

Our meeting comes one week early this month so mark your calendar to attend **MONDAY, May 19**, to hear **Joseph Obidzinski speak on the often-neglected “Second Battle of Fredericksburg – May 3, 1863”**. This battle was fought on much of the same ground as the First Battle of Fredericksburg. Although this Second Battle of Fredericksburg was fought twelve miles from the inferno at Chancellorsville, this “sideshow” played a crucial role in the outcome of that battle.

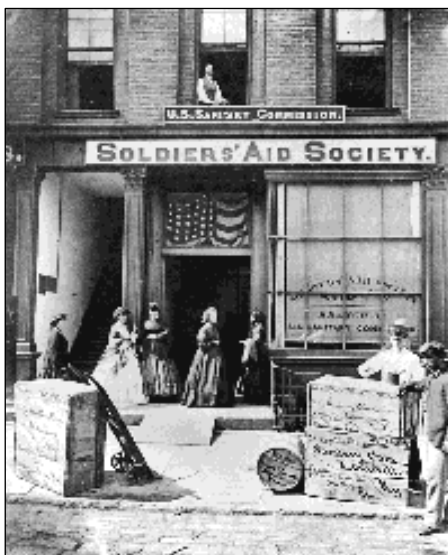
Joseph Obidzinski earned an undergraduate degree in history from Grand Valley State and a Masters degree from West Virginia University. He served as an intern at the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park and subsequently was hired as a seasonal historian providing tours of the four major battlefields in those parks. Joseph has also given tours at Gettysburg. He was also actively involved with the preservation of the Shepherdstown battlefield.

The Roundtable would like to give a hearty thanks to Jody Egen for her excellent presentation on the “Michigan Soldier’s Aid Society”.

Jody spoke on a subject seldom covered by Civil War enthusiast—namely the ‘many’ roles women played during the conflict. Although their critical role in the medical and sanitation arena is widely covered, seldom spoken of is the key role they played in keeping the home front farms/business going or of their involvement in the benevolence and soldier aid societies. A prevailing thought from that time is ‘*men fight and women must wait.*’ Well this wasn’t the way it was. As Jody expressed, women quickly became involved from home front to support their loved ones on the battlefields with items of food, textiles or other what nots necessary for daily life. This involvement morphed quickly into more organized efforts through church benevolence societies. However, these efforts were generally focused on a few distinct individuals or units and were not well organized, focused to actual needs, or self-sustaining.

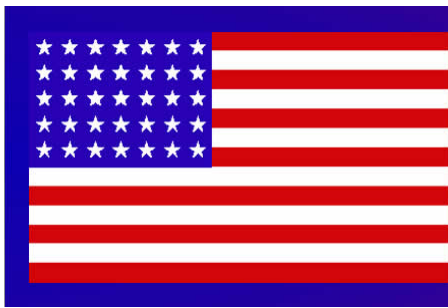


Following Fort Sumter, hundreds of soldier aid societies sprung up to better coordinate the efforts of the many far spread individual and benevolence groups. For instance, here in Michigan we had the Monroe Ladies Soldier Aid Society, the Coldwater Cadets and Jackson Grays. Still the organization and reach of these aid societies was inadequate.



A turning point in Michigan was the founding of the Ladies Soldier Aid Society of Detroit (LSAS-Det) following the battle at First Bull Run in 1861. It was the first of its kind in the country and, uniquely, had an all women’s board of director. Its “goal was to aid to soldiers in hospitals, camps, and battlefields any way they could. They rolled bandages, wrote letters, knitted socks, made clothing and blankets, sent care packages, and raised money in order to provide the comforts of home to those who were fighting or wounded. In addition to providing aid, the MSAS also provided relief for the soldier’s families.” Its contribution was size, organization, handling of logistics, and addressing practical soldier needs. Quickly many of the far flung benevolence and aid societies throughout the state channeled their efforts through it.

By 1863, the LSAS-Det became the Michigan Soldier’s Aid Society. Its mission expanded, rather than focusing on specific units, its expanded scope included soldier aid to all, regardless of unit. It also gained status as a branch of the U.S. Sanitary Commission. Jody spoke of the Society’s success, its growing pains, the



ways in which goods and funds were raised, and how its mission changed through time to be much more expansive to also include soldier families and refugees support. In short, it played a vital mission in support of soldiers' physical needs.

Jody began her presentation with an overview of **Michigan's** contribution to the Civil War effort which I repeat here:

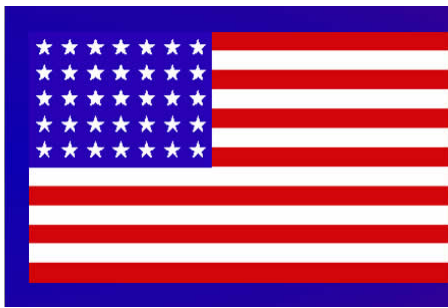
- 90,747 men served of which 89,001 were white, 1,600 black, 145 Indians and 1 woman
- Provided the following regiments: 31 Infantry, 11 Cavalry, 1 Artillery, 1 Engineer, 1 Sharp Shooter, and 1 Michigan Colored Regiment
- 398 officers and 13,985 enlisted died during the conflict—the vast majority through disease rather than battle wounds

Quiz Questions: This month's questions and answers pertain to the Second Battle of Fredericksburg...

1. How did General Lee try to undo the erroneous verbal order given to General Jubal Early by Colonel Robert H. Chilton of Lee's staff?
2. Who were the commanders of the two armies and what did they have in common?
3. Why was the Federal assault over the same ground as the disastrous First Battle of Fredericksburg successful?
4. What was the relative strength of the two armies at Fredericksburg on May 3rd?
5. What was the immediate aftermath of the Second Battle of Fredericksburg?

Odds & Ends: In keeping with our trip this coming October, you can find some nice summary articles and interesting Appomattox Court House facts on CWT's website at www.civilwar.org/battlefields/appomattox-courthouse.html.

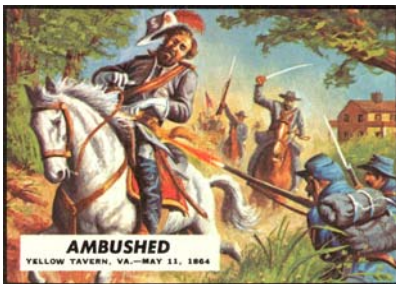
MRRT Minutes for April 28, 2014: The **Call to Order** was at 6:35 pm. **Introduction of Guests & New Members:** Bill, a friend of Brian's, was introduced. **Newsletter Report:** Bob read from the Cincinnati Canister, the NYC Dispatch and the Indianapolis Hardtack. **Preservation Report:** A \$150 donation was made to the Shepherdstown Battlefield Preservation Association. Also noted was that the Civil War Trust recently purchased the Foxes Gap at South Mountain. **Trip Report:** This October 25-26, the MRRT will be guided by Scott Patchan on a tour of "*Grant's Road to Victory: Five Forks to Appomattox*". Linda went over trip details and a sign-up sheet was circulated. The trip cost is currently projected at \$180 per person based on a minimum of 25 people participating—and potentially less if more sign-up. This charge includes our guide, all park entry fees, and local bus transportation on the tour route. The Saturday evening banquet will be at Crab Louis's—a 250 year old historic tavern in Midlothian, VA. The meal cost is \$40 per person. Rooms have been reserved at the Hampton Inn Richmond-Midlothian Turnpike for Friday and Saturday nights under MRRT at a rate of \$124 per night. Other hotels are available nearby but the bus leaves from the Hampton both days. Call to reserve your room at 804 897-2800. As always, we are responsible for our own transportation to and from VA. A flyer with trip details was handed-out at the meeting. Linda, Mollie and Jeanie are our trip coordinators. **Items of Interest:** 1-The Wall Street Journal found that the Civil War Sesquicentennial has not met expectations. For example, in 1970, seven million people visited Gettysburg but only 1.5 million visited the park for the 150th anniversary. 2-Smithsonian Magazine has published an excellent book; '*Smithsonian Civil War Inside the National Collection*' with over 550 pictures of artifacts with explanations and discussions. 3-Ron dug a South Carolina coat button in a 'legal dig'. 4-Several members commented on the excellent Ken Burns film, '*The Address*', which recently aired on PBS. The film showed how the Gettysburg Address was used as an unusual but successful teaching tool. **New Business:** Because of Memorial Day, our next meeting will be in three weeks on May 19. **Old Business:** For the third year, \$250 donation was proposed and passed for the *Jerry Maxwell Scholarship Fund*. The **Minutes for March 31, 2014** were approved.



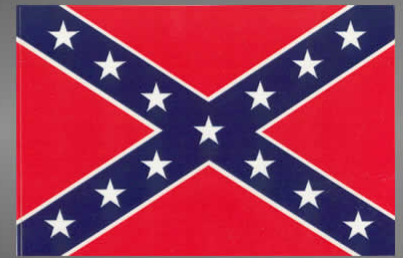
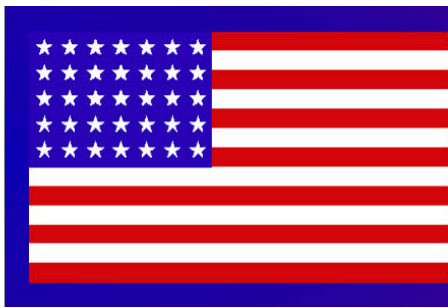
Civil War Sesquicentennial (May 1864): 4 May: The **Wilderness Campaign** kicks-off as Grant/Meade move their army across the Rapidan. The Union 122,000 strong will face Lee's 66,000 Confederates. **5 May:** North & South troops clash in the wooded topography of the Wilderness making coordinated movements difficult and artillery fields of fire poor. After a heavy day of fighting, both sides end the day basically as it began—little won or loss this first day. Also on this day, USA Butler lands 40,000 troops at the Bermuda Hundred. **6 May:** Fighting resumes in the Wilderness. The battle this day goes hard for the Federals but the Confederates are unable to capitalize. The South this day also suffer a grievous loss as Gen Jenkins is killed and Longstreet seriously wounded by friendly fire. In these two days the North has suffered casualties of approximately 18,000 (killed-wounded-missing) and the South 7,500. Although



the fighting in this opening gambit is over, fires that evening in the woods takes many further lives as wounded soldiers are unable to escape the flames. Gen Butler forces this day stretch along a 3-mile long line in sight of the steeples of Petersburg and 15 miles south of Richmond. Facing them are approximately 10,000 Confederates. **7 May:** Grant attempts to side step Lee by making for the vital crossroad of Spotsylvania. In the West, Sherman is moving against CSA Joe Johnston as part of Grant's grand plan. **11 May:** Skirmishing on the eve of the Spotsylvania battle finds Sheridan and Jeb Stuart engaged at Yellow Tavern. During this clash, **Jeb Stuart** is mortally wounded and dies in Richmond the following day. **12 May:** The Spotsylvania battle is now on as Grant attacks Lee's horseshoe salient through the rain in the early morning hours. By the end of the day, Union casualties are 6,800 and Confederate losses 5,000—and the 'Bloody Angle' becomes another historic name of this war. **13 May:** Grant moves his troops south and east towards Richmond and the right flank of Lee. In the West, Sherman continues to attack Johnston's defense near Resaca, GA. **15 May:** As another element of Grant's grand strategy, Sigel was assigned to move against Confederate forces in the Shenandoah Valley. On this day, Southern troops attack him at New Market, pushing him back at a loss of 831 casualties—approximately the same as Confederate losses. In the Western Theater, Johnston learns his flank is being turned and orders a retreat from Resaca. **16 May:** The Battle of Drewry's Bluff between Butler and Beauregard occurs. By days end, Butler retreats to Bermuda Hundred and his offensive threat stymied. Since departing on this campaign, Butler has lost a quarter of his troops. **27 May:** Sherman and Johnston clash around the New Hope-Dallas line. Sherman incurs 1,400 casualties but Confederate losses are light. **28 May:** Lee hurries his army to get in front of Grant as the Army of the Potomac crosses the Pamunkey River moving towards Cold Harbor. **30 May:** CSA John Morgan is back in action following his escape from an Ohio prison and on this day his forces begin harassing Sherman's supply lines in KY. As this month comes to an end, Sherman is aggressively moving towards Atlanta and pushing Johnston; Grant/Meade doing likewise towards Richmond; Butler is bottled-up; the Shenandoah Valley campaign under Sigel stalled, and the Red River Campaign has come to an inglorious end. This has been a busy month of action for both sides. For info on Michigan sesquicentennial events, visit <http://seekingmichigan.org/civil-war>.



Civil War Essentials: We continue our study of the important role horses and mules played in the Civil War. Horses and mules required significant logistics to perform their critical roles in the two armies. An artillery horse's daily ration was 14 lbs. of hay and 12 lbs. of grain—usually barley, corn or oats. Every horse in an artillery battery required this amount of food—even if the battery stayed in one spot during the winter months. A brigadier general said that 800,000



pounds of forage and grain were required daily to feed his command's horses and mules. Since a supply wagon usually carried one ton, 400 wagons were needed each day, whether in camp or on campaign. For every three wagons and teams hauling supplies a fourth team and wagon was needed to haul food for all four teams. The Confederate 17-mile long wagon train carrying wounded back to Virginia after the battle of Gettysburg included several miles of supplies for the horses and mules.

Feeding the horses became increasingly difficult as the war wore on and grain and hay shortages developed. This is particularly true in areas where the two armies fought multiple times and simply picked the fields and resources clean. Southern farms were particularly hard hit and unable to provide the supplies needed. General Sherman reported that his army lost a quarter of the horses that started the Atlanta campaign. Cavalrymen reported that horses became so hungry that they would eat the tails and manes of each other, and chew at the soldiers' uniforms.



Grazing was not an efficient way to feed horses either. Eighty pounds of pasturage was needed to meet the daily nutritional requirements. Also, a horse grazing was more likely to founder, a disease that caused lameness. Despite this, pasturage was used frequently for short periods of time if hay and grain were unavailable in sufficient quantities.

At times, even when the needed grain and hay was available, it couldn't be delivered to where it was needed. During May 1864, the artillery horses of the Union V Corps existed on a meager daily ration of five pounds of grain. This shortage resulted not from a lack of grain but from a lack of transport wagons. After the wagons had delivered the food supplies to the batteries, the V Corps infantry units seized them to use as ambulances during the Overland Campaign.

Water required a plentiful solution every day too. If the army was on the move, water had to be located at the end of each day. If water was located a significant distance from camp, half the horses were sent to water at a time. This situation created a significant problem if the unit had to move suddenly.

Quiz Answers:

1. General Lee sent written instructions to General Early allowing him to either reinforce Chancellorsville or to return to his previous position. General Early ordered all his units to return to Fredericksburg.
2. The Union commander of the VI Corps was General John Sedgwick and the Confederate commander was General Jubal Early, recently promoted to Major General. Both commanders were relatively new to their positions.
3. The Confederate artillery that was withdrawn toward Chancellorsville based on the erroneous verbal order was not fully redeployed and General Sedgwick was also able to stretch the Confederate line to breaking.
4. The Union army had 27,000 men while the Confederates only had 12,000 men at Second Fredericksburg. General Sedgwick's army tried to move onto Chancellorsville after the breakthrough. General Lee sent General Lafayette McLaws' division to oppose Sedgwick at Salem Church. The Union Army was able to escape to fight another day.

Monday, May 19, come out to hear **Joseph Obidzinski** speak on the **"Second Battle of Fredericksburg – May 3, 1863"**. The meeting will begin at 6:30 pm. Also, check-out our website at <http://www.farmlib.org/mrrt/>.