

On the night of September 18, 1863, two hulking armies faced each other across Chickamauga Creek in Northern Georgia. The Federal Army of the Cumberland, commanded by Major General William Rosecrans, numbered 64,500 with 170 pieces of artillery. Confederate General Braxton Bragg’s Army of Tennessee held a slight numerical superiority with 71,500 men and 200 artillery pieces. Nervously, the two armies sat on the frosty ground as the temperatures amazingly fell to near freezing. Rosecrans directed his staff to telegraph a request to ministers of the North advising them that his army was about to meet the enemy and requesting that they beseech Almighty God to lend His support to the Northern cause.

Men on both sides sensed the ominous mood in their respective camps. “All day a feverish, mysterious, nervous foreboding had seemed to pervade the camp,” wrote Lt. Col. Judson Bishop of the Second Minnesota. “Everyone was conscious of it and apprehensive that everything was not in order as it should be.” Federal Colonel Hans C. Heg, a native of Norway, found time to pen his wife a contradictory letter of staid optimism: “The Rebels are in our front and we may have to fight him a battle—if we do it will be apt to be a big one. Do not feel uneasy for me. I am well and in good spirits and trusting to my usual good luck. I shall use all the caution and courage I am capable of and leave the rest to take care of itself.”

The following two days brought unbelievable carnage as the two armies bitterly slugged it out on the Chickamauga (appropriately named the “River of Death” by the local Cherokee Indians for an earlier smallpox epidemic). Total casualties were exceeded only by those suffered at Gettysburg. Bragg’s losses amounted to 20,950 (2673 killed, 16,274 wounded, and 2003 missing). The Federal army lost 1656 killed, 9749 wounded, and 4774 missing for a total of 16,179. One of those killed was the semi-confident Colonel Hans C. Heg.

On **MONDAY, AUGUST 27**, the MRRT welcomes guest speaker Pierce Roberts, who will present “The Battle of Chickamauga.” Pierce resides in Battle Creek and is a member of the Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids, and Ann Arbor Round Tables. He is a retired football and volleyball coach at Battle Creek Central High School and is a member of the Michigan High School Football Coaches Hall of Fame.

* * * * *

The Auction held last month was an unqualified success. Numerous items exchanged hands and occasional bidding wars were a highlight of the evening as a total of \$406.00 was put into our treasury! Our thanks to all who showed up, those who donated items for auction, those who bid and bought, and to Jim Burroughs and Don Garlit for their expert help.

* * * * *

FALL FIELD TRIP:

Everything seems to be falling into place for what promises to be a fine excursion to Richmond, Virginia in October. For any who have not yet paid a \$40 bus deposit, please do so at this month’s meeting. (Make the check out to Carroll Tietz, but give it to Jerry Maxwell.)

Also, Please Note: The Saturday dinner (October 20) check—for \$23—should also be submitted at this month’s meeting. (Same procedure as above.)

QUIZ: All questions pertain to the month of August.....

1. On August 31, 1861, the Confederate Congress announced the appointment of five full generals. In order of seniority, name them.
2. On August 21, 1863, a pro-Northern town was sacked by a band of Confederate guerrillas. Name the town and the leader of the plundering Bushwhackers.
3. Which abolitionist were the Bushwhackers intent on capturing in the raid, and what group did he lead?
4. On August 29, 1864, the Democratic Presidential Convention opened. In which city did they convene and who did they nominate for the presidency two days later?
5. Which tribe of Indians burst from their reservation in Minnesota on August 17, 1862, beginning a bloody uprising that lasted until September 23? And, which reluctant chief led them and what former Detroit and Minnesota governor defeated them?
6. Which battle, fought on August 10, 1861, was the largest battle to occur in the state of Missouri during the war? And, which Union general impetuously ordered his outnumbered army to attack, thus losing the battle and his life?
7. Which 2 Confederate generals defeated the Federals at this battle?
8. Which famous Black abolitionist met with President Lincoln on August 10, 1863? And for what was he lobbying the President?
9. What famous newspaper editor wrote a letter, entitled "The Prayer of Twenty Millions," to President Lincoln on August 19, 1862, in which he questioned the President's policy on slavery? Also, name his newspaper.
10. Fill in the blanks on Lincoln's reply, made on August 22, 1862: "If I could save the Union without.....I would do it, and if I could save it by.....I would do it; and if I could save it by.....and.....I would do that also."

* * * * *

Stories from the great Battle of Chickamauga.....

The 700-acre Brotherton farm figured prominently in Longstreet's breakthrough of the Federal army. Tom Brotherton, who "knew every pig trail through these woods," served as Longstreet's guide for the attack. Years later when Longstreet visited the battlefield, one of his first acts was to go to the Brotherton house looking for his old scout, but Tom was dead. Adaline Brotherton, one of the heroines of the Chickamauga story, returned to the farm at milking time each day to milk the four cows and give the milk to the wounded of both armies being cared for in the little Brotherton house. George and Mary Brotherton, father and mother of the seven Brotherton children, had remained in the house during the fighting on the nineteenth, but left late Saturday afternoon to camp with those children who were not fighting in the Confederate army. When the parents returned following the battle, they found nine dead Federals in their front yard. All of the wounded had been taken to improvised hospitals. Jim Brotherton, who fought for the Confederacy, continued fighting, catching glimpses of his own house, and going from tree to tree. He had a blanket rolled over the knapsack strapped to his back. After the battle Jim counted thirty-seven enemy bullets and two buckshot caught in his blanket roll and knapsack. Following the battle, Jim stated: "I walked over the field the morning after the battle. In one place down in the woods I counted sixteen big artillery horses lying in one heap. A little way off was another heap of twelve more. And that was the way it was all through there."

* * * * *

"Old Grant" was a rooster and mascot of the 58th Indiana Infantry. He belonged to Sergeant Gilbert Armstrong of Company C. Not in all the army was there a better fighter than this contentious bird. He terrorized the mare of Chaplain John J. Hight, which, according to the chaplain "always passed him at the double-quick." Old Grant rode in the ambulance, where he often bullied the sick, but that appeared to be his privilege. Battle exhilarated him and his challenge had sounded amid the roar of Chickamauga. Sergeant Armstrong, his proprietor, was a famous sharpshooter who had served in the Mexican War and had been a boatman on the western rivers. He had received a

Henry repeating rifle as a gift from fellow soldiers. Near the end of the battle Armstrong was severely wounded and had to be left behind. Old Grant disappeared. Armstrong stated sadly, "Poor rooster, I fear—nay, hope—he was eaten by some hungry soldiers on that fatal frosty night."

* * * * *

A Lieutenant Renfro of the 22nd Alabama had obtained leave of absence to visit his home in Jacksonville, Alabama, roughly eighty miles from the battlefield. When he heard a battle was about to be fought, he hastened to his regiment and, due to the urgency, his father, the hotelkeeper of the town, drove him back in a buggy. They arrived during the night of the nineteenth. The lieutenant searched the field and finally found his command. He led it in the first assault and was shot dead as he approached the enemy position. The father had waited behind the lines. The last the men saw of them, the father was carrying the boy's body off the battlefield in the buggy in which they had come, going back to Jacksonville to bury him.

* * * * *

The day after the great battle had ended, Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest and 400 of his troopers took up the pursuit of the retreating Federal army. Riding down the La Fayette Road, Forrest encountered the rear of some bluecoats. Charging, the general was at the head of his forces, when the Federals fired a volley of bullets. One of these minie balls cut the large artery in his horse's neck. Eager to pursue the fleeing enemy, but seeing the blood spouting from the wound, Forrest leaned over his mount, poked his finger into the artery, and so checked the bleeding. The noble animal continued to dash forward, but when the chase was over and Forrest dismounted, the horse fell dead.

* * * * *

The losses at this battle were incredible. Officers fell as quickly as the common soldier. On the Federal side 13 colonels were killed or mortally wounded. Also killed was one Brigadier General, William H. Lytle. Twenty-seven Federal colonels were wounded and six captured. Confederate losses were equally staggering. Three generals—Preston Smith, James Deshler, and Benjamin Helm—were killed. Thirteen colonels were also killed or mortally wounded. The wounded included seven generals—Thomas C. Hindman, John C. Brown, Henry D. Clayton, John Gregg, Evander McNair, John Bell Hood, and Daniel W. Adams. Twenty-nine colonels were wounded and one captured.

QUIZ ANSWERS:

1. Samuel Cooper, Albert Sidney Johnston, Robert E. Lee, Joseph E. Johnston, and Pierre Beauregard
2. Lawrence, Kansas and William Clarke Quantrill
3. James Lane and the Jayhawkers
4. Chicago and George B. McClellan
5. Santee Sioux, Little Crow and Henry Sibley
6. Wilson's Creek and Nathaniel Lyon
7. Ben McCulloch and Sterling Price
8. Frederick Douglass and equal pay for Black soldiers
9. Horace Greeley and New York *Tribune*
10. Freeing *any* slave.....freeing *all* the slaves.....freeing some.....leaving others alone

Remind yourself of the **MONDAY, AUGUST 27** meeting, held at the downtown Farmington Library (Grand River/Farmington Road). Guest speaker, Pierce Roberts, will present "The Battle of Chickamauga." The business meeting begins at 7:30 P.M. It's sounds like a great evening. See you there.....