on the Chambersburg Pike
- Culp’s Hill – The breastworks are mostly gone.
- Little Round Top – The 1863 photos showed battlefield debris, including shoes.
- Devil’s Den – Alexander Gardner took the sharpshooter image. Several dead soldiers were “posed”.
- Rose and Trostle Farms

Peter said that Gettysburg: A Journey in Time by William A. Frassanito is the “Bible” of Civil War photographs.

MRRT Minutes for March 26, 2018: Call to Order 6:40 pm, about 40 present **Pledge** Dedicated to the newly found U.S.S. Juneau, carrying the remains of 687 sailors, including the five Sullivan brothers. **Introduction of Guests and New Members** Guests Don Neuman, Doug Wells, and Bob Crumley **Treasurer’s Report** Jeanie received a letter from the Friends of Shiloh, who planted 60 peach trees in the Peach Orchard with the money from our donation. **Secretary’s Report** Accepted **Preservation** Carlene Maxwell asked for a donation to assist in the restoration of a Civil War monument in Adrian, MI, since Jerry went to Adrian College. Jim moved and it was accepted that we spend \$200 in Jerry’s memory. Ken Baumann suggested that instead of donating to a scholarship fund, we should consider donating to a battlefield preservation fund or to someplace that Jerry would appreciate. Joe Epstein suggested that we donate to the demolition of modern structures on historic Civil War property. **Newsletters** Bob read from the Cleveland Charger, Cincinnati Canister, and the NYC Dispatch **Website** No change **Trip Report** Chickamauga/Chattanooga won the final vote by a large margin **Program** None **Items of Interest** David Stoddard recently visited the Olustee Battlefield in Florida and said that it is well done. **New Business** None **Old Business** None

Quiz Questions: This month’s questions and answers pertain to Women in the Civil War.

1. Which professions became available for Southern women during the Civil War?
2. How did Julia Ward Howe create the Union anthem *Battle Hymn of the Republic*?
3. What was author’s Louise May Alcott’s contribution to the Union war effort?
4. Who was the first woman to win the Medal of Honor?



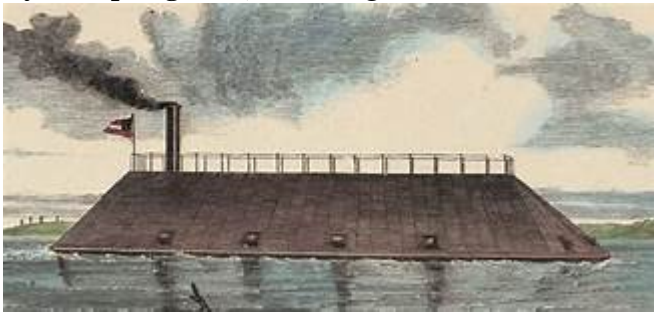
5. What was Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell's role in the war?

Civil War Essentials - Can a tiger (or a sea raider) change its stripes?

The most successful operations conducted by the small Confederate navy were the attacks on Union merchant shipping on the high seas. Raiders like the *CSS Alabama* and *CSS Florida* destroyed a large number of Union vessels, drove insurance rates up and resulted in the shifting of many Northern ships' registry from U.S. to British or other European flags to protect them. The economic impact was enormous.

One of the less well known raiders was the *CSS Georgia*. Built in the U.K. like the others, she was an iron-hulled 212 foot long, 600 ton screw steamer. She was capable of 14 knots. In the familiar pattern used by Confederate warships built in Britain, she left British waters as an unarmed merchant ship, but rendezvoused with another ship, the *Alar*, (which had sailed from a different British port) off the coast of France and took onboard guns and munitions and began her assault on Northern shipping. **The *Georgia* roamed the Atlantic from April 1863 to May 1864 taking eight or nine prizes.** While waiting in vain to meet another Confederate ship along the coast of Morocco, her shore party was fired on by Moorish troops. In response, the *Georgia* shelled the Moors. This is the only recorded action by a Confederate ship against a foreign adversary.

By late spring 1864, the *Georgia's* hull had become so fouled with marine growth that it needed an overhaul (early



iron hulled ships had a bigger problem with this than wooden ships with copper sheathed hulls). The captain sailed back into the port of Liverpool. Once there, it became obvious that the Union naval presence around the British Isles was now too strong to risk departing Liverpool for another raiding foray. **The Confederate agent in Britain, James Bulloch, then offered the vessel for public sale to recover some of its cost. Edward Bates, a professional in the shipping business, agreed to buy it provided the armament was removed.** He knew of the

ship's history but was assured that British Customs would have no objection to its being reregistered as a merchant vessel.

The converted ship sailed for Portugal under a British flag, but was stopped and seized by the *USS Niagara* in August 1864 on the basis that it was a former Confederate naval vessel which had engaged in attacks on U.S. shipping. It was taken to Boston where Bates filed a claim against the U.S. to recover his ship. **The District Court trial in September 1866 upheld the seizure.** The court recognized however that Bates himself was an innocent buyer and recommended that he apply to the British government for compensation. Instead, **Bates decided to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.**

The case came before the Court in early 1869. Bates' attorneys argued that the main precedent cited by the District court was inapplicable because the vessel seized in that case was still armed and manned by the enemy's crew while the *Georgia* was not. The U. S. Attorney General argued that accepted international law ruled that the sale of any type of enemy ship of war which had fled for refuge to a neutral port was illegal and the sale therefore invalid. **The Court ruled in favor of the U. S. It found that Bates should have contacted higher levels of British government before the sale.** If he had, he would have learned that Charles F. Adams, U.S. Minister to Britain, and British Foreign Secretary Lord Russell had had communications agreeing on the applicability of the case cited by the District Court Judge to all similar circumstances including those of the *Georgia*.

So the tiger couldn't change its stripes. Bates' loss was the *Niagara* crews' gain as the validity of the capture meant they would finally receive their prize money! The *Georgia* itself served as a true merchant ship until 1875 when it was wrecked off the coast of Maine.

**Quiz Answers:**

1. Southern white women began working as nurses, teachers, and in factories because the men were gone.
2. Julia awoke from a deep dream and began writing the famous lyrics. She sold the poem for five dollars.
3. Louisa's book, Hospital Sketches, described her experiences as a nurse and encouraged others to volunteer.
4. Mary E. Walker, an assistant surgeon in General Sherman's army.
5. Dr. Blackwell, the first woman to earn a medical degree, played a major role in the creation of the U.S. Sanitary Commission.

Civil War Essentials – Lieutenant Lemuel Crocker (1829-1885) of the 118th Pennsylvania Volunteers Lemuel Crocker enrolled as a First Lieutenant with the 118th Pennsylvania Infantry on August 16, 1862. One month later, his regiment was involved in the disaster at Shepherdstown, Virginia (now West Virginia) on September 21st, shortly after the Battle of Antietam.

On September 20th a couple thousand Federal soldiers waded across the Potomac River at Shepherdstown on a routine reconnaissance. The 118th Pennsylvania, a new regiment, suffered 37% casualties and nearly 75% of all Union casualties in the ensuing defeat. Pickets along the river bank saw their dead comrades across the river. Suddenly, on September 21st the pickets saw Lieutenant Lemuel Crocker walking across the mill dam bridging the two shores of the Potomac. "He (Lemuel) looked the very image of the daring soldier he was" wrote one of his comrades. The Battle of Shepherdstown was his first Civil War battle.



Crocker had asked his brigade commander, James Barnes, for permission to cross the river and care for the Federal dead and wounded. Barnes referred the request to General Fitz John Porter, who quickly turned it down. Crocker then proceeded to clip on his belt, dressed in his finest, and began his self-appointed mission.

First, Crocker dragged the bodies of three officers and a badly wounded private to the river. Then he carried each one over the river to friendly soil. A Porter staff officer threatened to "order a battery to shell him out" Lieutenant Crocker replied, "Shell and be damned" and then continued his work.

A Confederate officer found and asked Crocker what he was doing when he returned to the Virginia side. After the Lieutenant explained his humanitarian mission, the Confederate asked him how long he had been in the Federal Army. "Twenty days", replied Crocker. The Confederate said, "I thought so". The Confederate then showed him where a boat was and promised that no one would bother him.

Lieutenant Crocker had to face General Porter after the successful completion of his humanitarian tasks. Porter scolded him then let him go after taking into account

Crocker's "inexperience, unquestioned courage, and evident good intentions".

One Pennsylvania soldier wrote, "The daring of this man Crocker is beyond all precedent".

Crocker resigned his commission on February 26, 1864 after fighting at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg to care of his very ill wife. He served as the superintendent of the Buffalo, NY stock yards and worked in the fertilizer and brewing businesses. He died of a stroke in Buffalo on March 27, 1885.