

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

May 2018



www.firstdefenderscwrts.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

"In school I remember learning the Civil War ended a long time ago. Folks here don't always see it that way. They think it's still half-time." North Carolinian Abe Stice, as told to Tony Horwitz in "Confederates in the Attic."

"Southerners are very strange about that war." Shelby Foote

(Appomattox, VA) A spur-of-the-moment decision took us to Appomattox Courthouse on the 153rd anniversary of Lee's surrender to Grant in 1865. An early spring day gave way to the sixth "onion snow" of the season, so the indoor venue presented by a nearby museum provided some relief from the elements. As one might expect, the exhibits had a largely Southern flavor, but they were balanced and well-presented.

The obligatory visit to the museum's gift shop brought under my gaze a bobble-head figurine of Robert E. Lee. (Let that sink in for a moment... "Marse Robert," the "Old Gray Fox," a blooded member of the First Families of Virginia, the "Marble Man" reduced to a cartoonish parody on par with Snoopy, Winnie the Pooh and modern sports stars!) Well, okay, I'm old and perhaps a bit more traditional in my thinking of how art should depict heroes of days gone by. But, there it was. C'est la vie.



Hardly had I returned to my normal equipoise when I noticed another bobble-head on the other side of the display. This one was of Abraham Lincoln (let THAT one steep in your thinking: the Great Emancipator as a bobble-head!)



I immediately noticed something awry. Bobble-Head Lincoln was turned the wrong way. He faced to the rear, and visitors were greeted by his back. Perhaps someone had picked him up, looked him over and simply returned him to the shelf improperly.

But, no, on the next shelf, and well-above head level, was a more traditional rendering of the 16th president, a bust. It, too, had its head turned to the back of the display. Clearly, this was no coincidence. Nor could it have been child's play: both the bobble-head and the bust were at adult height with the latter well-above the six-foot level.



Curious, I asked the cashier if the display was intended to impart some message. She looked at the display behind me, sighed and said, "Again." Apparently, this was not the first time Old Abe's back had been turned. As routinely as "clean up in Aisle 5" at a grocery store, the museum staff retrieved a step stool and reoriented Lincoln to again face the people.

Study of the Civil War is interesting, even fascinating, to us in the North who see it as an exciting bygone era. There are those in the South, though, who today fervently believe they live in an occupied land. From a human perspective, it is enlightening to learn of views different from our own and the individuality that makes folks unique. However, the differences we face today cannot help but lend some credence to the observation the past 153 years have been, indeed, half-time.

For the Glory,

Craig

Round Table Business

President Craig Breneiser called the April meeting of the First Defenders Civil War Round Table to order at 6:17 p.m. at the Inn at Reading on April 10, 2018, for 53 members and guests in attendance. Following a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance, Craig welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The first item of business found Craig discussing what would happen when a scheduled speaker could not attend his assigned meeting. Because of Ed Bearss' recent fall and hospitalization, Craig experienced just that situation. Fortunately, Member Wally Heimbach offered to fill in for Ed and presented a program on Winfield Scott Hancock. The topic was timely since a Joe's Jaunt is scheduled to visit the grave of Hancock in Norristown on April 28th. Details of this day trip are available later in this newsletter.

Wally had recently spoken to Ed and reported that he was doing well considering the circumstances. We all wish Ed a speedy return to the battlefields! A get-well card from the First Defenders was sent to Ed.

Chair reports then were given as follows:

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Tim Antosy reported a balance in the treasury of \$3,783.64 as of April 11, 2018. For the month of April, we took in a total of \$154.00 for preservation giving us a present total of \$854.00 for preservation. The unencumbered balance as of May's meeting stands at \$2,929.64.

Preservation

Vice President Mark Quattrock reported that there were no matching grants that he was aware of at this time. He urged members to check our donation amounts for battlefield preservation over the lifetime of our round table. It is approaching a quarter of a million dollars.

Mark reminded us that a donation had already been made in Ed Bearss honor to three Tennessee battlefields during the March meeting.

Meal Captain

Kathy Little announced as a reminder 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.

May Book Raffle--from Gary Hertzog

As our final meeting of our current campaign arrives, thank you to all who continue to support our mission and book raffle. We are certainly making a difference in battlefield preservation. As a reminder, at our May meeting, we will be selling some various items such as VHS tapes, posters, newspaper replicas, and jigsaw puzzles. Perhaps you may find something of interest to you and find a good bargain as well. Thank you.

Programs

Dave Unger announced a brief meeting of his committee following the evening's speaker. He passed a flyer around from Wayne Motts, Executive Director of the National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg, regarding the second annual National Civil War Round Table Congress on August 18, 2018. You can find this flyer on our website if you are interested in representing the First Defenders.

Joe's Jaunts-Montgomery Cemetery

The next Joe's Jaunt field trip will be held on Saturday, April 28, 2018. We will be given a tour of Montgomery Cemetery in Norristown, Pennsylvania, through the Montgomery County Historical Society. The tour will begin at 10:00 a.m. and will last about one and a half hours with another half/full hour to stroll at leisure through the grounds.

The total cost of the tour, **which will be divided among those in attendance**, is \$150.00 plus a tip for the guide. Thus, the more who attend, the smaller the fee per person. Attendees must provide their own transportation so carpooling is suggested. If anyone is interested in bringing along guests, they will be welcomed.

Joe is reserving a room in the Eagleville Tavern for lunch around 12:30 p.m. The Montgomery Cemetery is located at 1 Hartranft Street. Take Route 422 to the Ochs exit and follow Egypt Road to the cemetery.

Six Union General officers, including Winfield Scott Hancock and Samuel Zook, are interred in the Montgomery Cemetery along with a large number of other Union veterans. We will also hear about the Exeter Train Wreck and visit the graves of veterans killed in that disaster.

Adopt-A-Position

The Spring date to work at our sites at Gettysburg National Park is Thursday, May 31. Please refer to the March newsletter for the details of this endeavor.

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 if you are able to participate.

The Battle of Williamsport & the Battle of Falling Waters, MD, 155th Anniversary

On Friday evening July 6 at 7 p.m., The Springfield Barn, 12 Springfield Lane, Williamsport, MD, will be the site of a free event commemorating the 155th anniversary of the July 6, 1863 Battle of Williamsport and the July 14, 1863 Battle of Falling Waters, MD.

Speakers include Ted Alexander, George Franks III, and Steve French. There will also be music, relics from the battles, book sales, period re-enactors, and more.

Doors open at 6. For more information, contact Steve French at sfrench52@yahoo.com.

May Program

Sickles at Gettysburg

No one who fought at Gettysburg was more controversial than Daniel Edgar Sickles. A disgraced former congressman who had shot and killed his young wife's lover (and who beat the charge with the first insanity defense in American history), Sickles was the only military non-professional corps commander in either army at Gettysburg.



Reviled by many, Sickles would always claim he had won the battle by deploying (and essentially destroying) his III Corps from Devil's Den, through the Wheatfield to the Peach Orchard and along the Emmitsburg Road. Assailed from two directions by Longstreet's Confederate juggernaut, historians still debate whether Sickles was foolish or extraordinarily lucky. Sickles would lose a leg during the action on July 2nd, and he would never return to a field command. He would, however, eventually return to Congress late in the 19th Century and manage to have himself awarded a Medal of Honor!

James Hessler is a Licensed Battlefield Guide who has written what has been described as the first balanced biography of Daniel Edgar Sickles. His program will

discuss this rogue-ish character who left an indelible mark on the Battle of Gettysburg and who lived a long and controversial life. Love Sickles or despise him, he was unquestionably one-of-a-kind!

Speakers and Programs for 2018

23rd Campaign

September 11	Chris Mackowski	TBA
October 9	Ryan Quint	Battle of Monocacy
November 13	Kevin Pawlek	Battle of Shepardstown
December 11	Craig Breneiser	Battle of Franklin

Dinner Reservations for the Tuesday, May 8, 2018

Meeting:

If possible please make your meal choices/reservations on the website. Our meal choices for May include: Chicken Dijonaise; Stuffed Boneless Pork Chop with pan gravy; Twin House Made Salmon Cakes with tiny pea and dill cream sauce; or Eggplant Parmigiana with fettuccini and 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, May 4, 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.**

Elections 2018

OUR MAY MEETING INCLUDES THE ALL-IMPORTANT ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR OUR UPCOMING 22ND CAMPAIGN!

THE PROGRAM SCHEDULE IS ALREADY UNDER DEVELOPMENT, BUT WE NEED A

PRESIDENT

VICE PRESIDENT

SECRETARY

TREASURER

TO LEAD THE FIRST DEFENDERS ON THEIR NEXT CAMPAIGN.

ANY MEMBER CAN BE NOMINATED TO SERVE IN ANY POSITION; THE ONLY PRE-REQUISITE IS BEING A MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING

NOMINATIONS WILL BE MADE FROM THE FLOOR DURING THE BUSINESS MEETING.

IF INTERESTED, PLEASE LET PRESIDENT BRENEISER KNOW SO HE CAN ASSURE YOUR NAME IS PLACED BEFORE THE MEMBERSHIP FOR CONSIDERATION!