

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

April 2017



www.firstdefenderscwrts.us

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It was on the evening of April 6th, 1862 following a hard day's battle on the banks of the Tennessee River that William Tecumseh Sherman found the commander of the Union Army, Ulysses S. Grant, and sighed, "Well, we've had the Devil's own day of it, haven't we?" There, in the pouring rain, the unflappable Grant simply replied, "Yes. Lick 'em tomorrow though."

It seems the Round Table has "had the Devil's own" year during our "China Anniversary Jubilee." We had a great start last fall with terrific programs and speakers throughout the waning months of 2016. As the New Year dawned, though, we seem to have run into some shoal water. The weather prognosticators had suggested this would be a hard winter although it really has been pretty mild (with some 60-70 degree temperatures in late February!). But, it has been hard on the First Defenders as our January and March meetings fell to inclement winter weather, and our February attendance dropped significantly in what seems to be a worrisome trend. True, our enlistments dipped by 12% for this campaign, but our program attendance has fallen by more than 25% from last year.

Eternal optimism may suggest our best years are yet to come. There is so much more to explore in Civil War history that generations unborn will melt away before the well runs dry. But, it will take all of us to rededicate ourselves to the reasons we became First Defenders by continuing to support our monthly programs, by "drafting" like-minded friends to join us and, perhaps most importantly, by providing the Round Table officers with your thoughts, ideas, concerns and suggestions. Whether it is the range of program topics, the quality of speakers, dining accommodations, meal selections or anything else, we need YOU to help keep the First Defenders on its continuing march toward history.

Our April 11th "Evening with Ed" is a perfect time to get back in formation and move forward. With everyone's enthusiastic support and *esprit de corps*, we can "lick 'em tomorrow" and for years to come!

For the Glory!

Craig

Round Table Business

Please note: Because of the cancellation of the March 2017 meeting of the Round table, there is no new business to report. Refer to the March newsletter for the most recent news.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Tim Antosy reported a balance of \$3,506.59 as of March 6, 2017. Last month we took in a total of \$128.00 for preservation giving us a present total of \$679.00 for preservation. Our membership still stands at 88. The unencumbered balance as of March's meeting stands at \$2827.60.

From Mark Quattrock--

Polo Shirts

There is still time to place an order for the 20th Anniversary Polo Shirts. I will be taking orders in April up to the April Meeting. If you wish to place an order please, either e-mail me at mquattrock@outlook.com with the number of shirts you wish to order and your shirt size. Please, include in the Subject Line of your e-mail **Polo Shirt**. The other way is by printing out the order form on our web site and handing it to me at the April Meeting. With the March Meeting having been cancelled, I am pushing back collecting the money from those of you who ordered until the May Meeting and will include details on how much to pay in the May Newsletter.

Mercy Street

Hi everyone! Season 2 of the PBS series Mercy Street has ended I have some very sad news to announce regarding the future of the series. An announcement was made by PBS that due to issues regarding funding they have **cancelled** Mercy Street. This is in part due to having lost a major grant used to fund production of the series and the likelihood that PBS will lose funding from the Federal Government used to operate and stay on the air. Right now the only way this series could continue is if another network decided to pick up the series. I will keep all of you updated as more news comes out.

Preservation Corner

Hope all of you are well and survived the snow we had in March. A lot is happening in the realm of Preservation since my last article I wrote. Here are some updates: First, Civil War Trust is currently offer 5 Matching Grants. They are:

- **Brandy Station-** This is the newest one that recently came out where the Trust is trying to save two key parts of the Battlefield. The first is Hansbrough Ridge (174 acres the Trust is trying to save) and Fleetwood Hill (70 acres the Trust is trying to save of the Hill. The Match is **\$6.50 to \$1**.

- **Tennessee**-The Trust is looking to try and save 63 acres of land pertaining to Fort Donelson and Parker's Cross Roads. The Match for this is **\$5.78 to \$1**
- **Virginia and West Virginia**-The Trust is looking to save 243 acres at 4 sites. They are: Cedar Creek and New Market Heights in Virginia and Harpers Ferry and Greenbrier River in West Virginia. The Match is **\$14.96 to \$1**
- **Virginia**-The Trust is trying to save 343 acres at Gaines Mill, Cedar Mountain, and Cold Harbor. The Match for this is **\$10.48 to \$1**
- **Mississippi**-The Trust is trying to save 434 acres at Champion Hill, Brice's Cross Roads, and Port Gibson. The Match for this is **\$6.20 to \$1**

Second, is in regards to Camp Letterman in Gettysburg. A German company called Lidl which is a Supermarket chain is looking to build a supermarket on a large portion of what is left of Camp Letterman. While plans are moving forward to build on the site the Gettysburg Battlefield Preservation Association is currently meeting with the Attorneys for the company to work out a deal where a portion of what is left of the site is saved. I will keep you updated on the progress of the talks.

As always, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of you who have supported the book raffle either by buying tickets or making donations of books and other items to be used for the raffle. I would also, like to thank all of those who made a monetary donation towards Preservation. All of this is truly appreciated and thank you for all of your support.

Until next time. See all of you in April.

Sincerely,

Mark Quattrochio

Important Announcement: The CWRT of Eastern PA is presenting **Americans at War**, a conference for the benefit of historic preservation.

This conference is scheduled for Saturday, May 6, 2017, at the Center at Holiday Inn Lehigh Valley. This is located at 7736 Adrienne Drive, Breinigsville, PA 18031. You may speak to someone regarding this conference at 610-391-1000. Registration and breakfast begin at 7:45 a.m.. One of the many speakers throughout the day is D. Scott Hartwig. The cost is \$50.00 per person which includes breakfast and lunch.

Send your check made out to "CWRT of Eastern PA, Inc." to Edwin Root 2332 Fox Meadow Drive, Allentown, PA 18104. Include your phone number and email address so that you will receive a confirmation.

For the full schedule of events, see Linda Zeiber for a copy of speakers and topics.

Adopt-A-Position from Barbara Shafer

The Spring date to work at our sites at Gettysburg National Park is Thursday, May 4.

We will meet at Lowes around 9 and carpool to Gettysburg or you may meet us at the first work site. We work on two of the sites have lunch and then work on the remaining sites.

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

The paperwork on two additional sites, WV 1st Cav (Farnsworth) and Benning's Brigade (TX) on South Confederate, should be completed.

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.

We will have six sites to work on. 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: Randy Hill at (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 Randy Hill at Gettysburg National Military Park.

April Program

"An Evening with Ed, the 'First Defenders' & More"

It is difficult to find a more appropriate way to officially celebrate the 20th birthday of the First Defenders Civil War Round Table than by spending it with our old friend, Ed Bearss, talking about...what else... the First Defenders! Back for his annual spring appearance is the redoubtable Historian Emeritus of the National Park Service and our annual "Evening with Ed."



Only two months shy of his 94th birthday, Ed has promised a never-before-heard program on the heady April days 156 years ago when young men from Berks County and surrounding environs became the first uniformed military troops to rush to the nation's capital to protect it from what seemed an imminent threat from just across the Potomac River in Virginia and seemingly hostile intentions from the eastern Maryland area. Those raw militia troops buoyed the spirits of the nascent Lincoln Administration that faced the ignominy of being chased from the seat of government by a rebellion only days old. These men would forever be hailed as the "First Defenders" of the Union.

Their story is well-known to most of the modern-day First Defenders who honor them with our Round Table, but Ed is certain to bring a new take on those early days of confusion and glory. And, he may also be ready to offer up some additional nuggets of Civil War history that make him truly a living legend!

Hiram Ulysses S. Grant

It seems that man's destiny in this world is quite as much a mystery as it is likely to be in the next. I never thought of acquiring rank in the profession I was educated for; yet it came with two grades higher prefixed to the rank of General officer for me. I certainly never had either ambition or taste for political life; yet I was twice President of the United States. If anyone had suggested the idea of my becoming an author, as they frequently did, I was not sure whether they were making sport of me or not. I have now written a book which is in the hands of the manufacturers, I ask you to keep these notes very private lest I become an authority on the treatment of diseases, I have already too many trades to be proficient at any.

Excerpted from **GRANT**

Page 628 by
Jean Edward Smith

Submitted by Mike Straus, Loyal
Contributor

Dinner Reservations for the Tuesday, April 11, 2017 Meeting:

If possible, please make your meal choices/reservation on the website. Our meal choices for April include: Grilled breast of chicken, asparagus, mushrooms, cheese sauce; Sliced top round of beef; Haddock with butter crumb top; OR Eggplant parmigiana, fettuccini, marinara sauce. Salad, soup, starch, vegetables, 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, April 7, 2017, 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.**

Speakers and Program Topics for 2017

5/9/2017

Ed Bonekamper

Myth of the Lost Cause

Newsletter contact: Linda Zeiber, zeibers@comcast.net

