

Vol LXII, #1

Michigan Regimental Round Table Newsletter—Page 1

January 2022

## MEMBER RENEWAL

The MRRT celebrates its 62<sup>nd</sup> year in 2022 – 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**

**Unfortunately, we have decided TO CANCEL our January 31, 2022, meeting due to the wide-spread Omicron variant of COVID-19. We plan to have our February 28, 2022, meeting. We look forward to visiting with you then.**

**Sadly, long-time friend and member Allan M. Oakes, 90, died on November 19, 2021.** Allan taught history and industrial arts at Warren Cousino High School for more than 30 years. He went to our meetings and on our field trips for several years. He and member Bob Guenther really enjoyed traveling together on our trips. Allan's hobbies included American History, woodworking, and restoring items found at estate and trade shows.

**Please visit our great website at <http://www.farmlib.org//mrrt>. Links to interesting Civil War programs are available.** Gerald Furi of the Farmington Library is doing a terrific job keeping the website up to date.

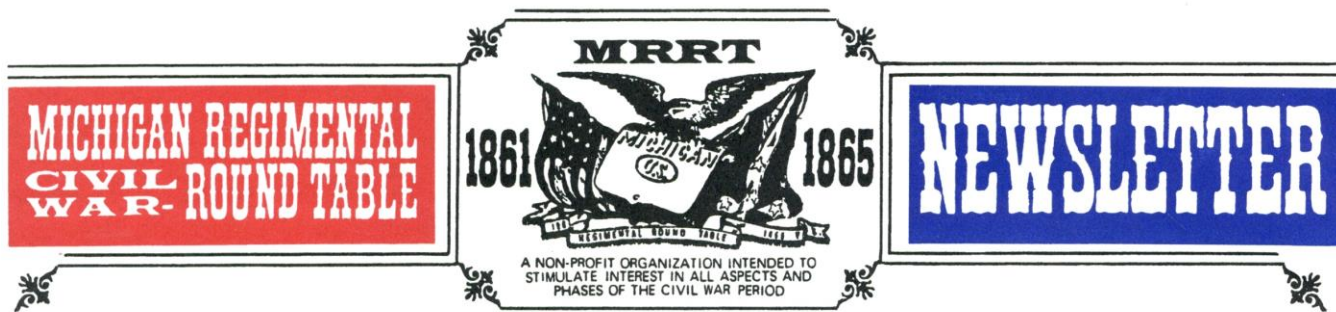
**The Roundtable thanks Tom Nanzig for his presentation on “Ten More True Tales . . . With A Twist”.** These “*off-the-beaten path*” tales were part of his long-time “*Ask the Colonel*” column. The ten interesting and unusual tales included:

**. First Civil War Monument** There were many candidates for the First Civil War monument. The Francis Bartow, colonel of the 8<sup>th</sup> Georgia Infantry, monument at Bull Run was built by the Confederates in September 1861. Another monument was erected in Louisville, KY in January 1862 for the 32<sup>nd</sup> Indiana soldiers from Germany. The William Hazen Brigade was honored at Stones' River, TN in July 1863. The first Michigan monument was erected in Tipton, MI in 1866. The bottom line is that it is up to the present day as to the definition of the First Monument.

**. Land Grant Colleges** President Abraham Lincoln signed the land grant college bill on July 2, 1862. Senator Justin Moreau pushed the legislation through Congress. The bill did not pass in 1851 because Southerners were against education for agrarians. Penn State in 1862 and Michigan State in 1865 were early land grant colleges (today their yearly football game is for the Land Grant Trophy). Iowa State received the first land grant. During 1890 a 2<sup>nd</sup> Morrill bill was passed. Each state, including Southern states, received two land grant colleges. Each Southern state received one land grant college for whites and one for blacks. Several of today's historically black colleges evolved from this 2<sup>nd</sup> Morrill bill.

**. Salle the Mascot** The most famous dog of the Civil War was Sallie Jarrett from Pennsylvania. Sallie was at the front of the review of the 41<sup>st</sup> Pennsylvania Infantry. Unfortunately, Sallie died at Petersburg, VA and was buried on the battlefield. Another famous mascot was the bald eagle Old Abe who spent the war with the 8<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin regiment. His image became the symbol of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne.

**. Wilder and Buckner at Munfordville** Colonel John T. Wilder led the Lightning Brigade (Indiana and Illinois regiments), which was a unique mobile mounted infantry for the Union Army of the Cumberland. His brigade was outnumbered at Munfordville, KY, 4,000 men vs 20,000 Confederates (Sept. 14-17, 1862). Colonel Wilder asked Confederate General Simon Buckner (who surrendered to General Grant at Fort Donelson) if he should surrender. Colonel Wilder decided to give up to the Confederates. His men were paroled and then served with distinction during the remainder of the war.



. **USS Undine (No. 55) captured by Confederate General Forrest** the USS *Undine* (Number 55) was a fortified gunboat on the Tennessee River. Confederate General Forrest's men successfully attacked the large Union storage facility at Johnsonville, TN on November 4-5, 1864, after a 23-day raid through western Tennessee. The surprise bombardment caused the Federals to burn the depot. Bourbon and whiskey were flowing on the streets of Johnsonville. Cavalry defeating Navy forces were very rare during the Civil War. The USS *Undine* was captured by the Confederates on October 30, 1864.

. **Arthur MacArthur: "On Wisconsin!"** Arthur MacArthur of the 24<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin and later his son, Douglas MacArthur, were Medal of Honor winners. Arthur won his in the charge at Missionary Ridge on November 24, 1864. During the charge he yelled, "On, Wisconsin!". Douglas won his Medal of Honor for his defense of the Philippines during World War 2. They were the only father and son to win the Medal of Honor.

. **Naked Charge at Cochran's Ford** on July 9, 1864, the 1<sup>st</sup> Tennessee (USA) tested the strength of the Confederates on the other side of the river. The Union colonel ordered a diversion at a ford downstream. The men went over and charged the Confederate rifle pits "buck naked". They were called the "Bare Hunters".

. **Counterfeiting "Honest Samuel Upham"** was a Philadelphia shopkeeper during the Civil War. He printed souvenir Confederate money – a disclaimer on the note did not make it illegal. By late 1862 Samuel was selling 28 variations of Confederate bill denominations and postage stamps. Currency notes were selling for 5 cents apiece. He sold as much as \$15 million in Confederate currency. This helped to complete the devaluation of Confederate money.

. **Nashville Women Syphilis** was a common problem among Union soldiers stationed in the Nashville area. During July 1863, Union General Rosecrans had the Nashville brothels transferred to Louisville, KY. The ship carrying the prostitutes was refused landing at both Louisville and Cincinnati, OH. Finally, the ship returned to Nashville. The women were then allowed to work again after army doctors examined their health, with another exam required 60-90 days later.

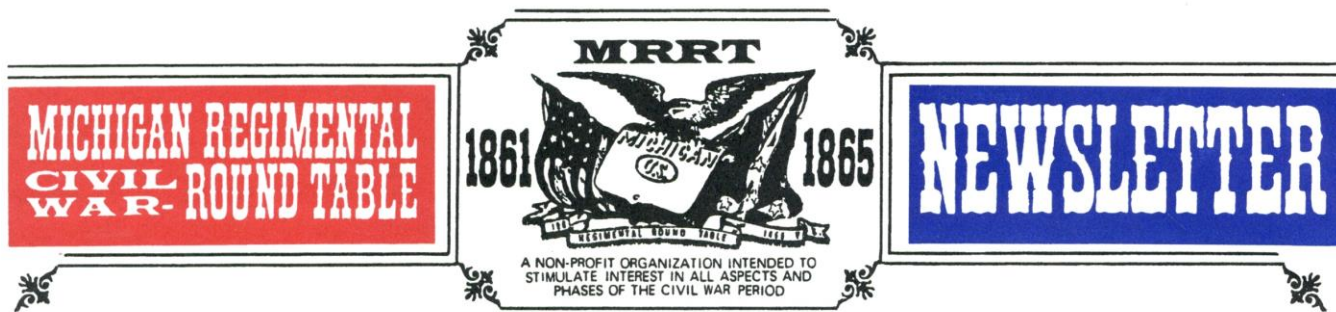
. **Rufus Barringer** During the last week of the war, Confederate general Rufus Barringer was captured at Nazarene Church. President Lincoln sent Secretary Stanton a note requesting good treatment for the general in captivity as he knew the general's brother from their time together in the U.S. Congress during the 1840's.

A week later the President was murdered and General Barringer was under suspicion because he had briefly met with the President after his capture. Secretary Stanton kept the general in prison through July and then released him. Rufus went back home to North Carolina.

#### Quiz Questions: This month's questions pertain to those "Who Didn't Like Each Other Much"

1. Which Union general slapped a fellow general in the face at the Galt House moments before he was shot and killed? Who shot him?
2. Of whom did George McClellan state: "The paltry young man who wanted to teach me the art of war will in less than be in full retreat or badly whipped? Of whom did General Henry Halleck say, "He does not understand strategy and should never plan a campaign?"
3. When General Jeb Stuart's father-in-law remained in the U.S. Army, Jeb wrote: "He will regret it but once, and that will be continually." Name this Union general. And, because of his dislike for his father-in-law, what did Jeb do with his own son?
4. Which of his Corps Commanders did General George Meade severely rebuke for the unauthorized movement of his corps at Gettysburg? Who did Meade hotly blame for not giving more specific orders at Fredericksburg?
5. Of whom did President Lincoln say, "I think that during General Burnside's command of the army, you have taken counsel of your ambition, and thwarted him as much as you could, in which you did a great wrong to the country".

Our thanks to "Old Sarge" for his help with these great questions.



### **Civil War Essentials – Confederate Privateers – A Forgotten Part of the Civil War at Sea**

When we think of the naval part of the U.S. Civil War, we are likely to conjure up images of the battles between ironclads of the two sides or the attacks on Union shipping by Confederate Navy commerce raiders like the *CSS Alabama* and *CSS Florida*. The efforts of stealthy unarmed blockade runners to evade the Yankee blockading warships around southern ports may also come to mind. **Few people think of privateers who were given “Letters of Marque” by the Richmond government to prey on northern shipping.**

**The use of privateers had been a recognized aspect of warfare for hundreds of years before the Civil War.** It was originally conceived as a way by which a ship owner of one country could receive compensation for the loss of a ship and/or cargo seized by another country. The aggrieved party was authorized by his government to venture out on the high seas in his own armed ship and capture a merchant ship from the country to recover his loss.

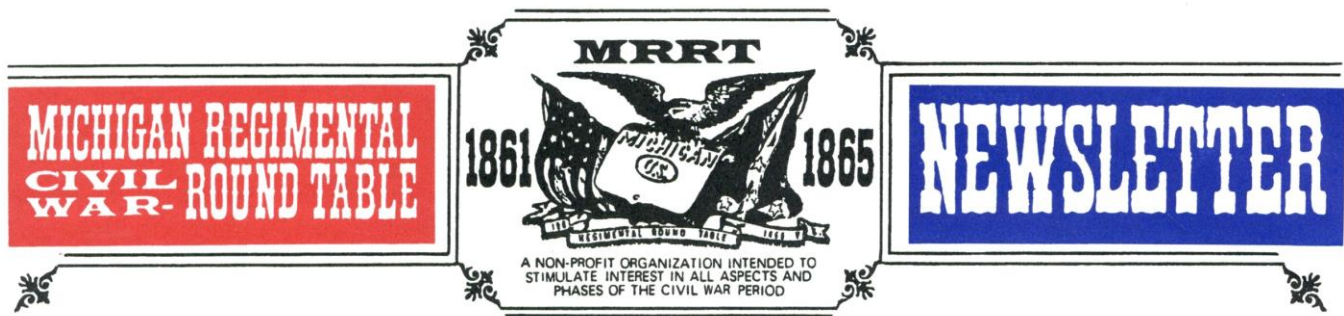
**In time however it evolved into a sort of “private enterprise in the naval raiding business” during wars.** Countries with small or no navies at all were still able to inflict damage on their enemies at sea by employing privateers. Ships captured by privateers were taken to port and sold with the privateer owner and crew splitting the proceeds, sometimes with the government which issued their Letter of Marque. England and France used privateers against the Spanish in the New World. **The Americans unleashed a swarm of privateers to wreak havoc on British merchant shipping during the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 as well.**

**By the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century however, most advanced countries had begun to see privateering as longer a benefit even for those countries with limited naval resources.** For one thing, some privateers had tended to pass smoothly into piracy when wars ended, even attacking the shipping of their own country, rather than give up their profitable life of booty. Many famous pirates like Henry Morgan had switched from privateer to pirate to privateer as wars came and went. Additionally, established navies resented privateers who competed with them for sailors and prizes. As a result, at the end of the Crimean War in 1856, 55 countries, including all the major European countries, signed the “Declaration of Paris” by which they agreed to cease using privateers against each other in the event of war. The U.S. did **NOT** sign the Declaration, however.

**Few privateers in history had been successful in combat with actual enemy naval vessels.** Stealth and surprise were their favored tactics against unarmed merchant ships.

**During mid-April the Confederacy’s new government declared its readiness to issue Letters of Marque.** These were documents which conferred on the ships status as a quasi-official arm of the CSA. **The response by some southern ship owners to the Confederate privateering authorization was enthusiastic.** The large number of U.S. merchant vessels in the western Atlantic and Caribbean, and the small number of Union warships available early in the war, seemed to promise rich picking for an enterprising rebel privateer. Perhaps some sailors recalled tales of profitable voyages that their forefathers had taken during the wars with Britain.

The corresponding reaction of the northern shipping industry was panic. **The initial reason for instituting the Union blockade was to prevent widespread privateering by the Confederacy;** the disruption of trade in and out of southern ports would later become the major goal of the blockade after the privateer threat declined. The Union did not authorize privateering since the number of Confederate merchant ships was so small (in March 1863 Congress passed a Privateering Bill but President Lincoln wisely refused to issue any Letters of Marque to avoid any chance of international incidents with British vessels).



A limiting factor on the success of the privateers would ultimately be the decision by most other nations, notably Britain, France, and Spain, to not recognize the Confederacy as a nation. **This meant that, unlike the privateers of the wars against Britain, the Confederate privateers would not be able to bring their captured prizes into foreign ports for sale.** Early on, Spain seized prizes sent to Havana, Cuba by a Confederate privateer. Because of this, successful raiders had to send their prizes back through the blockade to Confederate ports and the privateer ship would quickly reach a point when it could no longer spare any more men to act as prize crews! **Nonetheless, the first year of the war was the most successful for the privateers as they achieved a mixed bag of successes and failures.** Privateering activity would be the highest around Charleston and the Carolinas coast and also from New Orleans.



The first rebel privateering voyage was that of the *J.C. Calhoun* which captured a ship at the mouth of the Mississippi in May 1861. On June 1, 1861, the *Savannah* (drawing) left Charleston Harbor. It captured a prize, the *Joseph*, and sent it back to Charleston with a prize crew on board. Buoyed by this easy feat, it closed with another ship only to find that it was the USS *Perry*. The *Perry* was faster and better armed than the *Savannah*, so its privateer crew soon wound up in a New York City prison. A more successful foray was that of the *Jefferson Davis* which left Charleston in later June 1861 and soon captured ten prizes, several of which were recaptured trying to return through the blockade to Charleston.

**The initial response of the Federal government was to declare that all captured rebel privateer crewmen, like the *Savannah's* would be tried as pirates – since the Lincoln administration did not recognize the Confederacy as a separate nation, it followed that they could not recognize**

**Letters of Marque issued by it as legitimate.** Trials began for several captured privateer crewmen but threats from the Confederate government to treat captured Union soldiers and sailors the same way forced the Lincoln administration to back down. The crew's status reverted to prisoners of war.

As the Union blockade became more effective and several key enclaves of the Carolinas coast were captured by the Yankees beginning in late 1861, the real impact of privateering began to fade although some ships continued to operate. **Instead, the biggest Confederate threat to Yankee merchant shipping would come from the Confederate Navy commerce raiders such as the *CSS Alabama*.** Built or bought in Britain, they ranged all over the high seas and generally destroyed their many captures rather than securing them as prizes. **The effect of the combined CSA Navy commerce raider and privateer attacks was to reduce the U.S. merchant fleet to a fraction of its prewar size during, and for some time after, the Civil War.**

**Quiz Answers:**

1. William “Bull” Nelson and Jefferson C. Davis (not the Confederate President)
2. Generals John Pope and George McClellan
3. General Philip St. George Cooke; changed his son’s name from Philip St. George Cooke Stuart to James Ewell Brown Stuart, Jr.
4. Generals Dan Sickles and Ambrose Burnside    5. General Joseph Hooker