

# The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

April 2019



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

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Guilt. Sometimes you know it's coming. You snatch an extra cookie or remember that you procrastinated doing something important (like meeting the Newsletter deadline!). Other times, though, you are overcome with a sudden cold dread that is a telltale sign you are in trouble even if you don't know why.

I recently took an evening class on using a table router. Knowing this would be a workshop setting, I attired myself in jeans and one of my denim Gettysburg shirts with the obligatory crossed U.S. and Confederate battle flags embroidered on it. Common clothing for any of us with a Civil War interest (especially of Gettysburg!)

The instructor was a black man. A student in front of me was another young black man. The class was small, and both men were very polite and outgoing, yet there was that dread coming over me like a summer storm. I was in the presence of two men who, we are told, view the Confederate flag as a sign of oppression oft-times bandied about by white supremacists. I found myself involuntarily twisting and turning trying to block their view of what I was certain had to be a full-sized St. Andrew's cross on a crimson background and on which their attention had to be laser-focused. I envisioned myself being the cause of the next Charlottesville, and talking my way out of the crisis with some stirring recitation on the importance of Civil War history and understanding seemed as remote as finding a life vest on the *Titanic*.

My discomfort (and guilt) would only worsen. Soon, it was my turn at the router table. Both hands and arms were needed to operate the device and properly guide the work piece; they could not be spared to hide the offending emblem. (Failure to pay close attention and avoid distraction was key to losing body parts to a high-speed router bit!)

Mercifully, the class ended (days later, I'm sure!). There was no confrontation. Angry mobs did not appear. Frankly, I don't know whether either man even noticed (or cared about) my shirt. It's been nearly four years since Charleston changed perceptions about the Civil War and its symbols, and many of us are not quite sure why or how to act. That is has, though, is unquestionable. So, my Civil War attire will be relegated to appropriate occasions that are clearly related to events or places

where it can be seen as a tribute to those who fought a fratricidal war that would ultimately make the United States a better nation and promote understanding to eradicate those lingering feelings of guilt continuing to plague us 15 decades later.

*Craig*

## Round Table Business

President Craig Breneiser called the March meeting of the First Defenders Civil War Round Table to order at 6:25 p.m. at the Inn at Reading on March 12, 2019, for 56 members and guests in attendance. Following a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance, Craig welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited everyone to enjoy dinner and then resumed the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

Craig announced the passing of member Si Boone. Condolences were offered to his companion Iris Ringler and his acquaintances. Everyone was encouraged to keep Si in prayers and memory.

There are currently 78 members of the round table. Several years ago, we experienced a high of 102. A survey has been compiled to touch base with the wishes of current members. It is available online on our website ([www.firstdefenderscwrt.us](http://www.firstdefenderscwrt.us)). Please complete this survey and return it at the April meeting.

Chair reports were given as follows:

### Preservation

Mark Quattroco reported that he had received a Keith Rocco print depicting the Battle of Brandy Station from the American Battlefield Trust. He also shared a thank-you letter from the Battle of Franklin Trust for our donation of \$200. He described a leverage currently being offered and suggested a future donation. Mark's latest donation totals for battlefield preservation given by our members comes to \$33,405 which has been leveraged to \$268,448. Mark promises a longer report in the May newsletter.

### Treasurer's Report

Tim Antosy reported a balance in the treasury of \$2993.24 as of March 13, 2019. There is currently \$191.00 available for preservation which includes \$150.00 set aside for a special project. The unencumbered balance as of April's meeting stands at \$2802.24. Our membership stands at 78.

Timothy M. Antosy

### Meal Captain

Kathy Little reminded us that the deadline for ordering meals is always Friday at noon before the next scheduled meeting. If you have any problems ordering, please call Kathy. Her number is available in the section for "Dinner Reservations" each month. You should receive two replies by email after making reservations online. If you do not, be sure to let Kathy know by telephone. Your reservations may not have gone through.

## **Programs**

Dave Unger announced that the November 2019 program will be presented by Wally Heimbach whose program about Phil Kearny was postponed by February weather. Dave reminded everyone that April's program centers around the Louisiana Tigers at Gettysburg and will be given by Scott Mingus, Sr.

### **Joe's Jaunts-Gettysburg**

The next field trip, famously known as "Joe's Jaunts", will take place on Saturday, May 4, 2019. We will visit Harper's Ferry with retired National Park Service Ranger/Historian Dennis Frye. Dennis has spoken multiple times to our round table and is a truly dynamic speaker and guide. You will not forget nor will you be bored on a tour with Dennis. You can be sure that we will visit some sites not normally seen by the public.

Expect a long day with very minimal and light walking. As usual we will carpool, so at the April meeting, Wally Heimbach, in Joe's absence, will begin to inquire who wishes to go and continue organizing drivers.

We plan to meet Dennis near Boonesboro around 10:00 a.m. and tour until 3 or 4 p.m. You should bring drinks, snacks, and lunch for yourself. For those who wish, we will stop on the way home at Inn 94, New Oxford, for dinner.

Joe Schaeffer

### **Book Raffle News**

Gary Hertzog brought 13 books which were raffled during the March meeting. He encouraged anyone wishing to donate books to this worthy cause to bring them to the April and May meetings.

You may also email Gary at [gshertzog@verizon.net](mailto:gshertzog@verizon.net) with any book donations that you wish to make. Thank you once again for your generous support of battlefield preservation.

### **AAP**

The Spring date to work at our sites at Gettysburg National Park is Thursday, June 6.

We will meet at Lowes at 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 six sites, John Buford monument, John Reynolds monument, 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.

We will have eight sites to work on. To accomplish this we need YOU to volunteer, please let Don Stripling (610-750-3998) or Barbara Shafer (484-336-8995) know of your interest.

## **Berks History Center "Stroll Through History"**

The Berks History Center is hosting another *Stroll Through History* on Saturday, April 6, 2019, at 12:30 and 2:30 p.m. Dig up the past with guided tours of Aulenbach's Cemetery and enjoy history presentations by Civil War enthusiast, Mark Pflum.

Participants, please meet 15 minutes prior to tour start time at the upper parking lot of Francesca's Restaurant (formerly Arner's) on Howard Boulevard, Mt. Penn. Cost is \$5 for members of the Berk's History Center and First Defenders, Berks County Civil War Round Table, and \$8 for non-members. Pre-payment required by calling 610.375.4375.

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### **More Than Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain...**

**From Mike Straus**--Mike reminds us that some levity existed during the war and that this could have been a great April Fool's joke. Thanks, Mike, for a little insight into the 20th Maine!

Winter Camp near Rappahannock Station  
December 4, 1863

As I recall the names of those brave fellows, and think of the amusements of that winter, I am almost tempted to assert that it was the happiest time of my life. Many recruits came to us during that time, and of course they were proper subjects for practical jokes. One fellow from the backwoods of Maine reached the regiment late in the afternoon. He soon revealed to a number of boys that his only fear in becoming a soldier was that he would not be able to stand on "a picket post." He felt that it would require a great deal of practice to do this in a skillful manner, and since he had decided to enlist, he had not had a moment's time to practice it. Of course the boys had a great deal of sympathy for him, and kindly promised to assist him, for which he was very thankful. They informed him how difficult a thing it was for them when they first began. They accompanied him to the lower end of the street, where a post some four feet in height and six inches in diameter was set upright in the ground, the upper end being sharpened to a point. With a little assistance the recruit succeeded in reaching its sharpened top, and in the evening twilight, for nearly two long hours he managed to maintain his position, and received the compliments of his comrades. He then went to his tent, proud of the fact that he had mastered so difficult a problem in so brief of a time.

Army Life  
History of the 20th Maine Infantry Regiment  
Page #136

## April Program

Next to the famed "Stonewall Brigade," there is probably no more colorful organization in the Army of Northern Virginia than the 1st Louisiana Brigade, better known as the "Louisiana Tigers." The Tigers are most-often connected with the assault on East Cemetery Hill at Gettysburg on the evening of July 2nd, but Harry Hays' men played an important and somewhat raucous role on their northern journey.

At First Manassas, they were known as "Wheat's Tigers," many of whom had less-than savory reputations in the pre-war era but who were hard, tough and feared by their Northern adversaries. Under Hay's leadership, the Tigers were instrumental in the Battle of Second Winchester in June



1863 that would open the door into Pennsylvania. They would follow Jubal Early's division through Gettysburg in late June as it headed for the Susquehanna River, and would be bivouacked outside of York for two days because officers feared the consequences of allowing their men in a town still occupied by women and liquor. They would return to Gettysburg a few days later and eventually break through portions of the Union East Cemetery Hill line before being forced back by Federal reinforcement and a lack of support from Confederate units.

Possibly because the Tigers were never associated with a dashing, charismatic leader like their Second Corps "Stonewall" comrades, historians tend to give short shrift to these fighting Louisianians and their contributions to the Pennsylvania Campaign.

*Scott Mingus is a scientist and executive in the paper industry and holds patents in self-adhesive postage stamps and bar code labels. The Ohio native graduated from the paper science and engineering program at Miami University, and was part of the research team that developed the first commercially successful self-adhesive U.S. postage stamps. Scott has authored fifteen Civil War books, and his biography of Confederate General William "Extra Billy" Smith won the 2013 Nathan Bedford Forrest Southern History Award as well as the Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr. Literary Prize. Scott maintains a blog on the Civil War history of York County ([www.yorkblog.com/cannonball](http://www.yorkblog.com/cannonball)). His great-great grandfather was a 15-year-old drummer boy in the 51st Ohio Infantry, and other family members fought with the Army of the Potomac at Antietam and Gettysburg.*



## **Do You Have a CW Ancestor?**

If you would like to share information about a Civil War ancestor, please forward this information to Lisa Breneiser for posting on our website. We are all interested in personal connections to the past.

If you have not yet taken a look at Dale Kratzer's submission, check it out on our website.

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## **Speakers and Programs for 2019**

### **23rd Campaign**

**May 14**

**Paul Kahan**

**U.S. Grant and Reconstruction**

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### **Dinner Reservations for the Tuesday, April 9, 2019 Meeting:**

If possible please make your meal choices/reservations on the website. Our meal choices for April include: Grilled Breast of Chicken with asparagus, mushrooms, and four-cheese sauce; Sliced Top Round of Beef Pot Roast with vegetable sauce; Crab Stuffed Shrimp; or Cheese Manicotti 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, April 5, 2019, 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.**