



Please note that our May meeting is one week early, Monday, May 21st, because of the Memorial Day holiday.

Please pay your dues this month, the FIFTH MONTH of the year! Your \$20 check must be made out to Jeanie Graham (the bank will NOT accept checks made out to the RoundTable) and mailed to her at 29835 Northbrook, Farmington Hills 48334-2326; or simply given to Jeanie at the May meeting. Cash is always welcomed.

Our May 21st, 2018 meeting begins at 6:30 pm in the basement of the Farmington Library (Grand River and Farmington Road). Please visit our website at <http://www.farmlib.org/mrrt>

We will begin to sign up for our November 3rd and 4th trip to Chattanooga & Chickamauga at the May meeting. The sign-up list will be passed around or we can call Mollie (313.530.8516) or send her an e-mail at mmgalate@gmail.com

Trip Itinerary – Saturday, Nov. 3rd – Lookout Mountain & Chickamauga Sunday, Nov. 4th – Chattanooga
Tour Guide – Rick Manion, formerly employed at the River Raisin Battlefield in Monroe, MI
Hotel – Hampton Inn, 1000 Market St., Dalton, GA 30720 – next door to a Cracker Barrel
Telephone: 855-605-0317 State that you are with the Civil War Tour Group (CWT) Rate per night \$104 – good for Friday night, Nov. 2nd through Sunday night, Nov. 4th. Departure date is Monday, Nov. 5th. We do not have to stay at the Hampton Inn on Sunday night for the lower rate.
9 King Rooms and 9 Double Bedded Rooms are available. Cutoff date for reservations is October 19, 2018
Saturday Night Banquet – TBD
Battlefield Tour Bus - TBD

Our Monday, May 21, 2018 speakers will be Dr. David Collins, PhD, and Dr. Norm Sauer, PhD, who will discuss the famous Gettysburg photograph “The Home of a Rebel Sharpshooter”. Historians and Gettysburg buffs have debated who the dead Confederate soldier in Alexander Gardner’s sharpshooter photograph



was and which unit he was in. They will discuss past and present theories on the subject. Dr. Sauer’s background as a forensic anthropologist will aid in discussing and determining whether the photograph is William Langley, of the 1st Texas or John Rutherford Ash, of the 2nd Georgia. **This will be a fascinating and educational presentation!**

Dr. Collins (picture left) practiced law for nearly 40 years. Recently, he earned a PhD in history from Wayne State. He and his wife of 48 years live in Beverly Hills, Michigan.



Dr. Norman Sauer (picture right) is well-known in the field of forensic anthropology, teaching at Michigan State for 38 years. He has served the U.S. Department of Defense as a consultant for identifying soldiers missing in action in prior American wars. Dr. Sauer determined who the sailor was that kissed a nurse on V-J Day in Times Square, New York City. Dr. Sauer and his wife live in Williamston, Michigan.

The Michigan Regimental Roundtable greatly appreciated the presentation of “**The Other Battlefield - Women in the Civil War**” by Bill Grandstaff. **The many roles women played in the Civil War (and the women who played them) have received scant attention in most histories written in the past.** A few women, such as pioneering nurses, the only woman doctor in the Army, and female spies, were given some mention but the vast majority of women whose contribution was critical have remained unrecognized until recently. **The memoirs and histories written after the war**



in the 19th century reflected Victorian views on women who were expected to be prim and proper homebodies, deferential to their male counterparts. These qualities were not consistent with tales of women in more active roles including that of a soldier or worker in traditionally male occupations so these stories were left out.

In 19th century America most people lived on farms and when the male farmer left for the army, his wife had to try to replace him while still doing her own work. Even if he could send some money home, life was a struggle for her. When their situation became desperate, women were forced to take very unladylike actions. **Bread riots took place in a large number of Confederate cities.** Food had become so scarce and unaffordable that groups of ordinary women marched on stores and warehouses and took what they needed in defiance of the law. Some newspaper accounts supported these desperate women.



There were only a few accepted roles for women before the war – housewife, servant or, if educated, school teacher. These expanded during the war. Some women followed the army serving as cooks and washerwomen for the soldiers. The Irish regiments in the Union army were noted for this practice (which was prevalent in the British Army). On occasion these women were believed to have participated in combat beside their husbands. **Others, usually by dire necessity, turned to prostitution to earn a living.** Hookers populated every city or town where there were soldiers. **Union General William Rosecrans, concerned about the number of soldiers lost to STDs, ordered his Provost Marshal to rid Nashville of the prostitutes to solve the problem.** After first trying unsuccessfully to ship these ladies to some other place, this officer set up an “official” red light district where the prostitutes were regularly inspected by medical officers to prevent their transmitting disease to his soldiers.

Many women, especially younger single girls, worked in factories. The era of the Singer sewing machine made it possible for women to work in the textile and clothing industry. They were considered more tractable than men and were better suited for such work. **Assembling paper cartridges for muzzle loading muskets was also a job well suited to the nimble hands of girls. Known as “cartridge girls”, they were each expected to produce mounds of cartridges in a 12 hour day and were paid ½ of the rate for men.** A munitions factory was a dangerous place and a large number of girls died when accidental explosions rocked arsenals in Pittsburgh, Washington and Richmond.

Bill ended by suggesting that we all explore the still untold stories of the women of the Civil War.

MRRT Minutes for April 30, 2018: Call to Order 6:40 pm, about 40 present Pledge Dedicated to Glen Tipton, whose body was found on the battleship USS Oklahoma, who was identified through DNA and is now headed home for burial
Introduction of Guests and New Members Alice Diebel **Treasurer’s Report** Jeanie said that 16 regular members still have not paid their dues. Our Fort Wayne membership was renewed. Jeanie would like some help with the wording for the brick in Jerry’s memory at the Adrian Civil War monument. There was much discussion about how best to honor Jerry’s memory. Jeanie will call his wife, Carlene, and ask for opinion. **Secretary’s Report** Accepted **Preservation** Joe was unable to attend the meeting but sent his report. The Civil War Trust is attempting to raise money to acquire 81 acres at Glendale, VA, Cold Harbor, VA, and Gaines Mill, VA. The effort to preserve Fort Negley near Nashville, TN has been successful due to the discovery of a burial site for African Americans who helped build the fort. **Newsletters** None **Website** No change **Trip Report** Information on the trip is discussed on Page 1 of the newsletter. **Program** None **Items of Interest** Gene Kramer-the 5th Michigan Band will play at Fort Wayne, June 9, from 10-3 pm. Bill Grandstaff – The Summer Social at the Wisner House is Saturday, July 28th. Tours of the mansion will be available along with bands, cannons, and vendors. Bill is also involved in the development of Southeastern Michigan Civil War conference to take place at several parks this summer, organized through Oakland County parks. Details to follow New **Business** None **Old Business** None

**Quiz Questions: This month's questions and answers pertain to the battles of Chickamauga & Chattanooga.**

1. Which Michigan regiment helped save the Union army from total disaster at Snodgrass Hill in the Battle of Chickamauga on September 20, 1863?
2. Which Michigan regiment claimed to be the first to scale Missionary Ridge on November 25, 1863?
3. What does the word Chickamauga literally mean?
4. The Michigan Engineers and Mechanics constructed a pontoon bridge over the Tennessee River during October 1863 to allow food to flow into starving Chattanooga. What was the bridge's nickname and which Captain engineered the construction?
5. Besides "Old Pete" and "Old War Horse" what other nickname did General Longstreet earn at Chickamauga?

Civil War Essentials – Michigan's Bruce Catton – Historian of the Ordinary Soldier

Several MRRT members probably first caught the Civil War "bug" by reading one of the books by Michigan's preeminent author on the subject – Bruce Catton. He was the first popular author of the genre to add accounts of the ordinary soldiers to the traditional historian's description of battles, generals, and tactics.

Son of a minister/college president, Charles Bruce Catton was born in 1899 in Petoskey and grew up in Benzonia, a tiny village south of Crystal Lake in the northwestern Lower Peninsula. **In his boyhood he was fascinated by the tales told by the many Civil War veterans living in the area.** After a short stint at Oberlin College, interrupted by service in the Navy during WWI, he began his career as a newspaper reporter in 1920.

After 6 years reporting for Cleveland and Boston papers, he moved to Washington, D. C. to work for a newspaper association. **Being near the scene of the many battles fought in the area rekindled his interest in the war.** During the Second World War, he joined the War Production Board, then the Department of Commerce.



After writing a moderately successful book about these government bureaucracies in 1948, he turned to the Civil War. His original idea was to write a novel about the war. After completing part of his manuscript however, he decided that the fictional parts were (in his words) "awful, dreadful" but the factual parts were okay. **His career as an author of the history of the war started at that point.**

The first two books of the Army of the Potomac trilogy – *Mr. Lincoln's Army* (1951) and *Glory Road* (1953) won critical praise but saw only moderate sales success. **The third book, *A Stillness at Appomattox* (1954), was both a critical success and a big seller. The book won the Pulitzer Prize. It reached well beyond the small pre-centennial body of Civil War buffs to a larger audience who found the book good history that was enjoyable to read.** Catton had delved into diaries, letters, etc., of regular soldiers to bring them alive to the readers. His experience as a reporter helped keep the text crisp and concise. His wartime bureaucratic duty helped him understand and explain the Byzantine operations of the Civil

War Federal government to ordinary readers. He also had a knack of being able to describe the "place" – terrain, weather, noise and sounds, colors, etc. – so naturally that the reader's mind's eye saw it clearly.

Catton became the editor of *American Heritage* magazine and wrote 11 more books about the Civil War. He served on the Civil War Centennial Commission. **David McCullough, another author of popular readable history, worked with Catton at the magazine. McCullough remembers that Bruce would always refer to himself as a writer rather than a historian.** Perhaps that is why his work attracted so many new readers to Civil War history. **Among the last books Catton wrote was a memoir about his early life in Michigan.** He received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1977 and died in 1978.



Quiz Answers:

1. The 22nd Michigan commanded by Colonel Heber LeFavour of Detroit.
2. The 11th Michigan commanded by Major Benjamin Bennett of Burr Oak, killed in the assault.
3. River of Blood
4. The “Michigan Bridge” and Perrin V. Fox of Grand Rapids.
5. General Longstreet gained the added nickname of “Bull of the Woods” at Chickamauga.

Civil War Essentials – Food – Hardtack

Civil War soldiers complained all the time about their food. “We eat up everything they give us and feel hungry all the time” Confederate soldier Walter Lee, January 10, 1864. “I could not eat raw port and dry bread at home, but a fast of twenty-four hours, a ten-mile march, and a bivouac at night sharpens the appetite wonderfully.” Private Oliver W. Norton, 83rd Pennsylvania Infantry, September 30, 1861.

Hardtack was a staple food in the Union soldier’s diets. Besides hardtack, this food was called hard crackers, hard bread, army crackers, worm castles, sheet-iron crackers, and tooth dullers. By the end of the war, hardtack had become a “legend”.



What is hardtack? Flour, water, and maybe salt in a six to one ratio of flour to water mixed, kneaded together, rolled flat, cut into approximately three inch squares and baked. The final product was then packaged into wooden crates or barrels and sent off to the army. With the army the hardtack may sit out in the hot sun or in the pounding rain.

Soldiers claimed that if they tossed their hardtack into the outer trenches and the hardtack would come crawling back (worms). Some hardtack was so dense and dry that it resisted rot. A Pennsylvania soldier wrote, “Camp gossip says that the crackers have been in storage since the Mexican War . . . they were “almost hard as a brick, and undoubtedly would keep for years”.

Author William C. Davis wrote in his book, *A Taste for War*, “as many as three or four million hardtack (was) being consumed every day (by 1864), clearly too big a demand for any one baker to supply, and thus companies across the North received contracts that kept their ovens at baking heat around the clock.”

How did the soldiers eat hardtack? Several cooking methods were used with hardtack. Union soldiers soaked it in coffee – some claimed those six hours of soaking was required to make hardtack eatable. Others soaked it in water, then fried in it bacon or lard to make a “gourmet” dish called skillygalee”. Other men would beat the hardtack with a mallet or rifle butt to make “flour” that they added to soup, grease, or whatever else was available to cook. Many soldiers would eat hardtack in the dark so that they could not see what they were eating. Soldiers would mix hardtack with brown sugar, hot water, and possibly whiskey to create a “pudding”, to serve as dessert.

Surprisingly, hardtack is still a diet mainstay in parts of Canada and Alaska. Purty Factories in St. John’s, Newfoundland bakes three varieties of hardtack. Alaskan aircraft are required to carry “survival gear”, including food. Hardtack is a popular choice.

Fresh, hot hardtack is delicious, according to various “tasters”!