

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

December 2019



www.firstdefenderscwrt.us

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dixie Betrayed: How the South Really Lost the Civil War by David Eichner presents an interesting perspective on the reason why the Confederacy failed to achieve its independence. Hardly unique within the Lost Cause post-mortem bibliography, Eichner's thesis focuses largely on the diverse and oxymoronic political environment and characters that tried to give birth to a national government in a state rights mentality. In the end, if one accepts Eichner's view, the Confederacy succumbed less to Yankee bullets than to an internal raging cancer.

Though Southerners of the time may be loathe to agree, Abraham Lincoln accurately predicted the fate of representative government more than 25 years before in an address to the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois when he spoke of the threats to a constitutional republic. Lincoln would prophetically claim...

"Shall we expect some transatlantic military giant to step the ocean and crush us at a blow? Never! All the armies of Europe, Asia, and Africa combined, with all the treasure of the earth (our own excepted) in their military chest, with a Bonaparte for a commander, could not by force take a drink from the Ohio or make a track on the Blue Ridge in a trial of a thousand years. At what point then is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer. If it ever reach us it must spring up amongst us; it cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen we must live through all time or die by suicide."

Not yet 30 years of age, this speech would establish Lincoln's oratorical credit. But, it also would speak to what nearly happened to the government he would rise to lead and what almost certainly contributed to the demise of the Southern nation at the same time.

Given the sectionalism we face in our own day, it does not require the literary imagination of a Hawthorne or Dickens, or revolutionary zeal of a Marx or Mao, to see that Lincoln's warning from nearly 200 years ago still rings true. "If destruction be our lot we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen we must live through all time or die by suicide."

Craig

Round Table Business

President Craig Breneiser called the November 12, 2019, meeting to order at 6:24 p.m. at the Inn at Reading with 51 members present. Following the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer, Craig shared news about former member Ed Ewing. For many years, Ed shared his large collection of Civil War artifacts with us. Ed is suffering from Parkinson's Disease and currently resides at the Lutheran Home at Topton.

Craig then reported the recent death of Dr. James/Bud Robertson, 89. Craig recommended checking his podcasts about various Civil War topics. He was a notable historian who will be missed.

There have been several issues with the Inn at Reading. Beginning this year, we have been charged with various fees for a microphone, room rental, etc. The quality of the food seems acceptable as well as the service. If there is discontent with our "host", be sure to share your thoughts with Craig.

Preservation

Thanks to all of you who bought tickets for the Book Raffle, our Troiani Print Raffle, and who made donations. Your continued support of our preservation efforts is greatly appreciated. We were able to raise a total of \$176 for preservation which, included \$136 for the book raffle and \$40 for the print raffle. Just a reminder to all of you there is still time to purchase tickets for our print raffle at the December meeting. Best of luck to everyone who purchased tickets!!

The American Battlefield Trust has come out with by far the largest matching grant in its history as an organization. The matching grant is **\$539 to \$1** and the Trust is looking to purchase 118 acres at the Bristoe Station Battlefield in VA. The membership unanimously approved the round table making a **\$200** donation toward this matching grant. The total contribution from us with the matching grant is **\$107,800**. This is our biggest contribution yet in the history of the Round Table.

As of now we have raised this season \$825. Of this we have donated \$672 and our total contribution for this season with all of the matching grants is \$116,282.

Looking at all of the seasons with the Round Table, the total amount that we have donated is \$34,797 and the total contributions we have made with all of the matching grants is \$394,093. The battlefields that we have donated money for is vast, stretching across the United States to as far as Colorado.

Many of you asked the question how the American Battlefield Trust is able to do so many matching grants and especially of the size of \$539-\$1 matching. With the \$539-\$1 matching grant the Trust is expecting to receive \$1 million dollars from the Federal Government that they approved for preservation. The Trust has also received money from states, i.e. Virginia. Similarly, the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Association has received matching grants offered for Cedar Creek and currently with New Market Battlefield has come from both state money and private donors. You can truly see how important these matching grants are when organizations like us raise a small amount of money towards these matching grants that give us the "biggest bang for the buck." This is how we as an organization can make a difference and to help preserve our Civil War history and battlefields.

Until next time! Have a Happy Thanksgiving and see you in December!

Mark Quattrock
Vice President

Treasurer Report

Treasurer Tim Antosy reported a balance in the treasury of \$3574.03 as of November 13, 2019. There is currently \$301.00 available for preservation which includes \$150.00 set aside for a special project. The unencumbered balance as of April's meeting stands at \$3273.03. Our membership stands at 61.

Membership

Membership chair Lori Border announced that we currently have 61 members. The number is headed in the right direction, but we are well below former numbers. Share the news of the Round Table with friends and family members. Membership is available throughout the campaign. Please note that it is necessary to fill out the membership form and return it with your membership dues. The form is available on the website or from Lori.

Preservation/Book Raffle

Book Shelf News

The months have flown by and the end of the year is fast approaching. In December, our "Garryowen" raffle will come to an end. Thanks to everyone for the support you have shown for our preservation efforts through the special raffle. Your generous contributions to the "Garryowen" Raffle along with your continued support of our monthly book raffle, have made it possible to continue to help preserve Civil War battlefields and our history. THANK YOU!!! Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas & Happy New Year to All!!

Gary Hertzog

Meal Captain

Kathy Little reminded everyone that our next meeting occurs on December 10, 2019. All reservations are due by December 3, 2019. A few members have expressed concern about having our meetings at the Inn at Reading. If you have any thoughts or concerns, please share them with Craig or Kathy. Keep in mind that the price of dinner is now \$32.00.

Programs

Dave Unger announced the speaker for the December meeting Paula Gidjunis who will speak about the 128th Pennsylvania Volunteers, whose commander was the Mayor of Reading. Dave Fox will give January's program about Colonel Charles Albright and the 32nd Pennsylvania Volunteers. February will bring Linda Minarik who will be portraying Mary Todd Lincoln.

Website

Webmaster Lisa Breneiser reported that there is a new link on our website's Links Page which connects you to the Hagerstown Civil War Round Table. Additionally, you can now connect with the Society for Women and the Civil War. It is dedicated to recognizing the efforts of women who lived through or participated in the Civil War. It is helpful for researchers, reenactors or simply to honor these women of the past. The Society sponsors an annual conference and a quarterly e-journal.

If anyone has websites that you would like added to our links page, please contact Lisa Breneiser. Lisa is also working on an Adopt-A-Position webpage. Stay tuned!

Joe's Jaunts

Joe Schaeffer reported that 16 members attended the October "jaunt" to Gettysburg guided by LBG Jim Hessler learning about Longstreet's March/Countermarch. All who attended agree that it was a great trip. We were able to visit several private properties which are not available to the public.

Joe is looking for another trip in May, but no details are available at this time.

By the Christmas Hearth

--published by Harper's Weekly in 1865 Christmas edition

To-day at the home beside the hearth,
 Warm with the ruddy embers' glow,
We keep our Christmas, so unlike
 The Christmas of a year ago,
When in the camp at earliest dawn
 The grimy-throated cannon woke
Our slumbers, and with in the East
 The golden light of morning broke.

Ah! Then the smoke of battle hung
 Its sulphurous cloud our land above,
And bitter feud and hatred filled
 Brave hearts that should have warmed with Love;
But now at home beside the hearth
 We keep the day with song and cheer,
While from each spire the Christmas bells
 Ring out with voices sweet and clear.

Bring holly, rich with berries red,
 And bring the sacred mistletoe;
Fill high each glass, and let hearts
 With kindest feelings flow;
So sweet it seems at home once more
 To sit with those we hold most dear,
And keep absence once again
 To keep the Merry Christmas here.

May we never forget the hundreds of thousands who never had the first Christmas of peace in 1865.

December's Program

"The 128th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry" *presented by Paula Gidjunis*

Men of the 128th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry men hailed from the counties of Bucks, Berks and Lehigh. They were "nine-month men," enlisting in August 1862 in response to the fear of invasion of the North by the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia. The 128th would earn its baptism by fire at the Battle of Antietam in Maryland after barely one month of service. With scant opportunity for military training, they would pay the price with heavy casualties. By their time to muster out and return home was nearing, these veteran soldiers would find themselves in the thick of the Battle of Chancellorsville in May 1863, and they possibly were the catalyst resulting in the friendly fire shooting of Confederate General Thomas Jonathan "Stonewall" Jackson.



Paula Gidjunis is a retired middle school Social Studies and adjunct college history teacher, and currently works as a bookkeeper for JPG Photography in Philadelphia. She serves on the board of the Delaware Valley CWRT and chairs its Preservation Committee. Paula also serves on the board of the Historical Society of Montgomery County. She has a Bachelor's degree in History/Education, a certificate in Historical Preservation, a M.B.A. and a M. A. in History from LaSalle University. Paula lives in Glenside, PA, and when not doing something historical is babysitting her toddler grandson.

23rd Campaign Programs

<u>DATE</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
12-10-2019	Paula Gidjunis	"The 128th PA Volunteer Infantry"
1-14-2020	Dave Fox	"Col. Charles Albright & the 132nd PVI"
2-11-2020	Linda Minarik	"An Evening with Mary Todd Lincoln"
3-10-2020	Dave Unger	"From Soldiers to Governors"
4-14-2020	Phillip Greenwalt	"From Kirby's Kingdom: Ramifications from the Trans-Mississippi in 1864"
5-12-2020	Tom Huntingdon	"In Search of George Gordon Meade"

Dinner Reservations for the Tuesday, December 10, 2019
Meeting:

If possible, please make your meal choices/reservations on the website. Our meal choices for December include: Cornbread Stuffed Chicken with Supreme Sauce; Boneless Ham Steak with Grilled Apples; Key West Salmon; or Basil Pesto Cheese Tortellini with Spinach. Soup, starch, vegetables, dessert, rolls, coffee, tea, and water are included. The price is \$32.00 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, TUESDAY Dec. 3, 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 TUESDAY 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.
