

Our next meeting will be Monday, September 30, 2019. We meet in the basement of the Farmington Library (corner of Grand River Avenue and Farmington Road) at 6:30 pm. **Our speaker will be member, Dr. Ernest ‘Ernie’ Lawrence Abel, PhD, who will share with us the story of “Dixie (the song)”!**

Please visit our website at <http://www.farmlib.org/mrrt>

Our trip committee is accepting payment for our trip to Savannah, Georgia. EVERYONE MUST PAY FOR THE TRIP BY THE SEPTEMBER 30TH ROUNDTABLE MEETING. A check for \$255 will cover the cost of our bus fees, various tour stops, Saturday and Sunday lunches, and Saturday evening banquet. If someone wants to go just on Saturday and Sunday’s tours the cost is \$200 and if an individual wants to sign up just for the Saturday banquet the cost is \$55. Checks maybe brought to the meeting or mailed to our Treasurer, Jeanie Graham at her home: **29835 Northbrook, Farmington Hills, MI 48334-2326.** PLEASE MAKE THE CHECKS OUT TO JEANIE GRAHAM AS THE BANK WILL NOT ACCEPT CHECKS MADE OUT TO THE ROUNDTABLE.

On Friday, Nov. 8th, **OPTIONAL Savannah River Boat Cruise** – Narrated 90-minute Harbor Sightseeing Cruise at 1:00 pm at a cost of \$24.95 per person (www.savannahriverboat.com). Please make your own reservations.

Hotel – Hampton Inn & Suites-Savannah/Midtown, 4 miles from the historic district. The nightly rate is \$129. **Their telephone number is 912.721.3700.** Our group code is C-MRR. Rooms are available from Thursday night through Sunday night.

If you want to sign-up or have questions, please call Jeanie (248.225.7596), Linda (586.588.2712) or Mollie (313.530.8516). Mollie’s e-mail is mmgalate@gmail.com

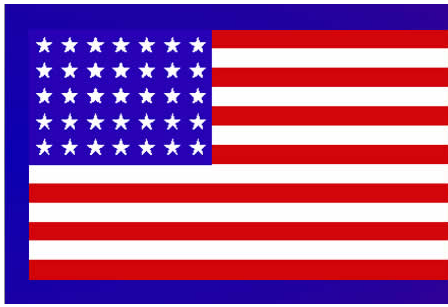
A reminder: Each participant must provide their own transportation to and from Savannah.

The Roundtable welcomes the return of member “Ernie” Abel, who will discuss “Dixie (the song)”. “Dixie” was the unofficial anthem of the Confederacy, even though it was written by a Northerner from Ohio. “Dixie” was probably the best known song to come from black-face minstrelsy. **Ernie will share with us the unique story of this very popular song.** Ernie has spoken to our group several times, primarily on the Lincoln assassination and John Wilkes Booth. He has written a book, **John Wilkes Booth and the Women Who Loved Him.** Dr. Abel is an emeritus professor at Wayne State University of psychology, obstetrics and gynecology. **This will be another great presentation by our friend, Ernie Abel!**



The Roundtable thanks Larry Hathcock for his entertaining and informative presentation on “Detention and Death on the Delaware River”, a story of Civil War prison camps. The site of the future Fort Delaware was on Pea Patch Island in the middle of the Delaware River, an ideal location for a fort. Joseph Cotton, the 10th man to graduate from West Point, supervised building of the fort, which began in 1848. George McClellan and John Sanders helped with the building process. Creating a good foundation was difficult. Three story buildings, 156 guns, and an elaborate sewer system were in the fort.

The Fort was finished close to the beginning of the Civil War. John Dix, who saved Delaware and Maryland for the Union, used Fort Delaware lock up disloyal people. He directed the building of barracks for prisoners. Delaware was a slave state with plantations in the southern portion of the state.



The Dix-Hill Cartel was a gentlemen’s agreement on July 22, 1862 that created prisoner exchanges between the two sides. For the next year, the Fort became a holding area for prisoners waiting to be exchanged.

The privy was located along the river, creating opportunities to escape. A large searchlight was installed to watch for escapes from the prison. During July 1862, 19 prisoners built rafts and left the prison during the night. The escaped prisoners were assisted in their escape by Southern sympathizers. Commander Gibson of the fort was then removed from his position. Officially, 51 prisoners escaped during the lifetime of the fort. There may have been many more escapers. Brigadier General Albin Schoepf took over command over the fort during the spring of 1863 and remained there until the end of the war. He served under General Buell during the Battle of Perryville and then moved to Fort Delaware.



Most of the Confederates captured at the Battle of Gettysburg were sent to Fort Delaware. General James Archer, Colonel Basil Duke, General Pettigrew, and Jeff Thompson, the Swamp Fox of the Confederacy. General Joseph Wheeler was the highest ranking officer held there during the war. At its peak, the Fort held 11,500 prisoners with 33,000 spending at least some time there during the war.

During August 1863 a smallpox epidemic began. The epidemic took a couple of months to bring under control with a vaccination program.

Estimates are that 2,460 Confederates are buried near the fort as well as 130 Union soldiers. William Hedgepath, Larry’s great-grandfather was on the list, even though he died in 1910. Another ancestor, H.P.J.

Hathcock, 16th Tennessee, was also on the list as being a member of the 19th Tennessee.

Fort Delaware has been a Delaware state park since 1959. The park is open from May 15-Oct 1. A ferry is used to reach the island.

Quiz Questions: This month’s questions and answers pertain to Civil War music:

1. How did Julia Ward Howe create the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*?
2. What was the extent of General U.S. Grant’s musical ‘expertise’?
3. What music did President Lincoln ask for at a celebration of the Appomattox surrender?
4. What was the official anthem of the Confederacy?
5. How large was the brass band that each Union regiment was required to have at the beginning of the war?

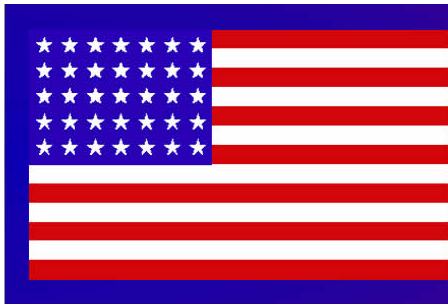
Civil War Essentials - Nathaniel Lyons and the Battle of Wilson’s Creek

In mid-1861, Missouri’s course in the Civil War hung in the balance. **A career army officer, Captain Nathaniel Lyons, became the central figure in the effort to keep Missouri in the Union.** During the highly fluid situation existing during those crucial months, he loomed larger-than-life and then was gone.

In the 1860 census slaves comprised 10% of the state’s population. **Most residents considered owning slaves to be an essential right.** Although a few large slave owners called for secession in early 1861, **most Missouri slave owners were “conditional Unionists”** – they preferred to stay in the Union so long as this right was protected. **Conversely, there was a high concentration of radical Unionists around St Louis, the largest city in the state.** These “unconditional Unionists” were mostly Republican and abolitionist. German immigrants who had settled in and around the city were part of this group.



With this volatile population mix, trouble was a certainty. The March 1861 state secession convention voted down leaving the Union 98 to 1. **It issued a resolution that there was “...at present no adequate cause...” for Missouri**



to secede. Like Kentucky It would try to be neutral. [The accompanying June 1861 *Harper's Weekly* cartoon is captioned: "That sly fox, Jeff, trying to induce Miss-Souri (silly goose) to take a walk in the woods of Secession."]
Governor Claiborne Jackson, a staunch secessionist, knowing he could not force most Missourians to endorse leaving without just cause, waited for the Federal government to provide the pretext. He believed that Missouri's strategic location would force the Union to violate its borders to attack the Confederates. **Jackson rejected Lincoln's call for volunteers after Ft. Sumter and promoted the formation and arming of militia units in pro-secession areas.** Secessionists took muskets, pistols and 3 cannon from the small Liberty arsenal.

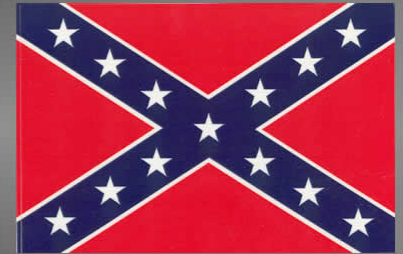
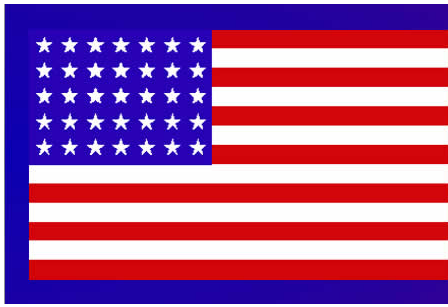
The Unionists in the St. Louis area, led by Republican congressman Frank Blair, Jr., also began to prepare for conflict. Blair approached Captain Nathaniel Lyons, commander of a small Federal garrison at the St. Louis arsenal for help. This arsenal contained large quantities of muskets, cannon, and ammunition as well as machinery to make weapons. Connecticut-born Lyons was a career Army officer with combat experience in Mexico and against Indians. **Service in Kansas during the turbulent 1850s hardened his hatred of anyone who threatened the integrity of the Federal Union.** In Kansas, he had used his forces to aid free soil "Jayhawkers".

Blair obtained a War Department order to draw weapons from the arsenal to arm volunteers who would enlist in the Federal army. He quickly mustered 2500. He and Lyons also shifted most munitions from the arsenal to Illinois to prevent their capture by Jackson's pro-secession forces. **The crucial turning point came next.** In May General Harney, the area Federal commander, was called away. Lyons led a force from the arsenal to Camp Jackson, a secessionist militia camp just west of St. Louis, supposedly to forestall a possible attack by them. He captured about 670 secessionist militiamen who had failed to scatter in time and marched them back to the city. **On the way, some of Lyon's recruits panicked and fired on a hostile crowd of protesters. Around 25 were killed and many wounded. This action caused riots and pushed many conditional Unionists into the secession camp.** The legislature immediately passed a long delayed military bill and gave Jackson sweeping powers to deal with this "invasion" of their state. The pro-secession militia, called the "State Guard", under Sterling Price was ordered to protect Jefferson City, the capital. Harney, having returned, tried to defuse the situation by reaching an understanding with Price but Blair got the War Department to relieve Harney of his command as a result. Lyon became his interim replacement. **A Price/Lyon meeting in mid-June completely failed to keep the peace with (now General) Lyon in effect declaring war.**



Events now moved quickly. **The State Guard failed to protect the capital from Lyon's forces which advanced by steamboat bypassing their defenses.** Jackson and the government were now fugitives fleeing to Boonville northwest of Jefferson City. A new Unionist convention held in the abandoned capital created a pro-Union replacement government. Lyon pushed ahead to Boonville and easily defeated the poorly equipped State Guard force defending it. **The secessionist government and army retreated to the southwest part of Missouri.** At this point, Lyon had achieved a great deal. The Federals held most key population, economic, and communications centers. He would have been wise to stop and consolidate. **But Lyon was a driven man and wanted to further punish the secessionists.**

Both sides received reinforcements – Ben McCulloch led Confederate and Arkansas troops up from Arkansas, Major Samuel Sturgis joined Lyon with one Iowa and two Kansas regiments. Franz Sigel led a mostly German force from Carthage where he had been checked by State Guard troops. But John Fremont, the new Federal department commander, was concerned with other hot spots and sent Lyon few reinforcements and only limited supplies.



The combined Confederate force of over 12000 including 3400 mounted men, led by McCulloch, concentrated in the Ozarks corner of the state. General Lyon concentrated his force at Springfield, a town further northeast. **In early August 1861, the two sides began to move toward each other. Although Lyon's troops won skirmishes at Dug Springs and Curran Post Office, he pulled back to Springfield fearing being cut off by the Confederate force he now knew to be larger than his.** McCulloch followed and camped along Wilson's Creek, a small stream 10 miles southwest of Springfield. **Both commanders had problems.** The enlistments of some Union units were expiring. Lyon saw his 5800 man army shrinking daily - it would soon be unable to confront the rebels. McCulloch's men had only 10000 weapons, many of which were civilian rifles or shotguns. Most men had no uniforms. In addition, his relationship with the aggressive Price was eroding. Price goaded McCulloch into attacking Springfield but rains delayed his advance (State Guard troops lacked weatherproof cartridge cases). Lyon felt the need to attack before his army melted away. He moved first and arrived at the Wilson's Creek area very early on August 10 with about 5000 men. Exhausted and desperate,

Lyon had agreed to Franz Sigel's risky scheme for a pincer attack on the enemy camp with Lyon attacking from the north and Sigel's small force from the southeast.

Initially Lyon's forces were able to push their enemy's screening forces off a key 170 ft. high hill afterward known as Bloody Hill. But a flanking attack on the Confederate right by the small Federal cavalry force failed. After that, the larger rebel forces recovered and began a series of counterattacks on Lyon's troops on Bloody Hill. Although exhausted and low on ammunition, the outnumbered Yankees held on helped by effective artillery support. After hearing the sound of Lyon's initial contact, Sigel's small force began its assault at 5:30AM. These troops also achieved early success and captured hundreds of surprised rebels. But the same Confederate force which had defeated Lyon's cavalry flanking maneuver earlier now showed up on Sigel's right flank. Assuming they were either Federals (both armies had a mix of uniforms at this time) or rebel units fleeing Lyon's force, he failed to adequately respond to this threat and his army was defeated and fled. **Lyon was shot and killed around mid-morning but his force continued to resist McCulloch's attacks.** Sturgis, the new commander, decided to retire to Springfield just before noon. The battered Confederate force did not try to interfere.

Wilson's Creek was the first major battle after 1st Manassas. The Federals suffered a 25% casualty rate and the Confederates about half that. Lyon's death was mourned by unionists and celebrated by rebels. The Federals abandoned Springfield and in September Sterling Price advanced northeast to retake the state while McCulloch and his force returned to Arkansas. Although victorious at Lexington in mid-September, Price could not retake Jefferson City (where Grant had organized the defenses) and was soon forced back to the southwest by Fremont. Springfield was retaken in late October. **The same month, the fugitive secessionist legislature approved Missouri's joining the Confederacy – futile with most of the state in Federal hands.** Irregular forces on both sides continued the bloodletting. Price led an 1864 cavalry raid into the state which ultimately failed and he was chased out of Missouri for good.

Nathaniel Lyon's actions had unleashed a maelstrom which consumed him and many other residents of Missouri.

Quiz Answers:

1. Julia awoke from a terrific dream with "*John Brown's Body*" ringing in her head. She scribbled the poem and then sold it to the *Atlantic Monthly* for \$4.
2. General Grant recognized two tunes, one was "*Yankee Doodle*", and the other was not.
3. Lincoln spoke briefly after the surrender at Appomattox. He asked the band to play "*Dixie*" which was "*one of the best times I have heard*".
4. The official Confederate anthem was God Save the South.
5. Each Union regiment had to have 24 members. This was ignored as the war went on because combat soldiers became a lot more important.