

THE FIRST DEFENDERS

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table at Kutztown University

September 1998

New Season Opens with Address by Kerry Lanza

Fifty-three members of the First Defenders attended the opening meeting of the 1998-1999 season, held on Tuesday, September 8 at the Moselem Springs Inn. Kerry Lanza, a local Civil War historian, spoke on the 151st Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment. A nine-month unit, the regiment recruited companies from Berks, Susquehanna, Schuylkill, and Juniata Counties. While chronicling the 151st PVI's service during the war, Lanza paid particular attention to the regiment's role at Gettysburg. Part of the First Corps, the 151st participated in the brutal fighting on the first day near Seminary Ridge and later took part in repelling Pickett's Charge on July 3, 1863. Lanza added an interesting dimension to his presentation by projecting visual displays from his laptop computer, which greatly enhanced his talk.

Prior to Lanza's address, Ron Rhein and Dave Valuska conducted a short business meeting. Two especially important issues came up. First, members will be asked to vote on whether they want to take a one or two-day field trip next June. Ballots are included in this newsletter and should be returned by the October meeting to Mike Gabriel.

A second issue involves possibly increasing the membership cap from its

present limit of 100. Some members expressed interest in raising the cap to allow more people to participate in the organization. Others stated that they would like to keep the cap at 100 in order to maintain the closeness and camaraderie of the organization. There was also a concern that if the membership increased too much that there would not be space available at Moselem Springs for the meeting. It was also suggested that members who do not attend at least one meeting a year possibly be dropped from the roles. The members came to no conclusion on the membership issue, and it will continue to be discussed over the next several meetings.

Finally, members were reminded to be sure to renew their membership by the **November meeting. After this date, they will be dropped from the role and their space will be given to someone on the waiting list. Membership renewals cost \$15 and should be directed to Don Stripling.**

Book Raffle/Preservation

The members helped get our 1998/1999 season off to a good start with both raffle ticket purchases and book donations. While attendance was not as high as it usually is, the members still bought 93 tickets to raise \$93.00. Thirty dollars covered expenses of books purchased over the summer so that \$63.00 went into the preservation fund. Thanks to our speaker, Kerry Lanza,

who returned his speaking fee, another \$50.00 was added to our fund.

Thanks to Peggy Reichardt who donated two autographed books. *The Last Full Measure* and *No Braver Man* by Jeff Shaara and Frederick W. Rohm respectively. Thanks too to Maureen Frei for donating a copy of the new and popular book, *Cold Mountain* by Charles Frazier. Look for these among the offerings in the upcoming months. And thanks again for your terrific support.

-- Tom Tate

October Meeting

The First Defenders will hold their next meeting on Tuesday, October 13 at 6:00 PM at the Moselem Springs Inn. **Jeff Wert**, a nationally known Civil War historian and author of books on James Longstreet, George Armstrong Custer, and John Mosby and his rangers, will speak. Mr. Wert's topic will be a comparison of the Stonewall and Iron Brigades, which is the basis of his new book, *A Brotherhood of Valor*, scheduled for release in January 1999 by Simon & Schuster Press. Mr. Wert has also said he would be more than happy to autograph books for members and answer questions on a variety of topics, not just the subject of his talk.

Members wishing to attend the dinner should make their reservations and meal selection by **Wednesday, October 7**, by calling 683-1533. If no one answers, please leave a message on the machine and speak clearly. The selections include catch of the day, vegetable lasagna, and chicken stuffed with broccoli. The price is \$15. If you make reservations, we must ask that you pay even if you are unable to attend

because we have to pay for all dinners that we order. We also request that members **make their reservations by the deadline**. Moselem Springs Inn needs a lead time of several days to order enough dinners. Late reservations also greatly complicates seating arrangements and can lead to overcrowding.

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The First Defenders Civil War Round Table at Kutztown University October 1998

Noted Historian October Speaker

Sixty-seven members and guests attended the October First Defenders meeting held at Moselem Springs Inn. The speaker was Jeff Wert, Penn's Valley High School (Centre Country, PA) history teacher and noted Civil War historian. Jeff is the author of five books, including ones on James Longstreet and George Armstrong Custer. Quoting Bob Grim's introduction of Jeff, "Anyone who knows something about the Civil War knows Jeff Wert."

Jeff's topic for the night was his latest book, A Brotherhood of Valor, due out in February 1999. The book studies the Confederate Stonewall Brigade and the Union Iron Brigade. Jeff stated that the purpose of this book was to present the human interest side of these two well-known units.

The Stonewall Brigade was composed of five regiments drawn from the Shenandoah Valley region of Virginia. Although not a well-disciplined group, they had a common determination to fight for freedom. Jeff briefly spoke about the brigade's commanders, Thomas Jackson ("not a great tactician but had great determination"), Richard Garnett ("the most loved leader"), and Charles Weidner ("disciplinarian"). The brigade's main problem was a high desertion rate and an enemy which it shared with the Iron Brigade, the war

itself, which sapped the strength of both units.

The Iron Brigade consisted of men from Wisconsin, Indiana, and Michigan. Their struggle came when a regular army officer, General John Gibbon, was named brigade commander. Gibbon drilled his men incessantly and used a black Hardey hat for unit identification. These men were "enthused in patriotism, duty, and honor." Gibbon's efforts paid off, and, according to Wert, by 1863 the unit was arguably "the finest combat brigade in the Union Army." The second infantry brigade to arrive at Gettysburg on the morning of July 1, 1863, it was the last to withdraw, covering the Union's retreat that evening. Originally consisting of 8,200 men, the Iron Brigade suffered 14.7% fatalities during the course of the war, the highest rate of any Union Brigade. It certainly gave as good as it got, however. Four of the five Confederate regiments which suffered the heaviest losses during the Civil War did so when facing the Iron Brigade. After entertaining a wide variety of questions, Jeff autographed books for members who brought them.

Prior to Jeff's address, Jack Gurney discusses a number of collectibles that he had brought. Mike Gabriel also chaired a brief business meeting. Member Roy Gehris will present the March 1999 program, and his topic will be the cavalry at Gettysburg. Also, the April meeting at Kutztown University was mentioned. James

McPherson will deliver the keynote address and First Defender President Dave Valuska will speak on German-Americans. The admission price to this event will be \$30 and includes a luncheon. Since seating will be limited, reservations will be required ASAP once registration material is available

Don Stripling reported that 64% of the members have responded to the renewal drive and that nine people are on the waiting list. The **November 10 meeting** will be the deadline for current members to renew. Anyone who has lost their renewal form can contact Don.

Mike announced the results of the vote for the June 1999 field trip: One day, 3 votes; Two days, 24 votes, which broke down into **16 for Fredericksburg/ Chancellorsville**, Bull Run, 1, and the Lower Shenandoah Valley, 7. The board will begin making preparations for this trip at its next meeting. Finally, Ron Rhein, who was serenaded with a tear-jerking rendition of "Happy Birthday," delivered the treasurer's report of \$2766.04, of which \$456 is earmarked for preservation.

Book Raffle

Members bought 113 raffle tickets at our October meeting. Speaker Jeffrey Wert's book *Mosby's Raiders* was purchased for raffle so the lucky winner could have it autographed. The expense of the book, \$13.00, gave us an income for preservation of \$100.00 and brings our preservation fund up to a total of \$556.00. Our inventory of books for the raffle is good, and we want to thank Ira Boyer for donating *Detailed Minutiae of Soldier Life* by Carlton McCarthy. It is hard bound and illustrated. Look for it among the items next month. Thanks also to those

winners who have not taken a book. That is a donation too.

Mr. Jack Gurney, who donated the lamp with the cast soldier last year, will have another such lamp for us. We will try to auction off this item because it is so popular. Look for it soon and bring some extra cash along so you can get in on the bidding. I believe it will be spirited. Thanks again for your wonderful support. Tom Tate

November Meeting

The First Defenders will hold their next meeting on Tuesday, November 10 at 6:00 PM at the Moselem Springs Inn. **Eric J. Wittenberg**, the author on a number of books and articles, will speak on the **Union cavalry officer John Buford**. Members wishing to attend the dinner should make their reservations and meal selection by **Wednesday, November 4**, by calling 683-1533. If no one answers, please leave a message on the machine and speak clearly. The selections include catch of the day, vegetable lasagna, and baked stuffed pork chops. The price is \$15. If you make reservations, we must ask that you pay even if you are unable to attend because we have to pay for all dinners that we order. We also request that members **make their reservations by the deadline**. Moselem Springs Inn needs a lead time of several days to order enough dinners. Late reservations also greatly complicates seating arrangements and can lead to overcrowding. **BE SURE TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP BY THE NOVEMBER 10 MEETING!!!! MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS COST \$15 AND SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO DON STRIPLING.**

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Ed Root November Speaker

Ed Root, a local Civil War historian, was the guest speaker at the November 10 First Defenders meeting held at Moselem Springs Inn. Seventy-two members and guests listened to Ed's discussion on James Stewart's Battery B, 4th U.S. Artillery, at Gettysburg. Our scheduled November speaker, Eric Wittenberg, had to cancel at the last minute due to unexpected business, and through the work of Tom Tate, we were able to get Ed to substitute. Our sincere thanks to Ed for filling in at such short notice. Eric Wittenberg was rescheduled for the May 1999 meeting.

The 4th U.S. Artillery was formed in 1821 and had seen action in Florida and Mexico, under Zachary Taylor, prior to the Civil War. In 1861, the unit was stationed in Utah before being deployed to participate in the Eastern campaign. At Gettysburg, Battery B was in the thick of the fighting on the first day. Ed distributed maps which showed the unit's location during this action. Once the Union line collapsed, the unit helped cover the retreat. Ed concluded his presentation by stating that Battery B "bought a half hour of time," allowing the I Corps to retreat back to Cemetery Hill. The battery paid a heavy price for this, however, and James Stewart was among those wounded. Fortunately he was able to reach Union lines.

Prior to Ed's presentation, Mike Gabriel conducted a short business meeting. The Chancellorsville/Fredericksburg trip dates were discussed and the members voted to go on June 12-

13. The board will provide more information on the trip as it becomes available. The members also voted to establish a new policy whereby "any member not attending at least one monthly meeting (or the field trip) per year would be dropped from the membership."

This meeting was also the last chance to renew 1998-1999 memberships. Since there were fewer names on the waiting list than those not renewing, the roster was opened to new members at this meeting. Once all the forms are returned, we should have approximately 100 members again, and they'll begin to receive the newsletter, a name tag, and membership certificate as soon as possible. The treasurer's report showed a balance of \$3,218.01 with \$556 earmarked for preservation. Jack Gurney discussed the muzzleloader artifacts that he brought, and Bob Davis talked about his visit to the Winchester, VA, museum. Dave Sweitzer also sold raffle tickets for a muzzleloader and will do so again at the next meeting. The proceeds go to purchasing a new colors for his reenactment unit, the 53rd Pennsylvania.

Prior to his talk, Ed Root made a presentation on the Civil War Library and Museum in Philadelphia, the oldest chartered Civil War institution. Ed had handouts on the museum, along with special notecards. An invitation for a First Defender member to serve as liaison with the museum was solicited. At the end of the meeting, a free-will offering was collected.

Preservation Update

We raised another \$100 for our preservation fund at our November

meeting, bringing our total to \$656. Remember to bring a few extra dollars with you to the December meeting. In addition to the books to be raffled, we will have another of those very special lamps made by Jack Gurney. Those of you at this past month's meeting got to see it. The painted cast iron figure is a Union officer representing General Grant. I'll be surprised if it is not the first item selected. We owe Jack a big vote of thanks for donating so valuable an item to be raffled.

I'd like you to consider the organization to whom we will donate our preservation funds this year. I mentioned this to the Board, who agreed that I bring this suggestion to the membership. As you voted to make a two day visit to the Fredericksburg/ Chancellorsville area, I propose we contribute to the fund most active in this highly threatened area, The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust. Central Virginia was the cockpit of Civil War battles and now is under immense pressure as the suburbs grow out of Washington to the north and Richmond to the south. Probably no area in the country containing Civil War sites is under more pressure. When I first visited this area in the early seventies, Salem Church and the monuments in its immediate surroundings were out in the country. Just last fall I was there again. Now, the build up of roadside services and shops is so heavy, as well as the traffic, that you can hardly park to visit the church. And forget stopping to see the monuments. Even at the Chancellorsville visitors center or at the site of the Chancellor house, traffic is so loud as it rushes along the highway, that it is hard to hear a tour conductor deliver a message to a group. And the Wilderness? It ain't wilderness anymore!

Presenting a check to a representative of CVBT sometime Saturday night at an appropriate ceremony

may be a nice extra touch to our two day visit. It may also open an opportunity for us to visit an area not generally available to the public. Please give this some consideration. Thank you again for your tremendous support in this endeavor.

Tom Tate

Christmas Meeting Scheduled

The First Defenders will hold their Christmas meeting on Tuesday, December 8 at 6:00 PM at the Moselem Springs Inn. The Kent Courtney Orchestra will be the featured performers. They will also have tapes available for purchase. Any members, male and female, who own Civil War uniforms or dresses from the era are encouraged to wear them.

Members wishing to attend the dinner should make their reservations and meal selection by **Wednesday, December 2**, by calling 683-1533. If no one answers, please leave a message on the machine and speak clearly. The selections include catch of the day, chopped sirloin, and vegetable lasagna. Hot and cold hors d'oeuvres will also be available during the social time. The **price for the December meeting is \$20**. If you make reservations, we must ask that you pay even if you are unable to attend because we have to pay for all dinners that we order. We also request that members **make their reservations by the deadline**. Moselem Springs Inn needs a lead time of several days to order enough dinners. Late reservations also greatly complicates seating arrangements and can lead to overcrowding.

We hope to have a very strong turnout for this meeting and hope to see you all there.

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Orchestra Provides Christmas Entertainment

Seventy-Eight First Defender members heard the Kent Courtney Orchestra perform at the annual Christmas program held on December 8 at the Moselem Springs Inn. The three-person musical group appeared in period costumes and played a wide variety of nineteenth-century music. Some of the most notable were "Shenandoah," "Roll, Alabama Roll," and "Santa Ana." Ken also provided a running narrative on the history of the songs and the period's music. It was an excellent performance, and the members enjoyed themselves very much.

Prior to the music, Mike Gabriel conducted a short business meeting. He announced that nearly all the new membership forms have been returned and those joining will receive nametags and certificates as soon as possible. The board has been busily working on next year's speaker s list and have it nearly completed. January and February 2000 are being left open for presentations by members. Anyone interested in giving a talk should contact Mike. The board continues to make plans for the June fieldtrip to Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg, and will announce the information once it's available. The cost will be approximately \$140/member, although this could change once the figures are finalized. Tom Tate suggested that the First Defenders donate this year's preservation money to the Central Virginia Battlefield Association,

to correspond with our trip. No formal decision was made on this point. The idea was also proposed that the September 1999 meeting will be a true round table discussion. Over the next month or so, the membership will choose some topic, such as George Meade at Gettysburg, and then they will study it. The September meeting will then be an open discussion on the issue, during which all members are encouraged to participate. Anyone with suggestions for the topic should bring them to the January meeting.

The members were again reminded that their will be no April 1999. Instead, the Kutztown University History Department's 21st Biennial Conference will be held on April 23. The topic is The American Civil War. Pulitzer Prize winning author and Princeton University Professor James M. McPherson will deliver the keynote address, "Was Blood Thicker than Water? Ethnic and Civic Nationalism in the Civil War." First Defender President Dr. David L. Valuska will speak on "German-Americans and their Influence on the Civil War." Dr. Heather A. Huyck of the National Park Service, will deliver an address entitled "From Manassas to Appomattox: Using National Park Service Sites to Interpret History to the Public." The cost of the conference is \$30 and seating is limited. Anyone interested should contact the History Department at 683-4385.

The final piece of business conducted at the meeting was the sad

announcement that our faithful treasurer, Ron Rhein, is resigning as of the January 1999 meeting. Ron's teaching schedule next semester will make it very difficult for him to attend meetings regularly so he's stepping down. Ron promised that he would still be able to deliver his highly anticipated presentation on the Battle of Champions Hill in February, however!!!! Arlyn Christ, a local accountant and First Defender Charter Member, will assume Ron's duties on the board. We will certainly miss Ron's service and thank him for all his contributions to the First Defenders. Ron closed his tenure with announcing a treasury balance of \$2730.01, of which \$656 is sequestered for preservation. He then led the board in a rousing rendition of "We Wish You a Merry Christmas."

Book Raffle

Once again your support of the raffle was most encouraging. We raised \$157.00 at the December meeting bringing our total of preservation funds to \$813.00. Special thanks must go to Jack Gurney for donating the soldier lamp once again this year. The lamp gave us an extra incentive to buy tickets.

We also need to thank certain members for making book donations. I carried home nearly as many books as I brought to the December meeting. Tami Seidel donated *The Enfield Connection*. Maureen Frei once again donated books, *Look Away* and *Until the End*. Peggy Reichardt, like Maureen, made a second donation this season with a three volume packet titled *Illustrated History of the Civil War*. The volumes contain an atlas and a volume each on arms and equipment of both the Confederacy and the Union armies.

Our book inventory is high; we have right now twenty-one books to be chanced off. This volume will keep our costs down and provide a reasonable selection for the lucky ticket holders. Thank you once again for your loyal support. Tom Tate

New Members: The First Defenders welcome the following new members. Joy Adams, Andrew Straka, Linda M. Zeiber, Natalie Rohrbach, Richard H. Geisinger, Sr., Jeffrey R. Elliott, Linda Noll, David Noll, Robert J. Evans, Denton Schucker, Andrew J. Monastra, Robert R. Sharets, Reichard D. Eshelman, Curt Steely, Catherine F. Reilly, Hayden and Patricia Rowe, Margaret M. Key, David R. Pflum.

January Meeting

The First Defenders will hold their next meeting on Tuesday, January 12 at 6:00 PM at the Moselem Springs Inn. First Defender Board Member Bob Grim will speak on "Revisiting the Pennsylvania German Soldier in the Civil War: The Experience of the 153rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry." Members wishing to attend the dinner should make their reservations and meal selection by

Wednesday, January 6, by calling 683-1533. If no one answers, please leave a message on the machine and speak clearly. The selections include catch of the day, chicken condon bleu, and vegetable lasagna. **The price is \$15.** If you make reservations, we must ask that you pay even if you are unable to attend because we have to pay for all dinners that we order. We also request that members **make their reservations by the deadline.**

SEASON'S GREETINGS !!!

THE FIRST DEFENDERS

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table at Kutztown University January 1999

MEMBER PRESENTS JANUARY PROGRAM

First Defender board member Bob Grim presented the program for the January 12 meeting at Moselem Springs. Bob presented a talk to fifty-nine members entitled "Revisiting the Pennsylvania German Soldier in the Civil War: The Experiences of the 153rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry." Bob had several relatives in the Civil War and highlighted the service of John Ackermann, his great-grandfather, in the 153rd.

Commanded by Colonel Leopold von Gilsa, the regiment drew most of its recruits from Northampton County. The 153rd was part of Eleventh Corps' first division and saw action at Chancellorsville. One of the first units to meet Stonewall Jackson's powerful flanking attack, the regiment acquitted itself. Although outnumbered 10 to 1, the 153rd did not retreat until ordered to do so and suffered 96 deaths.

On the morning of July 1, 1863 the regiment found itself at Emmitsburg, Maryland. It quickly marched to Gettysburg, and initially deployed on Union right flank at Barlow's Knoll. There, 13,500 Confederates faced 6,000 soldiers of the XI Corps. Bob's great-grandfather was wounded during this action. The regiment concluded its service at Gettysburg by being the first unit to enter the town after the battle and captured 209 rebel soldiers. The 569-man regiment lost 306 men at Gettysburg, including 211 on the first day.

The 153rd mustered out on July 14, 1863 having served from May 1862 through July 1863. Although it began its service

with 991 men, less than 300 remained when it returned home.

Bob's talk was symbolic of the many First Defender members who had relatives fight in the war. Their personal relationship adds much to our understanding of this great conflict.

Mike Gabriel conducted a short business meeting prior to Bob's presentation. Mike thanked Don Stripling for his work in preparing the membership directory, which was distributed prior to the meeting. Name tags and certificates for the new members have been ordered and will be at the February meeting. No one has proposed a topic (or topics) for the September 1999 roundtable meeting. There is also a need for a member to present the February 2000 program; please see Mike Gabriel if interested. Reservations are now being accepted for the KU History Conference to be held April 23, 1999 (this conference replaces our April meeting); information can be obtained by calling (610) 683-4385 or by e-mail at <groff@kutztown.edu>. The total balance in the treasury is \$3465.01 with \$813.00 earmarked for preservation. Jack Gurney discussed several artillery artifacts that he brought to show the members. Arlan Christ, the First Defender's new treasurer, brought a painting of the last meeting between Lee and Jackson at Chancellorsville, a fitting image considering our June field trip.

Book Raffle

Because of your donations our book raffle inventory is high. Thanks go to our members, some named and some anonymous, for additional books. We have one special CD titled "The Civil War," all

new music. Peggy Reichardt donated *Civil War Collectibles*, Richard and Cathie Kennedy donated *Gettysburg, the Confederate High Tide*, and Dave Klopp donated *Gettysburg*. We also received a gracious donation of a large roll of double tickets needed to conduct our monthly raffles. At the rate you are buying tickets, I will soon be needing this roll.

Dave and Diane Mengel have donated a picture of Confederate General Lewis Armistead reaching the guns of Cushing's Battery A, 4th U.S. artillery on that fateful day, July 3, 1863. It is what I would describe as a pencil drawing, matted and framed. Its overall measurements are 17" by 14". The only condition Dave put on it is that the money raised go to preservation. I want to discuss with the board just how we may chance this item. Its value is about \$100.00 so we should try to raise upwards of that amount. I would say the March meeting will be the night it goes on the block, but I'll bring it along on February so you can get to see it. More on this picture in next month's newsletter.
--Tom Tate

New Members: Last month's newsletter listed the new members, but several names were inadvertently left out or misspelled. Our apologies for that. The board and all the members of the First Defenders would like to welcome this year's new members. They will receive their nametags and membership certificates at the February meeting.

Joy Adams, Mary Adelsberger, Jeffrey R. Elliott, Richard D. Eshelman, Robert J. Evans, Richard H. Geisinger, Sr., Margaret M. Key, Andrew J. Monastra, David Noll, Linda Noll, David R. Pflum, Catherine F. Reilly, Natalie Rohrbach, Hayden and Patricia Rowe, Denton Schucker, Robert R. Sharets, Curt Steely, Andrew Straka, Linda M. Zeiber.

Weather Update

In case of bad weather, listen to the following radio stations to see if a First Defender meeting has been cancelled:

Reading: WEEU 850 AM;

WRFY 102.5 FM.

Allentown: WAEB 790 AM;

WFMZ 100.7 FM.

February Meeting

The First Defenders will hold their next meeting on Tuesday, February 9 at 6:00 P.M. at the Moselem Springs Inn. First Defender Vice President Mike Gabriel and former treasurer Ron Rhein will deliver a scintillating address on the decisive battle of the American Civil War, **Champion Hill**. Members wishing to attend the dinner should make their reservations and meal selection by Wednesday, February 3, by calling 683-1533. If no one answers, please leave a message on the machine and speak clearly. The selections include catch of the day, pot roast, and vegetable lasagna. The price is \$15.

If you make reservations, we must ask that you pay even if you are unable to attend because we have to pay for all dinners that we order. We also request that members make their reservations by the deadline. Moselem Springs Inn needs a lead time of several days to order enough dinners. Late reservations also greatly complicates seating arrangements and can lead to overcrowding. We hope to see you there!!!

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Western Campaign Featured

At the February 9 meeting, sixty-four members of the First Defenders heard the round table's first presentation on the Western Campaign. Board members Ron Rhein and Mike Gabriel delivered a spirited account of the decisive battle of the Vicksburg Campaign, the Battle of Champion Hill, May 16, 1863. Using handouts and overhead projections, they chronicled this violent encounter in Mississippi between Ulysses S. Grant's Army of the Tennessee and part of John C. Pemberton's Vicksburg garrison.

The battle opened in late morning when Grant's forces encountered the Confederates half way between Jackson, Mississippi, and Vicksburg. Grant unleashed a savage attack on Pemberton's left flank, only to see a Southern counterattack threaten his headquarters. The Union troops eventually contained this and drove the Confederates from the field, inflicting nearly 4,000 casualties and capturing twenty-seven cannons. The defeat sealed Pemberton in Vicksburg and prevented him from joining General Joseph Johnston's command, which was trying to reinforce the garrison.

Ron and Mike stressed that Champion Hill was fought by individual division and brigade commanders on both sides, and that Grant's calm leadership, even when facing a crisis, helped decide the battle. Ron and Mike also announced that this presentation will be the first of several annual talks on the Western Campaigns and the emergence of Grant. The February 2000 presentation will feature the forty-seven day siege of Vicksburg.

Prior to the talk, First Defender President Dave Valuska distributed certificates to new members. He then conducted a short business meeting. The first issue discussed was a topic for next September's meeting. Four possibilities were introduced, and the members will select one soon: Sickles' conduct at Gettysburg; Chamberlain at Little Round Top; Longstreet at Gettysburg; Lee as a modern general. Dave also addressed the June 12-13 field trip to Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg. The cost will be approximately \$120/person, double occupancy. Singles will cost \$40 more. The cost includes transportation, hotel accommodations, and a banquet on Saturday night. Members interested in attending the trip should return the enclosed slip to Mike Gabriel by the next meeting. We need to see if the trip should be opened to other round tables, or perhaps canceled if there is a lack of interest. If this occurs, the First Defenders will take a one-day trip as it has the past two summers. The members were also reminded that the April meeting will be the Kutztown University History conference, featuring Pulitzer Prize winning author James M. McPherson. We expect an especially large crowd and seating is limited. Interested parties should contact the History Department at 683-4385. This month's treasury report revealed a balance of \$4,200.44 of which \$1048.00 is sequestered for preservation.

Tom Tate discussed donating a portion of the preservation fund to restore Pennsylvania monuments at Gettysburg. A large restoration and refurbishment project is underway, and this might be a good use of some of our resources. Tom will deliver another report on this next month. He also

announced that the Central Virginia Battlefield Preservation Association, this year's recipient of our donation, will have representatives meet us when we are in Chancellorsville.

As he has for the past several meetings, Jack Gurney brought several Civil War artifacts to show the members. February's highlights were a shortened Spencer repeating rifle and a cavalry saber. Arlan Christ also discussed another painting dealing with a Fredericksburg/Chancellorsville theme.

Book Raffle and Preservation

You made February the second highest month for ticket sales and preservation funds so far this season. We raised another \$132 and had no expenses because of your book donations. Every dollar went to our fund. Again we can thank several more of our members for making book donations.

Please give some thought to the Pennsylvania Gettysburg Monuments Project that I announced at meeting night. If you weren't there, this project is working to raise money to repair and to maintain the Pennsylvania monuments at Gettysburg plus the statues to Pennsylvania generals. Donors may contribute to particular ones or to the fund in general. Consider if we should donate some of our preservation money to the project and if so to which monument. If you want more information on this project you can call Ms. Kathi Schue at Harrisburg, at (717) 783-0411. Thanks again to all of you for your whole hearted support of our book raffle. Tom Tate

Pennsylvania Monuments

This will be a new feature of the newsletter to describe briefly the monuments at Gettysburg.

1st Pennsylvania Reserve Corps

Also known as the 30th regiment of the line, the 1st Reserves were from Adams, York, Chester, Cumberland, and Delaware

counties. Its K company was from the Gettysburg area. They were mustered into service July 17, 1861. Their monument at Gettysburg is near the Whearfield and is in generally good condition.

If there are particular monuments you want described in future newsletters, tell Tom Tate.

Newsletter Upgrade

Over the next several months and into next year, the newsletter will begin to incorporate several new features. This will make the historic, academic, and preservation content fuller and get more members involved. Ron Rhein will join the editorial staff to help with these changes. Some of the new features will be a Western Theater column, a Pennsylvania Monument section, and book reviews. Any member interested in writing a book review or a western column should contact Mike Gabriel.

March Meeting Set

The First Defenders will hold their next meeting on Tuesday, March 9 at 6:00 P.M. at the Moselem Springs Inn. First Defender member **Roy Gehris** will present a talk on an often-overlooked topic, **the cavalry at Gettysburg**. Members wishing to attend the dinner should make their reservations and meal selection by Wednesday, March 3, by calling 683-1533. If no one answers, please leave a message on the machine and speak clearly. The selections include catch of the day, baked stuffed pork chops, and vegetable lasagna. The price is \$15.

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Cavalry at Gettysburg

Approximately sixty-five First Defender members attended the Tuesday, March 9 meeting at the Moselem Springs Inn. First Defender member **Roy Gehris** was the featured speaker, and he presented a spirited account of Union cavalry at Gettysburg. Using overhead projections and maps, Roy illustrated how important the cavalry was in securing the Northern victory. New young brigadiers, such as George A. Custer and Elon J. Farmsworth, managed to neutralize Confederate cavalry and support the Union position in actions at Hanover and east and south of the battlefield. According to Roy, Custer's charge on July 3 at the east cavalry field was critical in preventing J.E.B. Stuart's troopers gaining the Union rear.

Prior to the meeting, **Mike Gabriel** conducted a short business meeting. Enough members expressed interest in the June 12-13 field trip to Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville that it will definitely occur. See the enclosed registration slip for reserving a spot on the bus. Mike also reported that First Defender secretary **Don Stripling** had been in contact with Gettysburg National Military Park administrators. They periodically need volunteers to help them with various projects, such as landscaping, on the field. Don believed that this was a good cause and that perhaps some of our members might

want to participate. Mike took the names of those members who wanted to volunteer, and if anyone else is interested, they should contact Don.

Jack Gurney and **Arlan Christ** continued their practice of bringing Civil War artifacts and paintings, respectively, to show the other members. We thank them for their time and efforts. It certainly is interesting and adds new insights into each meeting. Jack and Arlan's efforts, along with Roy's presentation, again highlights the talent and involvement of the First Defenders membership and we are sure that it will continue. If anyone wants to contribute a book review, give a presentation, or otherwise volunteer their time, please contact Mike.

Book Raffle/Preservation

Our May meeting will be the last chance to have a raffle for the 1998-99 season. This will be a good time to offer you a chance to win some of the books we have in our inventory. I would like to reduce the number of books I have at home and not carry so many over the summer. We will chance off every book I bring along rather than the normal four or five.

We have raised a total of \$1,270.00 for preservation so far. Some of this money was carried over from last season. Still the amount is spectacular to be raised in such a short time by such a small group. Your support in ticket purchases as well as your many generous

donations of book and other items is what has made this possible. Thank you all so very much.

Pa. Monuments

According to the literature from the Pennsylvania Gettysburg Monuments Project there are monuments to the 1st, 2nd, 5th, 6th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th Pennsylvania Reserve Corps regiments at Gettysburg. The Reserves were a division under General Samuel W. Crawford of General Sykes's Fifth Corps. They fought in the vicinity of Little Roundtop and that is the general location of the monuments. Overall the monuments are in good condition and require minimal maintenance and repair. Many were refurbished within the past several years. The exceptions are the monuments to the 5th and 12th Reserves. They are located on Big Roundtop and the access to them is difficult. Each requires well over \$2,000.00 to repair with a maintenance endowment cost of four and five thousand dollars respectively.

If you are interested in the location, condition or cost to repair and maintain a particular monument at Gettysburg, please let me know and I will report from the information I have from the Monuments Project. Tom Tate

May Meeting

The First Defenders will hold their last meeting of the 1998-1999 season on Tuesday, May 11 at 6:00 P.M. at the Moselem Springs Inn. Author Eric Wittenberg will present a program on **General John Buford**. The membership will also select a topic for the September meeting discussion. The choices are: Sickles' conduct at Gettysburg; Chamberlain at Little Round Top; Longstreet at Gettysburg; Lee as a

modern general. A report will also be given on the Kutztown University Department of History's 21st Biennial History Conference, which took the place of our April meeting. First Defender president **Dave Valuska** will be one of the conference's three featured speakers. **Bob Grim** and Mike Gabriel, other board members, are also participating in the conference by giving introductions. Members wishing to attend the May meeting should make their reservations and meal selection by **Wednesday, May 3**, by calling 683-1533. If no one answers, please leave a message on the machine and speak clearly. The selections include catch of the day, chicken cordon bleu, and vegetable lasagna. The price is \$15.

If you make reservations, we must ask that you pay even if you are unable to attend because we have to pay for all dinners that we order. We also request that members make their reservations by the deadline. Moselem Springs Inn needs a lead time of several days to order enough dinners. Late reservations also greatly complicates seating arrangements and can lead to overcrowding. We hope to see you there!!!

Field trip Information

Anyone interested in attending the June 12-13 field trip should return the enclosed form, along with a check for **\$120/double occupancy, \$160/single occupancy**. The check should be made payable to **The First Defenders CWRT** and be sent to **Don Stripling, 33 Bucks Street, Wernersville, PA 19533**. Seating is limited to approximately thirty-eight (38), which will be accepted first come, first serve.

THE FIRST DEFENDERS

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table at Kutztown University Summer 1999

Wittenberg Addresses May Meeting

Eric J. Wittenberg, a Columbus, Ohio attorney and Wyomissing native, presented the May 11 lecture at the First Defender meeting held at Moselem Springs. Seventy-three members and guests heard Eric speak on John Buford. Eric discussed Buford's rise through the ranks, beginning with his graduation from West Point, where he ranked sixteenth in the Class of 1848. Eric then addressed Buford's Civil War service, focusing much of his talk on Gettysburg. He also highlighted the General's abilities and the various officers who helped his career. Eric argued that Buford was the best Union cavalry officer of the war, and the talk prompted a spirited question and answer period. Eric, the author of several books, including his latest *"We Have It Damn Hard Out Here,"* is also a spokesperson for the Trevilian Station Battlefield Foundation and mentioned it as a possible recipient for preservation funds.

Prior to the talk, Mike Gabriel conducted a short business meeting. He gave a report on the Kutztown University History Department's Civil War conference and thanked the approximately twenty-five members who attended. The round table discussion at the September 1999 meeting will focus on Generals Lee and Longstreet at Gettysburg. A suggested reading list for the meeting is listed later in the newsletter. The members voted to make

a \$250 donation to help preserve and restore the 88th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry monument at Gettysburg National Military Park. Arlan Christ discussed the print he brought to the meeting, "The Heavy Task Before Us" and Jack Gurney completed the meeting by showing weapons and artifacts from his collection.

Field Trip a Huge Success

Thirty-three First Defender members and guests had a terrific time on the round table's June 12-13 field trip to Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. This year's trip, our first overnight one, featured a surprise appearance by former Speaker of the House **Newt Gingrich**, who accompanied our group for about an hour at Fredericksburg. The group was also fortunate to have the services of a National Park ranger, Greg Mertz, who accompanied us both days, courtesy of the Central Virginia Battlefield Trust. In addition to explaining both fields, Greg also gave us a candlelight tour of Guiney Station, where "Stonewall" Jackson died. At the round table's dinner on Saturday night, Tom Tate and Arlan Christ presented \$500 to the Central Virginia Battlefield Trust to help with their efforts to preserve the "cockpit" of the Civil War. Overall, the trip was a huge success, and the overwhelming consensus was that everyone is now looking forward to next year's.

Book Raffle / Preservation

We have a good supply of books, about twenty-two, to start our new Roundtable season. They are all Y-2K compliant. Among the titles to be raffled at our September meeting is Glenn Tucker's *High Tide at Gettysburg*, appropriate for our roundtable discussion. We had some books in our inventory following our May meeting, so the purchases made over the summer were modest. We will be able to add to our preservation fund as early as our first meeting. While I hate see the summer come to an end I am looking forward to our meetings and working with all of you again to make this year another successful one for us all. Tom Tate.

Pennsylvania Monuments

The 88th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment's monument at Gettysburg will receive some monetary support from our Roundtable resulting from your vote in May. The 88th was mainly comprised of men from Philadelphia, but companies A, B and H were recruited from Berks County. It mustered in during the summer of 1861. The 88th PA was particularly conspicuous at Second Manassas supporting the guns of Captain George Leppien's 5th Maine battery on Chinn Ridge. There Lt. Col. Joseph McLean from Berks county was killed as he tried to maintain his regiment's position on the ridge. According to John J. Hennessy in his book *Return to Bull Run*, Mclean's great-great granddaughter lives today in Mohnton, PA.

At Gettysburg the 88th was part of the First Corps, Second Division, Second Brigade. There are four monuments to the 88th at Gettysburg;

the main one on Doubleday Avenue. It needs power washing and the bronze rewaxed. Maintenance cost is \$1,040 while the endowment is \$3,000. The cost to maintain and endow the other three, all small granite markers, is less than \$200 each. One monument is located at Ziegler's Grove, a second at Forney Field and the third monument is on south Hancock Avenue. Tom Tate.

1999-2000 Tentative

Schedule

Sept. 14: Open Discussion, "Lee and Longstreet at Gettysburg."

Oct. 12: Scott Washburn, "Civil War Infantry Tactics."

Nov. 9: Brian Pohanka

Dec. 14: Christmas Party featuring the Ken Courtney Orchestra.

Jan. 11: Kerry Willard, "Civil War Medicine."

Feb. 8: Ron Rhein and Mike Gabriel, "The Siege of Vicksburg."

Mar. 14: Undetermined

Apr. 11: Michael Dreese, "151st Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry."

May 9: Undetermined

Membership Renewal

As the First Defenders open their third full year, it's now time for members to "reenlist." First Defenders wishing to renew their memberships should complete the enclosed slip and return it with a **\$15** check by **NOVEMBER 9**. The check should be made payable to **THE FIRST DEFENDERS CWRT** and sent to **Arlan Christ, 332 West Main Street, Kutztown, PA 19530**. Any member who hasn't renewed by November 9 will be dropped from the rolls and new

members will be admitted from the waiting list.

September Meeting Set

The First Defenders will open their third full season on Tuesday, September 14, at the Moselem Springs Inn. The members will take part in a round table discussion on Lee and Longstreet at Gettysburg. Members can gain more insights into the topic by reading parts of any of the following works: Coddington, *The Gettysburg Campaign*; Wert, *Longstreet*; Gallagher, *Lee the Soldier*; Harry W. Pfanz, *Gettysburg: The Second Day*; Tucker, *Lee and Longstreet at Gettysburg*; Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox*; Donald Pfanz, *Richard S. Ewell* or any other books or articles about Gettysburg. The movie *Gettysburg* is also useful.

State Representative **Thomas R. Caltagirone** will address the meeting to discuss the preservation of Pennsylvania monuments at Gettysburg and receive

our donation. Other items on the agenda will be considering the destination of next summer's field trip and enlisting volunteers to write articles for the newsletter. Members wishing to attend the dinner should make their reservations and meal selection by **Wednesday, September 8**, by calling 683-1533. If no one answers, please leave a message on the machine and speak clearly. The selections include **catch of the day, vegetable lasagna, and baked stuffed pork chops**. The price is \$15. If you make reservations, we must ask that you pay even if you are unable to attend because we have to pay for all dinners that we order. We also request that members **make their reservations by the deadline**. Moselem Springs Inn needs a lead time of several days to order enough dinners. Late reservations also greatly complicates seating arrangements and can lead to overcrowding. We hope to see you all there as we kick off a new season of investigating the American Civil War.
