

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

January 2018



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In the film "Lincoln," Tommy Lee Jones turned in a tour de force performance as the sharp-witted and even sharper-tongued Congressman Thaddeus Stevens. At one point, he refers to Ohio representative (and George McClellan's 1864 running mater) George Pendleton as, "...proof that some men *are* inferior, endowed by their creator with dim wits, impermeable to reason, with cold, pallid slime in their veins."

Jones and his scriptwriters were not far off the mark portraying Stevens who once paused a speech on the House floor saying, "I yield to the gentleman for a few feeble remarks." On another occasion he described a pro-slavery congressman by saying, "There are some reptiles so flat that the common foot of man cannot crush them. And, in perhaps one of the most brazen comments ever recorded in the House, Stevens exclaimed, "Mr. Speaker, it will not be expected of me to notice the thing which has crawled into this House and adheres to one of the seats by its own slime."

Fifteen decades removed, we can snicker at Stevens' rapier-like sarcasm. We have, after all, grown accustomed to society's luminaries making profound (and not-so-profound) remarks. Communications advances have only provided an easier way to sound off. The technologies even extend to we commoners who now have an outlet to say whatever we like. As often as not, what we say finds its way to so-called friends or other folks who are only too happy to tell us how dumb we really are because we shared something with which they found fault. Apparently, we have forgotten Abraham Lincoln's admonition that "it is better to remain silent and thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt."

I, for one, have opted to excuse myself from this uncivil discourse, and my Facebook account has gone forever dark. In this time of joy, peace and resolutions for the future, I choose face-to-face conversation where different opinions can be reasonably exchanged and clicking the "unfriend" button is not an option. Perhaps by talking TO each other instead of AT each other we can avoid more static and make a positive difference in our world.

I do have to admit, though, I would have subscribed to Thaddeus Stevens' Twitter account.

For the Glory,

Craig

Round Table Business

President Craig Breneiser called the December meeting of the First Defenders Civil War Round Table to order at 6:20 p.m. at the Inn at Reading on December 12, 2017, for 65 members in attendance. Gary Hertzog, book raffle chair, announced the special silent auction for the first edition *Civil War Leaders and Battles*, published 1884-1888. He reminded all of us that the books are a good investment as well as a must for Civil War libraries. The minimum bid stood at \$151.00. Greg Stull, member and speaker for the evening, offered two prayers--one for recently deceased member Bob Shuman and the other for our forthcoming dinner. Craig then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

After dinner, Craig continued the meeting by telling us that prior to Bob Shuman's death, he was to have presented the evening's program about the burning of Chambersburg. Dave Fox had attended services for Bob and shared thoughts about him. Dave had spoken at the service about Bob's love for the First Defenders and reminded us that the old newsletters on the website were contributed by Bob. An interesting story about Bob was about his attendance at the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg as a boy. Bob will be remembered by all of us and missed.

Updates on other members included Dave Sweigert who had recently undergone surgery. Jim Struble had a second hip replacement in early December. We look forward to the return of these gentlemen while welcoming back Ev Binns.

Craig announced that Cate Kennedy was celebrating a birthday this evening. Richard Kennedy, her husband, provided a delicious birthday cake that was enjoyed by all for dessert. We sang "Happy Birthday" to Cate and thank both of them for the bonus festivity of the evening.

Treasurer's Report

Tim Antosy presented his report at the December meeting. Our balance as of December 14, 2017, stood at \$3827.54 with \$434.00 ear-marked for preservation. The unencumbered balance as of December 14, 2017, is \$3,393.54 with 88 members paid. The book auction brought in \$234.00 all of it for preservation.

Preservation

The December Meeting was a big success as we raised another \$330 for Preservation. Of this, \$155 came from the monthly book raffle and another \$175 came from a special silent auction for the Battlefields and Leaders series of books which, were original first editions. I want to take this opportunity to Congratulate all of the winners and to all of you who support our fund raising efforts or who donated money. Your support is greatly appreciated. Special thanks to Gary Hertzog who, is doing a great job with the book raffle and coming up with additional ways we can raise money.

During the December meeting the membership approved donating \$400 to the Civil War Trust for a \$33.42 to \$1 Matching Grant. The Trust is seeking to purchase 326 acres that include Second Manassas, North Anna River, New Market Heights

Battlefields. New Market Heights is part of the Petersburg Campaign and not to be confused with New Market Battlefield in the Shenandoah Valley. With the Matching Grant, our Total Contribution for our donation is \$13,368. This brings our Total Contribution for this season to \$18,188.

One other news item is the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation announced they are looking to raise money to save 107 acres of the portion of the Port Republic Battlefield called "the Coaling." It was on this portion of the battlefield where General Lewis Taylor's Louisiana troops charged. They are not currently offering any Matching Grants.

Until next time! Have a safe and Happy Holidays! See you in January!

Mark

Meal Captain

Kathy Little reminded everyone that the deadline for ordering meals is always Friday at noon before the next meeting. If you have any problems ordering, please call Kathy. Her number is available in the section for Dinner Reservations each month.

Newsletter

Linda Zeiber reported the deadline for the January newsletter was December 19th. The deadline is always one week following each meeting. She thanked everyone for submitted articles, especially Mike Straus for sharing his reading often, and gave a brief update of the unseemly events that occurred during Remembrance Day in Gettysburg this past November.

Book Raffle

Gary Hertzog reported an abundance of books in his possession and has listed titles on our website where books can be purchased outright for \$5.00 each. All money raised will be put into our preservation fund. Ten books were raffled at the December meeting. Thanks to all buyers of tickets.

Programs

Chairperson Dave Unger reported that plans for next year's speakers are already well underway. Thanks to Dave for leading this effort. We also send our best wishes to Dave who is undergoing knee replacement in early January. We wish him a speedy recovery and quick return to the round table.

From Correspondent Mike Straus--

In the early days, when things looked bleak and each day brought the possibility of conflict, patriotism was high, and small towns got things into gear with young men joining the local militia units for drill and learning maneuvers. Then, when Abe would call for the volunteers, usually the whole unit would go as a company to be absorbed together into a

regiment. In this case Oliver Wendell Holmes Upham, obviously named after his uncle, and his pal Frederick M. Osborne from Salem, Massachusetts, joined the Union Drill Club and eventually would go into Co. F, 23rd Massachusetts.

In 1990 these letters were discovered in a safe in Sugar Hill, New Hampshire, but were originally addressed to his mother back in Salem. Frank B. Marcotte was lucky enough to formulate them and present a pretty good story.

Mrs. C.W. Upham, sister of Oliver Wendell Holmes, wrote the following poem for her son who had joined the Union Drill Club.

*Summer 1861
Salem, Massachusetts*

Patriotic Ode

Rally boys! Come forth to fight,
For the Union, Law and Right;
For the Nation's honor, bright,
Let us draw the sword!

By the wrongs vile traitors wrought,
By the ruin they have brought,
Tyranny of deed and thought,
Forward is the word!

See the Northern pride and flower
Gathering in this fateful hour;
Union is our strength and power,-
Let us join the van!
Lay the traitors in the dust;
Die they shall, and die they must;
They have broken every trust,-
Forward every man!

Massachusetts calls to-day,
Beckoning all her sons away;
She no longer brooks delay-
Not a man must lag!
Gird the sword, and join the throng;
Right must triumph over wrong;
In our cause we shall be strong,-
Raise the starry flag!

*Private Osborne,
Massachusetts 23rd Volunteers
Page #35
Osborne Letters by Frank B. Marcotte*

Speakers and Programs for 2018

February 13
March 13
April 10
May 6

David Ward
Wayne Motts & Jim Hessler
Ed Bearss
Jim Hessler

96th PA Volunteers
Picketts Charge
Shiloh
Sickles at Gettysburg

January Program

Naval Schemes, Plots and Interesting Tidbits

While much of the focus of the Civil War is on the land activities, a number of interesting events took place on the water as well. As the title implies this presentation will cover events such as the “first” (?) Navy Seals (Confederate and Union), Confederate chutzpah on the Mississippi, cavalry afloat, the Shimonoseki Campaign in the search for the Alabama, war on the Great Lakes and influence of the Russian Navy, among others.

Dale Kratzer is a long-time member of the First Defenders Round Table. He is a retired water resources engineer with a lifelong interest in the Civil War, and is currently is an adjunct professor at Alvernia University where he teaches courses on the environment. Dale served in the US Navy Civil Engineer Corps with a Seabee Battalion in Vietnam and Puerto Rico (which may help explain his interest in the Navies aspect of the Civil War!). And, while he never authored any Civil War books, he has lectured in Alvernia's Seniors College on Civil War topics. His previous presentation to the First Defenders was on the Battle of Glorietta Pass in New Mexico.



Dinner Reservations for the Tuesday, January 9, 2018 Meeting:

If possible please make your meal choices/reservations on the website. Our meal choices for January include: Chicken Piccata; Grilled Black Angus Meatloaf with mushroom gravy; Broiled Tilapia with lemon butter sauce almandine; Orange Glazed Stir Fry Vegetable Symphony with white rice. 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 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, January 5, 2018, 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.**

