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Michigan Regimental Round Table Newsletter—Page 1

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**Trip:** Our trip to Perryville on October 10<sup>th</sup> and October 11<sup>th</sup> is only 2 weeks away. We will meet with our tour guides at 7:30 PM on Friday, October 9<sup>th</sup> at the Hampton Inn in Danville, Kentucky. This is going to be a great trip!

**The Roundtable welcomes long-time MRRT member Bee Friedlander, who will present “Civil War Animals” on Monday, September 28th.** Animals played important roles during the Civil War. Most of us are familiar with General Lee’s horse Traveller and the 8<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin’s eagle mascot. The countless unnamed animals that served, suffered and died during the war also deserve our attention. The 4 M’s: civil war mascots, civil war monuments to animals, military uses of animals, and the how the animal welfare movement flourished after the war ended will be the focus of Bee’s presentation.

Bee has been a member of the Roundtable since 1984, after taking Jerry Maxwell’s class at Oakland Community College. This presentation combines two of her passions: animals and history. After retiring as a lawyer, she worked for the Animals and Society Institute non-profit group in Ann Arbor. She retired from this in 2014. She has been actively involved with the Plymouth Historical Society, where she served as President for several years.



**The Roundtable wants to thank member Jeff Glass for his outstanding discussion of “John Bull and the Yankees: British/U.S. Relations before and during the Civil War”.** The story of U.S. / British relations began before the Revolution. After the War of 1812 the two countries did not like each other for several years.

Despite conflict with Britain over trade in the West Indies, progress was made in finalizing the border between the U.S. and Canada during the 1840’s. Treaties were signed to confirm the borders of Maine and Minnesota and the Great Lakes were demilitarized during the 1840’s. The 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel was agreed to as the border west of the Great Lakes. Britain secured Vancouver Island.

When the Civil War began, the British government conceded that the U.S. blockade of Southern ports was legal. Lord Palmerston, the British Prime Minister, disliked slavery but gave the Confederates equal trading status with the Union.

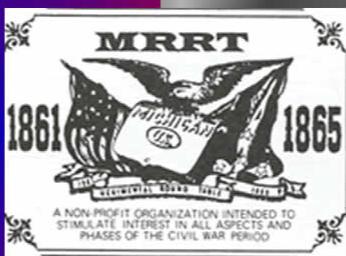
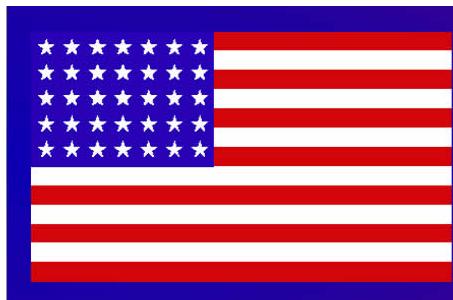


Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria, was against any war with U.S. from the beginning of the American Civil War.

The British opinion battle over the American Civil War was intense. The landed gentry saw the U.S. as a threat, with U.S. style democracy possibly spreading to Great Britain. Growing U.S. economic power was a major threat. Southern gentlemen were like them. The working class supported the North, especially after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued. Slavery was immoral.

The South believed that Europe would intervene in the war to keep the cotton coming because without it the European economy would collapse. However, the 1860 crop was so large that British mills had a surplus for 1861 with some cotton being sold back to the Northern states.

James Mason (Britain) and John Slidell (France) were Confederate envoys that made unsuccessful trips to Europe. Their ship, *RMS Trent*, was seized by the *USS San Jacinto*, on November 8, 1861. Mason and Trent were arrested and taken to Boston. The *RMS Trent* continued on to Europe. The British viewed this as an insult to them and sent more troops to Canada (still a British colony until 1867). U.S. Secretary



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of State Seward sent a letter to the British – the two envoys were released but with no apology. The British reacted favorably to this action.

The Confederate warships, *CSS Alabama* and *CSS Florida*, were built in England. The *CSS Alabama* destroyed 68 U.S. vessels during the war before being captured. Great Britain paid \$15.2 million to the U.S. in 1872 for Alabama claims. The U.S. Ambassador, Charles Francis Adams, strongly protested the warships being built in England. Finally, on September 8, 1863 the British stopped two rams from sailing which sharply reduced the possibility of war between Britain and the Union.

There were several Confederate operatives in British Canada. An attack on Camp Douglas, a prison camp in Chicago, failed because Union spies found out about it. The Johnson's Island prison camp on Lake Erie was attacked in September 1864. The *U.S.S. Michigan* helped to stop the attack.

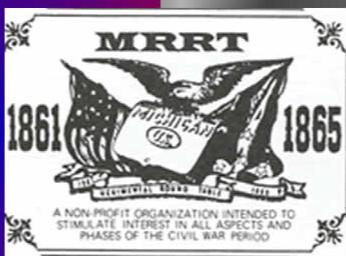
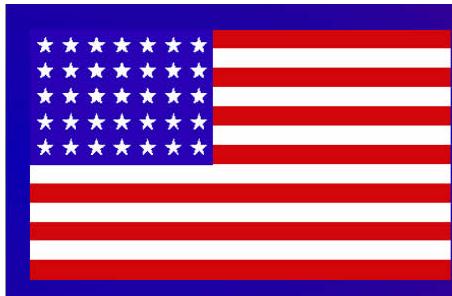
The most successful attack from Canada was on several banks in St. Albans, Vermont. The raiders seized more than \$200,000 from the banks but were unable to burn the town. The British captured 13 of the raiders that returned to Canada after the raid. After the war, \$87,000 was returned to the St. Albans' banks.

The British did not intervene in the Civil War because they were following their laws and interests. Slavery was disliked and major trade continued with the North during the war. They were very careful with other European countries, especially France. The French Emperor, Napoleon III, was unwilling to get involved alone. The French invaded Mexico during the war. After the war ended, the U.S. sent an army to the border to encourage the French to leave, which they did, resulting in the execution of Emperor Maximilian.

**MRRT Minutes for August 31, 2015:** The **Call to Order** 6:40 pm, with approximately 25 people present for the business meeting and 35 for the speakers' presentation. **Pledge** Dedicated to the memory of long-time member Ray Droste **Introduction of Guests and New Members** Visitor Mike VanHemert, who expressed an interest in going on Perryville trip. **Secretary's Report** Approved **Newspapers** Bob Newell pointed out that several Roundtable websites were not active. The Charleston, South Carolina site has not been updated in 2 years. **Treasurer's Report** Joseph M. Shellhaas' family made a donation to the Roundtable. **Preservation** Joe Epstein said that the Shenandoah Valley Battle Foundation is working to save 24 acres at Tom's Brook, Virginia. The Civil War Trust is trying to preserve 295 acres at the western edge of the Shiloh battlefield. **Trip** Jeanie Graham is collecting for the trip – 27 have paid with 32 signed up to go. Our group will meet with the tour guides at the Danville Hampton Inn at 7:30 on Friday, October 9<sup>th</sup>. The preliminary itinerary was handed out at the meeting. Linda Gerhardt said that the menu for Saturday's banquet at the Shaker Village is available. **Website** Our website is up-to-date for the trip and August's program **Items of Interest** Two reproductions of Loomis' Battery cannon have been placed in front of the Michigan State Capitol building in Lansing. The original cannon were scrapped for the war effort during World War 2.

#### **Quiz Questions: This month's questions and answers pertain to Civil War Animals.**

1. Old Abe, the famous bald eagle was the mascot of the 8<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin. Who was the mascot of the 49<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin and what happened to him?
2. When asked if he had a hobby, she replied "Cats." Who said that? About whom?
3. Approximately how many horses and mules served at Gettysburg, and about how many died?
4. Which Civil War era individual said, "It should be the study of every farmer to make his horse his companion and friend...All loud and boisterous commands, and brutal flogging should be banished from the field. A horse is in many respects like a man. He has five senses, and has memory, affection, and reason..."?
5. Although mules were usually too skittish for use under fire, they are said to have played a role in one major battle. Which battle was it and what happened during the battle?



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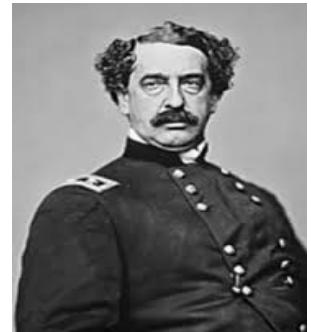
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**Civil War Essentials – Baseball** The first item to discuss is whether or not the Doubleday myth is true. **The Doubleday myth is that Abner Doubleday (1819-1893), future Union hero at the Battle of Gettysburg, invented baseball in Cooperstown, NY in 1839.** This story began with a dispute in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century over whether baseball was invented in the United States or developed from the British game of rounders.

National League President Abraham G. Mills gave a rousing speech in 1889 that baseball was American, inciting the crowd to declare “No rounders!” Sportswriter Henry Chadwick, a British native, discussed the similarities between baseball and rounders. Finally, the Mills Commission was formed in 1905 to decide between the American game of “Old Cat” and rounders as the game baseball came from.

None of the commission’s 7 members believed in the rounders theory.

According to the myth, mining engineer Abner Graves claimed that he saw Abner Doubleday create a diagram of a baseball diamond in approximately 1839. Chicago Cubs President Albert Spaulding (member of the Baseball Hall of Fame) wrote Graves a letter asking for evidence to back up his claim. Graves responded by saying the original drawing had not been saved and that most of the players involved had died. However, the Mills Report of December 30, 1907 gave Doubleday credit for inventing the game.



There were several reasons to doubt the validity of the Mills Report. For instance, Abner Graves was only 5 years old in 1839. He was anti-British and spent time in an insane asylum late in his life. There are also significant personal issues with Abner Doubleday inventing baseball. Doubleday was not in Cooperstown during 1839 because he was a plebe at West Point. Plebes were rarely given leave. Furthermore, baseball was only mentioned in his diaries or letters once during his lifetime. During 1871 he wrote a letter requesting baseball equipment. Abraham Mills spent time with Doubleday during the Civil War and afterwards but mentioned no involvement with baseball until Abner Graves’ testimony became public. The evidence is clear that Doubleday was not the inventor of baseball.

Present day baseball has several legacies dating to the Doubleday story. The National Baseball Hall of Fame was built during the 1930’s in Cooperstown, the alleged site of Doubleday’s first game. The local baseball stadium was named Doubleday Field. However, Abner Doubleday is not a member of the Hall of Fame.

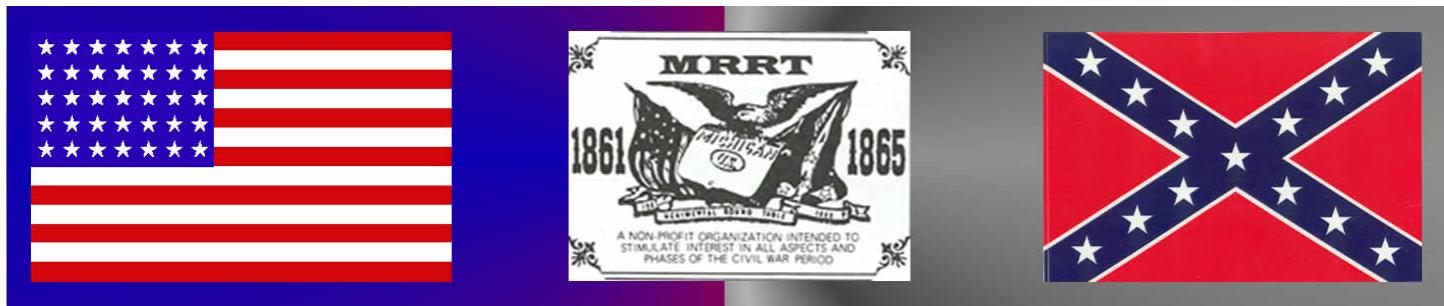
### Your Billy Yank Reporter “The Redemption of Col. George Willards Harpers Ferry Cowards”

The place is Gettysburg on July 2<sup>nd</sup>. The time is late afternoon, almost dark. Fighting is still raging in the Wheatfield and General Barksdale has unleashed his brigade’s fury on the Peach Orchard and Wilcox’s Alabama and Lang’s Florida brigades were crossing the Emmitsburg Road.

General Meade had ordered General Winfield Hancock to take command of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps to somehow hold off a complete collapse until darkness could bring fighting to a standstill. While trying to build a strong line with artillery and any spare regiments he could find, Hancock was still left with that 400 yard gap that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps’ flight had created. Hancock sent his aide to the northern end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps line, near the Bryan farm, to General Alexander Hays’ division. The aide reported “*General Hancock sends his compliments and wishes you to send one of your best brigades over there*” pointing to the Trostle Farm where the Mississippians had captured Watson’s Battery. General Hays turned to Col. George Willard and told him, “*Take your brigade over there and knock hell out of the Rebs*”.

Not many would have regarded Willards’ Brigade as Hays’ “Best”. These were the notorious “Harper’s Ferry Cowards” – the 39<sup>th</sup>, 111<sup>th</sup>, 125<sup>th</sup>, and 126<sup>th</sup> New York regiments. But General Hays had taken notice of these New Yorkers and had made them his pet rehabilitation project. He knew what they could do and had faith in them.

The 11<sup>th</sup>, 125<sup>th</sup>, and 126<sup>th</sup> New York were mustered in from August 20, 1862 to August 27, 1862. The 125<sup>th</sup> was led by Col. George Willard, a commissioned Regular Army officer. The 39<sup>th</sup> New York was a veteran regiment, organized in



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New York in April 1861. Their commander was Col. Frederick D'Utassy. Many of the men had served in European armies.

During Lee's Maryland Campaign the 111<sup>th</sup>, 125<sup>th</sup>, and 126<sup>th</sup> were assigned to Harper's Ferry. They arrived on Sept. 12<sup>th</sup> and were joined by the 39<sup>th</sup> New York. The New Yorkers were involved in Confederate General Lafayette McLaws attacked at Maryland Heights. These raw recruits, with less than one month's experience, were overwhelmed by McLaws' seasoned and battle-hardened troops. Colonel Dixon Miles surrendered the garrison of over 12,000 men on September 15<sup>th</sup>. The prisoners were quickly paroled after the surrender and finally reached Camp Douglas in Chicago around September 27<sup>th</sup>. The men would be there two months waiting for their official exchange.

Within two weeks after the surrender the military launched an investigation into the Harpers' Ferry affair. The commission's official report fixed the blame for the surrender on the officers in charge of the garrison, but also severely rebuked the New Yorkers. The report read: "*The Commission calls attention to the disgraceful behavior of the 126<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry.*" The damage had been done. As new Illinois recruits passed through Camp Douglas they began to taunt the New Yorkers with epithet "*Harpers Ferry cowards*".

The New York troops at Harpers Ferry received word that they had been exchanged on November 19, 1862. They were ordered to Washington to be armed and ready for duty. They arrived on November 25<sup>th</sup> and were assigned to the Capital's outer defenses. The four regiments were brigaded under Colonel D'Utassy and became the Third Brigade, Silas Casey's Division, of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Corps. These regiments would remain together for the remainder of the war.

Brigadier General Alexander Hays became the brigade's commander on January 6, 1863. He was a West Point graduate who had a fondness for fighting. He was given command of the brigade possibly because of its questionable quality. General Hays was a strict disciplinarian but always fair. He soon had them drilling and training until the results were apparent. He boasted, "*The Harpers Ferry boys have turned out trumps, and when we do get a chance look for blood*".

#### **End of Part 1 – Your Billy Yank reporter will continue with the next issue.**

1. Timothy, a golden eagle, was the 49<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin's mascot. After the war he (name changed to Andy Johnson) and Old Abe of the 8<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin were housed together at the Wisconsin State Capitol. The two birds fought frequently with Old Abe seriously injuring Andy Johnson, who eventually died from his injuries. They were embalmed and placed together in the Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Hall.
1. Mary Todd Lincoln/Abraham Lincoln
2. 72,000 horses and 5,000 mules participated at Gettysburg with 5,000 dying.
3. Frederic Douglass
4. During the Chattanooga Campaign, at the Battle of Wauhatchie, TN on October 28, 1863. Approximately 200 mules broke loose from the Union lines and ran into the Confederate lines. The Confederates fell back in confusion from what they thought was a cavalry charge.

This will be another great meeting on Monday, September 28th, with MRRT member Bee Friedlander presenting "Civil War Animals" at the Farmington Community Library. The business meeting will begin at 6:30 pm. Also, check-out our website at <http://history.farmlib.org/mrrt/>.