

Vol LXI, #8

Michigan Regimental Round Table Newsletter—Page 1

August 2021

Our August 30, 2021 meeting has been cancelled because of the pandemic.

However, there is some GREAT NEWS. Jeanie Graham has reserved the Farmington Library's meeting room for September 27th, October 25th, and November 29th, all Monday nights! We plan to have our normal meeting beginning at 6:30 PM. Hopefully, we will have speakers.

Additionally, Jeanie reserved the meeting room for 2022. The last Monday of each month except for May (one week earlier because of Memorial Day) and October and December (we do not meet during those months). We should be on our field trip during October.

Unfortunately, we will NOT be able to go on this year's trip to Culpepper, Virginia. With our first meeting of the year tentatively scheduled for late September, the Trip Committee will not have the time to put together all of the logistics involved in planning a great trip. We look forward to visiting Culpepper, Virginia during 2022.

Please visit our website at <http://www.farmlib.org/mrрт>. Links to interesting Civil War programs are available.

Civil War Essentials – The Strange Odyssey of Clement Vallandigham

It is well known that the Civil War and the conflicting principles that led to it raised some factions among citizens of the Northern states which opposed the Lincoln administration and its policy of war to force the seceding states back into the Union. Some of these were motivated by economic considerations—separating the two halves of the country damaged commerce in each section. Some were based on the belief that the U.S. Constitution allowed individual states to break away from the Union if they chose and that “states’ rights” superseded those of the Federal government. Still others were racially motivated. **An individual who came to epitomize some of these beliefs was Clement L. Vallandigham, a lawyer and politician from Ohio.**

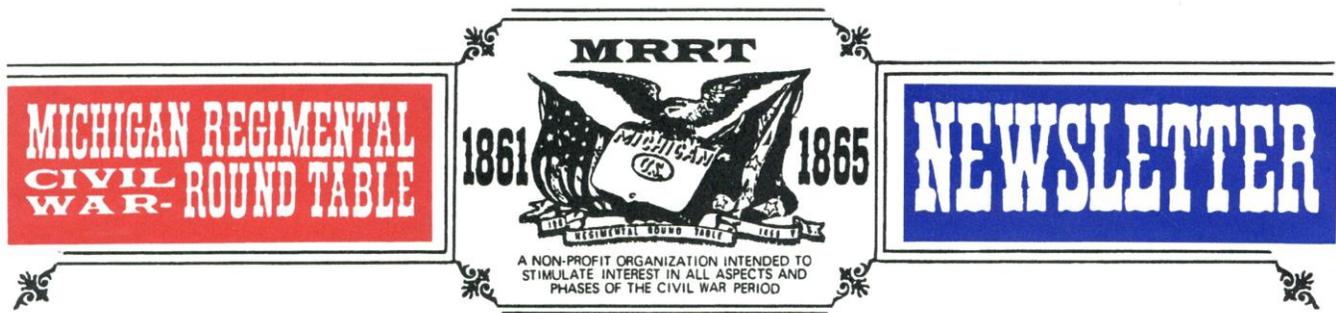
Born in Ohio, he attended Jefferson College (now part of Washington & Jefferson College) in Pennsylvania but did not graduate. He became a friend of Edwin Stanton before the war. Stanton lent Vallandigham money to study law and begin his practice. Both were Democrats, but Stanton was against slavery and Vallandigham was not. After passing the bar exam, he entered politics and was elected to the Ohio House. He was elected to the U.S. House twice before the war began after failing to be nominated for Lt. Governor in 1851.



The southern states seceded in 1861, which Vallandigham blamed entirely on what he saw as the abolitionist slant of the Lincoln administration. **He often spoke out publicly against Lincoln's decision to use military force and against all succeeding military spending bills.** He soon became a recognized leader of the so-called “Copperheads” or anti-war Democrats (cartoon). **The Copperheads were strongest in western Kentucky and the southern sections of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois due to their proximity to the south and their dislike of Republicans who identified with eastern financial and industrial interests.** For the most part they were vocal and peaceful in their opposition to

the prosecution of the war. Many were concerned about legitimate issues raised during the war such as the military draft, Lincoln's suspension of the writ of *Habeus Corpus* and military trials of civilians.

An organization variously known as the Knights of the Golden Circle, The Order of American Knights and finally the Sons of Liberty grew out of the anti-war Democrat ranks. It supposedly promised a more militant resistance to



the administration and the war. In fact, there turned out to be very little more than talk to these threats, but the Confederate government was misled into believing large numbers of members were ready to rise up and overthrow the Lincoln administration, allowing the rebel states to go their own way. Richmond sent some agents into these states to try to organize and encourage such violent activities, but they soon learned that there was “lots of smoke but almost no fire”.

The Federal government was very worried however, that these organizations *did* represent a real threat and they employed methods not always in keeping with the Constitution to suppress them.

Vallandigham became the head of the Copperheads. He continued to make speeches condemning the war and in May 1863 was arrested for “*expressing treasonable sympathy with the enemy*” in violation of an order issued by General Burnside, of Fredericksburg fame. Tried by a military court, he was sentenced to imprisonment. His arrest raised immediate protests by both the anti-war factions and by those genuinely concerned about the loss of civil liberty it represented.

President Lincoln knew that Clement Vallandigham, who he called a “*wily agitator*” as a jailed martyr was an even more potent weapon of the anti-war faction than when he was not in prison. He came up with a novel way to solve this dilemma, **he had Vallandigham sent under a white flag through the opposing lines into the Confederacy!**

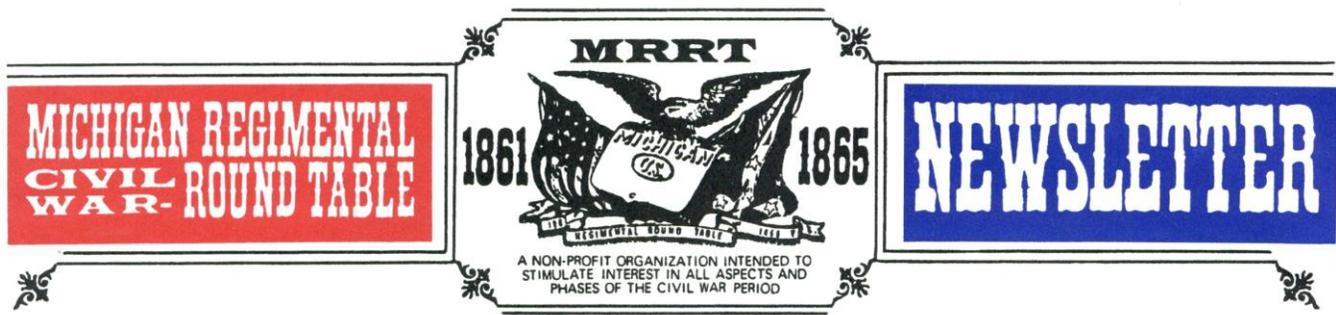
The Confederate government was at first unsure what to make of him, he was initially treated as an enemy alien. Eventually he left the Confederacy on a blockade runner and traveled to Windsor, Ontario. He actually ran for governor of Ohio from Windsor and did well in the Democratic primary but lost the election.

Clement became the head of the Sons of Liberty during the spring of 1864 and then **conspired with Jacob Thompson, head of the Confederate spy ring in British North America, to try to establish a breakaway of the states of Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, and Illinois to form a “*Northwestern Confederacy*”.** Clement reentered the North in order to ferment this four-state revolt which, of course, never materialized.

While back in Ohio, he again agitated against the war and even attended the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. He supported the convention’s anti-war platform which was eventually undermined by candidate George McCellan’s disavow of it. President Lincoln decided to let Vallandigham stay free after his return but to have him watched. As the war slowly ground to a successful conclusion, Vallandigham’s influence waned.

After the war, he continued to resist black suffrage at first, but changed his stance in 1871 when he advocated the “*New Departure*” strategy for the northern Democratic party which chose to bury the past and instead support equality of all persons as well as other progressive ideas such as civil service reform.

Continuing in his law practice, he met a bizarre end when he accidentally fatally shot himself while trying to demonstrate why his client could not have committed the crime of which he was accused! His client was later acquitted.



Quiz Questions: This month’s questions pertain to General U.S. Grant:

1. What unit was his first Civil War command? Which Illinois Congressman, later President Grant’s first Secretary of State, was instrumental in gaining Grant his rank of brigadier general?
2. What was Grant’s real name? Which West Point class did he graduate in and what was his class ranking?
3. Which two Democrats did he defeat in the Presidential Elections of 1868 and 1872?
4. Which of these is NOT true of U.S. Grant? A) Once sold firewood on the streets of St. Louis B) had little use for organized religion C) once stopped for speeding and fined \$20 while President D) bragged that no one had seen him nude since he was six years old E) hated the sight of rare meat or animal blood F) once sued the famous distiller Hiram Walker while serving in Detroit G) was an accomplished artist and musician
5. Where did Grant lead an ill-advised attack in his first combat of the Civil War? What nickname did he obtain for his attacks on Forts Henry and Donelson?

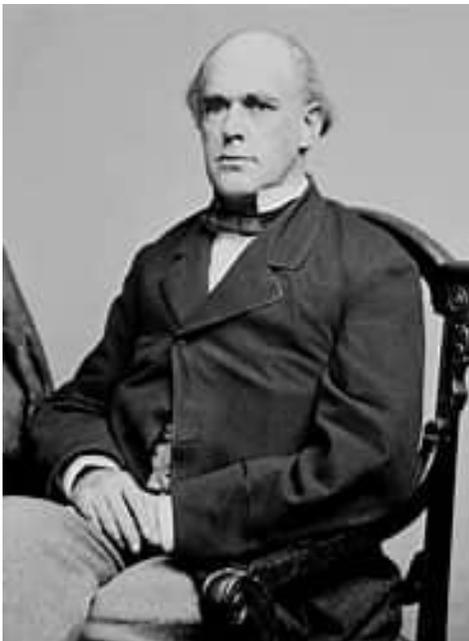
Our thanks to “Old Sarge” for his help with these great questions.

Civil War Essentials - U.S. Government Financing of the Civil War

Fighting the Civil War was very expensive for the Federal Government. **During the 1850’s the government spent roughly \$1 million PER WEEK. By as early as mid-1861, the cost of conducting the war was \$1.5 million PER DAY. Before the war ended in 1865, spending had increased to \$3.5 million PER DAY. The Federal government became the first government to spend more than \$1 billion in a single year. The total cost of the war in today’s money has been estimated to be \$68.2 billion. World War 2 cost \$4.7 trillion.**

Funding Sources

President Lincoln and Treasury Secretary Salmon P. Chase were able to create war funding measures that are still used today. The President left most financing decisions to Secretary Chase and his successors. Among the measures adopted were higher tariffs, proceeds from loans and bond sales, and the issuance of paper money not backed by gold or silver, referred to as (“*greenbacks*”).

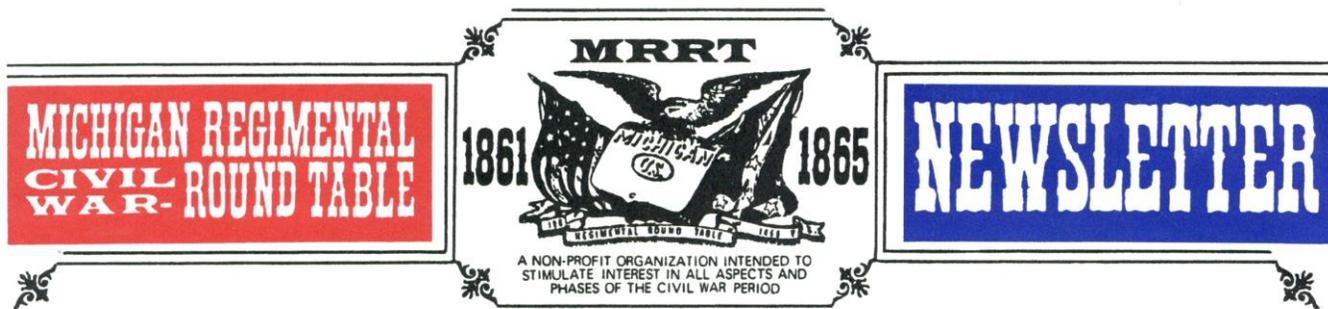


War Bonds

Secretary Chase (picture) told Congress in summer 1861 that \$320 million would be needed over the next fiscal year to finance the war. He thought that \$300 million would be available from borrowing, raising existing taxes, and the sale of public lands. Congress would have to come up with the remaining balance.

Congress authorized the Treasury to borrow as much as \$250 million for the war effort by issuing bonds and notes. Congress wanted to sell them to a wide-range of investors, including small-business owners and families. Buying this government “*paper*” showed support for the war effort.

There were a variety of bonds, including a “*bearer instrument*” where the bearer received the principal due from the Treasury, and bonds registered in the bond owner’s name and interest was credited when due. “*Seven-Thirties*” were notes that matured in three years and paid investors 7.3% interest per year. “*Twenties*” were bonds that matured in 20 years but redeemable after only five years, paying 6% interest.



Paper Currency

“Demand Notes” were the most historically and economically significant bonds issued during the war. The Demand Notes were redeemable in coin “on demand”. These notes were called “greenbacks” because of their green ink on their reverse, a name still in use today. These notes, in \$5, \$10, and \$20 denominations, were the first successful domestic currency.



By 1862, the federal government was having trouble financing the war. The U.S. Demand Notes were increasingly unredeemable, and the value of the declined. A bill was introduced in Congress to permit the Treasury to issue \$150 million in notes as “legal tender”. Legal tender guaranteed that creditors would accept the notes even though they were not backed by gold, bank deposits, and offered no interest. The first \$1 Legal Tender Note was issued in 1862 with Secretary

Chase’s picture on the front (picture above).

The National Banking Act of 1863 established a uniform national currency and national federal banks. The National Banks had to purchase U.S. government securities as backing for “National Bank Notes”. Most of the U.S. paper currency that circulated from 1862 to 1932 were these National Bank Notes.

Gold certificates, which were paper currency backed by gold reserves, were first issued in 1863 and put into general circulation in 1865. Each bill gave its holder title to a matching amount of gold coin.

Secretary Chase created a federal paper currency to cover government debt. The circulating money those ordinary citizens used was completely transformed.

Federal Income Tax

President Lincoln signed a law in 1862 imposing a graduated income tax. The income tax was declared unconstitutional in 1872 but returned in 1909 with the 16th amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Quiz Answers:

1. The 21st Illinois Infantry and Congressman Elihu B. Washburne
2. Hiram Ulysses Grant and 1843 (number 21 Of 39)
3. Horatio Seymour and Horace Greeley
4. G) Grant was an amateur artist but a near tone-deaf musician
5. Belmont, Missouri and “Unconditional Surrender”.

Confederate Paper Money

The Confederate States first paper money was issued in April 1861. Over the next three years 70 different types of paper money were issued. Almost every note was hand signed and numbered. Since the U.S. never recognized the Confederate government the money became worthless to the holders of the funds.

Today, Confederate money does have value for collectors. Most of the heavily printed money is still available to some extent. Collectors hold on to the most valuable paper money.