

SPECIAL NOTICE: This month's meeting will be held on **TUESDAY, MAY 25TH**

Ask a Civil War buff about the Vicksburg Campaign, and invariably, the story that comes forth starts and ends with Union General Ulysses S. Grant. And rightly so, for it was Grant who maneuvered seemingly at will through the interior of the state of Mississippi, defeated Confederate General John C. Pemberton at the battles of Champion Hill and Big Black Bridge, forced Pemberton into a siege, held off the army of relief of General Joseph E. Johnston, and finally forced Pemberton's surrender on July 4, 1863.

But what of the Confederate command effort? The relationship between Pemberton and Johnston, while civil during the campaign, turned bitter and acrimonious after the surrender of Vicksburg, and carried into their post-war writings. Johnston fueled the controversy with the publication of his memoirs in 1874, in which he placed all blame for the loss of Vicksburg on Pemberton and Confederate President Jefferson F. Davis.

Pemberton, the native Northerner who married a Virginia girl and cast his lot with the Confederacy, was trying to live out his post-war years as a quiet farmer in Virginia. Johnston's memoirs, however, spurred Pemberton to attempt a response to Johnston—an effort that historians knew was started, but never pushed forward to any great extent. Since 1874, the primary story of the Confederate high command at Vicksburg has been the story told by Joe Johnston.

Pemberton's response, however, was written, and nearly finished before his death in 1881. His manuscript turned up several years ago at a dealer in Cincinnati, Ohio. Subsequently edited and published by Villa Hills, Kentucky resident David Smith, this month's talk looks at the controversy between these two men, and discusses the arguments of Johnston's, and Pemberton's subsequent response.

In the end, no matter the reasons, Pemberton surrendered to Grant on July 4, 1863. But perhaps, in the detailing of the reasons for Southern defeat as told by Pemberton, our basic understanding of the Confederate command may be brought into balance.

This month Dave Smith will present “*They Didn't Like Each Other Much: Joseph E. Johnston and John C. Pemberton at Vicksburg.*” Dave is a two-time past president of the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table, and currently serves as program chairman, and webmaster for the Round Table Web site. He has spoken extensively throughout the Midwest on a wide range of Civil War topics, at Round Tables ranging from Illinois to Alabama to Virginia.

So mark your calendar now and remember the unusual evening for our meeting—**TUESDAY, MAY 25TH**.

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Last month it was the MRRT's pleasure to welcome **Corporal Martin W. Stafford** of Niles from the 2nd Michigan Volunteer Infantry in a program entitled, “*Hard Bread and Coffee.*” Corporal Stafford detailed his experiences as a common soldier with his views on politics, battle, and the life of a common soldier. Of course, the role of Martin Stafford was performed by Bob Myers whose lively and unique performance entertained us all. An excellent evening!

FALL FIELD TRIP: As of last month, we have a full bus of 46 signed-up volunteers. Most have paid their \$45 deposit for the bus. If you have not done so, please bring your check to this month's meeting. Make the check out to Jerry Maxwell or Carroll Tietz (but give it to Jerry).

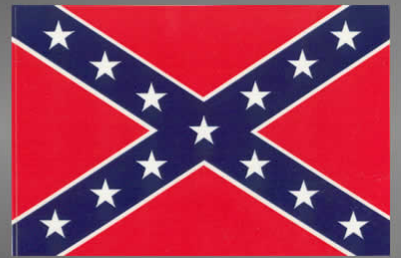


QUIZ: Generals (and others) who “Didn’t Like Each Other Much”

1. Which general did Jeb Stuart have transferred, calling him “by far the most troublesome man I have to deal with”? This man had earlier courted Stuart’s future wife. And, which outpost general developed a dislike for Stuart which, according to a contemporary, “ripened afterwards into as genuine a hatred as I ever remember to have seen in my life”?
2. On September 6, 1863, a Confederate general shot and killed a fellow Confederate general in a duel with “pistols at 10 paces” after one accused the other of supposed “cowardice.” Name these two.
3. Which Michigan general said of John Pope, “It can be said that he had not a friend in his command from the smallest drummer boy to the highest general officer”? And, which Federal general said, “I don’t care for John Pope one pinch of owl dung”?
4. What incident supposedly originated the nasty feud between Joe Johnston and Jefferson Davis? And, which Virginia general said of Jeff Davis, “There is a contamination in his touch....He is not a cheap Judas. I do not think he would have sold the Saviour for thirty shillings, but for the successorship of Pontius Pilate he would have betrayed Christ and the Apostles and the whole Christian Church”?
5. Which Confederate general killed at Fredericksburg once said of Robert E. Lee: “Lee is haughty and boorish and supercilious in his bearing....he hates me and sneers whenever my name is mentioned”? And, which Confederate general, who headed Lee’s artillery, was Confederate Ham Chamberlayne describing when he said: “[He] is Lee’s weakness. He is like an elephant, we have him and we don’t know what on earth to do with him, and it costs a devil of a sight to feed him. He is an absurd humbug”?
6. To which Confederate general was Tom Rosser referring when he wrote: “I am done with him....He has been as false to me as he has ever been to his country and his *wife*”? And, which cantankerous Confederate general suggested that Rosser, like Judas Iscariot, consider hanging himself, and labeled him “somewhat notorious,” a “consummate ass,” and a “falsifier”?
7. Which Union general did Phil Sheridan have removed from command at Five Forks, stating: “[He] did not exert himself....as rapidly as he might have done, and his manner gave me the impression that he wished the sun to go down before dispositions for the attack could be completed”? And, who did U.S. Grant severely chastise for bringing his troops late to Shiloh on the first day of battle?
8. This future Confederate general was expelled from West Point for breaking a mess-hall plate over the head of another future Confederate general. Name him and his mess-plate victim.
9. Of whom did Braxton Bragg say: “This man is ignorant....He is nothing more than a good raider”? And, which general said to Bragg, “I have stood your meanness as long as I intend to. You have played the part of a damned scoundrel....if you ever again try to interfere with me or cross my path it will be at the peril of your life”?
10. Which Illinois-born Federal cavalry “boy general” did George Custer remark: “[He] proved himself an imbecile and nearly ruined the corps by his blunders”? And, which former Union officer said when viewing Custer’s dead body at the Little Big Horn: “There he is, God damn him! He’ll never fight any more....I am only too proud to say I hated him”?

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In May of 1840, 25-year-old John C. Pemberton was transferred from Fort Wayne in Detroit to Fort Mackinac in Michigan’s frontier region. An erudite Philadelphian, Pemberton despised the move to a “*God-forsaken outpost*” among “*nothing but Indians and half breeds.*” It was true, he noted in a letter to his mother, that Mackinac Island was said to be “*one of the most beautiful places in the country, but, what is that unless some pretty girl is to enjoy it with you.*” Handsome young John Clifford Pemberton never seems to have had much cause for concern when it came to feminine



companionship. Upon arrival at his new post, he wrote his brother: *“I rather despised Detroit when stationed there, but in comparison with this place, it stands forth in bold relief.”*

Lieutenant Pemberton later wrote his brother that, *“All small places are full of scandals, hot beds that find plenty of gardeners.”* And soon Pemberton was involved in *“a rumpus”* with one of the women of the island. He admitted to his brother, *“I swear I love her dearly,”* but confessed of one difficulty—*“she is married.”* After breaking off this relationship, Pemberton again took up with a married woman. He advised his brother, *“It can never do harm to have a girl suppose you are in love with her, even though she is—or is about to be married—they all love it.”*

Possibly his hottest romance occurred with the beautiful Sophia Biddle, the daughter of Edward Biddle, a prominent resident of Mackinac Island, and his wife, Agathe, who was either wholly or partly of Indian descent. Sophia was described by a contemporary as *“a beautiful young lady with raven tresses and a fair complexion,”* and a belle of Detroit society. We are told that Pemberton fell madly in love with Sophia and repeatedly asked her to marry him. Each time, however, Sophia told him, *“You must first see my mother.”* Pemberton finally went to the Biddle residence to ask the mother for her daughter’s hand. When the door opened, Pemberton saw a woman who was dressed like an Indian. According to one version of the oft-told tale, Sophia was standing beside her mother, and Pemberton turned to her and exclaimed: *“What, is this your mother!”* Shocked at the thought that he had nearly married a *“half-breed,”* the bigoted Pemberton turned on his heel and left without another word.

In mid-summer 1841, Pemberton was transferred to Fort Brady at Sault Ste. Marie. The following year he was sent to Virginia where he met and married Martha Thompson. Back on Mackinac Island Sophia died of tuberculosis in 1848. Upon her gravestone is carved a single rose. Legend has it that some years after Sophia’s death Pemberton returned to the island and visited her grave and that it was he who had the rose chiseled on the tombstone.

QUIZ ANSWERS:

1. Beverly Robertson and William E. “Grumble” Jones
2. John Sappington Marmaduke killed Lucius Marsh Walker
3. Alpheus S. Williams and Samuel Sturgis
4. A bloody fistfight over a girl at West Point in the 1820’s and Winfield Scott
5. Thomas R.R. Cobb and William N. Pendleton
6. Jeb Stuart and Jubal Early
7. Gouverneur K. Warren and Lew Wallace
8. Lewis A. Armistead and Jubal Early
9. Nathan Bedford Forrest and Nathan Bedford Forrest
10. James Harrison Wilson and Frederick W. Benteen

Don’t forget to circle the date: **TUESDAY, MAY 25TH** for **Dave Smith’s** presentation—*“They Didn’t Like Each Other Much: Joseph E. Johnston and John C. Pemberton at Vicksburg.”* This should be an exceptional talk. The meeting at the Farmington Public Library (Grand River and Farmington Road) begins at 6:30 P.M. Show up early and we’ll see you there. Also try our website: <http://www.farmlib.org/mrrt/>.