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The Michigan Regimental Civil War Round Table went to the Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1864 on its last field trip. Here, tour guide Dennis Frye talks with members about the area.

Civil War comes to life for buffs

The complexity of America's Civil War will always fascinate Americans and foreigners alike, says Jerry Maxwell.

A group of longtime Civil War buffs meet monthly at the downtown Farmington Community Library to discuss all and any aspects of the war that separated brothers and put the American government to its ultimate test.

Maxwell, a retired North Farmington High School history teacher, has been a member of the Michigan Regimental Round Table for 23 years. He currently edits the newsletter and coordinates the group's trips.

Last October, the group traveled to the Shenandoah Valley.

The MRRT usually hosts a speaker at each of its monthly meetings and members takes one trip a year to places where important events of the Civil War took place, said group president Norm Carver.

"I think we have a good, solid round table," said Maxwell. "We have a mix of the young and old."

Carver said people's fascination with the Civil War stems from a war that pit brother against brother. It was the most declarative point of the U.S., following the American Revolution, he said.

"People (who are members) have

had relatives who fought in it," said Maxwell. "My family had people on both sides - all that still fascinates."

He said new books and new material about the war are always surfacing.

The Michigan Round Table members are a relaxed group of folks, assured Carver.

"It's a helpful group," added Maxwell, who noted the club also meets during the summer months.

Visitors are welcome to attend any of the meetings.

Regular membership dues are \$15 and \$10 for seniors and students. More information is at www.farmlib.org/mrrt/.