

Our Monday, September 25, 2017 meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. in the basement of the Farmington Library with long-time member Larry Hathcock speaking on “The Last Veterans of the Blue and Gray”. This will be a very informative and entertaining presentation. Please visit our website at <http://www.farmlib.org/mrrt>

Our trip to Shiloh and Corinth on October 21st and 22nd is rapidly approaching! Friday night, October 20th, we will have a meeting at our hotel, the Hampton Inn Pickwick Dam at Shiloh Falls, Tennessee at 7:30 pm. We will be touring the Shiloh battlefield on Saturday and the historic district of Corinth, Mississippi on Sunday.

We will be taking lunch and dinner orders at the September meeting.

If you previously signed up for the trip but are now unable to go please notify Linda (586.588.2712), Mollie (313.530.8516), or Jeanie (248.225.7596) so someone from the waiting list can be put on the bus. Please call our committee if you have any questions.

Our hotel is the Hampton Inn Pickwick Dam at Shiloh Falls –90 Old South Road, Counce, TN. Call (731)-689-3031 to book a room and request the CWR block rate (AVAILABLE UNTIL OCT. 6). The rate is \$115/night + tax for a king room or a double bed.

The Roundtable welcomes long-time member Larry Hathcock who will speak on “The Last Veterans of the Blue and Gray”. On December 19, 1959 on the eve of the Civil War Centennial, Walter Williams of Houston, Texas died at the age of 117. He was celebrated as the last Confederate soldier and the last living Civil War veteran. Ulysses S. Grant III, Chairman of the Civil War Centennial Commission, said that his death was an occasion for national mourning. President Eisenhower ordered that all American flags be flown at half-staff until his funeral four days later. Unfortunately, Walter Williams’ claims were not true. Larry Hathcock, long-time member and past President of the Roundtable, will discuss Williams’ claims and talk about the two men who were the last veterans of the Blue and Gray. Larry is a retired school teacher.



The Roundtable thanks David Ingall for his outstanding presentation on “General George Armstrong Custer’s Life through the Civil War: The Forgotten Custer”. David’s hometown of Monroe, Michigan has 23 Custer sites for us to explore and Monroe celebrates the Custer family during the first week of October each year.

Life before the Civil War

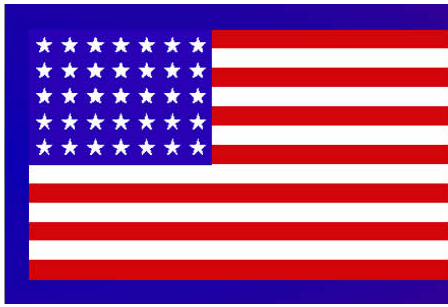
George Custer was born on December 5, 1839 in New Rumley, Ohio (near the West Virginia border), the third child of Emanuel and Maria Custer. Emanuel was a blacksmith. His two older brothers died in infancy. His younger brother Nevin was the only one that had children. Today’s Custer family is descended from Nevin.



George moved to Monroe, MI for better schooling opportunities, living there from age 10 to 16. He also spent time in New Rumley.

Congressman John Bingham, an Ohio Republican, appointed Custer to West Point. George Custer was a strong Democrat who received Republican support. The story was that Custer went to West Point to keep him away from his girlfriend, Molly.

George went to prep school for one year and then taught school before enrolling at West Point in 1857 with a class of 68 plebes. He was the “class clown” and finished as the “goat” or last in a graduation class of 34. Several class members left early to join the Confederate army. George graduated a year early because the Civil War had started.



The Civil War

2nd Lieutenant George Custer of the 2nd U.S. Cavalry served as a messenger at the First Battle of Bull Run. **During the 1862 Peninsula Campaign Lieutenant Custer of the 5th U.S. Cavalry became the first member of the Army of the Potomac to capture a Confederate flag (5th North Carolina), during the Battle of Williamsburg on May 5, 1862. He was one of the first men to go up in Thaddeus Lowe's balloons to observe the Confederate army.** George became a member of army commander General McClellan's staff. He went into the Chickahominy River with his horse to show General McClellan how deep the river was.

Lieutenant Custer was the best man at Confederate Captain "Gimlet" Lee's wedding. They were very good friends at West Point.

Promoted 1st Lieutenant Custer was deeply involved at the Battle of Antietam. He was right at the front, sending information back to General McClellan. Custer told McClellan, "We got to hit them, now!" George was in the famous picture of General McClellan and President Lincoln after the battle of Antietam.

Promotion to General and the Battle of Gettysburg

Custer became an aide to cavalry commander Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Pleasonton on June 9, 1863. Shortly thereafter Custer, Wesley Merritt, and Michigan's Elon Farnsworth were promoted to General. General Custer's first battle with the Michigan Cavalry Brigade was at Hanover, Pennsylvania on June 30, 1863. His general's uniform was described as a "circus rider gone mad".

General Custer's horse was shot at the Battle of Hunterstown, PA on July 2, 1863. He was not seriously wounded during the war, even though he had 11 horses shot. General Custer's only wound was at the Battle of Culpepper, VA on September 13, 1863 when he took some shrapnel.

General Custer and the famed Michigan Cavalry Brigade defeated General "Jeb" Stuart's Confederate cavalry on July 3, 1863. General Custer yelled "Come On, You Wolverines!" as they charged during a crucial time during the battle. He earned the respect of his men and the rest of the army.

1864 – 1865

George Custer married Elizabeth (Libby) Bacon (from Monroe) on February 9, 1864. Her father disapproved of George until he became a general. They were married at the First Presbyterian Church of Monroe.

General Custer was involved in the 1864 Overland Campaign. The Battle of Trevilian Station on June 12, 1864 became known as "Custer's First Last Stand". His men were totally surrounded, he lost his personal wagon and its contents but found a way for him and his men to escape.

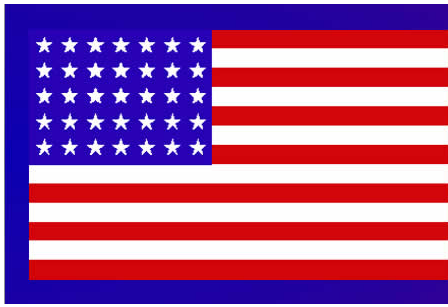
General Custer went to the Shenandoah Valley in August, 1864. He was promoted to command of the 3rd Cavalry Division on September 30, 1864. **Roundtable member Ron Cleveland has one of the guns that Custer captured at Tom's Brook on October 9, 1864.** Custer made the cover of Harper's Weekly after the Battle of Cedar Creek, VA. He saved the University of Virginia from being burned in early 1865.

General Custer's cavalry helped to force General Lee's surrender at Appomattox. He captured the Army of Northern Virginia's supply train. **After the surrender ceremony, General Sheridan purchased and presented the surrender table to Libby Ford to honor her husband's service to the Army.**

Great news! David has agreed to present the story of "General Custer and the Little Big Horn" during our September 2018 meeting!



MRRT Minutes for August 28, 2017: Call to Order 6:40 pm, about 20 present for business meeting with several more present for the speaker Pledge Dedicated to Larry Hathcock's brother, Sgt. Lee Hathcock, who died the previous week,



and to the sailors who died on the USS John McCain. **Introduction of Guests and New Members** Visitors included Ron Tomasik, Alice Duffy and Connor Duffy, age 11. **Treasurer's Report** Accepted **Secretary's Report** the July minutes should have said that free blacks in Pennsylvania voted until 1838 when that right was taken away. Report accepted **Preservation** Joe will provide notes at a later time. **Newsletters** None **Website** updated each month **Trip Report** Discussed on Page 1 of the newsletter. **Program** David Ingall will speak in Sept. 2018 on General Custer and the Little Big Horn **Items of Interest** Bee Friedlander discussed the removal of Confederate statues. Her view was that our group is not and has never been political. We all have our own point of view so that we should not take an official position. The controversy has been used by people for non-historic reasons. We, as people with a true interest in the Civil War, see a losing game if we only talk about monuments. We should stay apolitical and stick to history and preservation and not get bogged down with the hysteria associated with the removal of these monuments. Monuments alone don't bring about any knowledge of or interest in studying the Civil War. Our concern should be recruiting new members so that the Round Table movement doesn't fade away, and a focus on monuments isn't a good way to attract new people to our group.

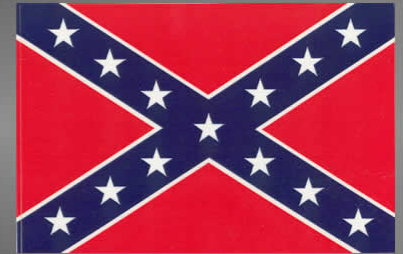
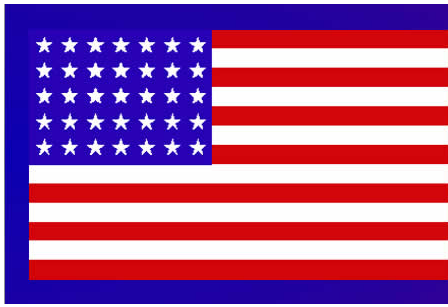
Gene's band, the 5th Regimental Band, was at the 33rd Civil War Reenactment in Jackson. The turnout was less than 10 years ago. The band will be at Greenmead in Livonia on September 23rd. **New Business** None **Old Business** None

Quiz Questions: This month's questions and answers pertain to the Battle of Shiloh.

1. Which four Michigan units were at the Battle of Shiloh?
2. Which Confederate general ordered 62 cannon to concentrate heavy fire on a solid Union line and what name was later given to this sunken road area?
3. What was the official name of the Confederate army and who replaced Albert Sidney Johnston after he died?
4. In which town and house was General Grant having breakfast about the time the battle began?
5. Which two Federal gunboats shelled the Confederates all night on April 6th and into the next morning?

Civil War Essentials – Battle of Shiloh On Sunday morning, April 6, 1862, 40,000 Confederate soldiers under the command of General Albert Sidney Johnston completed a march northeast from Corinth, Mississippi toward Ulysses S. Grant's army encamped along the Tennessee River. **The 23-mile march had taken the inexperienced Rebels three days to complete, yet they were about to pull off a major surprise attack on the unsuspecting Federals.** Certain conditions existed to enhance the element of surprise. **On the morning of the attack a thick fog had settled in patches over the battlefield which conspired to conceal the approaching enemy as well as muffle the sounds of the battle. Indeed, some bluecoats merely three-quarters of a mile from the intense musketry were either sound asleep or blithely preparing their breakfasts. Further enhancing the Rebel fortunes that morning, the Federal high command, expecting no onslaught, had dug no entrenchments nor posted the usual guards.** Some complacent Union generals had also ignored the reports of a few conscientious soldiers that actually saw the Confederates approaching. Members of the 53rd Ohio Volunteers, for instance, attempted to alarm William T. Sherman of the Rebels as early as April 5. It was **the third such warning from this unit, and Sherman was in no mood for their nervousness. "Take your damned regiment [back] to Ohio," he reportedly shouted in rage, "There is no enemy nearer than Corinth!"**

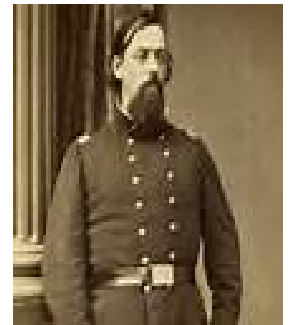
One of the Federal colonels who attempted to warn his superiors was Everett Peabody. Unfortunately, his advice went unheeded, and Peabody lost his life on the first day of the fighting. The 31-year-old Colonel Peabody was the descendant of a prominent Springfield, Massachusetts family and a Harvard graduate with a degree in Engineering. **From the time he graduated in 1849 he had spent ten years constructing Western railroads.** When he settled in Missouri shortly before the war to build the Platte County Railroad, **Peabody had become known as the "best field engineer in the West."** When the Civil War broke out, he was given command of the 13th Missouri Infantry in the



Western Theater. During the siege of Lexington, Missouri in September, 1861, Peabody was struck in the chest by a spent musket ball. Paralyzed by the blow, Peabody was placed on a stretcher, and his men attempted to remove him to a hospital. On the way a Rebel bullet struck Peabody's ankle and he fell into Confederate hands. Unable to walk without crutches for three months, he was finally paroled. Now he commanded Benjamin Prentiss' 1st Brigade in Grant's army in Tennessee.

Standing over six feet tall and weighing 240 pounds, Peabody made an impressive appearance. A bit outspoken and too short-tempered, Peabody often found difficulty with his superiors. His men, however, adored and trusted him. He, in turn, trusted them. When some of his subordinate officers came to him with the warning that Confederates were approaching, he went out to see for himself. Convinced that the Rebels were advancing in force, Peabody sought out General Prentiss on the night of April 5. Prentiss, however, "hooted" at the notion and refused to take Peabody's warning seriously. Long before daylight Peabody on his own initiative sent out three companies of Missouri soldiers to reconnoiter. By 5:00 A.M. shots were fired and the Battle of Shiloh had begun.

Later that morning Prentiss arrived at brigade headquarters and demanded to know what the shooting was about. When Peabody informed him that he had ordered the reconnaissance, Prentiss shouted, "Colonel Peabody, I will hold you personally responsible for bringing on this engagement." Peabody replied, "*If I brought on the fight, I am to lead the van,*" mounted his horse and rode to his men. Prentiss never forgave him. **As the morning hours passed, Peabody's forces found themselves in a whirlwind of battle and were forced to retreat. Peabody desperately needed reinforcements and artillery. Unfortunately Prentiss had refused to allow artillery to be parked in front of his brigade the night before. Peabody continued to search for Prentiss in the confusion, but he couldn't be found. Peabody returned to his brigade and found them in chaos and on the verge of collapse. Already bleeding from four wounds—in the hand, thigh, neck, and body—Peabody stood in the stirrups to challenge his men. Suddenly a musket ball struck him in the upper lip and passed out the back of his head, killing him instantly. His body tumbled backward and came to rest, his legs across a log and his head and shoulders on the ground. Confederate soldiers quickly overran the area as the Federals fled.**



The following day Peabody's men found his body. Although he was denied much of the recognition due him, Peabody's men long remembered his important contribution. **In fact had Peabody not sent out the scouting party that morning, the Confederate surprise attack might have been even more devastating, possibly rendering a Confederate victory.**

This article first appeared in the April 2002 Roundtable newsletter.

Quiz Answers:

1. 1st Michigan Light Artillery and the 12th, 13th, and 15th Michigan Infantries.
2. Confederate General Dan Ruggles and the "Hornet's Nest".
3. Army of the Mississippi and General Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard
4. Savannah, Tennessee and the Cherry Mansion
5. Tyler and Lexington

