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Michigan Regimental Round Table Newsletter—Page 1

November 2022

## MEMBER RENEWAL

The MRRT celebrates its 63rd year in 2023 – 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**. Cash is always welcome.

**Our November meeting will be on Monday, November 28, 2022, at 6:30 pm in the basement of the Farmington Library** – corner of Grand River and Farmington Road. **Our speaker, Jim Epperson from Ann Arbor**, will begin around 7:00 pm after a 6:30 pm business meeting. **We must leave the library by 8:45 pm.**

**We have returned from a very successful trip to the Culpepper, Virginia area!** We enjoyed great tour guides and wonderful weather. The group enjoyed touring very interesting places that we would never have visited on our own. There is a further discussion of the trip on pages 3 and 4 in this newsletter.

**The Roundtable is proud to welcome Jim Epperson of Ann Arbor as our November speaker. Jim will speak on “Grant and Rosecrans---it all started at Iuka”.** Jim will discuss several issues that resulted in a serious breach between the two Union generals that lasted several years after the war ended. The rift began at the Battle of Iuka, Mississippi that occurred on September 19, 1862. General Rosecrans was upset that General Grant’s men did not attack the Confederates.

Jim is a retired mathematics with a life-long interest in the Civil War. He maintains three Civil War websites, including *Causes of the Civil War, The Siege of Richmond and Petersburg, and Civil War Chronologies*. He serves as the webmaster for the Ann Arbor Civil War Roundtable.

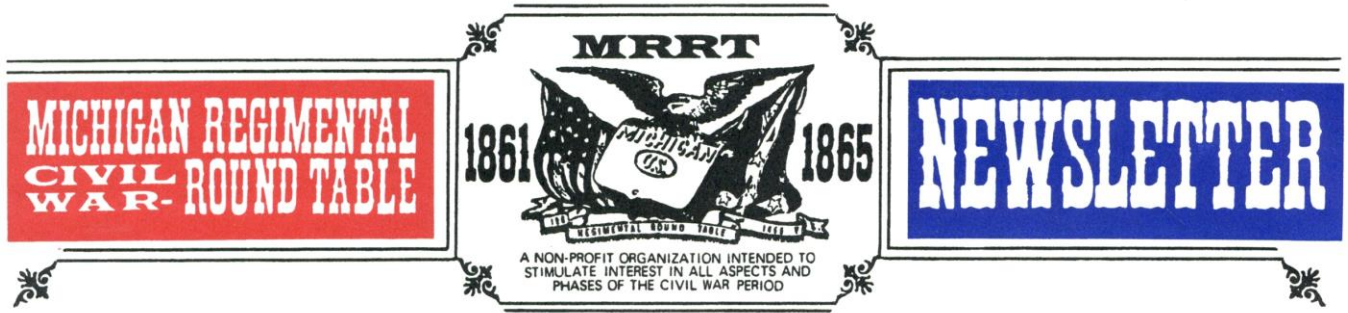
**Wearing a mask during our meeting is a personal decision. Masks will be available for your personal use.**

**September 2022 Speaker – Tom Nanzig – “West Virginia Secession: Mr. Lincoln’s Legal Dilemma”**

**Tom Nanzig – September 2022 Speaker** We thank Tom for another outstanding presentation, this time on “*West Virginia Secession: Mr. Lincoln’s Legal Dilemma*”. On January 1, 1863, Jacob Blair crawled through a window at the White House looking for President Lincoln. After they met, **the President signed the legislation that created West Virginia as a new state. It was clear that this bill was unconstitutional.**

Prior to the American Revolution, in 1763 settlement was prohibited west of the Alleghany Mountains. During the 1770’s, Harper’s Ferry was established as a town, the remainder of the area was unsettled. During 1814 the area was western Virginia with voting rights in the Virginia state legislature. During the 1830’s slavery tied the Shenandoah Valley markets to eastern Virginia. Calls for the separation of western Virginia from the eastern area then began to be heard.

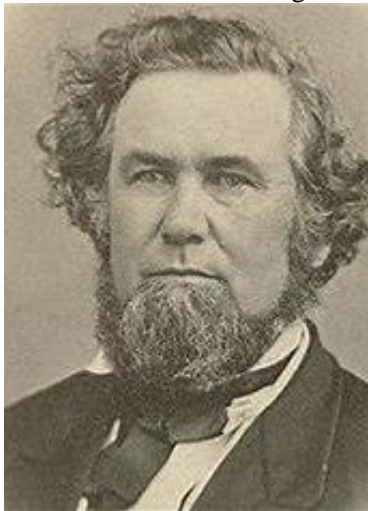
**An 1850 constitutional convention resulted in tax levies that favored eastern slaveholders. Slaves were counted for representation in the state legislature, but no slave could be taxed at more than \$300.** There were more eastern slaves than the total western population. For the western area, farm animals were taxed at the full value of the animal. **Western and Eastern Virginia were significantly different. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad traveled to Baltimore from the West, passing by eastern Virginia. The West was connected to both Pittsburgh and Cincinnati. The western area was mostly small farms with few slaves.** Anti-slavery Methodist circuit riders traveled through the western area, rallying the residents to fight for the Union. By the time April 1861 arrived, there was very little in common between eastern and western Virginia.



Virginia voted to secede from the Union on April 17, 1861, on an 88 to 55 vote. 24 delegates from the west then went home with the news. The Unionists met in Morgantown on April 17<sup>th</sup> to remain with Lincoln and the Union. Then, 400 western delegates voted for separation from Richmond on May 13, 1861, at the Wheeling Convention. A successful general vote for secession from Virginia occurred on May 23, 1861. Numerous nervous western Virginia residents moved to Ohio and Pennsylvania before the vote.

Once the war began, 17 Union infantry regiments moved to western Virginia by the end of 1861. Union Generals McClellan and Rosecrans had great military success in the area.

Francis Pierpont (picture below) was elected governor of “restored Virginia” at the Wheeling Statehood Convention. Governor Pierpont became the “Father of West Virginia”. The only money available was \$27,000 taken out of a bank. Virginia had put the money there for a mental hospital. Three congressional representatives and two senators went to Washington representing West Virginia, thus replacing Virginia.



The Wheeling Convention created a commission to consider statehood on August 6, 1861. The vote for statehood on October 24, 1861, was 8,000 yes and only 700 no. The name West Virginia was approved in the vote. President Lincoln’s Attorney General said that the vote was not legal.

The state constitution was approved in early 1862. The slavery provisions included anyone born after July 4, 1863, was free at birth. An individual less than 21 years old would have to wait. Anyone who was more than 21 years old would endure perpetual slavery.

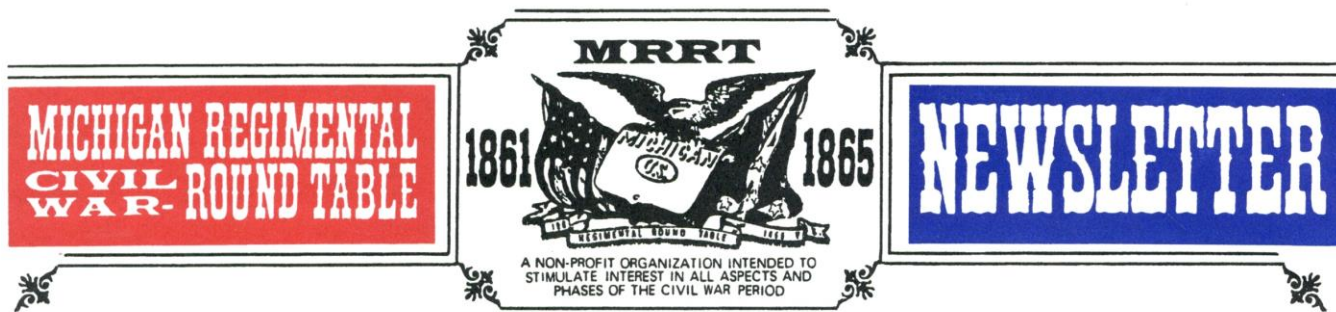
The statehood proposal went to the US Congress for approval in July 1862. Article 4, Section 3 of the U.S. Constitution required that West Virginia’s proposal to become a state required the approval of both the U.S. Congress and the seceded state of Virginia. The lengthy Congressional discussion centered on whether western Virginia was a state or territory.

President Lincoln asked his Cabinet members for their opinion on West Virginia statehood. Their vote was a 3-3 tie. The President agreed to adding West Virginia as a state “as in our best interest”. Military and political expediency overvalued the U.S. Constitution. Virginia was turned down by the U.S. Supreme Court to recover West Virginia in 1867.

Famed Confederate General Stonewall Jackson was born in Clarksburg, located in western Virginia.

**Quiz Questions: This month’s questions pertain to the month of November during the Civil War:**

1. Who was President Lincoln’s first Vice President elected on November 6, 1860? Who finished second to Lincoln in this election?
2. On November 7, 1861, Brigadier General Ulysses S. Grant defeated a small Confederate army at which Missouri site? Which Confederate General showed up with reinforcements to drive Grant’s army back?
3. On November 23, 1863, a Union general, commander of the Army of the Cumberland, moved his army forward toward an eminence about a mile in front of the main Confederate position on Missionary Ridge. Name him and the elevation he eventually captured.
4. On two successive days-November 4 and 5, 1861-the Confederacy named a commander of the Shenandoah Valley District and another to head up the new Department of South Carolina, Georgia, and East Florida. Name these two well-known men.



5. On the evening of November 9, 1863, President Lincoln attended the theater in Washington, D.C. What play did he see and who was the leading actor?

### Culpeper, VA – October 14, 15 MRRT Field Trip



The Roundtable, with 25 participants, enjoyed a terrific field trip to the Culpeper, Virginia area on October 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. Our main tour guide was Chris Army, associated with the “Culpeper Battlefield Tours” organized by Susan Ralston and Chuck Laudner. Chris is also a licensed battlefield guide at Gettysburg. Clark “Bud” Hall led us on two great tours that were truly off the beaten path. Over the years, “Bud” has led the effort to preserve the Brandy Station Battlefield. Brandy Station was the site of largest cavalry battle of the Civil War.

The Brandy Station area will be become a Virginia state park in 2024 when the various preservation groups turn

their property over to the state. The preservation effort began after an airport was built during the 1950's over the graves of fallen soldiers from the Brandy Station battle. The battle on June 9, 1863, was the opening salvo of the Gettysburg campaign. General Lee began moving north on June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**The Battle of Brandy Station on June 9, 1863, pitted 11,000 Union against 9,500 Confederates. Union casualties were approximately 1,000 while the Confederates had 500 casualties. This is the battle where the Union cavalry came of age. General Lee was unable to replace his cavalry losses, men, and horses, over the course of the war. Confederate cavalymen had to provide their own horses.**

**We stopped at the Beverly Ford Road and St. James Church sites.** The fighting in this area resulted in chaos. **Henry Catler, of the 8<sup>th</sup> New York Cavalry, was killed as the first casualty of the Gettysburg campaign.** The Union attacks were not well-coordinated, one began at 8:00 am and the other, which had farther to advance, did not start until 9:30 am. Union General Gregg was at Kelly's Ford, eight miles away. George Custer was on Pleasanton's staff during the battle. He fell off his horse at a stone wall. There were four battles in this area during the war because of the rivers and railroad located in the area.

The St. James Church was probably destroyed during the winter of 1863-1864 for firewood. The Confederates had a 16-gun line at the church during the Brandy Station battle. The Union force drove them back. Alfreud Waud drew sketches of the battle here.

**Another great stop was at the Graffiti House.** The homeowner was convinced to refurbish the house when it was falling apart in 1992. The Brandy Station Foundation then purchased the home in 2002. J.E.B. Stuart's autograph is on one of the walls. The house was probably a Confederate hospital and was also used for administrative purposes by both armies. As a result, **both sides left their autographs and drawings on the walls of the house.** These were found during the refurbishment of the house.

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**Bud Hall guided us to Hasbro's Ridge where the Confederates were getting ready to move toward Pennsylvania in early June 1863.** This position halted the Union cavalry assault. The Battlefield Trust was able to purchase 178 acres at this spot.

**On Hasbro's Ridge was one of the highlights of the tour. The remains of more than 350 huts were still there in the woods on the ridge (picture left).** Four to six men were in each hut during the winter of 1863-1864. These huts were quite a sight after our walk through the woods on top of the ridge.

**Sunday morning, we enjoyed the mural of Culpeper's African American people painted by member Brian Hoyer's grandson.** One of them was Pete Hill, a member of

the Baseball Hall of Fame. Peter was a player/manager with the Detroit Stars of the Negro League.

**We stopped at Madden's Tavern where three black Union soldiers were captured by the Confederates and then executed.** A monument to them has been built there. African American units were being added to the Army of the Potomac in early 1864.

**The group visited Fleetwood Hill where piecemeal Union attacks during the Battle of Brandy Station were unsuccessful.** The Civil War Trust spent \$3,5 million here for preservation. A McMansion was then torn down.



**Clark Mountain was the final stop of our tour. Once again, Bud Hall showed us some very interesting sites that we could never find on our own. Clark Mountain is the highest elevation in Virginia east of the Blue Ridge Mountains. A Confederate signal station on the mountain overlooking the Rapidan River and the Wilderness kept track of what the Army of the Potomac was doing, especially during the spring of 1864. General Lee was on Clark Mountain quite frequently. All of the area is presently under a protective easement, preserving numerous trenches and gun pits. The Civil War era roads are still there.**

A great trip! We look forward to a great trip in 2023.

**Quiz Answers:**

1. Hannibal Hamlin. Stephen Douglas in the popular vote, John Breckinridge in the electoral vote.
2. The Battle of Belmont and General Leonidas Polk
3. General George H. Thomas and Orchard Knob
4. Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee
5. "The Marble Heart" and John Wilkes Booth