



Kalamazoo Civil War Round Table Newsletter

February 2024

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This Month's Program

The Kalamazoo Civil War Roundtable is proud to announce that Mark Longstroth will present a program on "Grierson's Raid". The program will be held Friday, February 16th. The usual social period will begin at 7:00 pm and the program will begin at 7:30 pm. The meeting will be held at the Westwood United Methodist Church, 538 Nichols Road, Kalamazoo, MI.

Mark is a long-time member of the KCWRT. In the past, Mark has used great PowerPoint presentations to give the audience a feel for the movement of troops. Grierson's raid was a deep cavalry raid across the state on Mississippi during Grant's Vicksburg campaign.

During the American Civil War, the main purpose of mounted cavalry troops was scouting or reconnaissance to determine the location and movements of enemy troops. The cavalry was also used to screen or mask the location and movements of your own troops from enemy cavalry. The cavalry was also used to disrupt enemy communications and supply. Cavalry raids behind the enemy lines would disrupt troop movements, destroy supplies, and supply lines. Most deep cavalry raids ended in the capture of part, or all the raiding force and horses became worn out, supplies exhausted and enemy forces converged from all sides on the raiding force.

By mid-1862, the fortress of Vicksburg in Mississippi was the sole remaining Confederate strong point on the Mississippi. If the Union could take Vicksburg, they would cut the Confederacy in half. Vicksburg sits on a high bluff over the Mississippi. To the north lies the vast Mississippi Delta, a huge wetland between the Mississippi and Yazoo rivers. Union attempts to take Vicksburg were frustrated again and again.

David Farragut tried to take it in 1862 from the South with the Navy after he captured New Orleans. Grant tried to take the city from the north in 1862. Grant's first attempt to march south from Memphis ended when a cavalry raid destroyed his supply center at Holly Springs, forcing

him to retreat. Sherman's assault at Chickasaw Bayou was a diversion for Grant's main effort. During the winter of 1862-63 Grant made numerous attempts to find a passage through the Mississippi Delta during high water. Grant became convinced that the way to take Vicksburg was to move his army to the other side of the river south of Vicksburg and then cross to the Mississippi and attack Vicksburg from the south on dry land.

If Grant moved his army south of Vicksburg the Confederates would simply move their forces south and block his crossing. Grant needed a way to distract his opponent and steal a march on him. Grant decided on a cavalry raid in Mississippi to distract the Confederates while he moved part of his army south along the river.

Grant chose Benjamin Grierson to lead a large cavalry force from Tennessee south across Mississippi to link up with Union forces. He could link up with Grant's forces south of Vicksburg or go all the way to Baton Rouge Louisiana. This force would create chaos in Central Mississippi and keep Confederate attention on stopping and defeating this cavalry force and not Grant's army. Grierson left La Grange, Tennessee on April 17, 1863, and reached Baton Rouge on May 2, 1863. Along the way he destroyed bridge and rail lines, cut telegraph wires and evaded Confederate forces.

Past Programs

In January, Cameron Brown presented a program on the American Civil War song "Battle Hymn of the Republic". The talk was interesting and well received. Thank you, Cameron for your informative presentation! You can follow Cameron at HistoryFrontiers.blog.

There were 25 people in attendance. There were \$12 in book sales to help support monthly expenses and \$36 for the raffle to support preservation projects. \$37 was also raised for Loaves and Fishes who provide food for people in need. We thank Jim and Roxanne Frey for providing delicious snacks and treats. Thank you also to all of you who paid dues for the year.

Civil War Website and YouTube Videos

The Civil War Digital Digest is a website that provides videos and information on Civil War soldiers, battles, culture and people. There are a lot of videos on a wide range of subjects such as individual soldiers, battles, cooking, uniforms, civilian life and much more. You can find these free videos at: <https://civilwardigitaldigest.com/>

OR search YouTube for: Civil War Digital Digest



2023-2024 Dues

Dues of \$20 per family are now due for the 2023-2024 Roundtable. The dues are used to help pay speaker expenses and to pay for use of the room for our meetings.

For fiscal accounting, the KCWRT Balance at the end of January was \$3216.30.

Civil War and History Programs Around the State

Grand Rapids Civil War Round Table – Wednesday, Feb 21st

Steve Soper will speak on “Fathers, Sons, and Brothers: Families in the old 3rd Michigan Infantry.” The GRCWRT meets at 6:30 pm (presentation at 7:00 pm). There is a NEW MEETING LOCATION: Orchard View Church of God 2777 Leffingwell Ave. Grand Rapids, Michigan. For more information contact Dan Dunn at (616) 887-9828 or check www.grcwrt.com.

Ann Arbor Civil War Round Table – Monday, Mar 11th

Patrick McCormick will speak on "Battle of North Anna". The AACWRT meets at 7:00 p.m in the Administration Building Exhibition Room of St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, 5305 Elliott Drive (go to Lot "P"), Ann Arbor, Michigan. For more information call Ken Baumann at 734-439-7657 or email kb64bau@sbcglobal.net. You can also check aacwrt.org.

Michigan Regimental Round Table - Monday, TBD

The next MRRT meeting is TBD and topic is not posted. The MRRT normally meets on the Lower Level of the Farmington Library on Liberty St in Farmington. Meetings start at 6:30 pm with the presentation starting around 7 pm. For more information contact: <https://www.mrrt.us/> The MRRT newsletter on the website has some interesting info and trivia. Check it out!

Civil War Round Table of Southwest Michigan – Tuesday, Mar 12th

Licensed Battlefield Guide Les Fowler will present “The Modern Battle for Little Round Top.” The Southwest Michigan Round Table meets at 6:00 pm (presentation at 6:30) in Fellowship Hall (lower level) of the First Congregational Church at 2001 Niles Ave., St. Joseph, MI. For more information go to <http://www.cwrtswmi.org>.

Sons of Union Civil War Veterans – Tuesday, March 5th

The next Camp meeting will be held at 7:00 pm in the Ransom Library at 180 S. Sherwood St. Plainwell, MI 49080. For more info contact: gator0205@yahoo.com

Michigan’s Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Hall –

The museum is typically open 10 am – 4 pm on Wednesdays between Memorial Day and Labor Day. The GAR Hall is located at 224 S. Main Street Eaton Rapids, MI 48827. For details visit: <https://www.facebook.com/GARBrainerdPost111MemorialHallAndMuseum> or garmuseum.com or call 517 922-6427



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