

# The First Defenders

## Civil War Round Table Newsletter

November 2016



[www.firstdefenderscwrt.us](http://www.firstdefenderscwrt.us)

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

James Gordon Bennett, the editor of the New York Herald, walked the middle line during the 1864 election insulting both Democrats and Republicans equally. As far as Bennett was concerned, it didn't matter much who won. "While we have no hopes of Paradise regained with this election," he wrote, "we have no fears of the destruction of the country with the success of either Lincoln or McClellan. Each is a failure..." He believed the choice was between two evils, and he didn't believe that the defeat of one or the other would be the ruin of the country. So wrote John C. Waugh in his *Reelecting Lincoln: The Battle for the 1864 Presidency*.

Bennett was, quite obviously, on the mark with his prediction since the country would survive for the next 152 years. We are now on the cusp of the 58th presidential canvass which, as with the most of the 57 before, is being touted as "the most important election in our history." That may or may not be, but it is certainly unusual if nothing else. Consider...

- When Lincoln and McClellan squared off as Bennett was excoriating them both in 1864, the Negro was not yet a citizen and was certainly not able to cast a ballot. He would not have the opportunity to exercise the franchise for another six years until the 15th Amendment was ratified in 1870.
- It would take another 50 years before women would be granted the right to vote with the ratification of the 19th Amendment. The year was 1920, 28 years before Hillary Clinton was born and 96 before she would become the first woman to become a major party candidate.
- 16 presidential contests have passed since a non-politician (Eisenhower) last headed a major party ticket, and it has been since 19 since a true civilian was at the top of the ballot. Wendell Wilkie was the candidate in 1940, six years before the next civilian presidential candidate, Donald Trump, was born.

If the current canvass is not the most important in our national existence, it is almost certainly the most unique. Bennett's acerbic pen would likely still be dripping invective-filled ink at Republicans and Democrats alike, and his 1864 words seem ironically apropos for the campaign now coming (thankfully!) to a climax. What is as important today as it was then, what our Civil War ancestors have bequeathed to all following generations, is the right...I daresay *obligation*...to cast a vote. The victor on November 8th is unlikely to cause the ruin of the nation, but failure to do our duty by exercising our franchise does tear at the national fabric while dishonoring ALL who have sacrificed to afford us this right for 240 years. Vote for the candidate of your choice, BUT VOTE!

For the Glory,

*Craig*

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## Round Table Business

President Craig Breneiser called the October 11, 2016, meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. at the Inn at Reading. Greg Stull offered a prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance for the 62 members in attendance.

Vice President Mark Quattrock gave a report on battlefield lands and leverages available for preservation at the present time. These will be discussed in Mark's report later in this newsletter. Mark has an article about preservation later in this newsletter.

Many thanks to our friend Jeff Wert for his fascinating program for October about Mosby's Rangers. We always look forward to Jeff's return visits to the round table.

### Membership

It's now past-time to renew your membership for the campaign of 2016-2017. Please fill out the membership form found on the website, and return it with your check as soon as possible if you have not already done so. The deadline for payment was October 11, 2016. Dave Sweigert reported that he has received membership renewals from 80 people so far. Remember that you cannot order a meal without having paid for your membership. If you have not yet taken care of that, send your check to Dave before missing out on another great speaker.

### Programs

Dave Unger reported that all programs are in place for the current campaign as well as two for next campaign. See the lineup of programs at the end of the newsletter.

### Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Tim Antosy reported a balance in the treasury of \$3730.19 as of October 4, 2016, with \$511.00 ear-marked for preservation which includes a special donation for our friend Dennis Yerger who passed away this past May. The unencumbered balance as of September's meeting stands at \$3219.19.

### **Preservation Corner**

The October meeting saw us taking in \$163 from the book raffle. Thank you to everyone who bought raffle tickets and supported the raffle. Also, congratulations to all the winners.

The checks for the Civil War Trust and the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation have been sent, and we have received some very nice Thank-you letters from both organizations for the donations we made. Also, Jeff Wert gave us a great compliment for supporting the Foundation.

Finally, we received a very generous donation of books from the Civil War Institute to use for our book raffle. Special thanks to Peter Carmichael and the Institute for their donation.

That is all for now. See you next month!

Mark Quattrock

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### **Save the Date for AAP**

Barb Shafer announced that October 27, 2016, is the First Defenders date to work at our sites at Gettysburg National Park.

We will meet at Lowes on Rte. 724 around 9ish and carpool to Gettysburg, or you may meet us there. We work on two of the sites, have lunch, and then work on the remaining sites. Tommy's Pizza is a popular spot although we have eaten at other restaurants.

First Defenders has adopted two sites, Gregg's monument located at East Cavalry Field and 18th PA Cavalry located at Big Round Top.

First Defenders is completing the paperwork on two additional sites, WV 1st Cav (Farnsworth) and Benning's Brigade (TX) on South Confederate.

We also work on the 6th PA Cavalry and 8th PA Cavalry sites adopted by Barbara Shafer.

The 6th PA Cavalry fence will need to be painted. Roger Cotterill is the fashionista on dressing for the occasion, but clothing suitable for painting might be your best choice.

If time permits we have done some shopping and would like to visit The Round Barn in the future.

To accomplish this we need YOU to volunteer, please let Don Stripling or Barbara Shafer know of your interest. We may also be able to have a Ranger give a talk about a site or the Park.

The purpose of the Adopt-A-Position (AAP) program is for volunteers to maintain the historic setting of the battlefield.

Volunteers (VIPs) help by doing field maintenance and labor that otherwise would not be completed due to budget and/or staffing restraints.

VIPs donate time and labor in preserving regimental positions, battery locations, or brigade lines. The Park provides equipment and supplies that are needed for the sites. There isn't any monetary involvement by the volunteer. Individuals and/or groups can volunteer to participate. The criteria is a two-year commitment to work a minimum of

one day each during the spring and fall program. The individual or contact representative for a group will arrange a date two weeks before the time that a work party will be at the adopted site. All work at the project site must be pre-arranged with the AAP Coordinator. The coordinator at Gettysburg Park is: Alyce Evans at [\(717\) 338-4479](tel:(717)338-4479).

I have been doing Adopt A Position for about 10 years and the list of available sites has been cut in half. This means that sites have been adopted but there are still sites available both Union and Confederate.

If you would like a current list of sites to adopt you can contact contact Alyce Evans at Gettysburg National Military Park. You may prefer to talk to Barbara Shafer at 484-336-8995 about getting involved. Barbara can answer questions and address concerns.

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### **November Program—Sherri Stull Women Soldiers in the Civil War**



**The story of the woman soldier has been a long, neglected chapter in our nation's Civil War history. Even today, when thinking back to women of that time period, most individuals envision the woman left behind to tend her husband's farm or business, a laundress following the army, a nurse serving in a hospital, or maybe even the spy gathering intelligence. Few people think of the fairer sex of the Victorian era as a combatant. Together, we will explore military history as it relates to these brave women, discover who these women were, where they came from, why they chose to fight, how they were able to pass themselves off as men, and what happened to some when their identity was revealed. We'll also examine some known, documented cases of women in Civil War combat.**

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### **SPEAKERS AND PROGRAM TOPICS FOR FIRST DEFENDERS CWRT 2016-2017**

<b>MEETING DATE</b>	<b>SPEAKER</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>
11/9/2016	Sherri Stull	Women Soldiers in the Civil War
12/13/2016	Scott Mingus	Second Battle of Winchester
1/10/2017	Bob Shuman	The Burning of Chambersburg
2/14/2017	Paul Kahan	Simon Cameron: Amiable Scoundrel
3/14/2017	Steve French	McNeill's Rangers
4/11/2017	Ed Bearrs	First Defenders
5/9/2017	Ed Bonekemper	Myth of the Lost Cause

**Dinner Reservations for the Wednesday, November 9, 2016 Meeting:**

If possible, please make your meal choices/reservation on the website. Our meal choices for November include: Cornbread Stuffed Chicken with supreme sauce; Roast Turkey with cornbread stuffing; Seafood Alfredo; or Vegetable Penne with vodka sauce. Starch, vegetables, salad, dessert, rolls, coffee, tea, and water are included. The price is \$25.00 inclusive for meals.

If you make your reservation online and you do not receive a thank-you and/or a confirmation email, your reservation did not go through. If you must call in reservations, please call your menu selection to Kathy Little at 610-367-8082 no later than noon Friday, November 4, 2016, which is also the deadline for online reservations.

**\*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.

**\*\*PLEASE NOTE: IT IS MUCH APPRECIATED IF YOU PAY IN THE APPROPRIATE DOLLAR AMOUNT. WE DO NOT HAVE A CHANGE DRAWER. WE WILL NOT ACCEPT \$50 OR \$100 BILLS IN PAYMENT. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.**

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