

Vol LX, #6

Michigan Regimental Round Table Newsletter—Page 1

June 2020

MEMBER RENEWAL

The MRRT celebrates its 60th year in 2020 – and now is a great time to show your support by renewing your membership! (Or become a new member!).

Membership is \$25 a year – or \$5 for students. Checks MUST be made out to Treasurer Jeanie Graham (the bank does not like checks made out to the RoundTable) and can be mailed to her home at 29835 Northbrook, Farmington Hills, MI 48334-2326.

Our June 29, 2020 meeting has been cancelled as stated in a previous e-mail. The Farmington Library is working on a re-opening plan for future meeting reservations.

We thank our scheduled June speaker; our friend Steve Hawks from Grand Rapids who was going to speak on “Touring the Siege of Petersburg”. We hope to reschedule Steve for 2021.

WE HAVE DECIDED TO POSTPONE OUR TRIP TO THE BRANDY STATION/CULPEPPER, VIRGINIA AREA UNTIL THE FALL OF 2021.

This decision is based on all of the uncertainty involved with the COVID-19 virus. **We plan to keep our great tour guide, Clark “Bud” Hall, for 2021.** We are really looking forward to visiting the various Civil War sites in the Culpepper area. We thank our trip committee of Jeanie, Linda, and Mollie for their great work! **We will have a great trip in 2021.**

Please visit our website at <http://www.farmlib.org//mrrt>. Several Civil War presentations are listed on our website.

Civil War Essentials - Horace Greeley and the Civil War

Horace Greeley was a successful American writer and editor in the middle of the 19th Century. **Since 1841 he had been the editor and a part owner of the *New York Tribune*** which had the largest circulation of any newspaper in the country and had great influence in the politics of the time. It was the first newspaper to have a fulltime correspondent in Washington City.

Greeley was a liberal who promoted free education for all, women’s rights, temperance, and limiting the spread of slavery. He even dabbled in utopian socialism prior to the war. **Originally a Whig, he helped to found the Republican Party in the mid-1850s.** He championed the idea of westward expansion in order to provide greater opportunity for young and working class Americans. He traveled overland to California in 1859 in order to experience the West himself. Sources disagree on whether he personally coined the phrase “Go West Young Man” as often claimed.

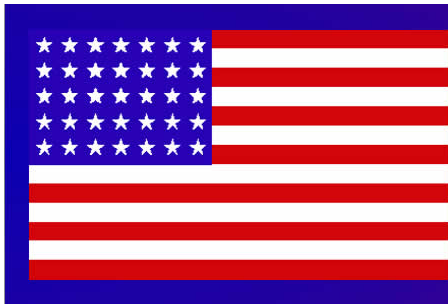


As the 1860 election approached, Greeley and the *Tribune* initially supported Edward Bates as the Republican candidate. When Abraham Lincoln came to New York to deliver his now famous Cooper Union speech, Greeley nonetheless urged his readers to attend the speech and afterwards concluded Lincoln might make a good running mate beside Bates.

Bates failed to arouse enough enthusiasm at the Chicago Convention, so **Greeley first considered Henry Seward of New York but eventually decided to support Lincoln.** Seward would hold this against Greeley afterwards and would retaliate by blocking Greeley’s attempt to be chosen as a Senator by the New York Legislature.

After Lincoln’s election, the southern states began talking about withdrawing from the Union. **Greeley initially editorialized that, while this was tragic, he did not believe that they should be prevented by force.** Right after the election he wrote “And

whenever a considerable section of our Union shall deliberately resolve to go out, we shall resist all coercive measures designed to keep it in. We hope never to live in a republic whereof one section is pinned to the residue by bayonets.” This position of reluctantly supporting a peaceful fracturing of the Union lasted until January



1861. **The *Tribune*'s position, as always reflecting Greeley's views, then dramatically changed to an uncompromising hard line on preventing the seceding states from leaving.**

After the war started, to promote the capture of the Confederacy's new capital before the CSA Congress could meet there on July 20, **the *Tribune* repeated its motto of "On to Richmond!!"** in every issue. This helped goad the new administration into launching the advance which resulted in the devastating defeat at 1st Manassas. Greeley was badly shaken by this disaster (some suggest he suffered a breakdown), but continued to generally support the Lincoln administration even though the military situation improved very little in the rest of the year.

Beginning in the spring of 1862, the *Tribune* began to argue for emancipation of slaves as a war aim in addition to restoring the Union. It also became more critical of Lincoln and the Union army's lack of military success – like many easterners, Greeley placed little value on Union successes in the west. **On August 20, 1862, Greeley reprinted a letter he had sent to the President which demanded action on emancipation – it was titled "The Prayer of Twenty Millions".** The publication of the letter forced Lincoln, who was walking a tightrope between abolitionists and Unionists, to publically respond, "My paramount object in this struggle *is* to save the Union, and *is not* either to save or destroy slavery". This angered the Radicals, but they were appeased, as was Greeley, when the Emancipation Proclamation was issued after the Union victory at Antietam.

Since the newspaper had supported the government's conscription law, the *Tribune* office was targeted by the mob during the July 1863 draft riot in New York City, but armed employees and naval yard guards prevented its destruction. As the war continued Greeley was appalled by the level of bloodshed. When, in July 1864 he was informed that there were Confederate commissioners in Niagara Falls in Upper Canada who were empowered to negotiate peace, he travelled there in an attempt to end the war. In fact these Confederates were only interested in assisting the Peace Democrats gain strength in the coming election and had no authority or interest in negotiating peace so his effort failed and he lost credibility with the administration and public.

Greeley was not initially enthusiastic about a 2nd term for Lincoln and made an unsuccessful attempt to find a Republican to replace him. Once the military successes in the 2nd half of 1864 signaled a likely Lincoln reelection however, he and the *Tribune* became fervent supporters. As the end of the war approached, Greeley argued that the US should show leniency to the defeated rebels in order to avoid the creation of martyrs which would further embitter the south. In his own changeable way, he then supported the hard line Radicals in their postwar struggle with President Andrew Johnson! Between 1863 and 1866 Greeley wrote a 2 volume history of the war. **He paid a portion of Jefferson Davis' bail in 1867 to release him from Ft. Monroe.**

Because he felt U.S. Grant's administration was corrupt, Horace Greeley ran for president against Grant in 1872 as the nominee of the newly created Liberal Republican Party. He was defeated and died less than a month later.

Quiz Questions: This month's questions pertain to the month of June during the Civil War.

1. Which Federal general ordered the office of the *Chicago Times* closed on June 2, 1863? Why did he do this?
2. Which governor of Virginia turned command of all Virginia forces over to the Confederacy on June 8, 1861? Which pro-Southern governor of Missouri called for 50,000 volunteers to help fight the Federals on June 12, 1861?
3. Which battle did Stonewall Jackson's army in the Shenandoah Valley win on June 8, 1862? Whose army did he defeat?
4. Which Union colonel was seriously wounded near Petersburg, Virginia on June 18, 1864, prompting a promotion to the rank of general by U.S. Grant who thought the colonel was fatally wounded? What was unusual about this promotion?
5. Which vessel became the U.S. Navy's first hospital ship, deployed on the Mississippi River on June 10, 1862? Which group of women served as volunteer nurses aboard the vessel?



Civil War Essentials - Just When Did the Civil War (officially) End?

Most Americans know (if only for a short time, usually before a high school history test) **that Robert E. Lee surrendered his army to U. S. Grant on April 9, 1865.** Many therefore assume that the war ended then. MRRT members know that several other Confederate armies would surrender by the end of May.

An additional milestone of sorts was the Presidential Proclamation in mid-June 1865 which lifted all restrictions on trade with those formerly rebellious states lying east of the Mississippi. Another Proclamation issued in April 1866 declared the insurrection ended in several additional states and a final one in August 1866 added Texas, the last state. The precise date of the official end mattered greatly to some people. **The 1863 *Captured and Abandoned Property Law* had set the deadline for legal claims against the Government arising from the war to be filed no later than 2 years after war's end.**

One such person was Nelson Anderson, a free man of color, who lived in Charleston, South Carolina. Anderson was a drayman (he drove a heavy side less wagon called a dray) in the cotton trade. He had managed to save enough money to purchase cotton from two white cotton traders in 1864 in order to participate in the trade himself. **Following the Confederate evacuation of the city in February 1865, Union troops seized all cotton found there including his and turned it over to the Treasury who auctioned it off in New York.**

Anderson filed his claim against the Government to receive compensation on June 5, 1868. The Law required that claimants prove that they had been loyal to the U. S. and had not rendered aid to the rebellion. This Anderson was able to prove before the Court of Claims. However, **the government attorneys argued that he had missed the filing deadline as the war in the East ended in June 1865. Nonetheless the court decided in Anderson's favor and ordered that he be paid for his cotton.** The U.S. Attorney General, concerned about this precedent, appealed the decision to the Supreme Court.

The case came before the Court in February 1870. **Justice David Davis, who had been Lincoln's 1860 Republican convention manager, rendered the Court's opinion.** After disposing of several secondary arguments raised by the Government, he addressed the issue of the deadline. **He opined that the August 1866 Proclamation represented the official end of the war based on three points:**

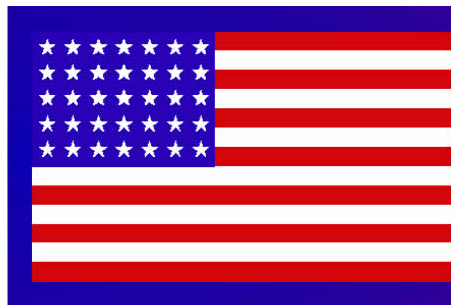
- The government could not expect loyal citizens to keep track of when and where each Confederate military force surrendered or disbanded.
- To argue that the end of fighting in a particular location defined the "end of war" there meant that loyal citizens might be treated differently depending on where they lived.
- The August 1866 Proclamation had included the statement that **"the said insurrection is at an end, and peace, order, tranquility and civil authority now exist in and throughout the whole of the United States".**

Based on these arguments, the Supreme Court affirmed the decision of the Court of Claims. Anderson received \$6,723.76, the amount his cotton had been sold for in New York in 1865. In total, the Court of Claims paid over \$9.8 million in claims to loyal citizens under the 1863 Law.

Quiz Answers:

1. General Ambrose Burnside and for publishing articles criticizing the Emancipation Proclamation.
2. Governors John Letcher and Claiborne Jackson
3. Port Republic, Virginia and Union General James Shield
4. Joshua L. Chamberlain of Maine. This was the only battlefield promotion that Grant made during the war.
5. *USS Red Rover* and nuns from local convents

We thank "Old Sarge for his help with this month's quiz.



Civil War Essentials – The Final Saga of Confederate General A.P. Hill

During the Civil War, General A.P. Hill was a skillful brigade and divisional commander in the Army of Northern Virginia, but was not as successful commanding at the Corps level. He did not get along with General Stonewall Jackson and could not live up to the expectations as Stonewall's successor. He also suffered from illnesses during the last year of the war. A.P. Hill was on medical leave from March 20, 1865 to April 1, 1865, the day before his death.

Confederate Corps Commander General A. P. Hill rode into his death on April 2, 1865, during the Union Army breakthrough at Petersburg, Virginia. He wanted to meet one with one of his divisional commanders, General Henry Heth, at his headquarters. Instead, he met two Pennsylvania soldiers who shot him dead just 800 yards from his objective.

General Hill's remains were moved to Richmond's Hollywood Cemetery in 1867. Twenty-five Confederate generals are presently buried there, the most of any cemetery in the country. The general was buried in an



unmarked grave with "Lt.-Gen. A.P. Hill" inscribed in the curbing in front of his grave.

During the late 19th Century, the Pegram Battalion Association, some of which served with the General during the War, worked to honor him in a more appropriate manner. The first idea was to place a statue over the General's grave at Hollywood. This changed to building a monument elsewhere in the city, away from Monument Avenue. The statue and pedestal – costing \$15,000 would be a centerpiece in the Richmond neighborhood. The land for the statue was donated.

General Hill's remains were exhumed in July 1892. They were stored in a sarcophagus in the granite pedestal that would serve as the base for an 8-foot bronze statue.

The placement of the A.P. Hill Monument has been discussed for many years. Forty-three crashes at the intersection occurred during 2019. Efforts to move the General back to Hollywood Cemetery in 2006 failed. During 2009, Sons of Confederate Veterans proposed to move the remains to Richmond's restored Oakwood Cemetery, where

thousands of Confederates are buried.

One very important item to remember is that General Hill's monument is the only one in Richmond that contains the remains of the honored individual. A fourth burial is likely in the near future.

Civil War Nugget – President Lincoln Enjoyed Cats – Once President Lincoln picked up three stray kittens on his way to a meeting with General Grant and Admiral David Porter. Grant's aide Horace Porter said, "*A curious sight at an army headquarters....to see the President "tenderly caressing three stray kittens" as he discussed military strategy.*"

The President and Mrs. Lincoln got into a disagreement over a cat. One time during dinner at the White House, the President used a gold fork from the presidential service to feed a cat. Mrs. Lincoln asked, "*Don't you think it's shameful for Mr. Lincoln to feed Tabby with a gold fork?"*"

The President replied, "*If the gold fork was good enough for former President James Buchanan, I think it is good enough for Tabby*".

Civil War Nugget – West Point – Before the War, West Point cadets were allowed to bathe only once a week and had to use cold water.