

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

September 2013 Beginning our 17th Campaign



www.firstdefenderscwrt.us

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome back for another season. I hope everyone had a pleasant summer. Although Linda will cover this news again, I feel it my responsibility to tell you that both the dues and meal prices are increasing this year. The dues will be increased to \$25.00 per member. This is the first increase in many years, but keep in mind that we have brought in many good speakers and the program committee has a great lineup for this year. We do not use book raffle money for speakers, as that goes all to preservation. The price of meals will be \$24.00 and is the first increase since we arrived at Golden Oaks. I hope you understand that we try our best to control costs, while providing a nice facility, good meals and first class speakers. Thanks. Now for the part I enjoy, being an amateur writer.

The summer of 1863, although inconclusive, had given Abraham Lincoln many reasons for optimism. The Army of Northern Virginia under Robert E. Lee, after their stunning success in the spring at Chancellorsville, invaded Pennsylvania. A frustrated Lincoln sacked Joe Hooker and sent an aide to wake up George Meade in the early morning hours of June 28 to tell him he had bad news to deliver. Meade assumed he was being relieved, but instead was informed of his appointment to command the Army of the Potomac. McDowell, McClellan, Pope, McClellan again, Burnside, and Hooker had all preceded Meade as commander of the army and none could match Robert E. Lee. The Army of the Potomac under Meade rose to the task and defeated Lee's men at Gettysburg in early July. Meade was unable to prevent Lee's army from escaping back to Virginia and an exasperated Lincoln exclaimed, "Our Army held the war in the hollow of their hand and they would not close it...As it is, the war will be prolonged indefinitely".

U.S. Grant provided Lincoln with news to soothe his mind. On July 4, the siege of Vicksburg ended with former Philadelphian John Pemberton

surrendering the Rebel garrison to Grant. On July 9 the rebel forces at Port Hudson also surrendered. The full length of the Mississippi River was now in Union hands and the Confederacy was cut in two. Lincoln proclaimed, "The Father of Waters again goes unvexed to the sea".

Lincoln now turned his eyes toward Tennessee to see how his commander there, William Rosecrans, would do against Braxton Bragg's army. They were about to clash along a creek called Chickamauga.

Joe Schaeffer

Round Table Business

Treasurer's Report

Lori Border presented her report at the July 23 board meeting. Our balance as of May 2012 stood at \$2360.70. \$113.00 is ear-marked for preservation. Receipts totaled \$344.00 with expenses of \$2158.12 leaving a balance of \$546.58 as of June 8, 2013.

Membership

It's time to renew your membership for the new campaign of 2013-2014. The Board met in July and decided that we need to raise annual membership dues to \$25.00 in order to generate additional income to pay for speakers. No one could recall a dues' increase in the history of our organization, and we feel fortunate to have brought and continue to bring top notch speakers for our meetings. We believe the increase is nominal and will not have an adverse effect on members.

Please fill out the attached form, and return it with your check as soon as possible. The deadline for payment is October 15, 2013. If you plan to pay your dues in person at the September or October meeting, please be sure to fill out **the renewal form** and **bring it along** with your payment.

We have been notified by Golden Oaks that the cost of meals will increase by \$2.00. This is the first increase since we began holding meetings there.

Thank-You's from Civil War Trust

The Round Table has received two thank-you notes from the Civil War Trust. The first was thanking us for the \$250.00 donation to Vicksburg in honor of Ed Bearss's 90th birthday. The second was to thank us for the \$750.00 donation to the Chancellorsville Battlefield. These generous gifts are made possible by our members generosity of book donations, ticket purchases, and cash gifts for the monthly book raffle. Keep up the good work during our new campaign.

From Don Stripling and Ron Emge--

OCTOBER 26 BUS TOUR

On Saturday, October 26 we'll be going to York where we'll do a walking tour of historic sites followed by traveling to Wrightsville to discuss the Civil War skirmish there during the Gettysburg campaign. If you receive your newsletter electronically, the tour flyer/registration form has been included as an attachment to the "e-blast" President Schaeffer has sent to you announcing the September newsletter's online availability. If your newsletter is mailed, the tour

flyer/registration form is included w/ this newsletter. The tour flyer/registration form can also be downloaded from our website "trips" link. PLEASE NOTE: member only (no non-member spouses/friends) registrations will be accepted thru September 9; after September 9, registration will be open to the public.

A word about our tour guide, Scott Mingus, a noted historian w/ his own website, www.scottmingus.com. Scott has done many tours of historic York for many organizations and tour groups. He is probably the most knowledgeable person on Jubal Early's division of Richard Ewell's corps. He has written a book on the Louisiana Tigers brigade of Early's division and just recently completed writing a book on the infamous "Extra Billy" Smith, a brigadier general of another brigade in Early's division. According to Ed Bearss, Scott is "the expert" on Early's movements east from the Caledonia Iron Works during the Gettysburg campaign. Scott will be bringing along on this tour copies of his book "Flames Beyond Gettysburg, The Confederate Expedition to the Susquehanna River, June, 1863" – cost is \$20; please let Ron Emge or Don Stripling know if you would like a book so Scott brings along enough books.

This will be a great tour with an excellent guide – you won't want to miss it!

From Dave Unger--

ELI DOUGHERTY

Eli Dougherty was captain of Company K, 93rd Regiment during the Battle of Fair Oaks Station on May 31st, 1862. During the battle he was struck by a bullet which shattered his gold watch and then ricocheted into a pocket Bible. His body was slightly bruised by the experience, but the aftermath was more astounding. The bullet went through only part of his Bible and left a mark in first Corinthians that ends with the passage "preach the word!" After this experience he received a medical discharge and returned to Pennsylvania. Does anyone know what occupation he took up upon his return? Wouldn't it be interesting to know!

From Tim Antosy--

Hi everyone. Hope you had a great summer. Last year I started a Facebook Page for the First Defender's. The idea of Facebook at least for our purposes is to talk about the stories of the Civil War. As an example I also belong to the Pennsylvania 88th Descendant's group and we also have a Facebook page. I have been a member of that organization for about 2 years now and you would be amazed at all the different photos, new clips and just information about the different men who served the 88th Pennsylvania. That is what I would like to have happen for the First Defender's. I have been a member of the First Defender's for 3 years now and when we meet I sit with different people. Most of those people have a story to tell about an ancestor or just some knowledge they would like to talk about concerning the war, but there is no place to do that. On the nights we meet you all know how quickly things happen there once the food is served. There really is no time to sit and talk. That is why Facebook is a great

vehicle to do that. You can post pictures of your ancestors or their discharge papers. As an example one of Deb Demarco another member of the First Defender's ancestors served in the 26th Pennsylvania Emergency Regiment. On his discharge paper you can see he only joins the Army on June 17, 1863 and on June 24th he is already in Gettysburg preparing to protect the city. Things like that are very interesting for everyone and again Facebook gives you an opportunity to do that. There will be other links on the page to direct you to interesting stories about the war. I hope you take advantage of it. All you have to do is go to facebook.com set up an account for yourself and then go to The First Defender's Facebook page and start writing or uploading a picture. It's that simple. If you need help with any of that please give me a call at 610-823-6626 or email me at tantosy@aol.com. I look forward to hearing your stories.

Thanks,
Tim Antosy

The Program for September: Michael W. Kauffman **Topic: In the Footsteps of An Assassin**

Biographical Background:

As historian William C. Davis once wrote, "no one has studied [John Wilkes] Booth longer or more in depth than Michael W. Kauffman, a well-known figure and voice of reason in the field of Lincoln assassination studies."

For thirty-five years, Kauffman has been a fixture at assassination-related symposia, tours, and news events. He has written numerous articles on the subject, and his bus tours of the John Wilkes Booth Escape Route have been a staple of feature publications all over the U.S., making Kauffman "legendary," according to The Washington Post.

He has written for Civil War Times, the Washington Post, American Heritage, Blue and Gray, and the Lincoln Herald, among others, and has lectured throughout the United States. He has also appeared in more than twenty television and radio documentaries, including programs on A&E, The Learning Channel, the History Channel, National Geographic Channel, and the Discovery Channel.

Kauffman is the editor of Samuel B. Arnold's *Memoirs of a Lincoln Conspirator*, and more recently (2004) he wrote *American Brutus: John Wilkes Booth and the Lincoln Conspiracies*, which was named by the New York Times, The Washington Post, and several other media outlets as one of the best non-fiction books of 2004. This all-encompassing account of the Lincoln conspiracy is based entirely on primary sources, and it gets closer to the truth than any previous attempt. As the late historian David Herbert Donald said, "There are many books on [the assassination] but this is by far the best."

Mr. Kauffman's newest book will be on sale: **In the Footsteps of an Assassin**. He will bring copies to sign and sell. They're \$25.00 each.

The new TravelBrains book/CD package, *In the Footsteps of an Assassin*, tells the story of Booth's plot with an emphasis on the sites associated with it. I've always believed that in order to understand history, you have to walk it -- to visit the sites and get a sense of where they stood in relation to one another.

Most people would be surprised to know that most of the houses and buildings that Booth and David Herold visited on their escape from Washington are still in existence, and until recently, few were marked. Much of my adult life has been devoted to tracking down those locations and pointing them out to visitors in the tourist-rich Washington area. I like to think that my efforts have helped call attention to the need for preservation of these sites and to the richness of our own local history.

Craig's Calendar...



Seminars & Exhibits

<u>Date</u>		<u>Contact</u>
NOW - JUN 7, 2014	"The Last Full Measure: Berks County at War 1861-1865" Historical Society of Berks County	610-375-4375
SEP 7	"The Irish Brigade at Gettysburg" - John Fitzpatrick National Civil War Museum, Harrisburg 1:00 PM	717-260-1861
SEP 14	"151st Anniversary of the Battle of Antietam at the Pry House Field Medical Museum" National Museum of Civil War Medicine 11:00 AM-5:00 PM	301-695-1864
SEP 14	"Securing the Union's Right Flank" - Terry Breckenbaugh National Civil War Museum, Harrisburg 1:00 PM	717-260-1861
SEP 21	"Confederate Battle Flags" - Greg Biggs National Civil War Museum, Harrisburg 1:00 PM	717-260-1861
SEP 26	"The Civil War Cavalry & the Navy" - Dale Kratzer Heidelberg Heritage Society, Wernersville 7:30 PM	610-678-4405
SEP 28	"Preserving the U.S.S. Monitor" - David Kropp National Civil War Museum, Harrisburg 1:00 PM	717-260-1861

Trips & Tours

<u>Date</u>		<u>Contact</u>
SEP 12-14	"The Chickamauga Campaign" - Norman Dasinger Civil War Education Association	800-298-1861
SEP 20-22	"Perryville" - Chris Kolakowski Blue & Gray Education Society	434-250-9921
SEP 21-22	"Antietam: McClellan's Masterpiece" - Ed Bearrs Civil War Tours	860-485-3603
SEP 28	"Antietam... Like You've Never Walked It Before" - John M. Priest Civil War Education Association	800-298-1861
SEP 28-29	"Grant Moves South: The Petersburg Campaign" - Ed Bearrs & Dr. Richard Sommers Civil War Tours	860-485-3603
OCT 4-6	"The Armies Move North" (Lectures & Field Trip, Middleburg, VA) Mosby Heritage Area Association (www.mosbyheritagearea.org)	540-687-4195

Anyone with any additional sources for "Craig's Calendar" is asked to provide contact information to craig.breneiser@gmail.net. Thanks!

Reservations for the September 10, 2013 Meeting:

Dinner Reservation Procedures: If possible, please make your meal choices/reservation on the website. Meal choices: *Pasta Primavera, Broiled Flounder, Chicken Marsala, Sirloin Beef Tips.*

The price is \$24.00 for meals. If you must call in reservations, please call your menu selection at 610.478.1717 no later than Monday, September 2, 2013, which is also the deadline for online reservations. Please call after 5:00 p.m. and speak clearly. This phone number is Joe Schaeffer's business phone so we are asking you to be considerate about not calling until after 5:00 p.m.

*NOTE: Once you have made your reservation, there are no cancellations. The Round Table will be billed for your meal whether you attend or not. Please understand that you will be asked to reimburse the RT should you not attend after having made a reservation.

2013-2014 Program Schedule

September 10, 2013: Michael Kauffman
October 8, 2013: Dennis Frye
November 12 2013: Tim Smith
December 10, 2013: Mark Quattrock
January 14, 2014: David C. Keehn
February 11, 2014: Ivan E. Frantz, Jr.
March 11, 2014: Greg Stull
April 8, 2014: Edwin C. Bearss
May 13, 2014: Kristopher White

In the Footsteps of an Assassin
Sept. Surprise: Lincoln's Union in Peril
Lincoln at Gettysburg
Confederate States Medical Service
Knights of the Golden Circle
PA Railroad & the Civil War
Leonidas Polk
Cold Harbor
Hell's Half Acre: Spottsylvania



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FIRST DEFENDERS CWRT MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Membership payment of **\$25 is due by October 15, 2013.**

The check should be made payable to **The First Defenders CWRT** and mailed to:

**David Unger
307 Grant Avenue
Leesport, PA 19533**

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

October 2013



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The summer of 1863 was fading away and so were Confederate hopes for independence. Crushing defeats at Gettysburg and Vicksburg left Southern governors openly rebellious toward Jefferson Davis's government. European intervention was a lost hope. Civilian and military supplies were scarce and desertions from the army were epidemic. Davis needed a battlefield victory and it needed to be big.

Robert E. Lee lobbied for a concentration of all available troops to Virginia. He would then resume the offensive against the Army of the Potomac. Davis and his advisors disagreed, turning their hopes to the West, to Gen. Braxton Bragg. Davis ordered Lee to detach James Longstreet and two of his divisions to go to Tennessee and assist Bragg's Army of Tennessee. Their opponent was William Starke Rosecrans, a man of brilliant intellect but prone to instability when stressed. Rosecrans and Longstreet had been roommates at West Point. Rosecrans had so far had the best of Bragg, consistently feinting and outmaneuvering his opponent.

Longstreet's arrival emboldened Bragg, and he determined to turn and crush his opponent. The Armies collided on September 19 and 20 in a heavily wooded area along Chickamauga Creek, east of Chattanooga. Survivors described the fighting as some of the hardest they ever saw and the casualty lists confirmed this. At a critical moment in the battle, Rosecrans received an erroneous report of a hole in his lines. He moved troops to plug this non-existent gap, thus creating a very real hole in another part of his lines. Unknown to him, James Longstreet was on his way to the gap just opened, striking with such ferocity that the Union line collapsed. Rosecrans panicked and fled with two-thirds of his army.

George H. (Pap) Thomas, a native Virginian fighting for the Union, led his troops to the sound of the guns. Aided by Gordon Granger's men, he held back the Rebel tide long enough for the Union army to reach the

safety of Chattanooga. His conduct this day earned him the title, "Rock of Chickamauga." Bragg had achieved an overwhelming victory for Jefferson Davis, but had failed to destroy the Union army. Nevertheless, he had them encircled at Chattanooga and began the effort to "starve them out." Now the crisis was in Abraham Lincoln's lap. Elections for Governor were only weeks away in Pennsylvania and Ohio. He could not afford to lose those states to Copperhead opponents. He must save the army in Chattanooga. Lincoln had lost faith in Rosecrans. Who could the President turn to?

Joe Schaeffer

Round Table Business

President Joe Schaeffer opened the September meeting at Golden Oaks Golf Club at 6:35 p.m. welcoming everyone back from the summer break. Sixty-eight attended the inaugural meeting. He introduced several guests who had joined us for the evening. Vice President Craig Breneiser offered a prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Joe reminded all in attendance that the Board was forced to raise membership fees to \$25.00 for the current year. Golden Oaks also requested a hike in meal prices to \$24.00 each; however, they have assured us that that price will be in effect for at least two years. Everyone was reminded that money for meals will be collected no earlier than 5:45 p.m. each meeting. Members are encouraged to enjoy fellowship with each other at any time, but please be considerate to Lori and Dave by adhering to that time. Also, Lori asks everyone to bring exact denominations of money to cover the \$24.00 meal. It is particularly difficult to make change early in the collection each month. Joe also reminded everyone of our reservation procedures which can also be found later in this newsletter. Be aware that once you make a reservation, you are obligated to pay for that meal should you not attend the meeting. The deadline for reservations is always the Monday of the week prior to the meeting date. Again, refer to the end of the newsletter for specific details, phone numbers, etc.

Ron Emge described the upcoming field trip to the York/Wrightsville area on October 26th. Specifics can be found in this newsletter.

Joe told us of a note written by the late John Shollenberger's wife. John died right before the spring field trip which he had planned to attend. John's fee had been returned to the family. Mrs. Shollenberger returned the check asking that the money be used for battlefield preservation which meant so much to her husband.

Joe received a thank-you note from Laura Catalano for providing a speaker for the Schuylkill River Heritage Association. Dave Fox graciously offered to do a program for the kayakers, and they enjoyed it immensely.

Membership

It's time to renew your membership for the new campaign of 2013-2014 if you have not done so. The Board met in July and decided that we needed to raise annual membership dues to \$25.00 in order to generate additional income to pay for speakers. No one could recall a dues' increase in the history of our organization, and we felt fortunate to have brought and continue to bring top notch speakers for our meetings. We believe the increase is nominal and will not have an adverse effect on members.

Please fill out the attached form, and return it with your check as soon as possible. The deadline for payment is October 15, 2013. If you plan to pay your dues in person at the October meeting, please be sure to fill out **the renewal form** and **bring it along** with your payment.

Preservation/Book Raffle

Cate Kennedy thanked members for their continued generosity through the purchase of raffle tickets and donation of books. Special thanks to Dave Klopp who continues to provide the tickets at no cost to the Round Table. One of the many things that makes the First Defenders special is the amount of money given through the years to battlefield preservation. Buying tickets, donating items, and giving money to this worthy cause deserves acknowledgement. Keep up the good work during our new campaign. Find up-to-date figures on donations on the home page of our website.

Ed's Artifacts

Ed Ewing shared two items with us in September. He brought a Model 1857 cartridge box which had been manufactured for the regular army. He also brought an 1812-1813 Starr cavalry saber with a black scabbard. The saber cost \$2.74 each. The 1st and 2nd North Carolina regiments had Starrs. The French influence on the blade is obvious, and keep in mind that the French army was considered the best in the world at that time. Thank you, Ed, for sharing your vast collection and your expertise with us.

From Don Stripling--

OCTOBER 26 BUS TRIP

There are still seats available for the October 26 bus trip to visit historic York and Wrightsville guided by historian Scott Mingus. The price for the trip is \$45 per person. You can give your registration form and check (payable to the First Defenders CWRT) to Ron Emge or Don Stripling at the October 8 meeting or you can mail it to Don at PO Box 130, Wernersville, PA 19565-0130. Also, Mingus will have his book on the burning of the Wrightsville bridge available on the trip – price \$20 cash.

ADOPT-A-POSITION

The First Defenders have been assigned 2 sites in the GNMP “Adopt-A-Position” program – General Gregg’s Cavalry Shaft on East Cavalry Field and the 18th PA Cavalry Monument on Big Round Top. A “work crew” is being formed to work on these sites sometime after the October 8 meeting; this time around, the work on these sites is minimal (clean the immediate areas). We will also be working on Barbara Shafer’s 6th PA Cavalry Monument on South Cavalry Field. If you would like to help, please call Don Stripling at 610.750.3998.

From Bruce Updegrave--

Bruce shared with me an original letter that he acquired written by William Medler to his brother George of Middleport, Schuylkill County. William served in the 81st Regiment, Co. G, enlisting on September 16, 1861. He was killed in action during the Battle of Fredericksburg, VA, on December 13, 1862. The following is William's letter:

Mauch Chunk Aug. 13th

dear Brother

I have now Enlisted for three years this evening. I have made up my mind in five minutes and tomorrow I will leave at eleven oclock. I have nothing to say only let Father know about the affair.

I will write again when at Harrisburg therefore I will bid you all farewell,

Your Brother,
William

Thank you, Bruce, for sharing your letter with us.

From Errol Steffy--

One of the places visited during our June field trip of Lee's retreat from Gettysburg was the Daniel Donnelly House/Falling Waters 1863 Battlefield owned by George Franks. George wrote to Errol expressing his pleasure at having our round table at his house. He has authored a book on the topic as well which can be obtained through Amazon.com or from the author directly at www.fallingwatersmd1863.com. If you have any questions, please talk to Errol.

The Program for October: September Suspense: Lincoln's Union in Peril

Dennis E. Frye is the Chief Historian at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. Writer, lecturer, guide, and preservationist, Dennis is a prominent Civil War historian. Dennis has numerous appearances on PBS, The History Channel, The Discovery Channel, and A&E as a guest historian, and he helped produce award-winning television features on the Battle of Antietam and abolitionist John Brown. Dennis served as an Associate Producer for the Civil War movie *Gods and Generals*, during which he recruited and coordinated nearly 3,000 reenactors for the film. Dennis also is one of the nation's leading Civil War battlefield preservationists. He is co-founder and first president of the Save Historic Antietam Foundation, and he is co-founder and a former president of today's Civil War Trust, from whom he received the Trust's highest honor - the Shelby Foote Award. Dennis is a tour guide in demand, leading tours for organizations such as the Smithsonian, National Geographic, numerous colleges and universities, and Civil War Round Tables. Dennis also is a well-known author, with 88 articles and eight books. *Harpers Ferry Under Fire* (released in March 2012) received the national book of the year award from the Association of Partners for Public Lands; and *September Suspense: Lincoln's Union in Peril*, was awarded the 2012 Laney Book Prize for distinguished scholarship and writing on the military and political history of the war. Dennis has written for prestigious Civil War magazines such as *Civil War Times Illustrated*, *America's Civil War*, *Blue & Gray Magazine*, *North and South Magazine*, and *Hallowed Ground*, and is a guest contributor to the *Washington Post*. Dennis resides near the Antietam Battlefield in Maryland, and he and his wife Sylvia have restored the home that was used by General Burnside as his post-Antietam headquarters.

***Dennis will have the special edition collector's edition of *September Suspense* with him at the meeting. It is numbered and autographed with a special frontispiece. Only 1,000 have been printed. It can only be purchased from Dennis at personal appearances and is not sold in stores or online. It will be DISCOUNTED \$10! The price is \$25.00 (normally \$35). In addition, you will receive a FREE COPY of another of his books, *Antietam Revealed* (a \$12 value at no cost). Free is good!**

Craig's Calendar...



Seminars & Exhibits

<u>Date</u>		<u>Contact</u>
NOW - JUN 1, 2014	"Conscription During the Civil War" National Civil War Museum, Harrisburg	717-260-1861
NOW - JUN 7, 2014	"The Last Full Measure: Berks County at War 1861-1865" Historical Society of Berks County	610-375-4375
OCT 3	"Blue & Gray Gala" National Civil War Museum, Harrisburg 6:00 PM	717-260-1861
OCT 4-6	"North-South Skirmish Assn. Period Firearms Competition" Winchester, VA (info at www.N-SSA.org)	
OCT 19- 20	"149th Anniversary of the Battle of Cedar Creek" Cedar Creek Battlefield, VA	540-869-2064
OCT 25- 27	"Gettysburg NMP Seminar Series" Gettysburg NMP & Civil War Institute	717-334-1124 x3251

Trips & Tours

<u>Date</u>		<u>Contact</u>
OCT 4-6	"The Armies Move North" (Lectures & Field Trip, Middleburg, VA) Mosby Heritage Area Association (www.mosbyheritagearea.org)	540-687-4195
OCT 18- 19	"The First Day at Gettysburg" - Gary Kross & Charlie Fennel Civil War Education Association	800-298-1861
OCT 19- 20	"Gettysburg- The Second Day" - Ed Bearrs Civil War Tours	860-485-3603
OCT 23- 27	"Gettysburg-Confederate High Tide"-Ed Bearrs, Bob Krick, Jeff Wert Civil War Tours	860-485-3603
OCT 26	"Mosby's Confederacy- The Atrocities of 1864" - David Goetz Civil War Education Association	800-298-1861

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Reservations for the October 8, 2013 Meeting:

Dinner Reservation Procedures: If possible, please make your meal choices/reservation on the website. Meal choices: *Vegetable Stir Fry, Broiled Salmon, Pecan Chicken, Pot Roast.*

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Sept. Surprise: Lincoln's Union in Peril
Lincoln at Gettysburg
Confederate States Medical Service
Knights of the Golden Circle
PA Railroad & the Civil War
Leonidas Polk
Cold Harbor
Hell's Half Acre: Spottsylvania

Newsletter contact: Linda Zeiber, zeibers@comcast.net



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FIRST DEFENDERS CWRT MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Membership payment of **\$25 is due by October 15, 2013.**

The check should be made payable to **The First Defenders CWRT** and mailed to:

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307 Grant Avenue
Leesport, PA 19533**

FIRST DEFENDERS
YORK/WRIGHTSVILLE BUS
TOUR October 26, 2013

Scott Mingus, a York Countian, and the author of the book *Flames Beyond Gettysburg, The Confederate Expedition to the Susquehanna River, June, 1863* will be our tour guide.

We will leave 55 Commerce Drive, Wyomissing at 8:00AM sharp heading to York. We will park the bus at Penn Park in York where we will meet Scott. Penn Park was the site of the closest military hospital to Gettysburg with over 2000 Gettysburg wounded being treated here. From Penn Park we will walk around historic York as we discuss the regional and national importance of York. York was the birthplace of the Articles of Confederation and witnessed Jubal Early's June 1863 invasion as York became the largest city in the North to fall to the Confederate Army during the Civil War. This walk will take about 2.5 hours on level sidewalks on flat ground with a slight incline in one segment; we'll stop often to talk about various buildings, people, events, and topics so that the most we'll walk at any one time is about 5 minutes.

Once we return to the bus, we'll be stopping at the Old Country Buffet for lunch. After lunch we will follow John Gordon's brigade eastward to the Susquehanna River and discuss the skirmish of Wrightsville and the state militia's desperate attempts to defend the river and the world's largest covered bridge. We will then return to York to drop off our guide and then head back to Wyomissing, arriving there by 4:30 PM.

The cost for this fall trip is \$45/person which includes the buffet lunch, deluxe bus transportation, and the services of the expert guide. MEMBERS ONLY (no non-member spouses/friends) can use the registration form below to sign up for the trip thru Monday, September 9 by mailing the form along w/ your check to Don Stripling, PO Box 130, Wernersville, 19565-0130; beginning September 10, members and non-members may sign up; make checks payable to the First Defenders CWRT. Any questions, contact Ron Emge (304.529.4888) or Don Stripling (610.750.3998).

----- REGISTRATION FORM -----

NAME _____

TELEPHONE _____

NAME _____

TELEPHONE _____

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

November 2013



www.firstdefenderscwrt.us

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Tim Smith, our speaker in November will be speaking on the events in Gettysburg. So as not to steal his thunder, I will continue with the struggle in the Western Theater.

Braxton Bragg had scored a tremendous victory over William Rosecrans at Chickamauga, but had lost a good opportunity to destroy the Union army. As October began, that door to complete victory was still open. The Yankees were holed up behind their fortifications in Chattanooga, yet they were hardly secure. The Rebels held the heights on Missionary Ridge and Lookout Mountain, controlling all major roads into the city and with the river to their backs, the Yankees were surrounded. Bragg began a siege, hoping to starve the Yankees into surrendering. Rosecrans had lost his spirit, Lincoln referring to him as, "confused and stunned like a duck hit on the head." The army and townspeople were reduced to eating mules and horses. Secretary of War Stanton sent the 11th and 12th Corps on a 1,200 mile journey to bolster the defenses, but with no supplies to feed them, they would just be 20,000 more men to surrender.

Lincoln now turned to a man who never lost his nerve. He appointed Ulysses S. Grant to command of all troops west of the Appalachians. Grant, always a man of action, went right to the front. He ordered immediate attacks and within a week had opened a thin but helpful supply line called the "cracker line." Of equal importance he brought spirit back to the army. By mid-November he had the reinforcements from the east and Sherman's army added to his forces. Confederate generals peering down from their heights could clearly see that they had a fight coming. Now Jefferson Davis felt sweat under his collar.

Jefferson Davis had an unflinching loyalty to Braxton Bragg which clouded his eyes to the general's weaknesses. At Chattanooga this resulted in disaster. Bragg was bullheaded and short with subordinates.

Junior officers hated him and he returned the favor. Nathan Bedford Forrest threatened to kill him and refused to serve under his command. Davis took the unprecedented move of going to Chattanooga to calm things. James Longstreet asked Davis to relieve Bragg. Davis refused, instead dispatching Longstreet and his division to attack Knoxville. The command was thus weakened and Davis left having only made the situation worse.

Grant attacked with everything he had on November 24-25. As the rest of the army watched, Joe Hooker's men in the "Battle Above the Clouds", captured Lookout Mountain. Sherman's men hit the north end of Missionary Ridge. Grant expected this to be the decisive blow, but Patrick Cleburne stopped Sherman cold. The attack was sputtering. Grant who always seemed to underestimate the ability of George Thomas had ordered him to make a feint against the center to help take pressure off Sherman. Instead, the men under the Rock of Chickamauga charged and never looked back. Rolling over one Rebel line after another, they raced to the top of Missionary Ridge. Bragg's men broke and this time he was the general fleeing from the field of battle.

Chattanooga was saved. Grant was the nation's hero and Lincoln had his victory. Davis and Bragg blamed their subordinates. Union and Confederate armies settled down to lick their wounds, reorganize and wonder how much longer this bloodshed would last.

Joe Schaeffer

Round Table Business

President Joe Schaeffer opened the October meeting at Golden Oaks Golf Club at 6:30 p.m. Fifty-four members attended the meeting. Vice President Craig Breneiser offered a prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Joe then announced the marriage of Craig Breneiser and Lisa Hourt recently extending congratulations.

Several members gave an update on the recent hospitalization of Roger Cotterill. Roger had his left kidney removed and is doing well at this point. Anyone wishing Roger's address to send get well wishes may contact Joe Schaeffer or Dave Unger. We all wish Roger a speedy return to meetings.

Don Stripling reported that there will be no work done for the Adopt-a-Position at Gettysburg this year because of the government shutdown.

Treasurer's Report

Lori Border reported a balance of \$354.60 as of September 10, 2013. Receipts totaled \$3,656.00. Expenses amounted to \$1,958.43 leaving a balance of \$2,052.17. The preservation account had \$333.000 in it prior to the motion to send money to the CWPT.

Membership

Membership stands at 74 as of the October meeting. We were well over 100 members at the end of the last season. If you have not yet renewed your membership for the new campaign, please send your money and membership information to Dave Unger. Dues this year are \$25.00.

Preservation

Four parcels of land are currently available for purchase at Antietam, Bolivar Heights at Harper's Ferry, and Shepherdstown. The Civil War Preservation Trust announced a leverage of 11:1 for this endeavor. A motion was made and seconded to send \$200 to the Trust in honor of speaker Dennis Frye. The preservation fund stood at \$300 previous to this donation.

Buying raffle tickets, donating books, and giving money to this worthy cause deserves acknowledgement. Keep up the good work during our current campaign. You can find up-to-date figures on donations on the home page of our website.

Ed's Artifacts

Ed Ewing shared two carbines with us in October, a 50 cal. Smith and a 54 cal. Burnside. He described these as the #3 and #4 weapons of the Civil War. The Smith was preferred over the Burnside which tended to jam after 3 or 4 rounds. It used an ice cream cone cartridge compared to the linen cartridges of the Smith.

The Burnside's were issued to the 3rd, 4th, and 18th PA Cavalries. Because of their distaste for the weapon, they often were "lost". Troopers found them hard to load on horseback, and they leaked gas making the barrel extremely hot.

Ed also brought a display of cartridges which were used for both weapons. Thank you, Ed, for sharing your vast collection and your expertise with us.

****Important Newsletter Note****

Due to a scheduled surgery, I will not be able to compose the December newsletter. Craig and Lisa Breneiser have graciously offered to write the newsletter in my stead. Please send any articles or information that you would like to have published in the newsletter to craig.breneiser@gmail.net no later than Tuesday, November 19, 2013.

I am appreciative beyond words for Craig and Lisa's help. I hope to be back in action by Christmas.

Linda Zeiber

A Civil War Thanksgiving Letter

Contributed by Mike Straus

November 24, 1864

Fort Rice, Virginia {near Weldon Railroad, on the Petersburg Line}

This day has been set apart by the president as a day of "thanksgiving and praise." If anybody can tell me any occasion for gratitude or praise, I shall be greatly indebted to him. Since the recurrence of this festive occasion one year ago, many changes have taken place, many familiar faces have passed away, many voices have been hushed, their lives sacrificed.

As for me, I momentarily expect death or some other calamity in which this horrid war abounds. {"Horrid" is primarily a female expletive which, when emanating from a female mouth, may mean anything or nothing, generally the latter. But I use it in no such limited or vague sense. I attach nothing short of its full meaning, and even then find it inadequate.}

I am thankful that the days of slavery are ended. In the multitude of my troubles I have well-nigh overlooked whatever of good has fallen on my lot. I hope that next Thanksgiving will find me safely at home. This is my last one in Virginia, at least, come life or death.

This forenoon we had a divine service, so called. The afternoon was spent watching the northern horizon for a shower of luxuries suitable to the day. In vain did our mouths water and our imaginations riot in visions of roast turkey and mince pie. As these things have been promised, their nonappearance disappoints us immensely.

Pvt. John Haley
Co. I, 17th Maine Volunteers

Craig's Calendar...



Seminars & Exhibits

<u>Date</u>		<u>Contact</u>
NOW - JUN 1, 2014	"Conscription During the Civil War" National Civil War Museum, Harrisburg	717-260-1861
NOW - JUN 7, 2014	"The Last Full Measure: Berks County at War 1861-1865" Historical Society of Berks County	610-375-4375
NOV 2	"Lincoln Leads the Discussion of the Gettysburg Address" National Civil War Museum, Harrisburg 1:00 PM	717-260-1861
NOV 11-26	"Banners of the Fallen" National Civil War Museum, Harrisburg	717-260-1861
NOV 16	"Remembrance Day Parade, Ceremonies & Illumination" Gettysburg 1:00 PM - 9:30 PM	717-259-6516 717-338-1243
NOV 16-18	"18th Annual Lincoln Forum" Wyndham Hotel, Gettysburg Info at: admin@thelincolinforum.org	

Trips & Tours

<u>Date</u>		<u>Contact</u>
NOV 8-9	"McCausland's Raiders in 1864" - Scott Patchan Civil War Education Association	800-298-1861
NOV 10-17	"Custer in the Civil War" - Neil Mangum Blue & Gray Education Society	434-250-9921
NOV 15-16	"Andrew's Raiders & the Great Locomotive Chase" - Norm Dasinger Civil War Education Association	800-298-1861

Anyone with any additional sources for "Craig's Calendar" is asked to provide contact information to craig.breneiser@gmail.net. Thanks!

The Program for November: Lincoln at Gettysburg

Timothy H. Smith is employed as a Licensed Battlefield Guide at the Gettysburg National Military Park and a research historian at the Adams County Historical Society. He is the author of ten books and numerous articles on the Civil War and local history. He is a frequent lecturer at Civil War Round Tables and Seminars and has appeared on several televised documentaries including the popular Pennsylvania Cable Network Battle Walks series.

Abraham Lincoln spent just 25 hours of his life in Gettysburg. But during that time, he put the finishing touches on, and delivered, what many consider to be the greatest speech in American History. Most of the approximately 15,000 people who attended the ceremonies were from the local area. And for the rest of their lives, those in attendance related their personal recollections. Rarely used in books and articles on the the Gettysburg Address, these reminiscences provide us with a more complete understanding of how the Lincoln's speech was delivered and received. Join historian Timothy H. Smith, as will examine the events of November 19, 1863, and how those events effected those who witnessed them.

Buy raffle tickets to support battlefield preservation!

Matching funds multiply our contributions many times over.

Reservations for the November 12, 2013 Meeting:

Dinner Reservation Procedures: If possible, please make your meal choices/reservation on the website. Meal choices: Cheese Stuffed Shells, Broiled Haddock, Chicken Cordon Bleu, Roast Beef Marsala.

The price is \$24.00 for meals. If you must call in reservations, please call your menu selection at 610.478.1717 no later than Monday, November 4, 2013, which is also the deadline for online reservations. Please call after 5:00 p.m. and speak clearly. This phone number is Joe Schaeffer's business phone so we are asking you to be considerate about not calling until after 5:00 p.m.

*NOTE: Once you have made your reservation, there are no cancellations. The Round Table will be billed for your meal whether you attend or not. Please understand that you will be asked to reimburse the RT should you not attend after having made a reservation.

2013-2014 Program Schedule

November 12 2013: Tim Smith
December 10, 2013: Mark Quattrock
January 14, 2014: David C. Keehn
February 11, 2014: Ivan E. Frantz, Jr.
March 11, 2014: Greg Stull
April 8, 2014: Edwin C. Bearss
May 13, 2014: Kristopher White

Lincoln at Gettysburg
Confederate States Medical Service
Knights of the Golden Circle
PA Railroad & the Civil War
Leonidas Polk
Cold Harbor
Hell's Half Acre: Spottsylvania



Newsletter contact: Linda Zeiber, zeibers@comcast.net

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Treasurer	Lori Border	borderlori@verizon.net
Preservation	Cate C. Kennedy	kenwycke1@aol.com
Solicitor	Robert P. Grim	rgrim@hometownnu.com
Trips	Don Stripling	donstripling54@juno.com
Trips	Ron Emge	Emge301@comcast.net
Programs	Dave Sweigert	Davesweig@aol.com
Programs/Adopt a Position	Don Stripling	donstripling54@msn.com
Programs/Web	Errol Steffy	esteffy1741@comcast.net

FIRST DEFENDERS CWRT MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Membership payment of **\$25 is due by October 15, 2013.**

The check should be made payable to **The First Defenders CWRT** and mailed to:

**David Unger
307 Grant Avenue
Leesport, PA 19533**

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

December 2013



www.firstdefenderscwr.us

VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As the armies enter the month of December 1863, the tortured sounds of the battlefield die away. The issue is yet to be decided, so it is now a time to rest, refit and plan for the fourth spring of the war and what both sides know will be an ever-worsening bloodletting.

Both North and South went to war in 1861 over what they considered to be liberty, but the *sine qua non* of the struggle...African slavery...continues to creep more into the collective conscience of America. Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation is nearly a year old, and the President, recently returned to Washington from Gettysburg and what history will aver to be his greatest moment, will report to the country that 100,000 former slaves are now serving in the nation's military seeking to restore a Union in which all men will be free. Perhaps more surprisingly, though, Confederate Major General Patrick Cleburne is sitting in his headquarters near Dalton, Georgia, putting the final touches on a proposal that he will take before the entire high command of the Army of Tennessee suggesting what is unspeakable, if not unthinkable, in the South: enlisting of Negroes in the army to shore up dwindling manpower and blunt Northern efforts while providing freedom to the slave and their families. In Cleburne's mind, Confederate independence trumps perpetuation of slavery.

I mention these two relatively small instances (in Cleburne's case, his proposal is quickly squelched and kept a closely-guarded secret for a quarter century, likely costing the "Stonewall of the West" a well-deserved promotion to corps command) because as the newsletter goes to press a new antebellum film, *12 Years A Slave*, has debuted in area theatres. It is based on a relatively unknown book first published in 1853 by Solomon Northup, a talented free Black who was treacherously sold into slavery. He would spend the next dozen years on Louisiana plantations before being

able to prove his free status and be repatriated with family and friends in upstate New York.

According to most reviews, the film closely parallels the story on which it is based. While it, perhaps, lacks the majesty of last year's *Lincoln*, this film is important because it presents a visceral, gut-wrenching and unvarnished view of the horrors of slavery. It is *not* a film most people will long to see a second time, but it is one that should be seen once by old and young alike.

Dr. James Robertson has wonderfully asked "how can the current generation write the next chapter of our history without understanding what happened before" on the sometimes tortured path we have endured as a nation? And, for those of us who are older and wiser, we would do well to remember George Santayana famously noting, "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

Craig S. Breneiser

Round Table Business

President Joe Schaeffer opened the November meeting at Golden Oaks Golf Club at 6:30 p.m. Sixty-six members attended the meeting. Vice President Craig Breneiser offered a prayer including keeping Linda Zeiber in our prayers and wishing her a speedy recovery. He then led the Pledge of Allegiance. Joe announced the return of Roger Cotterill to this evenings meeting, who was welcomed back with a round of applause.

Joe said the bus tour in October led by Scott Mingus, "The Flames Beyond Gettysburg, The Confederate Expedition to the Susquehanna River," was a very successful tour.

Treasurer's Report

Lori Border reported a balance of \$2,052.17 as of October 9, 2013. Receipts totaled \$2,327.00. Expenses amounted to \$1,942.37, leaving a balance of \$2,436.80. The preservation account had \$278.00.

Membership

Joe introduced a new member, Jewels Malenda and two guests. He announced that Tom Tate has decided to retire from the Round Table. Tom's letter was very complimentary of the organization. Joe reminded us of the tremendous contribution Tom gave to the group administering the preservation trust for nearly 12 years for our round table. Tom strongly supports the First Defender's Preservation Trust and will continue to support it.

Membership stands at 82 as of the November meeting. We were well over 100 members at the end of the last season. If you have not yet renewed your membership for the new campaign, please send your money and membership information to Dave Unger. Dues this year are \$25.00.

Preservation

Civil War Trust now has the opportunity to save 608 acres of endangered battlefield land at two significant November 1863 sites. Vital pieces of hallowed ground at Chattanooga and Rappahannock Station are threatened by development. It is a 36:1 match, which will officially end December 31, 2013. This endeavor will be discussed at the December meeting.

In addition to the book raffle, a special raffle was held honoring the Gettysburg Address Anniversary with three unique books presented. Buying raffle tickets, donating books and giving money to this worthy cause deserves acknowledgement. *All monies* collected from the book raffle goes to preservation. Keep up the good work during our current campaign. You can find up-to-date figures on donations on the home page of our website.

Ed's Artifacts

Ed Ewing was unable to be with us this month.

December Program: "Beyond The Myth: The Confederate Medical Service"

Mark Quattrock, will be presenting "Beyond the Myth: The Confederate Medical Service." With movies like "Gone with the Wind" and "The Horse Soldier" and TV shows like "ER," Hollywood has created a lot of myths regarding Civil War medicine. Soldiers are seen "biting the bullet" during operations or not having any pain killers.

Nowhere is there an area of Civil War Medicine more steeped in myth than the Confederate Medical Service. The Confederate Medical Service faced many challenges, foremost of which was creating an organization from scratch and developing a system for treating soldiers on the battlefield as well as creating a logistical system of supply. Despite these challenges, the Confederate Medical Service was effective, and in some instances the care given by the Confederate Medical Service was better than its Northern counterparts. Like their Union alter egos, though, the Confederate Medical Service contributed to many of the medical techniques and practices that were discovered during the Civil War.

December's program will talk about the Confederate Medical Service, the challenges it faced, the ways it tried to overcome them, the system that was created to evacuate and treat the wounded and the accomplishments made.

Reservations for the December 10, 2013 Meeting:

Dinner Reservation Procedures: If possible, please make your meal choices/reservation on the website.

Meal choices:

Vegetable Lasagna
Shrimp Stir Fry
Chicken Picata
Meatloaf

The price is \$24.00 for meals. If you must call in reservations, please call your menu selection at 610.478.1717 , no later than Monday, December 2, 2013, which is also the deadline for online reservations. Please call after 5:00 p.m. and speak clearly. This phone number is Joe Schaeffer's business phone so we are asking you to be considerate about not calling until after 5:00 p.m.

*NOTE: Once you have made your reservation, there are no cancellations. The Round Table will be billed for your meal whether you attend or not. Please understand that you will be asked to reimburse the RT should you not attend after having made a reservation.

2013-2014 Program Schedule

December 10, 2013: Mark Quattrock	Confederate States Medical Service
January 14, 2014: David C. Keehn	Knights of the Golden Circle
February 11, 2014: Ivan E. Frantz, Jr.	PA Railroad & the Civil War
March 11, 2014: Greg Stull	Leonidas Polk
April 8, 2014: Edwin C. Bearss	Cold Harbor
May 13, 2014: Kristopher White	Hell's Half Acre: Spottsylvania

Newsletter contact: Linda Zeiber, zeibers@comcast.net



Craig's Calendar...



Seminars & Exhibits

<u>Date</u>		<u>Contact</u>
NOW - JAN 12, 2014	"Civil War Era Drawing from the Becker Collection" Frick Art & Historical Center, Pittsburgh, PA	
NOW - JUN 1, 2014	"Conscription During the Civil War" National Civil War Museum, Harrisburg	717-260-1861
DEC 1	"Christmas in Camp" Living History Historic Blenheim, Fairfax, VA	703-591-0560
DEC 6-7	"Stonewall Jackson Headquarters Candlelight Tour" Winchester, VA	
DEC 7	"25th Anniversary Battlefield Illumination" Antietam National Military Park, Sharpsburg, MD	
DEC 7	"An Evening with the Painting" Gettysburg Cyclorama 5:00 PM	
DEC 14	"Museums by Candlelight" National Museum of Civil War Medicine, Frederick, MD	
DEC 29	"Tea as Medicine" Gettysburg Seminary Ridge Museum	
DEC 31	"General Meade Birthday Ceremony" Laurel Hill Cemetery, Philadelphia, PA 12:00 Noon	

Trips & Tours

<u>Date</u>		<u>Contact</u>
DEC 4-7	"Walking Tour of the Battle of Missionary Ridge & Ringgold Gap" Blue & Gray Education Society	434-250-9921
JAN 22-25	"22nd Annual Sarasota Civil War Symposium" Civil War Education Association <i>Long-time First Defender Tom Tate will be one of the presenters!</i>	800-298-1861

Anyone with any additional sources for "Craig's Calendar" is asked to provide contact information to craig.breneiser@gmail.com. Thanks!

Contact Information

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Solicitor	Robert P. Grim	rgrim@hometownnu.com
Trips	Don Stripling	donstripling54@juno.con
Trips	Ron Emge	Emge301@comcast.net
Programs	Dave Sweigert	Davesweig@aol.com
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**David Unger
307 Grant Avenue
Leesport, PA 19533**

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

January 2014



www.firstdefenderscwrt.us

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This month I am using this space for some thank you messages and some thoughts for the season. First, a thank you to all who expressed their concern and support after the fire at my office building. We hope to be back in by February 1, 2014. Several people helped with the newsletter and cancellation calls. If I try to name everyone, I am sure to miss some, but a special thank you to Craig, Lisa, Dave S., Dave U., Errol, and Linda. Many things were lost to water damage, including some history books and Civil War art, but we must remember that it was just stuff. Many people around us are suffering the real loss of loved ones. Please take a moment to remember in your thoughts and prayers those we have lost in the past year. John Shollenberger and Harold Rood, two longtime members, passed away, while other members have lost relatives. Also, remember the blessings that we still enjoy and the fellowship of our group.

Finally, please accept my apology for the December cancellation. We will always try to err on the side of safety for our members.

To Mark Quattrochio, we will look for a spot as soon as possible to have your talk. I know how it is to prepare and be postponed. Thanks for your efforts.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS. JOE

Round Table Business

Weather forced cancellation of the December 10, 2013, meeting. For the latest round table business information, please reference your December newsletter. We regret

having to postpone RT member Mark Quattro's program, "Beyond the Myth: The Confederate Medical Service" about Civil War medicine. This will be rescheduled at a future date.

In Memoriam

We were saddened to learn of the death of Member Harold Rood on December 8, 2013. Our sincere condolences have been sent to Harold's wife. We will miss him.

The Program for January: Knights of the Golden Circle

Author & Historian: **David C. Keehn**

is an attorney from Allentown, Pennsylvania, with a history degree from Gettysburg College and a juris doctorate from the University Pennsylvania

Topic: **Knights of the Golden Circle: Secret Empire, Southern Secession, Civil War**

During April 1860, thousands of Knights of the Golden Circle congregated in south Texas to launch their "colonization" drive into northern Mexico. A local correspondent described the countryside as "filled up with members of this mysterious organization . . ." The powerful Texas Knights under Grand Commander Elkanah Greer, committed two regiments and \$500,000. Knights arrived from Arkansas, Georgia, the Midwest, Virginia and the eastern port cities of Baltimore and New York. They expected KGC General-in-Chief George Bickley to appear shortly with \$2 million and a further division.

When Bickley couldn't produce as promised, the Knights reorganized and shifted to supporting the Southern Governors. The Knights helped precipitate secession in key states like Texas and Virginia, and pushed for secession in Maryland and Kentucky. They pursued seizure of the capital at Washington, and took over federal forts in the South including twenty-one along the Texas frontier. Knights helped build up the nascent Confederate army through the enlistment of whole castles and the contribution of at least six Generals. Knights instigated the February 1861 Baltimore plot, and participated in the 1865 assassination of Abraham Lincoln by KGC leader John Wilkes Booth.

Through extensive research and credible contemporaneous sources, Dave Keehn unveils the true history of this shadowy secret society. Unlike prior accounts that concentrate on Bickley—the KGC's brilliant but erratic front man, Keehn focuses on the Knights' powerful state military and political leaders—men like Greer who were the backbone and sinew of the KGC. He looks at their relation to prior filibusterers as well as Southern fire-eaters and fellow expansionists. Keehn's fast-paced, clearly written narrative will appeal to both academic and general readers. It shows that the KGC was more substantial than historians have generally assumed, and provides a new perspective on Southern secession and the outbreak of the Civil War.

Mr. Keehn's book: **Knights of the Golden Circle** will be on sale for **\$32.00**

Reservations for the November 14, 2014 Meeting:

Dinner Reservation Procedures: If possible, please make your meal choices/reservation on the website. Meal choices: **Pasta Primavera, Broiled Flounder, Chicken Picata, Meatloaf.**

The price is \$24.00 for meals.

If you must call in reservations, please call your menu selection at 610-334-2029 no later than Monday, January 6, 2014, which is also the deadline for online reservations.

***NOTE:** Once you have made your reservation, there are no cancellations. The Round Table will be billed for your meal whether you attend or not. Please understand that you will be asked to reimburse the RT should you not attend after having made a reservation.

2013-2014 Program Schedule

January 14, 2014: David C. Keehn
February 11, 2014: Ivan E. Frantz, Jr.
March 11, 2014: Greg Stull
April 8, 2014: Edwin C. Bearss
May 13, 2014: Kristopher White

Knights of the Golden Circle
PA Railroad & the Civil War
Leonidas Polk
Cold Harbor
Hell's Half Acre: Spottsylvania



Newsletter contact: Linda Zeiber, zeibers@comcast.net

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Programs/Web	Errol Steffy	esteffy1741@comcast.net

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

February 2014



www.firstdefenderscwrts.us

First Defenders Board Chooses New Meeting Site

Beginning with the **February 11, 2014, meeting**, the First Defenders CWRT will meet at the **Inn at Reading** for its monthly gatherings through at least May of this current season. As many members are aware, recent problems had arisen with our continuing patronage at Golden Oaks Golf Club.

Board members immediately began seeking information from other possible locations that could accommodate our group keeping our requirements and wishes as close to those in the past as possible. Location and accessibility for members as well as speakers, price of meals and other fees, menu selections, parking, and appropriate facilities to meet the requirements of our organization were all taken into account at each venue.

The Board met Thursday, January 16, 2014, at President Joe Schaeffer's office to discuss and assess all potential locations available. After serious consideration of all factors, the Board voted to move to The Inn at Reading (www.innatreading.com), 1040 N. Park Road, Reading, beginning with our next meeting in February. All members will receive a call about this change in addition to the information in this newsletter and on our website.

We will meet in the Governor Mifflin Room for the February meeting. We are optimistic that this new location will meet with approval from the membership. We ask that members and guests not arrive before 5:00 p.m., and, as a reminder, Lori and Dave will not be taking any meal money before 5:45 p.m. The price of meals will be \$25.00. Please have exact denominations of money if at all possible.

Round Table Business

President Joe Schaeffer called the January meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. at Golden Oaks Golf Club by asking our vice president, Craig Breneiser, to offer a prayer and lead the Pledge of Allegiance. There were 60 members and guests present. New member Dennis Yerger was welcomed as well as guests of Dale Kratzer.

Joe then discussed the problems that we were experiencing should we continue meeting at Golden Oaks. One immediate issue was a claim that we had not been paying sales tax on the meals. Despite the receipts held by Treasurer Lori Border to the contrary, Golden Oaks asked for sales tax. Dave Unger moved that the additional expense for the meals for January be taken from the treasury. Lori Border seconded the motion. The additional expense totaled approximately \$75.00 for the evening. Joe informed that membership that we could no longer have meetings at Golden Oaks and that the Board would investigate new locations.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Lori Border reported that our balance from October's meeting was \$1,591.80. Receipts from the October meeting totaled \$2001.00. Expenses incurred totaled \$1823.61 leaving a balance of \$1,769.19 as of December 9, 2013. The preservation fund had a total of \$446.00.

Ed's Artifacts

Ed Ewing brought several belt plates for members to see. He spoke about the early and well-known collector Sid Kerkis whom Ed had met in Harpers Ferry. He told of Kerkis' book about accoutrement plates. Kerkis had found an 1826 Eagle plate worn on a shoulder belt at 1st Manassas in the 1950's. He allegedly found 27 belt plates in a single day at Cold Harbor. He was apparently the ultimate collector of Civil War artifacts.

June 14 Field Trip

Don Stripling spoke briefly about the June bus tour entitled "Baltimore and the Civil War". Information was provided to each table which included itinerary and lunch choices. You will be hearing more about the trip at each meeting from Don or Ron Emge.

Notice from the Historical Society of Berks County

On Saturday, January 25, 2014, a program entitled "Meet the Generals" will be held at the History Center at 940 Centre Avenue in Reading at 12:30 p.m.

The Confederation of Union Generals is an organization dedicated to authentically portraying historical figures from the Civil War to help educate the public. Their program allows the audience to ask questions of the Generals to learn more about their roles and accomplishments. At 12:30 p.m. there will be a meet and greet and the presentation begins at 1:00 p.m.

Non-members \$8

Members \$5

Quotable--Army Mules

Valverde, New Mexico Territory
February 21, 1862

Confederates were viewed as threatening the entire territory when they invaded New Mexico in 1861. At Valverde, on February 21, 1862, they were met by a motley bunch of opponents who called themselves Graydon's Independent Spy Company. Their Captain was James {Paddy}

Graydon, a former saloon operator in Fort Buchanan. Col. Edward R. Camby, head of the Department of New Mexico, listened intently as Graydon suggested a novel way "to mow down boys in gray like ripe wheat." When his commander approved Graydon's scheme, he moved into action.

A number of 24- pounder howitzer shells were packed into wooden boxes, then lashed to the back of a pair of army mules.

Under cover of darkness, a squad of Graydon's men moved across the river with the heavily laden mules. Soon they were within an estimated 150 yards of unsuspecting Confederates. Jerking the mules to a halt, Federal partisans lighted fuses, gave each animal a few hard smacks, and ran for their own lines. To their consternation, the mules moved quickly into action-- following their drivers instead of going forward!

One of the participants summed up the affair wryly; "Every one of them shells exploded on time, but there were only two casualties-- the mules!"

Thanks to Mike Straus for sending this amusing and interesting piece of February history.

February's Program

Author & Historian Ivan E. Frantz, Jr.

Ivan E. Frantz, Jr. grew up in York, Pennsylvania and graduated from York Suburban High School. After Mr. Frantz graduated from high school he served for 6 years in the United States Navy Nuclear Power Program and was assigned to the nuclear powered cruiser U.S.S. South Carolina, CGN-37. Mr. Frantz is currently employed by the Glatfelter Paper Co. in Spring Grove, Pa. as a machinery mechanic. Mr. Frantz had two Great-Great Grandfathers serve in Pennsylvania Regiments during the Civil War, and is a member of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and the Gettysburg Civil War Roundtable. Mr. Frantz also had a Grandfather that worked for both the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Western Maryland Railroad. Mr. Frantz is a member and past president of the Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society. Mr. Frantz has authored and published articles about the Pennsylvania Railroad during the Civil War, the York, Hanover & Frederick Railway (a P.R.R. subsidiary) and the St. Patrick's Day Flood of 1936 on the P.R.R. in the KEYSTONE, which is the quarterly journal of the Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society.

Topic: The Pennsylvania Railroad and the Civil War

The American Civil War was the first major war to involve railroads on a large scale, either for the transportation of troops, supplies and material or as the target of a military objective. This presentation takes a look at the Pennsylvania Railroad and its involvement with the action that occurred during the Civil War. Because of its unique location the Pennsylvania Railroad played a major role in troop transportation during the entire war in the Eastern Theatre of combat. Two P.R.R. subsidiary companies played major roles in the military action during the Antietam Campaign of 1862 and the Gettysburg Campaign of 1863. And Pennsylvania Railroad employees made major contributions with their involvement in the Federal Government to help answer President Abraham Lincoln's call to "preserve the Union". So even though most of the military action took place south of the Mason-Dixon Line, learn how a northern railroad helped the Union prevail in the tide of battle from 1861 to 1865.

Reservations for the February 11, 2014 Meeting:

Dinner Reservation Procedures: If possible, please make your meal choices/reservation on the website. Our meal choices for February include:

Eggplant Parmesan (Vegetarian), Broiled Lemon Dill Haddock, Chicken DiJonnaise or Flat Iron Steak with Mushroom Glaze.

The price is \$25.00 inclusive for meals.

If you must call in reservations, please call your menu selection at 610.478.1717 no later than Monday, February 3, 2014, which is also the deadline for online reservations. Please call after 5:00 p.m. and speak clearly. This phone number is Joe Schaeffer's business phone so we are asking you to be considerate about not calling until after 5:00 p.m.

***IMPORTANT NOTE* Once you have made your reservation, there are no cancellations for any reasons after 3 days prior to the meeting.** This is the policy of the Inn at Reading, and the Round Table will be billed for your meal whether you attend or not. Please understand that you will be asked to reimburse the RT should you not attend after having made a reservation and not cancelled prior to this 3-day time period.

2014 Program Schedule

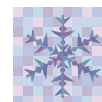
March 11, 2014: Greg Stull
April 8, 2014: Edwin C. Bearss
May 13, 2014: Kristopher White
June 14, 2014: Field Trip

Leonidas Polk
Cold Harbor
Hell's Half Acre: Spottsylvania
Baltimore & the Civil War

Newsletter contact: Linda Zeiber, zeibers@comcast.net



Craig's Calendar...



Seminars & Exhibits

<u>Date</u>		<u>Contact</u>
NOW - JUN 1, 2014	"Conscription During the Civil War" National Civil War Museum, Harrisburg	717-260-1861
NOW - JUN 7, 2014	"The Last Full Measure" Historical Society of Berks County, Reading	610-375-4375
NOW- DEC 31, 2014	"1864" National Civil War Museum, Harrisburg	717-260-1861
FEB 15, 2014	"Community Free Day" (No Admission - Special Programs) National Civil War Museum, Harrisburg	717-260-1861

Trips & Tours

<u>Date</u>		<u>Contact</u>
2014	<p>Tours & Programs are now being scheduled for the 1864 spring, summer and fall campaigns. Check these providers for more information on their schedules (some great programs coming up!):</p> <p>Civil War Tours: www.civilwartours.org Blue & Gray Education Society: www.blueandgrayeducation.org Chambersburg Civil War Seminars: www.civilwarseminars.org Civil War Educations Association: www.cwea.net</p>	<p>860-485-3603 434-250-9921 717-264-7101 800-298-1861</p>

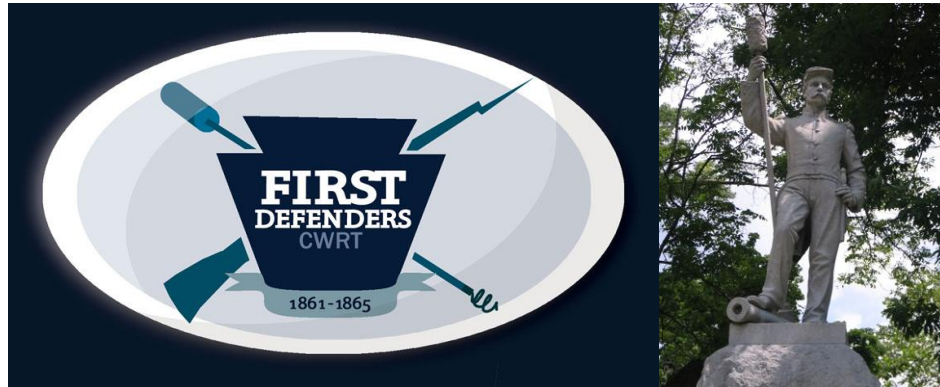
Anyone with any additional sources for "Craig's Calendar" is asked to provide contact information to craig.breneiser@gmail.com. Thanks!

Contact Information

President	Joseph Schaeffer	jschaeffer@heartlandsettlement.com
Vice President/ Chaplain	Craig Breneiser	Craig.breneiser@gmail.com
Newsletter/Recording Secretary	Linda Zeiber	zeibers@comcast.net
Membership	David Unger	dsunger@comcast.net
Treasurer	Lori Border	borderlori@verizon.net
Preservation	Cathy C. Kennedy	kenwycke1@aol.com
Solicitor	Robert P. Grim	rgrim@hometownu.com
Programs/ Adopt-a- Position/Trips	Don Stripling	Donstripling54@msn.com
Trips	Ronald Emge	Emge301@comcast.net
Photographer	Tim Antosy	Bciu92@hotmail.com
Programs/Web	Errol Steffy	esteffy1741@comcast.net

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

March 2014



www.firstdefenderscwrt.us

Vice President's Report

"Weather and mud is responsible for nine-tenths of the profanity heard in this army." So opined a New Hampshire veteran of the Army of the Potomac. A fellow New Englander quipped that, "If Virginia was once in the Union, she is now in the mud." As we look out our windows 150 years later, it seems little has changed.

We know Civil War armies would usually go into winter quarters in late November and remain there until around April. During that time, the mud and human filth would prove more challenging and deadly than enemy shot and shell as a plethora of diseases invaded the campground and turned into instant epidemics that we find difficult to comprehend in our time.

"Modern medicine" was hardly advanced beyond the Middle Ages. Indeed, Mother Nature inflicted far more casualties on the armies than the Blue and the Gray did on each other. An Indiana boy who, along with his comrades existed largely in little more than mud holes, wrote, "No wonder we have so many sick and so many are dead." A Massachusetts soldier betrayed his puritanical roots when he observed, "In our childhood we were taught that God is everywhere, but after this god-damned place we concluded He makes exceptions."

While the Army of the Potomac wallows in its Culpepper winter camps, the politicians in Washington turn up the heat to end the war. On February 26th, 1864, Congress passes legislation reviving the grade of lieutenant general. Taking the weekend off, they returned to business on March 1st to formally nominate Ulysses S. Grant for the vacancy, confirming him the

next day. By the 3rd, Grant is ordered from Chattanooga to Washington, and President Lincoln will formally hand him his commission on March 9th. (It would seem the 38th Congress is somewhat more efficient than the current 113th Congress. While medicine advances over the next 15 decades, the legislative process apparently cannot keep pace.) Before March ends, Grant and his generals develop the comprehensive strategy that will bring the war to a successful conclusion.

In the meantime, the War will go on. Winter camps will be broken. Armies begin to move. The weather continues to impact battles and campaigns, just as it continues to impact us 150 years later. As we look sullenly at the landscape and dreary weather forecasts, perhaps we can find solace in the words of another New Hampshire veteran which seem both prophetic and instructive: "I've given up the use of profanity because no words can possibly do the weather and mud here any degree of justice."

*For Union & Freedom,
Craig S. Breneiser, Vice President*

Round Table Business

President Joe Schaeffer called the February meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. at The Inn at Reading by asking Vice President, Craig Breneiser, to offer a prayer and lead the Pledge of Allegiance. There were 73 members and guests present for our first meeting at The Inn at Reading. Joe explained the new reservation/cancellation policy since our change of meeting location. **All reservations/cancellations must be made no later than the Friday preceding the meeting by noon. No changes will be considered after this time. You may not make nor cancel a reservation after noon on Friday preceding the meeting. You will be expected to pay for any meal ordered whether or not you attend after making a reservation.**

Forms for the June 14, 2014, field trip to Baltimore were made available. Anyone interested in taking that trip is urged to send in his/her application with meal choices and payment to Don Stripling or Ron Emge now. A short article is available later in this newsletter regarding the trip.

Linda Zeiber expressed interest in donating preservation money to the Civil War Preservation Trust which is working on buying twelve available acres on East Cemetery Hill at Gettysburg. There is currently at 3:1 leverage for every dollar donated. Details will be available at the next meeting for this worthy cause.

Joe announced that the "Meet the Generals" program at the History Center (formerly the Berks County Historical Society) has been re-scheduled for March 29th at the History Center. Details are available by calling there or checking the website.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Lori Border reported that our balance from November's meeting was \$1,769.18. Receipts from the November meeting totaled \$1653.00. Expenses incurred totaled \$1801.57 leaving a balance of \$1,620.62 as of January 14, 2014. The preservation fund had a total of \$607.00.

Ed's Artifacts

Ed Ewing brought a collection of paper documents for members to peruse. Included in his collection were stock certificates for Southern railroads, a bill of lading from the Southside Railroad paid in 1868, Southside Railroad scrip, Winchester notes, used postage stamps, and Virginian notes and bank notes among many others available for inspection. As always, we thank Ed for sharing his collectibles with us.

JUNE 14 BUS TRIP

The flyer and registration form for the June 14 bus trip, Baltimore & the Civil War, is now available on our website, www.firstdefenderscwrt.us. Download the flyer and registration form under the "Program & Events" June 2014.

Our guide for the June trip, Dan Toomey, will be bringing along two books that he has authored for purchase. "The War Came by Train" is \$35, and "The Civil War in Maryland" is \$20. Dan will accept MasterCard, Visa, checks, and cash for the books.

Medal of Honor for Cushing?

An article appeared in the ***Reading Eagle*** last month about the pending awarding of the Medal of Honor for Lt. Alonzo H. Cushing for his heroism 150 years ago during the Battle of Gettysburg. Many of us are well-acquainted with the story of the 22-year-old Union artillery officer who refused to leave the field though severely wounded during Pickett's charge on July 3, 1863. He died as a result of a head wound on top of other wounds inflicted on that field.

The article reports the following:

Buried deep in a defense bill to fund modern-day weapons systems and military operations in Afghanistan is a measure to waive the time limit for posthumously awarding the nation's highest military honor to Cushing....Cushing will have waited the longest--of 3,461 recipients--to receive the Medal Honor...

Recommendations for the Medal of Honor must be made within two or three years of the action, depending on the military branch, unless Congress waives the time limits.

*Thanks go to Dave Unger for bringing this article to my attention. L. Z.

Craig's Calendar...



Seminars & Exhibits

<u>Date</u>		<u>Contact</u>
NOW - JUN 1, 2014	"Conscription During the Civil War" National Civil War Museum, Harrisburg	717-260-1861
NOW - JUN 7, 2014	"The Last Full Measure" Historical Society of Berks County, Reading	610-375-4375
NOW- DEC 31, 2014	"1864" National Civil War Museum, Harrisburg	717-260-1861
MAR 29, 2014	"Meet the Generals" Historical Society of Berks County, Reading 12:15 PM	610-375-4375
MAR 29, 2014	"Guns of 1864" - Joseph Bilby National Civil War Museum, Harrisburg 1:00 PM	717-260-1861

Trips & Tours

<u>Date</u>		<u>Contact</u>
MAR 29-30, 2014	"McCausland's Raiders in 1864: From Chambersburg to Moorefield"- Civil War Education Association Patchan	800-298-1861 Scott

If you are going to be travelling, there are DOZENS of Civil War events scheduled around the country. Check out *Civil War Courier* at www.civilwarcourier.com and click on "Calendar of Events."

Anyone with any additional sources for "Craig's Calendar" is asked to provide contact information to craig.breneiser@gmail.com. Thanks!

March's Program

Member & Historian Greg & Sherri Stull

~~Lt Gen Leonidas Polk is portrayed by Greg Stull. Greg is a living historian and re-enactor as well as a direct descendant of Leonidas Polk. His portrayal is based on personal family history as well as in-depth research of the general.

Francis Devereux Polk is portrayed by Sherri Stull, Greg's wife. Sherri is also a living historian and re-enactor as well as a direct descendant of Private William Epler of the 128th PA Volunteers. Her portrayal is based on research into the personal accounts from Polk family diaries.

Topic: Leonidas Polk, Meridian Campaign

~~1863 started out well and could have been a major turning point for the new Confederate nation. It is unfathomable to the people of this young nation on how things have changed in a year. The victories of Chancellorsville and Chickamauga are overshadowed by the losses at Vicksburg, Gettysburg, and Chattanooga. The heart of the Confederacy has been split in two. There is a period of rest for the armies but for the western armies the rest is short lived. Union forces press the Deep South, with the Meridian campaign starting things in February of 1864. It is now March of 1864. The two remaining major Armies of the Confederacy, the Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of Tennessee are left to defend the southland.

Tonight we will hear a state of the war from the current head of the Department of Mississippi, Lt Gen Leonidas Polk. Gen Polk is fresh off of his successful campaign fending off Gen Sherman's advances in February- known as the Meridian Campaign. Gen Polk will offer his view on the Meridian campaign as well as the state of affairs in his area. His wife, Francis will also offer her experiences on the home front while this great conflict for southern independence rages on.

Reservations for the March 11, 2014 Meeting:

Dinner Reservation Procedures: If possible, please make your meal choices/reservation on the website. Our meal choices for March include:

3-Cheese Ravioli (Vegetarian), Grilled Salmon, Stuffed Chicken with Cornbread or Beef Tips over Rice.

The price is \$25.00 inclusive for meals.

If you must call in reservations, please call your menu selection at 610.478.1717 no later than noon Friday, March 7, 2014, which is also the deadline for online reservations. Please speak clearly and remember that this phone number is Joe Schaeffer's business phone.

IMPORTANT NOTE Once you have made your reservation, there are no cancellations for any reasons after noon on the Friday preceding the meeting. This is the policy of the Inn at Reading, and the Round Table will be billed for your meal whether you attend or not. Please understand that you will be asked to reimburse the RT should you not attend after having made a reservation and not cancelled prior to the aforementioned time period.

2014 Program Schedule

April 8, 2014: Edwin C. Bearss
May 13, 2014: Kristopher White

June 14, 2014: Field Trip

Cold Harbor
Hell's Half Acre:
Spottsylvania
Baltimore & the Civil War

Newsletter contact: Linda Zeiber, zeibers@comcast.net

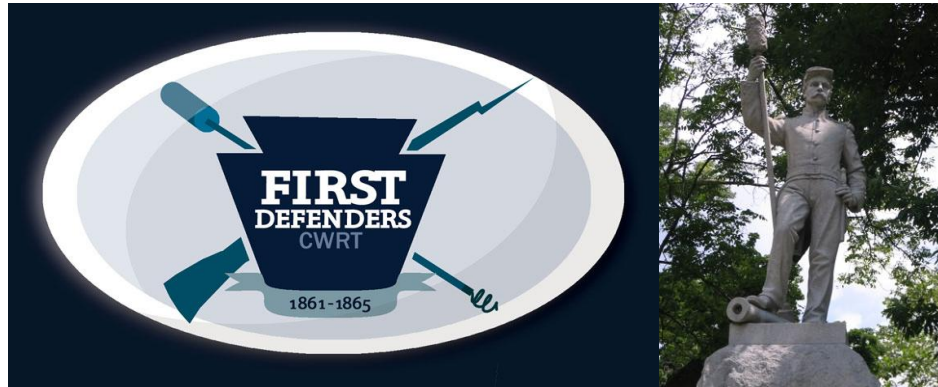


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Photographer	Tim Antosy	Bciu92@hotmail.com
Programs/Web	Errol Steffy	esteffy1741@comcast.net

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

April 2014



www.firstdefenderscwrt.us

The President's Message

A WARM WELCOME BACK TO OUR FRIEND ED BEARSS. Ed will be speaking on the Battle of Cold Harbor, part of Grant's Overland Campaign in the spring of 1864. Historians and students of the Civil War generally regard this battle as one of the most deadly and wasteful in terms of casualties for the Union army. Newspapers and critics instantly branded Grant a "butcher", contending that he knowingly sacrificed lives even though he knew the chances of victory to be very long. 150 years have passed since the battle and only recently have some researchers begun to question the casualty figures and the reasons for the failure to dislodge Lee's army. Gordon Rhea in his 2002 book on Cold Harbor asserts that many soldiers who were seen to fall and who were counted in the casualty lists, merely "hit the dirt" and remained there until Lee's army relocated. He backs up his theory based on the inspection, long-term, of casualty reports in the Union army. He also challenges the idea that all of the blame for failure be attributed to Grant. While not excusing Grant, he points to serious flaws in the efforts of Grant's subordinates, failing to exploit moments of opportunity when they existed. I will be very interested in Ed's take. Having been fortunate to sit and talk at breakfast with Ed on more than one occasion, I am sure that he will cover everything in detail. Ed is not only gifted with a wonderful memory for detail but also the ability to put things in the proper perspective.

REMEMBER, since we are at The Inn at Reading, you may bring more guests. I urge you to do so and encourage them to join our Round Table.

Membership is very important, as that is the only source of revenue to pay speakers.

A special thank you to Greg Stull for his talk on General Polk. As one who has spoken in front of our membership, I know how much time and effort goes into the task. Please continue to support all of our members who take on the task.

Joe Schaeffer

Round Table Business

President Joe Schaeffer called the March meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. at The Inn at Reading by asking Vice President Craig Breneiser to offer a prayer and lead the Pledge of Allegiance. There were 62 members and guests present for our meeting. Joe reviewed the new reservation/cancellation policy since our change of meeting location. **All reservations/cancellations must be made no later than the Friday preceding the meeting by noon. No changes will be considered after this time. You may not make nor cancel a reservation after noon on Friday preceding the meeting. You will be expected to pay for any meal ordered whether or not you attend after making a reservation.**

Forms for the June 14, 2014, field trip to Baltimore have been made available with the newsletter and on our website under "Newsletter & Photos." Anyone interested in taking that trip is urged to send in his/her application with meal choices and payment to Don Stripling or Ron Emge now. A short article is available later in this newsletter regarding the trip.

Linda Zeiber discussed sending a donation of \$500.00 to the Civil War Trust which is working to buy twelve available acres on East Cemetery Hill at Gettysburg. There is currently at 3:1 leverage for every dollar donated. A motion was made and passed to do this next month with a second motion made and passed to send the money earlier should the drive end earlier than our April meeting.

Joe announced that the "Meet the Generals" program at the History Center (formerly the Berks County Historical Society) has been re-scheduled for March 29th at the History Center. Details are available by calling there or checking their website.

Joe informed the membership that he would not be seeking reelection as president of the round table for next year. He has served our organization well and faithfully for the past four years and will be missed by the Board and members alike. He urged members to begin thinking about the election of officers in May and to seriously consider the post of president or any others that may need to be filled for the well-being and future of our organization.

New Members

Joe welcomed three new members. They are Rick Mitstifer, Edwin Stock, and Bob Troxell. The total member roster now stands at 97. We are happy that you three gentlemen have decided to join the round table. New members may join us at any time throughout our campaign year.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Lori Border reported that our balance as of January 14, 2014 was \$1,620.62. Receipts from the January meeting totaled \$2,389.00. Expenses incurred totaled \$2184.84 leaving a balance of \$1,824.78 as of February 11, 2014. The preservation fund had a total of \$731.00. Funds for the upcoming field trip amount to \$490.00.

Ed's Artifacts

Ed Ewing brought a collection of Confederate items in keeping with the evening's theme of General Polk. An authentic document signed by Polk's nephew Lucius was included. He explained that generals often put family members on their staffs provided that they had good penmanship. Orders were dictated, and the general's adjutant wrote them out. He also had a "check" for \$100,000 issued to the quartermaster for supplies. Ed included a Colt revolver, 31 caliber Model 3A with fluted cylinder, for our inspection. Also on the table were a sword belt for a militia sword, epaulets from Virginia, and several other documents. As always, we thank Ed for sharing his collectibles with us.

JUNE 14 BUS TRIP

The flyer and registration form for the June 14 bus trip, Baltimore & the Civil War, is now available on our website, www.firstdefenderscwr.us. Download the flyer and registration form under the "Newsletter & Photos" link.

Our guide for the June trip, Dan Toomey, will be bringing along two books that he has authored for purchase. "The War Came by Train" is \$35, and "The Civil War in Maryland" is \$20. Dan will accept MasterCard, Visa, checks, and cash for the books.

On Buying Raffle Tickets...

Are you aware of one simple and important thing that you can do for the round table and for the future? It is as simple as remembering to buy raffle tickets at each monthly meeting. Dollars from each of us add up to become the 'ticket' for buying battlefield acreage as it becomes available for preservation. Can any of us ever have enough Civil War books?!

Keep Cate Kennedy busy at each meeting by giving her those dollars for a noble and worthy cause.

Tales from Mike Straus....

Once, again, Mike has sent two fascinating stories. The first is appropriate reading for the April newsletter published during the month that witnessed the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. The

second topic is Cold Harbor which Ed Bearss will cover in his program. Enjoy both of them, and thanks, Mike.

Backstage at the Lincoln Assassination
April 16, 1865
Washington, D.C.

There is no evidence that anyone connected with Ford's Theater ventured out in public to attend church that clear, chilly Easter Sunday. If they had, they would have heard their profession roundly denounced. "It will always be a matter of deep regret to thousands that our lamented President fell in the theater," intoned the Reverend Phineas D. Gurley, Lincoln's own pastor. He was merely echoing a long-held belief that one's soul was endangered if death came while one was inside such a debauched place: "The theater is one of the last places to which a good man should go and among the very last in which his friends would wish him to die. " "Would that Mr. Lincoln had fallen elsewhere than at the very gates of Hell," cried another man of God. Yet another asked any young man who was "justly proud of your sister, would you not rather follow her to the grave tonight, than to know that tomorrow she shall stand at the altar and pledge her faith, and trust her precious future to an actor?"

May 17, 1865
Cold Harbor, Virginia

Since this campaign commenced there has been no fooling, no boys' play. It has been a campaign of earnest, deadly combat, and he who hasn't had his fill of blood and thunder hasn't kept with his command, or else he is a hog. I have seen in the public prints many expressions like the following: "eager for the fray," "spoiling for a fight", "anxious to meet the foe," "the army is all enthusiasm." I shall knock the romance all out of this business by remarking that these are only gush from the pen of a wretched scribbler who knows not what kind of gibberish he is dispensing. These phrases look well in print- much better, indeed, than does the language of the real military man when he sees them paraded as facts.

It is quite the common thing to hear people speak flippantly of a small fight or skirmish in which "only a few" have fallen. How quickly their tune would change if one of that few was their child or their brother! This is the only way to gauge sorrows and losses: take them home and make them a personal matter. Battles must cost life and limbs of someone, and to that someone, though ten thousand should fall, it can be no more disastrous. Each one dies for himself, and the pangs of death are not mitigated by going in a crowd.

Private John W. Haley, Co. I, 17th Maine Volunteers

Reservations for the April 8, 2014 Meeting with Ed Bearss:

Dinner Reservation Procedures: If possible, please make your meal choices/reservation on the website. Our meal choices for April include:

Fettuccini Alfredo (Vegetarian), Grilled Tilapia, Chicken Marsala or Pot Roast.

The price is \$25.00 inclusive for meals.

If you must call in reservations, please call your menu selection at 610.478.1717 no later than noon Friday, April 4, 2014, which is also the deadline for online reservations. Please speak clearly and remember that this phone number is Joe Schaeffer's business phone.

***IMPORTANT NOTE* Once you have made your reservation, there are no cancellations for any reasons after noon on the Friday preceding the**

meeting This is the policy of the Inn at Reading, and the Round Table will be billed for your meal whether you attend or not. Please understand that you will be asked to reimburse the RT should you not attend after having made a reservation and not cancelled prior to the aforementioned time period.

2014 Program Schedule

May 13, 2014: Kristopher White

Hell's Half Acre:

Spottsylvania

June 14, 2014: Field Trip

Baltimore & the Civil War

Craig's Calendar...



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NOW - JUN 7, 2014	"The Last Full Measure" Historical Society of Berks County, Reading	610-375-4375
NOW - DEC 31, 2014	"1864" National Civil War Museum, Harrisburg	717-260-1861
APR 11-13, 2014	"The Long Road Home: Saylor's Creek" Appomattox, VA Contact: j.danielbrown@me.com	
APR 11-13, 2014	"150th Anniversary Commemoration of 1st Battle of Waynesboro" Waynesboro, VA	540-949-5259
APR 25-27, 2014	"150th Anniversary of the Bermuda Hundred Campaign" Chesterfield County, VA	804-786-7498
APR 26-28, 2014	"Buchanan Civil War Weekend" Buchanan, VA	540-254-1212

Trips & Tours

<u>Date</u>		<u>Contact</u>
APR 4-6, 2014	"Weekend with Ed Bearrs" Chambersburg Civil War Seminars & Tours	717-264-7101
APR 11-12, 2014	"Gettysburg- Day One"- Gary Kross & Charlie Fennel Civil War Education Association	800-298-1861
APR 25-26, 2014	"Riding with John Singleton Mosby"- David Goetz & Eric Buckland Civil War Education Association	800-298-1861

If you are going to be travelling, there are DOZENS of Civil War events scheduled around the country. Check out *Civil War Courier* at www.civilwarcourier.com and click on "Calendar of Events."

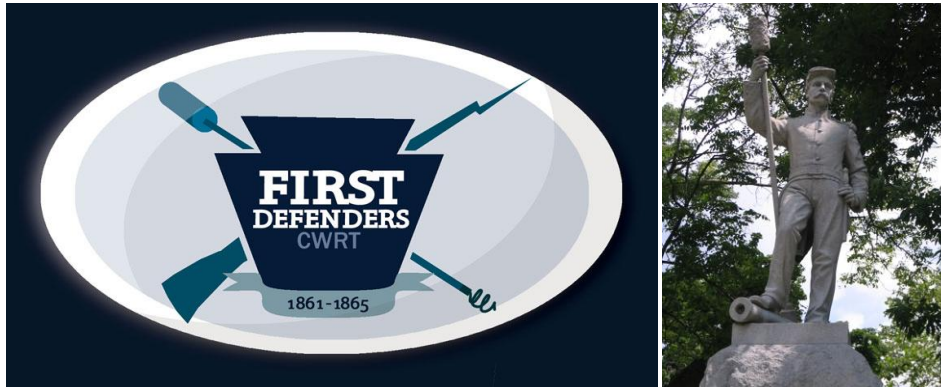
Anyone with any additional sources for "Craig's Calendar" is asked to provide contact information to craig.breneiser@gmail.com. Thanks!

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The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

May 2014



www.firstdefenderscwrt.us

The President's Message

Ulysses S. Grant began the Overland Campaign in the spring of 1864 by promising to President Lincoln, “whatever happens, there will be no turning back.” This was a far cry from the arrogance of his predecessors who openly boasted that they would bag Robert E. Lee, only to find themselves retreating to Washington to lick their wounds. Grant knew that conquering the Army of Northern Virginia was going to be a prolonged and bloody task. He also knew that the Army of the Potomac was up to the task, if only the Federal government and the Northern people had the will to see this thing through. On May 5th and 6th, Lee for the second time in barely more than a year fought the Union army to a standstill in the Wilderness. Just like the year before, Lee paid a heavy price, when a corps commander was wounded by his own men. This time it was James Longstreet, who unlike Jackson would live, but Lee would be without his services for some time.

Grant’s army was badly mauled. Veterans of previous defeats expected to be told to retreat. When ordered to march on May 7, they suddenly realized something was different. They were headed South. Grant was not sending the army home in defeat but stealing another march on Lee. One soldier wrote, “Our spirits rose, we marched free. The men began to sing.” The Army of the Potomac was headed to a small crossroads called Spotsylvania Courthouse.

Those who are caught up in the fantasy of the Lost Cause of the Confederacy, lose sight of the fact that Grant held the better hand and he knew how to play it. Grant set the strategy and Lee danced to his tune.

Lee had a choice to defend Richmond or save his army by fleeing south to join other Rebel armies. When Grant headed South on May 7, Lee knew it was only a matter of time till he lost. Yet he chose to sacrifice his men in a vain attempt to save the capitol. Who was the real butcher?

I wish to thank everyone whom I have had the pleasure to work with the last few years, on the board and in the membership. We have a wonderful round table. Let's keep it going. Joe

Round Table Business

President Joe Schaeffer called the April meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. at The Inn at Reading by asking Vice President Craig Breneiser to offer a prayer and lead the Pledge of Allegiance. There were 100 members and guests present for our meeting with Ed Bearss. Joe reminded everyone that the election of board members will be held in May. He will be stepping down after leading us for four years. Bob Grim and Dave Unger are also leaving their posts. Many, many thanks are owed to these three gentlemen for their work over the years. We were also reminded that the round table will be donating \$500 to the Civil War Trust for preservation of acreage on East Cemetery Hill at Gettysburg. This is being done in honor of Ed Bearss.

Joe welcomed new member Nancy Melcher. Many guests were introduced. Hopefully, many of them will want to return in September to become permanent attendees at our monthly meetings. At this time, we have 97 members.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Lori Border reported that our balance as of February 11, 2014, was \$1,824.78. Receipts from the February meeting totaled \$2,530.00. Expenses incurred totaled \$1,922.24 leaving a balance of \$2,432.54 as of March 12, 2014. The preservation fund had a total of \$842.00 with \$500.00 pledged to Gettysburg. Funds for the upcoming field trip amount to \$949.00.

From Don Stripling....

UPCOMING BUS TRIPS

As of the April 8 meeting, there were 13 seats left for the June 14 Baltimore trip. If you plan to attend this program, please submit your registration/check no later than the May 13 meeting or mail the same to the address listed on the registration form.

Our fall trip will be October 25 and is entitled "Philadelphia and the Civil War." If you receive your newsletter via the mail, a copy of the trip flyer will be included in your newsletter. For those who get the newsletter on-line, a trip flyer will be emailed to you in the near future.

Both trips are opened to the public and will be filled on a first-come basis. Make your friends aware of these trips and invite them to register.

On Buying Raffle Tickets...

Are you aware of one simple and important thing that you can do for the round table and for the future? It is as simple as remembering to buy raffle tickets at each monthly meeting. Dollars from each of us add up to become the 'ticket' for buying battlefield acreage as it becomes available for preservation.

Keep Cate Kennedy busy at each meeting by giving her those dollars for a noble and worthy cause.

A Personal Reflection on Ed Bearss--

I have a confession to make. I have grown accustomed to spending time with Ed Bearss every April! How can it be that Ed continues to make his way back to us each spring **and**, is it possible to come to expect it to be so? I have my theories about our good fortune, but the one thing that I know for certain is that Ed thinks that our round table has got it right when it comes to battlefield preservation. I know what it means to him personally. There are rumors that it's only the pot roast in Berks County, but I doubt it.

Each April Ed begins his program and I sit in awe of his incredible knowledge of all things historical...of his energy at 91...of his storied past serving in World War II...of his service in the National Park Service as Chief Historian...of his endless tours of battlefields (Civil War as well as WWII) to help others understand and appreciate the past. He has touched countless "students" over the years.

And, if it's April, we must be blessed with Ed again. That he occasionally fumbles for a name or must refer to his paper once or twice during an hour's program these days simply reminds me that he is, after all, mortal. I have had doubts of that in the past! If you paid close attention to Barbara Shafer's introduction during the last meeting, you will recall that Ed did not accept much of his honorarium this year. Let none of us ever forget our great privilege and honor to count him as our revered friend or to take his presence for granted. We have been blessed indeed, and I am already looking forward to next April.

Linda Zeiber

From Mike Straus....

Mike has shared the following quote with us for the month of May:

May 7, 1861
Boston Navy Yard

I am going to fight under the old banner of freedom. I may never return, but if I die, it shall be under the folds of the flag that sheltered my infancy, and, while striking a

blow for its honor, and my own...Wherever there is fighting there we will be, and where there is danger in the battle there I will be, for I will gain a name in this war.

Master's Mate William B. Cushing
U. S. S. Minnesota

I asked Mike if *William* was related to *Alonzo* of Gettysburg fame and whom I wrote a short article about his pending Medal of Honor (**still** 'pending') in last month's newsletter. Mike sent this response which I know you will find fascinating:--

These two guys (William and Alonzo) grew up daredevils and hell raisers in today's terminology. They were very close in their youth. Alonzo, about two years older, went on to West Point and William went to the Naval Academy in Annapolis...William had quite a daring career in the Navy.

July 1861

"I may resign before too long, and go into the land service...I have no doubt that I can procure a captain's birth in the volunteers. I so long to be with Allie. It seems as if I might be some protection to him in the time of action. If the Rebels should kill him, I don't think that I would be a man any longer. I should become a fiend. I love that boy better than I do my own life: and I would not live without my brother. For myself, I care nothing. I am drifting about the world with every wind and tide. I take my fate with me, and whate'r it may be, I hope to meet it like a man.

Addendum Correction:

Last month, Mike shared a quotation from a recently published book entitled *Backstage at the Lincoln Assassination*, by Thomas A. Bogar, Washington, D.C.: Regnery History, copyright 2013, p. 138. Mike's quote was a reminder to all of us of the anniversary of Lincoln's assassination. Mr. Bogar has taken a new perspective on the Lincoln assassination so, if you think you know all that there is about Lincoln, you may want to get a copy of his book and check it out for yourself. Apologies for this omission. L. Z.

May's Program: Kris White--Hell's Half Acre, Spotsylvania

Biographical Background: Kristopher White is a historian for the Penn-Trafford Recreation Board near Pittsburgh, PA, and teaches continuing education courses at the Community College of Allegheny County. White is a graduate of Norwich University with a MA in Military History, as well as a graduate of California University of Pennsylvania with a BA in history. For five years he served as a staff military historian at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, where he still volunteers his services.

For a short time he was a member of the Association of Licensed Battlefield Guides at Gettysburg. Over the past seven years, he has spoken to more than 30 round tables and historical societies. He is the author and co-author of numerous articles that have appeared in *America's Civil War*, *Blue and Gray*, *Civil War Times*, and *Armchair General*. White co-authored *The Last Days of Stonewall Jackson* with longtime friend Chris Mackowski. The two have authored numerous articles together and are currently working on a book-length study of the Second Battle of Fredericksburg and Salem Church (publication 2013). White and Mackowski are also the founders of

www.emergingcivilwar.com. Their website introduces a new generation of Civil War historians to the history world.

Reservations for the May 13, 2014 Meeting

Dinner Reservation Procedures: If possible, please make your meal choices/reservation on the website. Our meal choices for May include:

Vegetable Lasagna (Vegetarian), Open-face Crab Cake with Creamy Swiss Cheese Sauce, Chicken Picatta or Pork Loin finished with Apple Jack Brown Sauce.

The price is \$25.00 inclusive for meals.

If you must call in reservations, please call your menu selection at 610.478.1717 no later than noon Friday, May 9, 2014, which is also the deadline for online reservations. Please speak clearly and remember that this phone number is Joe Schaeffer's business phone.

***IMPORTANT NOTE* Once you have made your reservation, there are no cancellations for any reasons after noon on the Friday preceding the meeting.** This is the policy of the Inn at Reading, and the Round Table will be billed for your meal whether you attend or not. Please understand that you will be asked to reimburse the RT should you not attend after having made a reservation and not cancelled prior to the aforementioned time period.

2014 Program Schedule

June 14, 2014: Field Trip

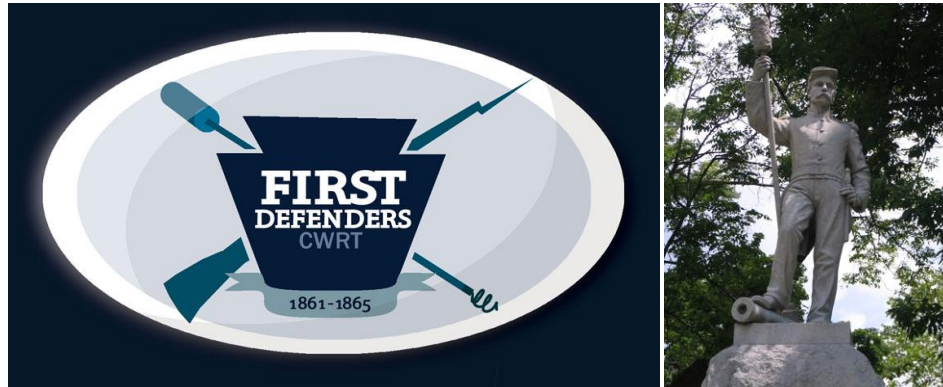
Baltimore & the Civil War

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Meeting Minutes

The May 13, 2014, meeting of the First Defenders was called to order by President Joe Schaeffer at the Inn at Reading at 6:30 p.m. There were 68 members and guests present. This meeting officially closed the 17th campaign for the First Defenders; however, there are still 12 seats available for the June 14th field trip to Baltimore. Anyone interested in attending still has time to contact Don Stripling or Ron Emge for details.

Joe announced that Kris White, the program presenter for the evening, had donated two of his books and two *Blue and Gray Magazines* to our book raffle. Kris had also waived part of his fee in order to donate it to battlefield preservation.

Battlefield preservation was the next item on the agenda and Joe suggested a donation to Petersburg, Bentonville, Appomatox, and Mansfield, LA, all of which have a 10:1 leverage through Civil War Trust. It was moved and seconded to send \$600 in Kris White's and Joe Schaeffer's honor. Additionally, a second donation of \$500 was sent to Civil War Trust to help purchase 12 acres of East Cemetery Hill at Gettysburg. This initiative has a 3:1 leverage and was sent in honor of Ed Bearss, our speaker for April.

President-elect Craig Breneiser presented out-going President Joe Schaeffer with a plaque/clock thanking him for his five years as round table president. Joe led us through several difficult times of having to find new meeting places during his tenure. He was always the voice of calm and worked hard to make the round table better than ever. The Board and membership are eternally grateful for his leadership and guidance.

Election of Officers

Each May officers are elected. Joe Schaeffer announced a slate of candidates willing to serve on the board. The new president is Craig Breneiser serving with two vice presidents, Tim Antosy and Mark Quattro. Dave Sweigert will take over membership. Lori Border will continue to serve as treasurer. Linda Zeiber continues as recording secretary and newsletter editor. Cate Kennedy remains in charge of preservation/book raffle. Barbara Shafer will serve in a new position as meal captain. Errol Steffy will continue to head the programs' department and serve as web master. Don Stripling and Ron Emge will continue organizing our field trips. All positions were unopposed and unanimously accepted by the membership.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Lori Border reported that our balance as of March 12, 2014, was \$2,432.54. Receipts from our March meeting were \$4,404.00 with expenses of \$3,946.10 leaving a total balance of \$2,890.44 as of May 13, 2014. The total preservation account stood at \$1,115 with \$500 pledged to Gettysburg in honor of Ed Bearss. Money earmarked for the field trip stood at \$1,303.45.

Membership

Membership totaled 97 as of the May meeting. Joe suggested that we think about possible expansion for the upcoming season since we have been holding meetings at the Inn at Reading. Previously, the size of the room limited the size of the organization at Golden Oaks, but now we have the opportunity to increase our numbers because of a more flexible venue. We are reminded that quality speakers command larger fees, and, with funds coming exclusively from membership dues, we will work to our benefit in all ways by growing our numbers.

Ed's Artifacts

Ed brought artifacts exclusively from the Spotsylvania Battlefield in keeping with the program that Kris was presenting. He explained that many of the items were from the Will Gavin collection. Gavin was the first to use a metal detector to find artifacts on the field and authored a book about accoutrement plates. Ed himself found most of the collectibles from Spotsylvania that he shared with us. Thanks, Ed, for another year of interesting artifacts from your vast collection.

September Newsletter Deadline

The **September 2014 newsletter** will be posted online sometime during the week of August 18th. Please submit all items for publication no later than **August 10th**. This is critically important since the newsletter editor will be in Alaska from July 25 through August 11th and will be unable to address issues during that time period.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Zeiber, zeibers@comcast.net