

# The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

## September 2017, the 21st Campaign



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

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Every late summer the NASCAR racing circuit enters what has become affectionately known as "silly season." This is a time when rumors abound about the future of drivers, teams, sponsors and the like, and prognosticators go into overdrive attempting to see into the future. They sometimes hit paydirt, but just as often are so far from the truth as to make their predictions laughable (much like weather forecasters, who still get paid no matter how off-the-mark they are).

Well my friends, "Silly Season" has descended upon us all over the past week to such an extent that I have had to start my President's Message anew on a daily (and sometimes more frequent) basis. Individual political biases can color our take on whether the President's public statements in the wake of Charlottesville were sufficiently condemning, and studied consideration can be given to the propriety of removing statues of Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, author of the infamous *Dred Scott* decision, in the dark of night. We can, perhaps, even have a lively discussion whether "Stonewall" Jackson, John Hunt Morgan and the nameless Confederate citizen-soldiers represented by "Old Joe" were patriots or traitors. Every day, we are treated to such a new and increasingly bizarre assault on Civil War iconography that we are dulled by sensory overload.

And then comes the eye-rolling, you-cannot-possibly-be-serious moment that assures us Silly Season is in full swing. ESPN stoically announces the necessity of shuffling a play-by-play announcer from a University of Virginia football game because...wait for it...he shares a name with a Confederate general that some might find offensive. So, Robert Lee will be calling a game in Pittsburgh rather than the Old Dominion.

It seems rather unfathomable the "Marble Man," Robert E. Lee, could ever be viewed with anything other than reverence and respect in Virginia of all places. And, the last time Lee ventured across the Mason-Dixon Line into the Keystone State, his experience was

anything but pleasant and relaxing. Finally, the modern Robert Lee not only has no ties to General Lee or the Confederacy in general, but is, in fact, an Asian American.

We have included some trenchant comments on the current events from some well-known and highly-regarded authors and historians in this issue of the newsletter and soon to be found in *Civil War Times Illustrated*. There are many more such musings appearing in traditional news outlets and Civil War sites almost on a daily basis. These are things which concern us all regardless of our political views because we have an active, healthy interest in the true history of the Civil War period. Take the time to read and consider these views.

By the time you read this, Silly Season will have passed through several more days, stretching our imaginations, patience, reason and sanity. But hopefully the modern Robert Lee will at least return from Pennsylvania with fonder memories than did his namesake 154 years ago.

For the Glory,

*Craig*

### **Round Table Business**

The Board of the First Defenders CWRT met on August 8, 2017, to discuss the upcoming 21<sup>st</sup> Campaign. Items for discussion will be presented at the September meeting. Please see Linda Zeiber, Recording Secretary, if you would like to have the minutes from the meeting.

### **Membership**

It is time to renew your membership for the 21<sup>st</sup> Campaign. Please complete the enclosed membership form and return it with your check to Dave Sweigert. If you plan on paying your membership dues in person at the September or October meeting, please bring a completed **renewal membership form**. The deadline for payment is October 10, 2017. By becoming a member, your membership dues largely support our speakers. We appreciate your prompt payment.

Guest rates will continue to be \$ 35.00 which includes the meal. If your guest would like to become a member, the \$10 fee will be credited towards the annual membership fee of \$ 25.

### **Preservation Corner**

In November of 2016, the family of the late Dennis Yeager presented a family donation of \$300 to be used towards preservation. The CWRT voted unanimously to donate the money to Barlow's Knoll in Gettysburg.

The CWRT received a letter thanking us for the generous donation. The letter indicated that the 35 acre property was successfully purchased without federal matching money. The acreage is located just a few paces from General Barlow's monument. This land has been on the National Park Service's "wish list" for decades.

Mark Quattro

## **EMPTY PEDESTALS: What should be done with the Civil Monuments to the Confederacy and its Leaders?**



By Civil War Times Magazine

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From Charlottesville, Va., to New Orleans, La., the removal of Confederate statues from public spaces and the debates over their removal are making national news. Numerous other Southern communities, large and small, are reconsidering the future of the Southern soldiers in marble and bronze that stand watch over their town squares and courthouses. What will be their fates? So to that end, I asked members of the magazine's advisory board, all highly respected scholars and authors, as well as some other selected authorities, to send us their opinions on Confederate monument removal. Their interesting and thoughtful answers are diverse, and some are likely to be controversial. The removal of Confederate monuments is a complex issue.

Here are a few excerpts from the upcoming article;

### **William (Jack)C. Davis, Professor of History, retired, Virginia Tech University**

In the passionate debate over where—and whether—the Confederacy merits remembrance today, we forget that changing values and demographics have always imperiled past generations' heroes. Nowhere is it written that heroes remain in place for all posterity. Where are the statues of George III today? New times make new heroes. Before 1968 there were no Martin Luther King Boulevards; today there are hundreds.

Removing statues in New Orleans and elsewhere is unfortunate, however understandable. Occasionally circumstances demand change. Nathan Bedford Forrest High School in Jacksonville, Fla., was all-white in 1959. By 2014 it had a substantial black student population. African Americans attending a school honoring a slave dealer (and possible abettor of the "Fort Pillow Massacre") was too surreal to be ignored.

Confederates represent a part of our history. Judge past figures by today's values, and our Capitol's "Statuary Hall" would become "Empty Pedestal Hall." Instead, consider Budapest's Memento Park. Rather than destroy statuary from the Communist era, the city moved it into one park as a "monument" to democracy's triumph.

"Lost Cause" mythology claims that Confederates seceded over self-determination. Ironically, as local populations today reevaluate who to memorialize, that argument is ascendant. Urban demographics will continue to shift, along with popular will, meaning that in the future if the people so desire, Davis and Lee may march back into town.

### **D. Scott Hartwig, Supervisory Historian, retired, Gettysburg National Military Park**

We are all aware that the legacy of our Civil War and Reconstruction is complex, controversial, and for some, painful. I can understand the anger residents of New Orleans

might feel about a monument in the heart of their city commemorating and celebrating an 1866 massacre of black citizens who were simply demonstrating for the right to vote. It was a constant reminder of a white supremacist society and I sympathize with the city's decision to remove it.

Monument removal, however, becomes more problematic when we apply it to any monument or memorial associated with the Confederacy, as if by removing these symbols we can somehow repair the past and heal wounds. But does it? It seems more likely to heal one wound and open another. A better solution to tearing down Confederate monuments is the example of the Arthur Ashe monument on Monument Avenue in Richmond. Ashe's monument reminds visitors and residents that Richmond's history is complicated and more than just the memory of the Confederacy and its leaders. Rather than tear down monuments, build new ones, where appropriate, that tell the story of those who struggled bravely for freedom and equality.

### **Robert K. Krick, Noted Speaker on Civil War topics, Author of Stonewall Jackson at Cedar Mountain**

We live in an age riven by shrill and intemperate voices, from all perspectives and on most topics. No sane person today would embrace, endorse, or tolerate slavery.

A casual observer, readily able to convince himself that he would have behaved similarly in the 1860s, can vault to high moral ground with the greatest of ease. Doing that gratifies the powerful self-righteous strain that runs through all of us, for better or worse. In fact, it leaps far ahead of the Federal politicians (Lincoln among them) who said emphatically that slavery was not the issue, and millions of Northern soldiers who fought, bled, and died in windrows to save the Union—but were noisily offended by mid-war emancipation.

It is impossible to imagine a United States in the current atmosphere that does not include zealots eager to obliterate any culture not precisely their own, destroying monuments in the fashion of Soviets after a purge, and antiquities in the manner of ISIS. The trend is redolent of the misery that inundated the planet during the aptly named Dark Ages, arising from savages who believed, as a matter of religion in that instance, that anyone with opinions different than their own was not just wrong, but craven and evil, and must be brutalized into conformity.

On the other hand, a generous proportion of the country now, and always, eschews extremism, and embraces tolerance of others' cultures and inheritances and beliefs. Such folk will be society's salvation.

### **September Program; Author & Historian: Dennis Frye**

#### **“Did McClellan Out-Think Lee During The 1<sup>st</sup> Invasion?”**

We often laugh when we think of George McClellan. We enjoy making McClellan the Union's whipping boy. McClellan, himself, brings little sympathy to his cause. Full of bravado, often arrogant, and sometimes insubordinate, McClellan is the general we like to dislike. We chuckle when he claimed, following the first invasion of the North, that it was the second time he had saved the North.

Yet when Robert E. Lee was asked after the war who was the best Union general he faced, he responded with George McClellan.

Was McClellan as incompetent and ineffective as history has branded him? Discover some answers as we ask: "Did McClellan out-think Lee during the 1st Invasion?"

*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, C-SPAN, Fox News, A&E, and Voice of America as a guest historian. He helped produce Emmy award-winning television features on the Battle of Antietam, abolitionist John Brown, and Maryland during the Civil War. Dennis 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 also is a well-known author, with 98 articles and nine books. Harpers Ferry Under Fire 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 as 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.*

### **Bob Shuman Update**

A card shower would surely be appreciated for Bob. He is currently at Laurel Nursing Home, 125 Holly Rd. Room 326, Hamburg, PA 19526 and still on a ventilator. They are continuing to try and wean him off of the ventilator, but have not been unsuccessful as of this printing. Please keep Bob and Pauline in your thoughts and prayers.

### **Adopt-A-Position**

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.

The Fall date to work at our sites at Gettysburg National Park is Thursday, October 5.

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 four sites, Gregg's monument located at East Cavalry Field, 18th PA Cavalry located at Big Round Top, 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.

**We will have six sites to work on. To accomplish this we need YOU to volunteer, please let Don Stripling ([610-750-3998](tel:610-750-3998)) or Barbara Shafer ([484-336-8995](tel:484-336-8995)) know of your interest. We may also be able to have a Ranger give a talk about a site or the Park.**

## **Dinner Reservations for Tuesday, September 12, 2017**

If possible please make your meal choices on the website.

Our meal choices for September include:

1. Grilled Chicken Bruschetta;
2. Grilled Pork Chop with Sauteed Apples;
3. Butter Crumb Flounder with Scampi Sauce; or
4. Cheese Ravioli with Marinara Sauce.

Salad, 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 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, Sept. 8, 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 CWRT 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.**



Newsletter Contact: Linda Zieber, [ziebers@comcast.net](mailto:ziebers@comcast.net)

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