

# The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

Summer 2017



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

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I was recently asked how I thought President Trump was doing after six months in office. Recognizing (and avoiding!) the virulent polarization that topic brings to otherwise civil discourse, I reflected on how my great-great grandfather might have responded to a similar question about President Lincoln in September after the first six months of the very first Republican administration 1861.

Lincoln had a rocky start. The day after his inauguration, he chose to rebuff receiving Confederate commissioners who had been sent to "negotiate." After his first week, the new Confederacy adopted a constitution for its fledgling government. By the first of April, he had to let an uppity Secretary of State Seward know who was going to be in charge of the executive branch (and it wasn't going to be Seward!), and he faced a complete mismanagement of a relief effort for Fort Sumter followed by the Sumter crisis itself. And it was only Week #6!

Things continued to go downhill from there. Four more states would secede from the Union bringing the total to 11. Troops would be needed to quell rebellion, and riots broke out in Baltimore. Citizens would be arrested and jailed, and writs of habeas corpus issued by Chief Justice Roger Taney would be ignored by the President. In fact, Lincoln would go so far as to suspend the writ entirely, an unparalleled step in a free nation.

The Confederacy formally declared war on the United States on May 6th, and a week later England would extend "belligerent" rights to the South, a baby step short of diplomatic recognition. In return, Seward would threaten the British with war (apparently not yet convinced that he was not directing national policy). War Secretary Simon Cameron would order the army to disregard the Fugitive Slave Act, and escaped slaves would become "contraband" of war. By June, another assault on the Constitution, this time Article IV, would gain traction as 50 counties in western Virginia would secede from secession and, two years later, a new state would be admitted to the union that was part of an existing state (and from an original colony, to boot!).

Bull Run and Wilson's Creek did not improve Lincoln's fortunes, nor did generals such as John Pope and John C. Fremont who proclaimed martial law or (gasp!) emancipated slaves. Both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives would

formally expelled members who supported secession, and four New York newspapers would be "suppressed" by the government, albeit temporarily, while a Massachusetts editor would be tarred-and feathered and a Chester, PA, newspaper office would be ransacked and destroyed. Oh, and the United States would now have its very first income tax.

156 years later, Franklin Breneiser's great-great grandson is left to wonder just what Mr. Lincoln would be doing as he wandered the White House in the middle of the night if he had a Twitter account.

For the Glory,

*Craig*

## Round Table Business

President Craig Breneiser called the May meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. at the Inn at Reading on May 9, 2017. Craig offered a prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance for the 51 members present. We had no guests nor any members hospitalized or suffering from illness. Craig shared a thank-you note from Ron Emge which was a response to a sympathy card sent from the round table following the death of Ron's wife. Wally Heimbach noted that he had spoken to Ron recently and reported that he was doing as well as could be expected under the circumstances. We are looking forward to seeing Ron in the fall.

## Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Tim Antosy reported a balance in the treasury of \$2171.10 as of May 08, 2017. Last month there was \$612.000 available for preservation. Our membership stands at 88. The unencumbered balance as of April's meeting stands at \$1559.10.

## Preservation Corner

It is hard to believe our 20th Anniversary Season has to come to an end and what a season it has been. Our season ended on a very high note at our May meeting. First, thanks to all of you we raised \$129 that night from our book raffle and those who donated money towards Preservation. All of you who supported the book raffle during the season by purchasing tickets or donating items for the raffle your contributions are greatly appreciated. In addition, I would like to thank all of those who donated money towards Preservation. All of this is greatly appreciated.

Second, during the meeting the Membership approved a **\$500** donation to the Civil War Trust as part of a Matching Grant they are running with a **\$76 to \$1** match. The money the Trust is raising is going towards preserving Bristoe Station, Reams Station, and Trevelian Station in Virginia. With the Matching Grant our Total Contribution we are making to the Civil War Trust is **\$38,000**.

Overall, we have had a very successful 20th Campaign Season. During the course of the season we raised **\$1145**. We donated **\$1600** and with all of the Matching Grants our Total Contribution for this season is **\$41,956**. All of this is going towards a great cause and this is an amazing accomplishment.

I would like to thank Gary Hertzog for all of his hard work with running the book raffle. This was his first year and Gary really stepped up to the plate and did an amazing job.

Thanks Gary for everything. Also, I would like to thank Lisa Breneiser for helping me with the Book Raffle at the May meeting. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Until next time! Have a great summer and hope to see you in September for the start of our 21st Campaign Season.

*Mark Quattro*

### **Joe's Jaunts**

Joe Schaeffer reported on the first "jaunt" to the Lost Avenue in Gettysburg in April. He thanked Wally Heimbach and Dean Schultz for leading the group on an extensive walking tour of the area.

There is currently discussion under way for a trip to Harper's Ferry in early November. Stay tuned for more details on the next jaunt.

### **Programs**

Dave Unger reported that most of the speakers are now in place for our 21st campaign. Dennis Frye will be the speaker in September on the topic of whether or not McClellan outthought Lee at Antietam. He said that we are still in need of a speaker for February of 2018. No final decision has been reached as to Ed Bearss speaking in April as has been the custom for many years.

### **AAP**

Barbara Shafer reported that four round table members worked on six sites on the Gettysburg Battlefield on May 4th. She reminded everyone that another crew will be needed in the fall. Details and dates will be announced in September.

### **Meals**

Meal Captain Kathy Little thanked everyone for ordering meals online and by telephone promptly during this campaign. She hopes for continued cooperation during the new campaign.

### **Website**

Webmaster Lisa Breneiser announced that the "Old Campground" tab on the website is currently being updated. Work is continuing in order to arrive at a money total of donations for battlefield preservation over the years. Lisa also informed us that 20 years of past newsletters are now available on-line.

## Newsletter

Linda Zeiber thanked Craig Breneiser for his excellent monthly messages on the first page of every newsletter and encouraged anyone who may have missed some to be sure to read them. She also thanked Mike Straus for sharing his quips, quotes, and humorous or touching excerpts to share with others in the newsletter. All of our members are avid readers and should be alert to any passages that others may enjoy reading in the newsletter and forward them to Linda. Newsletter contact: Linda Zeiber,



[zeibers@comcast.net](mailto:zeibers@comcast.net)

### *Special Newsletter Note!*

**Anyone with any information to be included in the September newsletter should forward it to Lisa Breneiser, 5940 Valley View Court, Slatington, PA, 18080 (email: [Lisa.Breneiser@gmail.com](mailto:Lisa.Breneiser@gmail.com)) no later than Friday, August 11th!**

## Election of Officers

Each May an election is held to determine Round Table officers for the new campaign. All those currently serving had agreed to continue in their offices and no new challenges were made to force a run-off for any of the positions. All members are encouraged to consider being a part of the group which tries to provide the best experiences possible for the membership. No one should ever hesitate to run for an office in the future.

## Membership

Dave Sweigert reported that we ended the current campaign with 88 members. The total has declined recently, and we would like to increase our membership for the 21st campaign. Several different methods of making our presence known were discussed. Comments were made about some things that may or will be done in the future to help solicit new members.

All members are encouraged to invite friends to join us for a meeting and get to know the good things that embody the First Defenders. Please share any ideas that you have with Dave or Craig or anyone of the board members. The names and contact information are available on the website.