

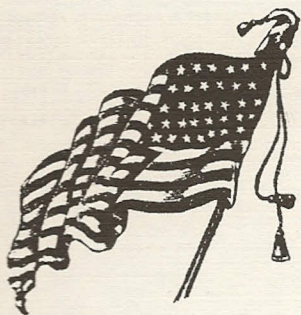
MICHIGAN REGIMENTAL ROUND TABLE



Silver Anniversary Celebration

1960 ~ 1985

**Saturday, April 20th 1985
Botsford Inn Farmington Hills, MI**



Fling out the old banner, let fold after fold,
 Enshrine a new glory as each is unfurled;
 Let it speak to our hearts still as sweet as of old,
 The herald of Freedom all over the world.
 Let it float out in triumph, let it wave over head,
 The noble old ensign, its stripes and its stars;
 It gave us our freedom, o'ershadows our dead,
 Gave might to our heroes, made sacred their scars.
 Let it wave in the sunbeam, unfurl in the storm,
 Our guardian at morning, our beacon at night,
 When peace shines in splendor athwart her bright form,
 Or war's bloody hand holds the standard of might.
 Unfurl the old banner, its traitors crush down,
 Let it still be the banner that covers the brave,
 The star spangled banner, with glory we own,
 'Tis too noble a banner for tyrant and slave.

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SILVER ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Saturday, April 20, 1985
 Botsford Inn, Farmington Hills, MI

- 2:00 P.M. Opening Festivities
- 4:00 P.M. Guest Speaker, Jerry Maxwell
 "General Armstrong Custer in the Civil War"
- 5:00 P.M. Guest Speaker, Dave Finney
 "Living History As A Member of The
 Gallant 7th Michigan Infantry"
- 6:00 P.M. Reception and Cash Bar
- 7:00 P.M. Silver Anniversary Dinner
- 8:30 P.M. Presentation and Recognition
 of Our Past Presidents
- 9:00 P.M. Guest Speaker, Bob Krick,
 Chief Historian, Fredericksburgh-
 Spotsylvania National Park, "Stonewall
 Jackson in the Valley"

ANNIVERSARY YEAR PROGRAMS

1984-85

SEPTEMBER 24:

Al Pifer, "Stories of a 26th Michigan Soldier"

OCTOBER 29:

Dr. Weldon Petz, "Eyewitness to the Gettysburg Address"

NOVEMBER 26:

Chris Calkins, "Rambling in Virginia: The War is Alive and Well"

DECEMBER 9:

Christmas Banquet at the Holly Hotel, Holly, Michigan

JANUARY 28:

Jim Genko, "The Twenty-First Michigan"

FEBRUARY 25:

Jerry Maxwell, "Rob Wheat and the Louisiana Tigers"

MARCH 25:

Dr. Roger L. Rosentreter, "We Are Coming Father Ab'ram: Michigan in the Civil War"

APRIL 20:

Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Celebration at the Botsford Inn, Farmington Hills, MI.

APRIL 29:

Wiley Sword, "Alexander Webb"

MAY 11:

Annual Round Table Picnic at David and Susan Finney's, Howell, MI

MAY 27:

Abbott Gibney, "General James Longstreet"

JUNE 24:

Civil War Round Table Quiz (Kalamazoo RT - Abraham Lincoln RT - MMRT)

JULY 29:

Show and Tell: An Annual Program

AUGUST 26:

Civil War Auction

25 YEARS OF TRIUMPHS & TRIVIA

FEBRUARY 1966: John Hooper's newsletter masthead debuts — a round table with a broken leg, "US" carved on one side, "GSA" on the other.

MARCH 1966: Dr. Marion B. Roberts brings members souvenir chips of the Grant tree from the Wilderness battlefield.

FEBRUARY 1969: Bertielou Gentile, our first lady member, saluted in the newsletter for never having missed a meeting.

AUGUST 1969: Picnic dinner at Francis Slyker's camp site complete with Sibley tent. (Ray Russell has graciously carried on the tradition.)

OCTOBER 1969: Mrs. Bernard Glenn of Fowlerville made honorary member. Her father served in the 20th Michigan. With Dr. Roberts (whose father served in the 56th North Carolina), round table has rare distinction of having members who are first generation descendants of soldiers on both sides.

OCTOBER 1969: Dues increased to \$3.00. Had been \$2.00 since club's inception. (Eight years later, dues increased to \$5.00, a figure still well below most other round tables.)

AUGUST 1971: Round table joins the fight against the Gettysburg Tower.

DECEMBER 1974: Art Stewart presents "Food of the Civil War Soldier" for the fifth time by popular demand.

MARCH 1975: Chuck Rice joins round table after seeing Gil Ernst's MRRT jacket patch.

APRIL 15, 1977: Founders' Night at Botsford Inn. Six of the original founders are honored in person.

OCTOBER 1984: Carroll Tietz elected treasurer for the 12th consecutive time, our longest serving officer.

MICHIGAN REGIMENTAL ON IT'S SILVER ANNIVERSARY

⇒) Picking Up Steam and Headed for 50 (←)

by the Old Sarge*

Looking back over the events of our first 25 years, I can hardly believe we did all that we did. But it's all there in the newsletter (plus a few other sources known only to yours truly), and it adds up to some pretty staggering statistics: 482,000 miles accumulated on our field trips, 9,250 newsletters mailed out. 659 trips to libraries that we've tallied researching programs. 11,160 cups of coffee that we've consumed during meeting breaks. The 6,000 Civil War books that we've read and the 10,453 slides and pictures that we've made of battlefield monuments, cannons and the happy smiling faces of each other on our various outings.

Now, if those are a bit much for you to accept all at once, consider these facts and figures: We've visited every major eastern battlefield and most of those in the west (plus many of the minor ones) on our 17 annual battlefield tours. There have been something like 230 editions of the newsletter in the 20 years of its publication (it seems like more to those who wrote them). The Round Table has met some 280 times since its inception. Programs add up to about the same number (we can't be sure because in the first five years hardly any of them were recorded).

* Abbott Gibney, a 22-year member, was the first Old Sarge when the newsletter was launched in 1965 and served in that capacity for over 5½ years. He has also been corresponding secretary, president and historian, his role here.

Since 1960, the newsletter has listed 220 programs. One hundred ninety-four of these were programs or events of our own making, while 26 were programs given by outsiders, a ratio of better than 7-1, preserving our reputation as a "do-it-yourself" club. Breaking that 220 down a little further, we've had 18 round table discussions, 10 "Show N Tells", eight magic lantern nights (slides or movies), four nights of programs on tape (courtesy of our friends in the Hagerstown, Maryland Round Table), and 19 get-togethers for picnics, banquets, parties and the like. This later figure just goes to prove that following history doesn't have to be a ponderous pursuit.

History is fun;
writing it is tough...

The beginnings of all organizations are more or less apocryphal. This seems especially true of historical groups. Perhaps it stems in part from a preoccupation with folklore. But I strongly suspect a simpler, more mundane reason: Somebody just forgot to write it down. Michigan Regimental is no exception. The first five years of our club have been pretty much lost to the ages. Oh, you can corner Don Limpert, Ray Russell or King Abbott and they'll spin yarns by the

yard for you about the early days. But then talk to Jess Yeager, Abbott Girney or Francis Slyker. The details of the same events come out differently. Some of it you can blame on imperfect memory or an active(or inactive)imagination(or, in a few instances to the suspected influence of strong drink). Whatever. My purpose is not to impugn the honesty of these gentlemen, but only to point out that often the same event viewed from several perspectives(to say nothing of the influences on memory of an especially eventful quarter century) can be devastating to the truth unless there is written documentation. What follows has been fairly well authenticated.

The official date of our founding is January 8, 1960. (That will draw immediate fire, I know. King Abbott's history says it was nearer the fall of 1960. But I'm going to stick with January 8—Longstreet's birthday—on the premise that all groups like ours need an anchor with the past,albeit,in this case,a coincidental one that few if any of you have been aware of until now.) Not meaning to embarrass King(one of our founders and a good personal friend for many years),but he poses a contradiction in the opening of his history(the first such attempt by anyone,it should be noted).He says there were just six men who made up our group in the beginning. Then he identifies 11 as members of "the original group." This is not a point that bothers me particularly.It does, however,illustrate what a difficult job you have on your hands when you sit down to write history.

In the beginning there were six...

In the beginning there were just six men whose interest in Civil War history brought them together at the home and later the office of Don Limpert,a building contractor in Troy. The group grew quickly and soon the six became 11, all of whom are rightfully identified as Michigan Regimental founders:Don Limpert (to whom the round table idea first occurred),King Abbott,Bill Bennett,John Bruhns, John Hooper, Frank Limpert, Jon Phillips, Terry Roach, Ray Russell, Don Smith, and Jess Yeager.

Four of these men were responsible for our unique identity. To Ray Russell,our president in this silver anniversary year,goes the honor for naming us"Michigan Regimental Round Table." While other round tables were almost universally making "Civil War" a part of their names to identify themselves with the Centennial,in full swing in the 60's,Ray felt it might be wiser to give ourselves some leeway.Michigan Regimental would be good for the study of all the American wars just in case the Centennial didn't last-which was the case. Even before the Centennial concluded in 1965, interest in that event and Civil War history had cooled. This caused the collapse of many round tables. But that's getting ahead of our story.

Jess Yeager originated our official in-

signia of the eagle, cartridge box and the Union and Confederate flags. John Hooper took Jess's basic idea and rendered it into the finished design that we're all familiar with. King Abbott, who designed and produced our first membership certificates and cards, made the insignia a principal part of these pieces. Some years later, in 1974, Abbott Gibney had the insignia reproduced as a jacket patch for the membership.

Through the coal chute...

Michigan Regimental by 1962 numbered 17 members. A Detroit News feature story identified Limpert (originally chairman, at the time president) as "...one of the state's leading Civil War hobbyists and researchers." Founder Don Smith, a former policeman, was singled out for having "...recently published a book on the Civil War." Don's book, published by Stackpole, was the Twenty-Fourth Michigan, a widely praised regimental history of that famous element of the Iron Brigade. Founder Ray Russell "...is recognized as a leading authority on Michigan's role in the Civil War," the story continued.

About this time the club, which had outgrown its meeting place at Don Limpert's found a new home in the basement of the Congregational Church in Birmingham. Everything went well as long as the church janitor remembered to leave the key under the mat of the minister's residence next door. When he forgot, we

were left out in the cold—literally—unless we had a volunteer, younger and slimmer than most of us, who could slip through the coal chute and unlock the door from inside.

The odyssey begins...

Our stay at the church lasted three years— and then our wanderings began. When the church building in Birmingham was torn down, the round table, at the invitation of the church, moved to its new building two miles north in Bloomfield Hills. This was a good break. Four years later we got a bad break when the church raised its rental fee, seriously endangering the club treasury. We moved again, this time to a bank. Four more years and we were on the move again, this time for a six-month stay at Seaholm High School in Birmingham. Next we went to Alexander Hamilton Insurance complex (near where we meet now) for 2½ years; then to Fort Wayne on the Detroit River, our most historic meeting place, for 20 months. And finally we came to rest at Farmington Hills Library where we've been enjoying the library's excellent facilities and friendliness for the past 5½ years.

Down but not out...

With the decline in interest in the Cen-

ennial, we experienced a decline in membership. Our meanderings from meeting place to meeting place only aggravated the situation. Members who couldn't remember our new address or the new meeting night simply gave up on us. "Some nights it was so bad," remembers Ray Russell, "that those of us conducting the meeting were about equal in number to those in the chairs in front of us." Clearly we had to do something and quickly or Michigan Regimental would become a thing of the past.

We held an emergency planning meeting to come up with ideas. One of the best was the newsletter which went into publication immediately and has been with us ever since. Another idea perhaps even better than the newsletter, was more member-involvement programs — members in the mass, that is. "Show N Tell" made its first appearance about that time. It was an immediate hit and spawned such spin-off programs as "Who's Your Favorite General?" and "What's Your Favorite Battlefield?" These provided the special something that we very much needed at the time to hold or bring back members who hadn't been seen in months.

The "Atlanta Barn-Burner"...

But the single best membership turnout in those early days came in September of 1967. This was for the season-opener that the newsletter described this way: "Big Reunion Meeting—The Biggest Barn-

Burner Since Sherman and Atlanta!" Prizes of all kinds were promised to everybody attending: "Door prizes...fun prizes...prizes for the oldest member, youngest member...member coming the longest distance...member bringing the most friends or guests..."

On meeting night the prizes were awarded with great ceremony and flourish. Every prize was a spoof gift and all the recipients (bless 'em) had the good grace to go along with the gag. It takes a person of rare tolerance and self-effacement to be called up in front of 60 people to receive an award identified as "a genuine steel engraving of Robert E. Lee" and find out it's a postage stamp. Or to receive a piece of gravel tagged "A chip off the Rock of Chickamauga," a scrap of General Custer's left boot, a bullet hole from General Sheridan's desk, General Grant's red flannel night shirt tail, dirt from the March to the Sea, or the world's largest Confederate flag (two inches square) which had been "dehydrated to save space." The awards went on thru the entire evening, and no one went home emptyhanded even if he had wished otherwise.

Michigan Regimental-survivor!

At one time we were exchanging newsletters with nearly 30 other round tables. They ranged from nearby Abraham Lincoln Round Table to the Confederate Historial Society of London, England. Abraham

Lincoln is still going strong and the London group has staged a recent revival, but many of the rest are gone. Most of these had larger memberships and more resources than we've ever been able to put together. So, why did we survive? We made it on the grit and determination, ingenuity and plain hard work of many people. But there was something else — perhaps the most important ingredient of all — that saw us through. A complete stranger to our group may have put his finger on it. After meeting us for the first time, he said: "I've never seen a more enthusiastic or more friendly group of people anywhere." That was more than a few years back. And since then, many other people have told us the same thing.

People we can be proud of...

Over the years, we've shared the company of some pretty fine people who've been attracted to our circle. More than a few of them have contributed substantially to Civil War research and have the conditionals to prove it. Earlier, we mentioned Don Smith, one of our founders. His Twenty-Fourth Michigan is ranked as one of the outstanding regimentals to be published during the Centennial. Wiley Sword, a good friend of the round table for many years, is the author of Shiloh: Bloody April, widely considered one of the definitive books on that battle. Wilbur Thomas, an honorary member since 1968, has two Civil War biographies to

his credit: George Thomas the Indomitable Warrior and James Longstreet, Scapegoat for Gettysburg. Weldon Petz, who has addressed the round table numerous times, is nationally known for his Lincoln studies. He also has published several books on Lincoln. And a rising author and Civil War scholar in whom we take special pride is Chris Calkins. Chris literally grew up in the round table, joining us as a high school student back in the 60's. He's now a Park Service historian at Petersburg. His 36 Hours Before Appomattox has received acclaim from professional historians as an outstanding work.

We're proud, too, to have known such people as Al Nemetz, who served as round table president three consecutive terms, 1966-69, and whose outstanding leadership did much to sustain the group through those unsettled and uncertain years. The late Karl Kaiser, good friend and solid supporter of the round table from its earliest days until his death in 1981. It was Karl, who with his wife Bertha, many years ago took on the long and painstaking task of restoring the state of Michigan's badly neglected Civil War sword collection. Bill Price and the late Dalton Lamb, the "General" and the "Colonel" respectively, who donned their uniforms to present their Civil War program more than 100 times for school, church, civic, and club groups. By so doing they contributed greatly to a favorable image for the club throughout the community.

Not all the contributors or their contributions made headlines — aside from those in the MRRT newsletter. At one time we had as members William Longstreet, grandson of the Confederate General, plus first generation descendants of Civil War soldiers on both sides. Mrs. Bernard Glenn, of Fowlerville, MI, whose father was a sergeant in the 20th Michigan, represented the North, and Dr. Marion Roberts of Hillsborough, N.C., whose father was in the 56th North Carolina, represented the South. Dr. Roberts is the lone survivor and he maintains a keen interest in the round table.

The award for the best program ever presented to the round table has to go to Art Stewart for his "Food of the Civil War soldier." Art, who is an industrial food specialist, prepared authentic hard tack, salt pork, corn dodgers, and other wartime fare for all of us. He did such a good job he was asked to repeat his program—each time complete with goodies—an unprecedented four times. George Smith will always be remembered — and chided in good-natured fashion — for our 1969 field trip accommodations in Hagerstown, Maryland (a story in itself). But George also served us well as president in 1971-72.

And we remember the wife of a member (his name is withheld to avoid embarrassment) who baked up a great variety of refreshments for the coffee break only to learn her husband had told her the wrong date for the meeting. He was a week early. Undaunted, she baked a new batch for us

the following week. That's the kind of spirit that has made us what we are and has brought us all this way in 25 years. There have been so many more — the list of names would go on and on. We remember them warmly and salute them all.



"What we are comes out of what earlier Americans were—out of what they did and thought and out of their shining victories and their dark tragic defeats."



AUTOGRAPHS

SILVER ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

Ron Cleveland
Joseph Camps
David Finney
Abbott Gibney
Mil Lent
Jerry Maxwell
Carroll Tietz

ROLL OF PRESIDENTS

(1960 - 1985)

1. 1960-61: Don Smith
2. 1961-62: Don Limpert
3. 1962-63: John Hooper
4. 1963-64: Ray Russell
5. 1964-65: Mil Lent
6. 1965-66: John Hooper
7. 1966-67: Al Nemetz
8. 1967-68: Al Nemetz
9. 1968-69: Al Nemetz
10. 1969-70: Abbott Gibney
11. 1970-71: Abbott Gibney
12. 1971-72: George Smith
13. 1972-73: Dr. Maerit Kallet
14. 1973-74: Greg Kolasa
15. 1974-75: Jerry Maxwell
16. 1975-76: David Finney
17. 1976-77: Ken Baumann
18. 1977-78: Brian Russell
19. 1978-79: Ken Berry
20. 1979-80: David Finney
21. 1980-81: Jerry Maxwell
22. 1981-82: Ken Baumann
23. 1982-83: Bill Mason
24. 1983-84: Bill Mason
25. 1984-85: Ray Russell

MICHIGAN REGIMENTAL ROUND TABLE FOUNDING MEMBERS

Founded January 8, 1960

King Abbott	Frank Limpert
Bill Bennett	Jon Phillips
John Bruhns	Terry Roach*
John Hooper	Ray Russell
Don Limpert	Don Smith
Jess Yeager	

Deceased*



"If we have expertise in any area of the Civil War, let us always be ready to share it, remembering humbly that all the true 'experts' have long since departed."

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