

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

December 2020



www.firstdefenderscwrt.us

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With more than a month to go until we can finally put 2020 in the rearview mirror, there is little doubt this year has reserved for itself a place in history as one of the more momentous laps around the Sun. We find ourselves in a world dramatically changed since a year ago, and there is much uncertainty in the days ahead. Promises and trepidations of new leadership and a new political direction are in store even as we continue to cope with a pandemic that shows no signs of abating anytime soon.

Our forbears in 1865 may have had many of the same worries and fears that we have today. Assassination and the close of a fratricidal war brought untested leadership and a new reality to the reunited and still-growing nation. An entire race of people were now free from bondage, and neither white nor black were quite sure just how that would possibly work as they peered into a murky, uncertain future.

The road our ancestors travelled has not always been easy. If we listen to some modern-day commentators, those pioneers did almost everything wrong in bringing our country to where it is today, and sound almost like teenagers willing to tell anyone who will listen just how dumb their parents are and how **THEY** will never be so stupid when they become adults! Somehow, though, we have managed to survive.

The American journey has not been easy, and hindsight allows us to see in 20-20 vision the mistakes that have been made. Our continuing adventure promises to be challenging, too, as we seek to build "a more perfect union," and it is pretty certain future generations will look back critically and wonder what we were thinking and how we could have been so foolish.

None of us know how long our time on earth will be, but we do know we have been blessed to exist within the grandeur of the American epic. We must continue to move boldly forward and embrace an uncertain future. We remember that, "We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

Craig

Round Table Business

The First Defenders CWRT met on November 10, 2020, at Giannotti's. Twenty-seven members were present with six others joining the meeting virtually when speaker Jay Jorgensen began his program discussing "Presidents at Gettysburg."

The meeting was begun at 6:30 p.m. with a prayer offered by Ev Binns followed by President Craig Breneiser leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

Membership

It's time to renew your membership for the campaign of 2020-2021 if you have not done so. Please fill out the membership form found on the website, and return it with your check as soon as possible. The deadline for payment has passed, but all who have not renewed membership are encouraged to rejoin with no penalty. Funding programs is not possible without membership dues. If you plan to pay your dues in person at the December meeting, please be sure to fill out **the renewal form** and **bring it along** with your payment. There are currently 51 paid members.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Tim Antosy reported as of November 10, 2020, the balance in the treasury stood at \$4003.82 with \$124.00 ear-marked for preservation. The unencumbered balance as of November 10, 2020, is \$4179.82.

Book Raffle News

Gary Hertzog hosted the usual monthly book raffle. In addition to an interesting selection of titles, our speaker Jan Jorgensen contributed a 4-volume set of comprehensive Civil War books to entice ticket purchasers. Each book raffled each month helps preserve another parcel of sacred ground. Thanks to all who buy tickets and special thanks to those who simply donate money to the cause because they cannot fit one more book into their libraries!

Joe's Jaunts

Joe Schaeffer reported that there are no definite jaunt plans at this time. He has spoken to Charlie Fennel about doing a tour of East Cemetery Hill, but no date will be chosen until there is some improvement of the COVID-19 virus pandemic.

Preservation

Vice President Mark Quattroch announced the most recent leverages available for battlefield land purchases. Lookout Mountain and Franklin currently have a \$53:\$1 leverage through the American Battlefield Trust. A motion was made and seconded to make a \$200 donation to take advantage of this initiative. Mark will write a detailed report for the January newsletter.

December Program:

The Army of the Potomac - Chapter 1 featuring Denton Schucker

The Army of the Potomac has gone down in Civil War history as the premier Union field force. Despite the ongoing difficulty in finding the right leader, it has generally been acknowledged the army's soldiers always fought well. Its massive power would finally be harnessed and unleashed when Ulysses S. Grant came east in 1864, and the tide of the conflict was changed.

Before Grant, though, the Army had to be created. The entire federal army in the spring of 1861 consisted of only about 16,000 officers and men, and most of those were posted in the vast expanses of the western United States. When shots rang out in the morning darkness in Charleston Harbor on April 12, 1861, no "Army of the Potomac" then existed.



How did this force come into being? How was it organized? Who would lead it? What was the Militia Act of 1795? And, perhaps most importantly, what role did Abraham Lincoln play in creating the force that came to symbolize, more than any other, the military might of the United States. This program will trace the Army of the Potomac's bumpy history from its birth in the spring of 1861 until it landed at Fortress Monroe a year later to start the Peninsular Campaign.

Denton Schucker is a veteran member of the First Defenders, and this will be his second Round Table program. A lifetime Fleetwood resident where he served as the Borough mayor and emergency management coordinator, Denton and his wife, Gigi, have been married for 50 years (!) and are the parents of three children. A U.S. Army veteran with 30 years on active and reserve duty, Denton had a front row seat with the 1st Cavalry Division during the Vietnam Tet Offensive. Now retired from the Evansville cement plant, Denton spends his spare time mowing grass and shoveling snow.

24th Campaign Upcoming Programs

Date	Speaker	Program
12 JAN 2021	Joe Schaeffer	<i>"Help Yourself and God Will Help You": the Birth, Life & Death of the CSS Alabama</i>
9 FEB 2021	Hallie Vaughn	<i>Dr. Mary Edwards Walker - A Living History Portrayal</i>
9 MAR 2021	Phillip Greenwalt	<i>From Kirby's Kingdom: Ramifications from the Trans-Mississippi in 1864</i>
13 APR 2021	Robert Dunkerly	<i>The Confederate Surrender at Greensboro</i>
11 MAY 2021	Tom Huntington	<i>In Search of George Gordon Meade</i>

**Dinner Reservations for the Tuesday,
December 8, 2020 Meeting**

Please make your meal choices/reservations on the website. Our meal choices for December include: Pork Chops; Shrimp Scampi; or Cheese Ravioli. The price is \$27.00 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 December 4, 2020, 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 Giannotti's, 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. *THE MEAL COST AT GIANNOTTI'S IS \$27.00!* THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.**
