

MEMBER RENEWAL

The MRRT celebrates its 60th year in 2020 – and now is a great time to show your support by renewing your membership! (Or become a new member!).

Membership is \$25 a year – or \$5 for students. Checks should be made out to Treasurer **Jeanie Graham** (the bank does not like checks made out to the RoundTable) and can be mailed to her home at **29835 Northbrook, Farmington Hills, MI 48334-2326**; or simply bought to the meeting and given to Jeanie. Cash is always welcomed.



Sadly, long-time member Mae Wright, mother of member Mike Wright and grandmother of member Brandon Wright, has passed away. She enjoyed our meetings and several of our field trips over the years. Mae was the Director of English as a Second Language for the Southfield Public Schools. She will be missed.

Our next meeting will be Monday, November 25, 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 Mark Laubacher from Ohio who will discuss “Weapons of Mass Destruction Considered during the Civil War”.

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

The Roundtable has returned from a great trip to Savannah, GA. We thank Jeanie, Linda, and Mollie for their great efforts in putting our trip together. The Roundtable enjoyed several Civil War related tours on Saturday; including a **Guided Trolley Tour through Old Savannah, the Old Fort Jackson Civil War Militia Program with a loud cannon demonstration, and Fort Pulaski. Unfortunately, we experienced National Park Service bureaucracy at its worst at Fort Pulaski National Monument. Eventually, someone did let us in!**

We really enjoyed a guided Civil War walking tour through the Savannah Historic District. Our guide, Keith Blake, and Manny became very good friends! During lunch we celebrated the birthday of the Marine Corps! **Our Sunday afternoon visit was to Fort McCallister.**

Our Saturday and Sunday lunches and the Saturday evening banquet were terrific as was the weather. Traveling back to the Detroit Area on Monday had its challenges.

Share stories of our trip at the November 25th meeting.

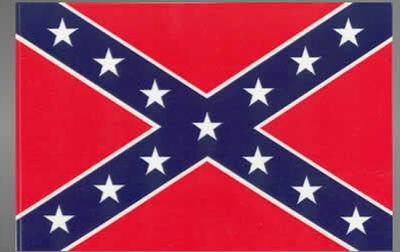
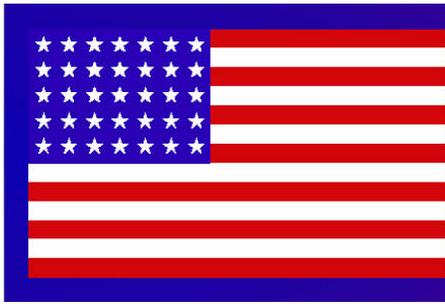
The Roundtable welcomes back Mark Laubacher from Ohio who will share with us the story of “Weapons of Mass Destruction Considered during the Civil War”. Several suggestions, including the use of chemical and biological agents, were made during the War to create a winning advantage over their opponent.

For example, Confederate troops created fuse activated sulfur smoke cartridges to combat a Union tunneling operation. A physician executed a plan to infect Northern cities and President Lincoln with yellow fever. The Union researched and discussed the usage of chemicals on the Rebels. A New York schoolteacher researched a chlorine ordinance to be included in an artillery shell.

This will be a very interesting presentation on a unique topic!

Mark is a RN and paramedic working as a Certified Specialist in Poison Information since 1992 at the Central Ohio Poison Center located at Nationwide Children’s Hospital, Columbus, Ohio. He is very active in the Civil War community. Mark presented a paper on snake bites at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine Conference in 2013. He is also an active member of several Civil War societies. His previous presentation to the Roundtable was *“The First Medical Man aboard the USS Monitor”*.





Dr. Ernest Abel captivated the Michigan Regimental Roundtable with his presentation of The War over Dixie.

The Roundtable thanks member Gene Kramer for his playing of “Dixie”. A novel aspect of his presentation was the use of a clip of the famous “dueling anthems” scene from the classic movie *Casablanca* in which the Vichy French patrons in Rick’s Café drown out some German officers singing the German national anthem by vigorously singing the *La Marseillaise*. **He used this to illustrate how emotionally important national anthems (like flags) have been to nations throughout history.**



The Confederacy began with no anthem, and never officially adopted one. At first the new country identified the stirring *La Marseillaise* as an unofficial proxy for their anthem but they wanted their own exclusive song. **At Jefferson Davis’ inauguration, the band leader needed a catchy tune and chose Dixie.** It was an inspired choice and Dixie became immediately popular with almost all including Davis who suggested it as an anthem.

However the catchy tune carried some baggage **as it had been written by a Yankee,**

Daniel D. Emmett, several years before the war to serve as a “walk around” song for a Broadway, NY Theater. Emmett was paid a few hundred dollars for the song rights. The original lyrics reflected a white interpretation of a Negro’s account of a saucy fellow who chased women. As such it was extremely popular in the north; even Abe Lincoln was known to like it. **After the war started, in the south the lyrics had to be changed to represent the Confederate mantra of defending their culture against the marauding Yankees.** Confederate Gen. Albert Pike, among others, wrote a suitably patriotic set of lyrics. **While not loved by all southerners, no other tune was as popular.**

The *Bonnie Blue Flag*, written by Harry McCarthy, was well liked but not as much as *Dixie*. In the north, the wartime interpretation was that the song reflected yearning of black slaves who had been shipped south when slavery was outlawed there to return to the north.

The origin of the word “Dixie” was ascribed to either the Mason-Dixon Line, which formed the border between Pennsylvania and Maryland, or bank notes nicknamed “Dix” issued by big New Orleans bank. *Dixie* was sufficiently identified with the Confederacy that singing it was outlawed in parts of the south occupied by Union forces. John Wilkes Booth supposedly was arrested in New Orleans for singing it on a bet but managed to talk his way out of danger.

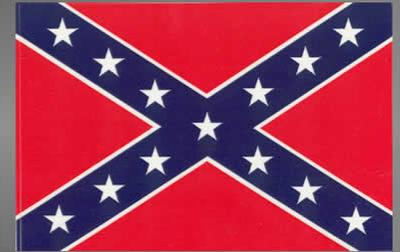
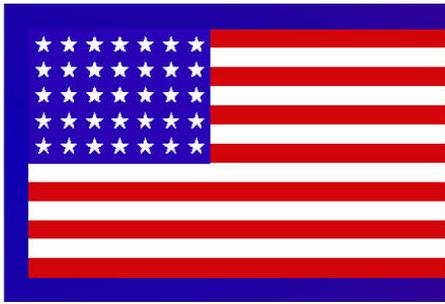


After the war, the song continued to generate controversy. A man named Hayes claimed authorship of the tune as did a black family named Snowden who said they taught it to Emmett in Ohio where he was born. Neither claim has been substantiated. After the war, the Daughters of the Confederacy attempted to get a CSA veterans convention to approve a

change to the lyrics, but were rebuffed. **In recent years, the song’s identification with slavery and the Confederacy has made it a musical pariah so it is rarely played at public events.**

Quiz Questions: This month’s questions and answers pertain to the Civil War in Savannah, Georgia.

1. What else besides the city of Savannah did General Sherman offer as a Christmas present to President Lincoln?
2. What was the major cause of the successful Union attack on Fort Pulaski on April 10, 1862?
3. What was future Confederate Commander Robert E. Lee’s first assignment after graduating from West Point?
4. How many times was Fort McAllister attacked by the Union Army and Navy during the Civil War?
5. What was the significance of Old Fort Jackson during the Civil War?



Civil War Essentials – Confederate Major John A. Harman (1824-1874) Quartermaster John Harman was born on a farm near Staunton, Virginia in the Shenandoah Valley. **As a youth, he went to Texas, joined the Texas Rangers, and participated in the Mexican War.**

After the Mexican War ended, he returned to Staunton where he prospered in the livestock trade and monopolized the stagecoach business in the upper Shenandoah Valley. **He married his cousin Elizabeth Garber in 1849 with whom he would have 13 children, sadly five predeceased their parents. Taking care of his family helped prepare him for his task of supplying an army during wartime.**

John Harmon became Confederate General “Stonewall” Jackson’s Quartermaster when the general took command at Harpers Ferry in the spring of 1861. He was recruited for the job by Stonewall himself even though he wanted to go back to his profitable business. Later John Harmon wanted to be a combat officer.

Captain, later Major, Harman became the only quartermaster that Stonewall had. This was amazing, because both had strong personalities and frequently clashed. Major Harman was a troublesome personality because he had limited experience as an officer, his inability to keep secrets, and frequent disputes with General Jackson. A fellow staff officer described Harman as a “big-bodied, big-voiced, untiring, fearless man and devil would have ordered Jackson himself out of the way if necessary to obey Jackson’s orders”. Soldiers called him “the old man” and avoided him.

Before the Battle of Antietam in September 1862 General Jackson’s wagon train became hopelessly snarled in the Potomac River. Major Harman went into the water among the mules. He kicked stubborn mules and unleashed profanity that “would have excited the admiration of the most scientific of mule drivers.” The traffic jam ended quickly.

Major Harman expected a lecture from Stonewall who deeply disliked profanity. However, General Jackson offered no rebuke, just saying, “Thank you, Major”. General Jackson shook his head in resignation.

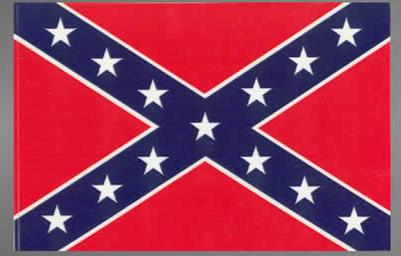
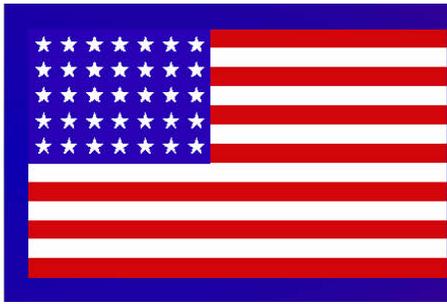
During the 1862 Shenandoah Valley Campaign, Major Howard went home because some of his children had yellow fever, two died and two more were seriously ill. When Major Howard asked for an extension of his leave, it was denied. When another child died, he was not allowed to go home for the funeral.

After Stonewall’s death in 1863, Major Harman became Quartermaster to General Richard Ewell. He also served some time as Acting Chief Quartermaster to General Lee.

After the war ended, Harman returned to Staunton, where he became a Republican, earning the dislike of his neighbors. President Grant appointed him Postmaster of Staunton shortly before he died in 1874.

Quiz Answers:

1. Included with the capture of Savannah were 30,000 bales of cotton, 150 cannon, 200 cars and locomotives, 800 prisoners, and three steamers.
2. Fort Pulaski was captured by the Union Army primarily because of the newly developed rifled cannon. As a result, brick fortifications became obsolete.
3. Robert E. Lee’s first assignment was to start developing a fort on Cockspur Island – the future site of Fort Pulaski.
4. Fort McAllister was unsuccessfully attacked seven times before Sherman’s Army arrived in Dec. 1864.
5. When the War began Old Fort Jackson became Confederate headquarters for all of the river defenses guarding Savannah. The Savannah River Squadron was formed, including three ironclads built in Savannah.



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