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Michigan Regimental Round Table Newsletter—Page 1

August 2022

Our August meeting will be on Monday, August 29, 2022, at 6:30 pm in the basement of the Farmington Library – corner of Grand River and Farmington Road. Our speaker will begin around 7:00 pm after a 6:30 pm business meeting.

We welcome back Jack Dempsey again, as our August speaker. Jack will speak on his new book “Heart in Tatters Eunice Hunt Tripler and the Civil War”. Eunice Hunt Tripler married Dr. Charles Tripler in Detroit in March 1841. Dr. Tripler wrote and published, *“Manual of the Medical Officer of the Army of the United States”*. After Dr. Tripler’s death Eunice was a vocal advocate for her husband’s legacy. Jack’s book has received several excellent reviews. *“Enlightening and entertaining, the MCWA has done a real service to Civil War scholarship in publishing these lively and forthright memoirs”* Dr. Gerry Prokopowicz, Civil War Talk Radio. **Once again, proceeds from sale of this book will help with the project to erect a Michigan monument at Antietam. The book is available at \$19.95. This will be another great presentation!**

October 14th to 16th Field Trip to Culpepper, Virginia

Yes, we are planning for our October trip to Culpepper, Virginia, where we will tour the Brandy Station Battlefield and other Civil War sites! We already have almost 30 signed-up (early August) for the field trip!

The tour dates are Friday evening, October 14th through Sunday afternoon, October 16th.

Our tour guide will be Chris Army – with assistance from Susan Ralston and Chuck Laudner. Chris and Susan operate the new “Culpepper Battlefield Tours”. Their website is <https://www.culpepperbattlefields.org/>

The tour cost (excluding hotel expenses and travel to Virginia and back home) is \$250. Please bring a check to our August meeting or send it to Jeanie at her home. Her address is: 29835 Northbrook, Farmington Hills, MI 48335-2326. Make your check out to Jeanie. The bank does not like checks made out to the Roundtable. Thank you!

Hotel – Best Western Culpepper (block of rooms has been reserved at \$119.99 per night plus taxes. **To reserve a room (Block under MRRT Bus Tour), call 540.825.1253**

Tour:

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2022

7:30 pm to 8:30 pm Meet and greet with guides at the hotel to discuss the tour.

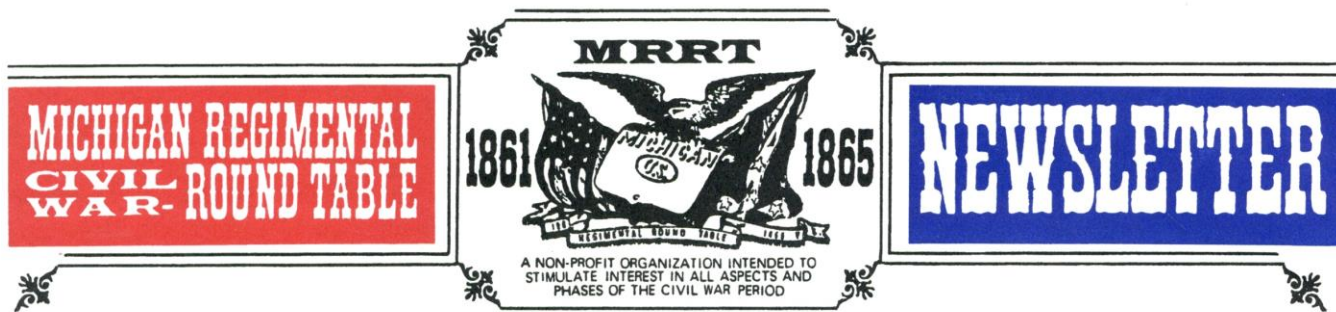
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2022

8:30 am to 6:00 pm

- Campaign Plan and Opening Shots of the Brandy Station battle
- Buford’s Knoll (approximately one mile each way) and Fleetwood Hill
- **Banquet Style Lunch at Green Ribbon at Old House Vineyards in Culpepper.** A choice of 1 of 3 pub-style sandwiches, salad or a side, dessert, and soft drink. Vegetarian and dairy-free options will be available. **This replaces the “traditional” evening banquet.**
- Stevensburg Action and Hansbrough’s Ridge

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2022

- Sites of the Federal Winter Encampment and Culpepper National Cemetery
- Clark’s Mountain (provisional)
- Lunch – Linn Park (Stevensburg) – box lunch delivered by Subway. Club, turkey, or vegetarian on wheat with chips, cookie, and drink.



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- Continued sites of Winter Encampment and USCT Monument (dedicated November 2021)
- Visit/hike to Germanna Ford

If you want to sign up or have question(s) please contact Jeanie Graham at grahamjeanie@hotmail.com, 248.225.7596, or Linda Gerhardt at lindagerhardt@comcast.net 586.588.2712. We will send via e-mail or with the monthly mailing any updates to the trip.

Please note that each participant must provide their own transportation to and from Culpepper, VA, as in prior years.

Wearing a mask during our meeting is a personal decision. Masks will be available for your personal use.

The Roundtable thanks Dr. Roger Rosentreter, PhD, of Michigan State, for a great presentation on “*The Battle of Gettysburg with a Slight Emphasis on Michigan’s role in the Greatest Battle Ever Fought on the North American Continent*”. Michigan contributed 4,000 soldiers to the Army of the Potomac for this great victory. The new Union commander, George Meade, was an accomplished lower-level field officer. He did not like volunteers, which most of the Army of the Potomac was. General Lee had to reshuffle the Confederate army corps commanders after the death of Stonewall Jackson. His main subordinate, General Longstreet, wanted a tactical defensive invasion. The Yankees marching North wrote that “*we are cheered by all the people*”. Of course, the soldiers complained about the Pennsylvania farmer’s prices for provisions. Bread cost \$1. The Pennsylvanians were a people of barns, not brains.

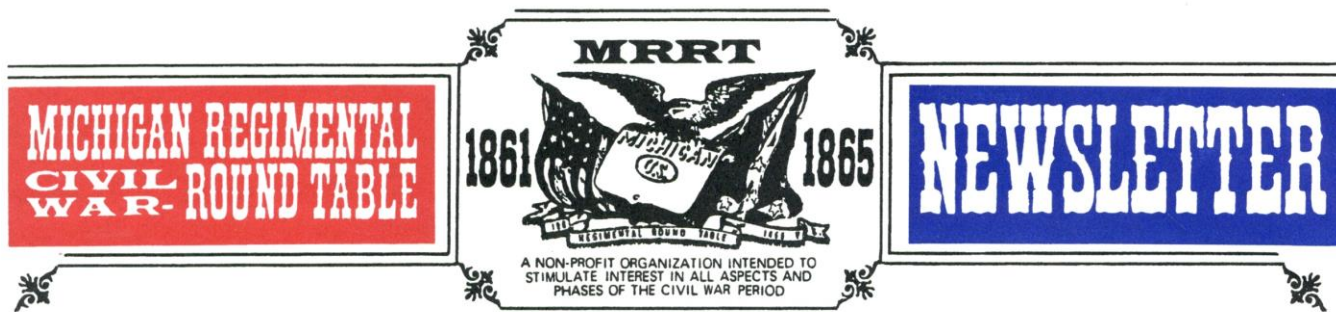


The 24th Michigan (monument at left) was the first Michigan regiment to enter Gettysburg, where all the roads in the area met. The 24th was part of the Iron Brigade, which wore the Black Hats. When the fighting began, the Confederates were very confident as they thought that they were only fighting militia. They soon realized that it was the Iron Brigade, one of the best units in the Union Army. The 24th lost half a dozen color bearers or more in the fighting. The battle intensified at 3:00 pm as the 24th’s commander, Colonel Morrow was wounded. Volleys were being fired at a 20 yards distance from each other. The 24th lost 496 men, approximately 80% of the regiment. Colonel Morrow was captured. Twenty-two of the twenty-five officers were killed or wounded on July 1st.

Civil War historian Bruce Catton (from Benzonia, MI) wrote that July 2nd was a “*day where crisis followed crisis*”. The saying that “*No battle plan survives first contact with the enemy*” was very true on July 2. Hiram Berdan of Michigan put together four companies of sharpshooters from the state. He did not wait to be on the firing line as General Sickles moved the Third Corps forward into the battle.

The Third Michigan, commanded by Colonel Bryon Pierce, fought in the Peach Orchard where the firing range was 50 yards. Colonel Pierce was wounded when he was shot off his horse. The First Michigan and the Fifth Michigan also joined the fight. Colonel Harrison Jeffers led the 4th Michigan into the Wheatfield. The fighting was “*every man for himself.*” Colonel Jeffers was bayoneted and died on July 3rd. Wheatfield casualties were 50%.

The 16th Michigan was on the left end of Little Round Top. The “*famous*” 20th Maine was on the right end. “*It was the hardest we ever done to drive them (the Texans) back*”. This was the first time these Confederates had been driven back. Controversially, the 16th’s Colonel ended up behind the battle line because he said that the 16th’s flag was there.



Even though General Alpheus Williams of Detroit organized the Union defenses on Culp's Hill, he is largely forgotten today. General Meade did not even mention General Williams' great efforts in his after-the-battle report. Today, Williams Avenue on the battlefield is empty.

General Henry Hunt, of Detroit, was the artillery chief of the Army of the Potomac. His grandfather was at the Battle of Lexington during the Revolution. Henry entered West Point at the age of 16. **Hunt decided to hold the artillery fire until the Confederate infantry advanced forward on July 3rd. He saved ammunition and duped the Confederates into believing that the Union artillery was mostly out of action prior to the charge.**

Norman Hall, from Monroe County, was the only Michigan soldier at Fort Sumter in April 1861. His brigade, including the 7th Michigan, was involved in defeating Pickett's Charge at the Copse of Trees. Additionally, the 1st Michigan Light Artillery was at the Copse of Trees.

General George Custer commanded the 1st, 5th, 6th, and 7th Michigan Cavalry regiments in the Michigan Cavalry Brigade. General Custer yelled "*Come on, you Wolverines!*" as the brigade helped stop Confederate general J.E.B. Stuart's plan to go around the Union Army and create "*chaos*". Colonel Russell Alger of the 5th Michigan Cavalry led the "*most gallant charge of the war*". General Elon Farnsworth, a graduate of the University of Michigan, was killed in an ill-fated charge against Confederate infantry on July 3rd after the battle had ended. General Kilpatrick ordered this suicidal charge,

More than 1,100 of the 4,000 Michigan soldiers that participated in the Battle of Gettysburg became casualties. Several of them are buried in the National Cemetery. There are 166 identified gravesites with many more unidentified in the Michigan plot. There are ten Michigan monuments on the Gettysburg battlefield.

Civil War Essentials - Atlanta and its Railroads

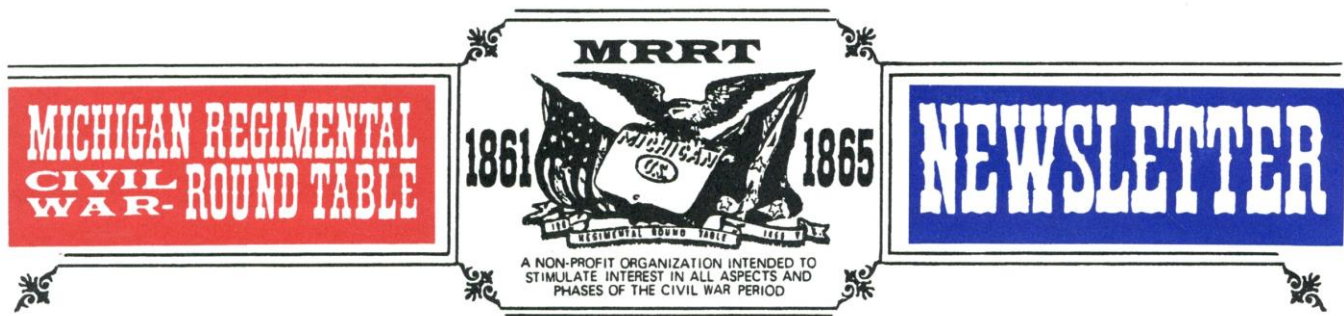
Atlanta, Georgia was a major hub of the southern railroad system prior to the Civil War and its critical value increased as the war came on. Its capture by Sherman's army in the fall of 1864 has been judged to be the single most important factor in ensuring the re-election of Abraham Lincoln and therefore the eventual victory of the north.

The town was unofficially known as "Terminus" in its early days and then as Marthasville after its first post office was established in 1843. **When the Western & Atlantic RR arrived in 1845 and stimulated the town's growth, the railroad began using the made-up name Atlanta on its station sign and the nickname stuck.**

Although it rapidly diversified in the 1850s, Atlanta remained a railroad town. In addition to the W&A, the Georgia RR, the Macon & Western RR, and the Atlanta & West Point RR all served the city. Its large passenger depot handled so many travelers that Atlanta became known as the "Gate City of the South". By 1860, the population had reached 12,000 and it was home to manufacturing as well as insurance and banking concerns.



In January 1861, a majority of Atlanta's voters elected a pro-secession delegation to go to Milledgeville, then the state capital, to help decide whether Georgia should leave the Union. **While there would be no actual fighting near the city for years, the usual war-related activities occurred.** Men become soldiers, drilled, and left to go off to battlefields elsewhere. Women became involved in caring for the wounded and providing food and other supplies to troops in transit. By the end of 1861, some consumer goods such as



coffee, tea, etc., were already becoming expensive and hard to find. The city's

manufacturing facilities converted to turn out military supplies including armor plate, pistols, rifles, and cannon. The Atlanta Arsenal produced over 330,000 rounds of ammunition and 2,000,000 percussion caps each month. Because of the railroads and the factories, warehouses were concentrated around Atlanta.

By the spring of 1862, Confederate military regulations became an increasingly present fact of life for Atlanta residents. General Bragg declared martial law, first in the city and then in the surrounding area several months later. While some residents fled to what they presumed were safer locations, refugees, and workers from other parts of the CSA swelled the population to over 20,000.

The fall of Vicksburg, Mississippi in the summer of 1863 acted as a tocsin for the Confederate authorities. Realizing the coming danger to Atlanta, they ordered the construction of defensive fortifications. **Colonel Lemuel Grant laid out a defense built around seventeen mutually supporting forts, designated A through R, connected by 10 miles of trenches and obstructions** (photo on Page 3). Major warfare entered Georgia at the Chickamauga battle later in 1863 – although a Confederate victory, its relative proximity (110 miles) to Atlanta heightened the concern of the city's residents. The subsequent Federal victory at Chattanooga increased their fears.

William T. Sherman began his historic campaign against Atlanta in May 1864. Confederate General Joseph E. Johnson conducted a skilled defense of northern Georgia, but his smaller army was not strong enough to stop Sherman who used flanking maneuvers to force the rebel army out of successive defensive positions. **Johnson was replaced by**



Jefferson Davis in mid-July 1864 for failure to keep the Yankees away from the city. Almost immediately his successor, John B. Hood, tried to knock Sherman's army back from Atlanta with a series of head-long attacks – the battles of Peachtree Creek and Bald Hill - which failed after hard fighting and resulted in major losses for the Confederates. Hood then pulled back into the city's defensive perimeter. Sherman began a siege of Atlanta which included shelling the city itself. This prompted a protest from the mayor, James M. Calhoun, to which Sherman replied in a vein similar to earlier comments from him - *"war is cruelty, and you cannot refine [limit] it"*. After more than a month of siege warfare, Sherman withdrew from his lines north and west of the city and circled around to attack the last two railroads open to the city. **Hood could not stop the Federals at Jonesboro on September 1 and was thus forced to evacuate**

Atlanta. His troops fired or blew up the city's remaining strategic assets (some equipment had been removed before the siege) such as the Arsenal, railroad equipment and manufacturing sites (photo left). The next day, Mayor Calhoun surrendered the city to Sherman saying, *"the fortune of war has placed Atlanta in your hands"* and asked him to protect its citizens and their private property. **The hard-bitten Sherman had different ideas and ordered that all residents pack up and leave the place.** During a ten-day period, over 2,000 people and their most treasured (and portable) possessions were conveyed 12 miles in Federal army wagons to Rough and Ready Station and turned over to the Confederates. They would return after Sherman left Atlanta to find most of their homes and businesses destroyed. When Sherman left on his famous "March to the Sea", he ordered that any strategic properties not already in ruins be destroyed.

That marked the end of Atlanta's role in the war. **It was quickly rebuilt after the war and grew larger and more important than ever.** In 1868, Atlanta replaced Milledgeville as the state capital and is today the largest city in Georgia.