

MONDAY, March 30, 2026, ROUNDTABLE MEETING

Our March 2026 meeting will be on Monday, March 30, 2026, at 6:30 pm at the lower level of the Farmington Library, on the corner of Grand River and Farmington Road. Our guest speaker, Larry Hathcock, long-time member, and our expert on the Union Navy, will speak on “Victory at Sea and Waterways: The Union Navy in the Civil War.”

FALL 2026 FIELD TRIP – DESTINATION WILL BE DECIDED

Immediately after our Pledge of Allegiance, we must decide on our trip destination for this coming fall. Our tour leader, Linda Gerhardt, must have as much time as possible to make the arrangements. This will involve making recommendations and having a FINAL VOTE.

MEMBER RENEWAL

The MRRT celebrates its 66th year in 2026 – and now is a wonderful 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 the NEW treasurer, Jim Burroughs (the bank does not like checks made out to the RoundTable) and can be mailed to his home at 1632 North Silvery Lane, Dearborn, MI 48128. We will gladly accept cash at our meetings. The dues are used to pay our expenses, mostly outside speaker-related, and contributions to battlefield preservation.

ROUNDTABLE WEBSITE

The Roundtable has a great website, created by our friend, Gerald Furi. We are no longer connected to the Farmington Library. The website is: <https://www.mrrt.us> Please note that the s after http is necessary to get on the website. The website is well worth visiting.

MARCH 2026 SPEAKER – LARRY HATHCOCK – ORTONVILLE, MI

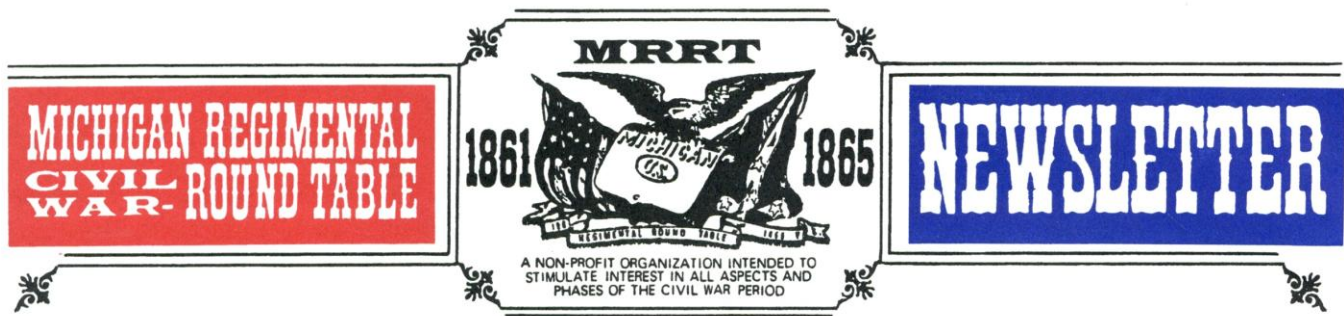


The Roundtable welcomes long-time member Larry Hathcock as our March 2026 speaker, presenting “Victory at Sea and on the Waterways: The Union Navy in the Civil War”. At the beginning of the Civil War, the U.S. Navy was given numerous difficult tasks to accomplish. These included: Establish the 3,500-mile blockade of the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. Control coastal harbors and sounds. Secure the vast Mississippi River. Defend against the Confederate naval activity. Acquire and build ships. Recruit and train thousands of men. Larry will describe how these objectives were accomplished. Picture, left, is Admiral David Farragut – *“Damm the torpedoes”* at the Battle of Mobile Bay.

Larry Hathcock is a retired upper elementary school teacher and a six-year veteran of the U.S. Naval Reserve with three years of active duty. Larry is a past president of the Roundtable and has given numerous talks over the years on various naval topics.

This will be an outstanding presentation on Monday evening, March 30, 2026! We look forward to seeing you.

February 2026 Speaker Review – Jack Dempsey the Roundtable thanks Jack Dempsey, for his educational and entertaining presentation on *“Radical of Radicals: Austin Blair – Civil War Governor-in his own words”*. This book is one of a series of books that Jack has written to raise money for a Michigan monument at the Antietam battlefield. He is hard at work on future volumes. **We thank Jack very much for his presentation.**



Governor Blair was very progressive.

Governor Blair (picture left in front of Michigan state capital) **was very progressive for his time. He was anti-capital punishment in the 1830’ and 1840’s. Austin was a formidable opponent of secession and slavery. He advocated for giving blacks and women the right to vote.**

He was a lawyer, local official, and legislator. Austin was a founder of the Republican Party in Jackson, MI “*under the oaks*” in 1854. President Lincoln was a Whig during his one-term in Congress. The future President joined the Republican Party when the Whigs collapsed during the 1850’s. He campaigned for John Fremont, the first Republican candidate for President in 1856.

He was a supporter of William Seward in 1860, who was more anti-slavery than Lincoln was. He advocated that “*We will deliver Michigan for Lincoln.*” Austin was elected governor as Lincoln carried the state. Jack believes that Governor Blair was the best governor in the history of the state.

Similarities between Lincoln and Blair. Both were originally Whigs. Both were anti-slavery and politically ambitious. Each of them advocated for greater rights for African Americans. Both were politically independent Midwesterners.

The Governor was dedicated to the union war effort. He used his own money to provide supplies for Michigan troops during the war, resulting in him being worse off economically after the war ended. His salary as governor was only \$1,000 per year. He also provided repeating rifles for the Michigan Cavalry brigade at the Battle of Gettysburg. He supported black soldiers, saying “*do us proud.*”

Differences between Lincoln and Blair

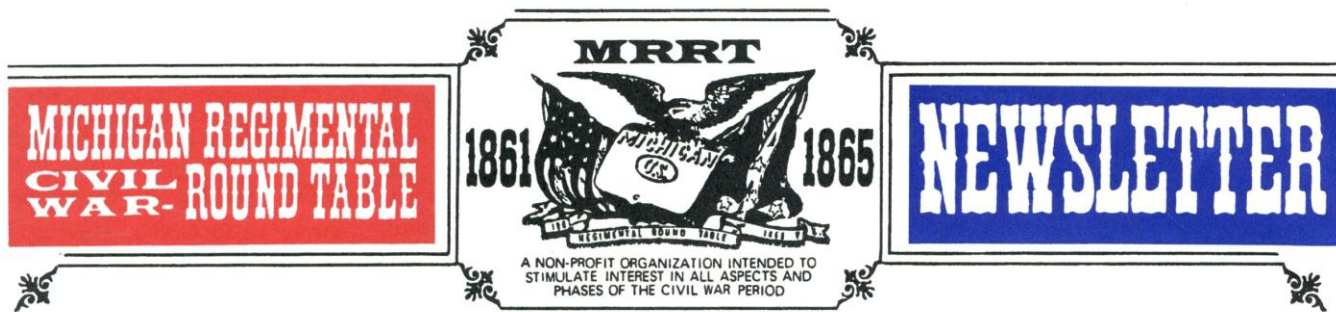
The Governor wanted the Fugitive Slave Act repealed before the war began. Austin sought a more aggressive approach to conducting the war. General McCellan needed to pursue victory much more actively. Governor Blair and Michigan raised more regiments than the Federal government wanted. **The President said, “*Thank God for Michigan*” as the first western regiment to reach Washington was from Michigan.**

Austin Blair appointed Orlando Wilcox, Alpheus Williams, and Isiah Richardson as generals from Michigan. Richardson died at Antietam; he might have become commander of the Army of the Potomac. Alpheus Williams was a Corps Commander at Gettysburg who was never promoted because he was a Democrat.

He died in 1894 and was buried in a modest grave in Jackson’s Evergreen Cemetery.

Civil War Questions and Answers!! This month the Questions pertain to Abraham Lincoln.

1. A fictitious tale circulated concerning Lincoln’s so-called disguise worn in Baltimore on the way to Washington D.C. for his inauguration? What was the disguise and who “made-up” this story?
2. To which abolitionist did Lincoln say, “*So this is the little lady who made this big war*”? Also, to which abolitionist did Lincoln say, “*There is no man’s opinion that I value more than yours*”?
3. To what was Lincoln referring to when he said, “*It was founded on both injustice and bad policy*”? Also, what did Lincoln say was “*defective*” in his own background?
4. Which speed did Lincoln claim was his best, stating: “*I should choose that speech and leave it to the world unerasd*”?



5. To whom was Lincoln referring when he said, “*My boy! My boy! Was it necessary this sacrifice should be made? Our thanks to Old Sarge for providing these questions.*”

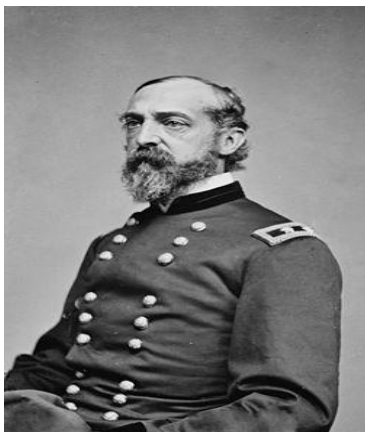
Civil War Essentials – The Army of the Potomac Marches to Gettysburg

The Army of the Potomac faced a major challenge in addition to fighting the Confederates on Northern soil during the Gettysburg campaign. **All the equipment required to fight a major battle also had to arrive at the battle site on a timely basis.**

Huge Size of the Army of the Potomac

Union troops moved forward toward Gettysburg each day on the command “*March.*” **The troops were in four columns, two on each side of the road. Artillery batteries and supply wagon trains travelled down the center of the road. Each of the seven corps wagon trains were seven to ten miles long. Moving along with the trains were large herds of cattle with their mounted drivers.**

Captain Hyde, of the Seventh Corps staff wrote, “*To give you some idea of an army, our Corps of 16,000 men with its wagons takes six hours to get into motion, and on the road is 9 ½ miles long.*” Based on this the Army would be one hundred miles in length if all seven corps, artillery, and cavalry corps were all on one road.



Union Soldiers suffered greatly.

General Meade’s (picture left) soldiers were suffering greatly. Many men lacked shoes and adequate clothing after the long march north through Maryland and recent forced hikes through the rain and mud. As a result, the soldiers needed rest. At this time, the General had no telegraphic communications with General Halleck in Washington or Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs. He could request supplies, but the request could not be sent on a timely basis, and the needed supplies could not be delivered to the battlefield. This was primarily due to the activity of Confederate cavalry damaging the railroads and cutting the telegraph wires.

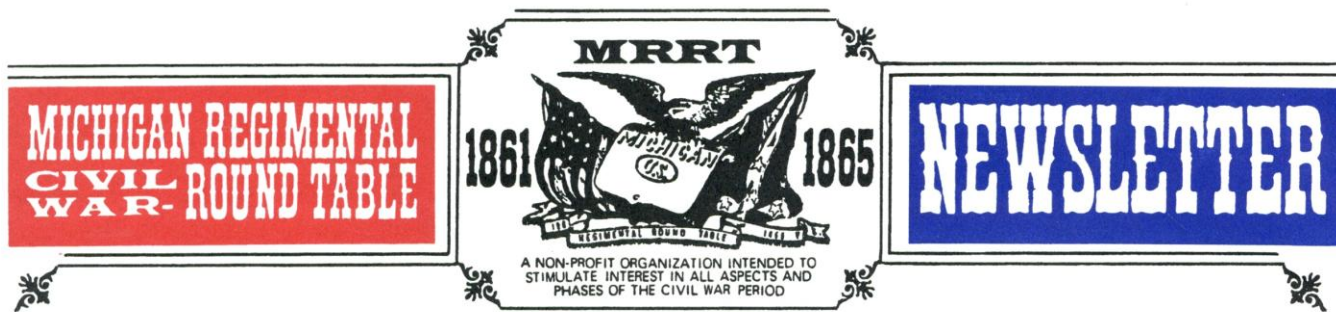
General Meade’s Supply Struggles on July 1st

The July 1st fighting at Gettysburg was a significant Confederate victory. The Union soldiers were driven through town to high ground east of town. This may be a good place to fight a battle.

Besides the brutal fighting, General Meade also had to worry about feeding his men and the army’s horses and mules, and the men required clothing, shoes, socks, and munitions. Well over one fourth of the army were shoeless on July 1st.

The Union army had marched from Falmouth, Virginia to Frederick, Maryland, and then thirty miles farther north, at least 120 miles. Men had marched more than fifteen hours a day through rough terrain and through heavy rains and mud. Obviously, the men needed significant rest.

The 90,000 men had to be supplied and resupplied continuously, or the army would fall apart. Ammunition and food were essential to successfully fight the Confederate army. The Union Army had over three hundred guns that required ammunition. Between the two armies over 50,000 artillery rounds were fired during the battle.



The Railroads

During the afternoon of July 1, the Union War Department ordered General Haupt “to take care of the repairs of the North Central (Railroad) and to work on the Western Maryland Railroad”. Westminster became the Union supply base, despite being twenty-two miles southeast of Gettysburg, with General Haupt overseeing the military railroads. General Haupt did everything humanely possible to create a reliable railroad supply line.

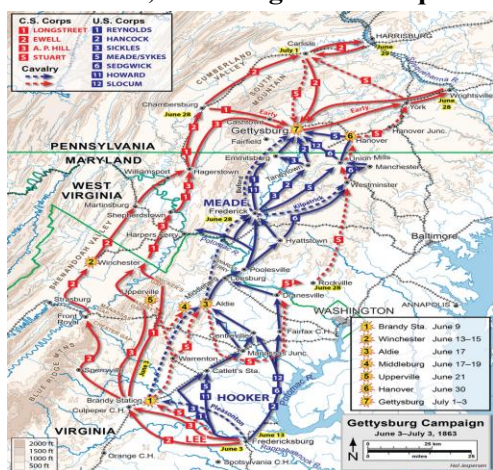
Feeding the Horses and Mules

Feeding the Army’s horses and mules was a tremendous task. Each horse was to be fed fourteen pounds of hay and twelve pounds of oats every day. Mules needed fourteen pounds of hay and nine pounds of oats, corn, or barley. Men could live up to ten days without adequate food while horses and mules broke down within three days when not fed or given forage different from their regular forage.

Without forage for the animals, the army would not be able to move. The frequent requirement for shoeing horses and mules generated a substantial demand for iron to produce shoes and nails, as well as coal for use in the forges. This feeding task was almost impossible as the Army used more than thirty thousand mules and almost thirty thousand horses every day.

The Army of the Potomac constantly needed supplies of all types.

The Army (and the Confederate Army) needed supplies coming in all the time. The amount of quartermaster, subsistence, and forage stores required were unimaginable. Quartermaster Ingalls requested at 4:15 pm on July 1st, 500,000 pounds of grain and 20,000 pairs of boots. Between June 28 and July 1, 50,000 pairs of shoes were ordered.



Westminster, PA, and Union Bridge became the Union supply base for the Battle of Gettysburg. (Picture left, complexity of Gettysburg campaign)

When General Meade ordered all Corps to Gettysburg, Westminster and Union Bridge became clogged with the supply trains of the seven corps, cavalry corps, and artillery Reserve.

There were at least 50,000 wagons that would have extended for fifty miles if lined up on a single road. Each wagon used a six-mule team and two men to oversee the wagon. There were more than thirty thousand heads of cattle led by mounted drivers. Seven infantry regiments performed guard duty with the wagon trains. Artillery and cavalry also guarded the supply trains.

Quiz Answers:

1. A plaid suit with a Scottish cap and Joseph Howard, Jr. of the *New York Times*
2. Harriet Beecher Stowe and Frederick Douglass
3. Slavery and Education
4. “*A House Divided against itself cannot stand*” delivered on June 16, 1858
5. Elmer Ellsworth – Lincoln’s friend who was the first Union officer killed in the Civil War.