

7TH MICHIGAN CAVALRY
MORNING REPORT
Headquarters: Bay City, Michigan

Thanks to Ray

We thank Ray Herek for his well prepared talk in February about the many illnesses contracted by Civil War soldiers and their treatment. He made it clear that the cure during the Civil War was mostly worse than the disease.

He also made us more careful about what we eat and who we select for our family doctor.

Two More Speakers

We have two more speakers this spring.

On March 11th, Mark Hoffman will speak to us about the organization of Civil War engineers and how their specialties advanced the war effort.

Mark is the deputy director of the Michigan Department of History, Arts, and Libraries located in Lansing and wrote a book on his topic in 2008 entitled "My Brave Mechanics: The Michigan Engineers and their Civil War".



Mark Hoffman

After our annual dinner on April 8th at the Atrium on Water St, in the meeting room of the connected Stein Haus, Jerry Maxwell of Farmington will enlighten us about Abraham

Lincoln's personal life and his family before and during his presidency.

Match the General to his Horse

Although they usually kept several horses so they would always have a fresh one available, the name of the favorite horse of Civil War generals is often remembered.

See how many you can match with its owner.

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| 1. U.S. Grant | a. Virginia |
| 2. George Meade | b. Little Sorrel |
| 3. John Hunt Morgan | c. Hero |
| 4. Robert E. Lee | d. Old Baldy |
| 5. John Bell Hood | e. King Phillip |
| 6. Richard Ewell | f. Kentuck |
| 7. Joe Hooker | g. Cincinnati |
| 8. George Thomas | h. Rienzi |
| 9. J.E.B. Stuart | i. Don Juan |
| 10. William T. Sherman | j. Fire-eater |
| 11. Stonewall Jackson | k. Jeff Davis |
| 12. Phillip Sheridan | l. Lookout |
| 13. Jubal Early | m. Traveller |
| 14. George McClellan | n. Lexington |
| 15. Albert Sidney Johnston | o. Black Bess |
| 16. Bedford Forrest | p. Billy |
| 17. George Custer | q. Almond Eye |
| 18. Benjamin Butler | r. Rifle |
| 19. James Longstreet | s. Old Whitey |

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The answers are on page 3.

The Stuff of Legends –

Barbara Fritchie

After winning the second battle of Bull Run in early September of 1862, Robert E. Lee decided to follow up his victory with an invasion of the North.

The Army of Northern Virginia moved quickly across the Potomac River and into Maryland where it would soon fight the battle of Antietam.

As the rebels entered the crossroad town of Frederick, they were described by one observer as “. . . the dirtiest men I ever saw, (and) a most ragged, lean and hungry set of wolves. Yet, there was a dash about them that the northern men lacked.”



Confederates in Frederick, a rare photo of rebels on the march

In Frederick lived 96-year old Barbara Fritchie, a loyalist to the Union, who had the stars and stripes waving in front of her house.

Legend has it that the Confederate troops were angered by the flag and were shooting at it and threatening her when General Stonewall Jackson rode up.

John Greenleaf Whittier picks up the story in his popular 1864 poem entitled “Barbara Fritchie”, and reports what happened thereafter:

"Shoot, if you must, this old gray head,
But spare your country's flag," she said.
A shade of sadness, a blush of shame,
Over the face of the leader came;
The nobler nature within him stirred
To life at that woman's deed and word;
"Who touches a hair of yon gray head
Dies like a dog! March on!" he said.

Barbara Fritchie died only a few months later and never knew of her fame. She probably also never knew she said that nor that she had seen Stonewall Jackson in front of her house.



Barbara Fritchie

The route of march of the Confederates through Frederick didn't take them past Fritchie's house and no witness ever claimed being present at any confrontation between Barbara and the mighty Stonewall.

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Alas, it still makes a nice story and a nice poem. Winston Churchill thought it so good that when he visited her house on a tour of the United States in 1943, he recited it entirely from memory.

Answers to Match the General to his Horse:

1-g, 2-d, 3-o, 4-m, 5-k, 6-r, 7-l, 8-p, 9-a, 10-n, 11-b, 12-h, 13-s, 14-f, 15-j, 16-e, 17-i, 18-q, 19-c

Michigan's Most Famous Horse

The Civil War horse of most significance to Michigan was "Rienzi", Union cavalry general Phillip H. Sheridan's favorite ride.

Sheridan spent the first part of the war in St. Louis assigned to quartermaster duties. The 2nd Michigan Cavalry Regiment was looking for an experienced leader so Michigan's Governor Austin Blair appointed Sheridan its Colonel.

He was so successful in battles fought near Rienzi, Mississippi in the spring of 1862 that the colonels of the other regiments in his brigade petitioned that he be made a brigadier general to command them.

Archibald Campbell, a captain in the 2nd Michigan and later its commander, gave him a fine 3 year old black gelding Morgan horse that was born and raised in the Grand Rapids area.

Sheridan named the horse Rienzi after the place of his successes and the quick-gaited animal soon became his favorite.

The horse was described as "over seventeen hands in height, powerfully built, with a deep chest, strong shoulders, a broad forehead, a clear eye and of great intelligence. He was one of the strongest horses Sheridan ever knew, was very active, and was one of the fastest walkers in the Federal army."

By the fall of 1864, after many more great successes, Sheridan was leading a Union army in the Shenandoah Valley against Jubal Early's Confederates. After fighting several battles against Early, all seemed quiet in the valley for the moment so Sheridan thought it safe for him to leave his army to go to Washington for a strategy conference.

But as he was returning and was having breakfast at Winchester, about 19 miles from where his army was encamped at Cedar Creek, he thought he heard the distant sound of cannonading.

Leaping onto Rienzi and quickly outdistancing his staff, Sheridan galloped toward Cedar Creek. As he got closer to it, he was met by the refugees of his retreating army. Early had attacked and Sheridan's proud force was being routed.

Rallying his men as he went, he brought his army back together. When he reached their battered battle line, he rode back and forth in front of it so his men could see him.

Reorganized, they counter-attacked Early's forces and sent them running. The day, October 19th, ended in complete success for the Union.

The 1864 presidential election was only a few weeks off and a defeat at Cedar Creek would have been disastrous to Lincoln's reelection hopes.

In recognition of his horse's great stamina in taking him the entire distance, Sheridan renamed it "Winchester". The horse became the subject of a famous poem by Thomas Buchanan Read entitled "Sheridan's Ride", which thrilled the North.

In 1865, at the battle of Five Forks, Virginia, when his soldiers hesitated to attack the Confederate works, Sheridan grabbed his headquarters flag and showed them the way. He rode Rienzi directly toward the Confederate breastworks, which the horse leaped over into the startled Rebels, who then fled.

Upon the horse's death in 1878, it was stuffed and later displayed at the Smithsonian Institute's Historical Museum, where it remains today.

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Rienzi at the Smithsonian