

# The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

December 2021



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

It is often believed the holiday season was spent comparatively peacefully during the Civil War, and the soldiers would reflect inwardly while engaging in unofficial truces with their adversaries across the lines. While it is true there were no major battles at Christmastide, the War was never far from one's mind.

Abraham Lincoln would spend his first holiday in the White House with his family before sitting down with his advisors in an effort to stave off war with Great Britain following the *Trent Affair* six weeks earlier. A year later, he would be anxiously following the decidedly mixed fortunes of the Army of the Cumberland advancing from Nashville to Murfreesboro and a portion of the Army of the Tennessee approaching the well-defended Chickasaw Bluffs near Vicksburg. By his third Christmas in the Executive Mansion, the President would be planning a goodwill visit to Confederates imprisoned at Point Lookout, Maryland. Still, the war ground on.

In what would become his final White House Christmas, Abraham Lincoln would receive that evening the now famous telegram from Major General Sherman: "I beg to present you, as a Christmas gift, the City of Savannah, with 150 heavy guns and plenty of ammunition, and also about 25,000 bales of cotton."

Overjoyed, the President would reply the next day. "Many, many thanks for your Christmas gift, the capture of Savannah." Lincoln would go on to gratefully acknowledge Sherman and the officers and men of his army, and, combined with George Thomas's recent victory at Nashville, he would biblically write, "...it brings those who sat in darkness to see a great light."

Lincoln's next words, though, were sobering. "But what next?" Despite the joy of the holiday season and clear signs the Union was on the move, the President knew the War still needed to be won and clearly saw that peace would be a challenge, too.

As we near the end of a whirlwind 2021...a new administration, the continuing pandemic, an uncertain economy, unrest..., and while wishing everyone a joyous holiday season and blessings for the New Year, we, too, can contemplate Lincoln's inquiry 157 years later: "But, what next?"

*Craig*

## **Round Table Business**

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table met on November 9, 2021, at Giannotti's Country Manor. Twenty-seven members were present when President Craig Breneiser called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. Craig acknowledged two guests, Faith Binns and Michael LeWitt, in attendance. Three members joined the meeting virtually.

A prayer from the Civil War was offered by "Chaplain" Ev Binns followed by President Breneiser leading the Pledge of Allegiance. Dinner was then served. After dinner, Craig conducted a business meeting that included the following reports:

### **Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Tim Antosy presented his report at the November meeting. Our balance as of November 9, 2021, stood at \$3,904.71 with \$259.00 ear-marked for preservation. The unencumbered balance \$3,655.71. As of this report, there is a total of 52 paid members.

Apparently last month, someone paid dues but did not fill out an application form. Please contact Tim Antosy if you are that person. If not, you will not be credited for being a member.

### **Preservation**

We had another great meeting in terms of raising money for preservation. At our November meeting we raised a total of **\$137** of which, \$92 was from our Book Raffle and \$45 was from our special Print Raffle. Thanks to all of you who bought book and print raffle tickets or made a donation. It is greatly appreciated! Just a quick reminder, the December meeting is when we will be holding our print raffle. You still have time to purchase tickets that night up until we hold the raffle. First Prize is a print of Stonewall Jackson's monument at the Manassas Battlefield, and this was given to us by the American Battlefield Trust in appreciation of our support. Gary Hertzog has also been bringing to our meetings a small number of books to sell to raise additional funds and to reduce our book inventory. Also, check out the list of books Gary has on our web site and if there is a book you want, please reach out to Gary.

The American Battlefield Trust has just come out with a new project and matching grant. This involves Gettysburg and saving five acres; four of those acres are right off the Baltimore Pike across from the Comfort Inn Suites Hotel (where the old Military Museum used to be), and the remaining acre is on South Cavalry Field. The Matching Grant is **\$5.83-\$1**.

The National Museum of Civil War Medicine is also looking to raise **\$20,000** to restore the reproduction Rucker Ambulance currently on display in the barn at the Pry House Field Hospital Museum. The Rucker Ambulance, along with the Wheeling or Rosecrans Ambulance, were the two main types of ambulances used by the Union Army. The Museum is contracting with a company which specializes in this type of work. There is no Matching Grant with this project.

## Book Raffle News

Our book raffle selections for December follow:

1. *Underground Railroad in Pennsylvania* by William J. Switala
2. *Lincoln's Little War (How His Carefully Crafted Plans Went Astray)* by Webb Garrison
3. *Mosby's Rangers (The True Adventures of the Most Famous Command of the Civil War)* by Jeffrey D. Wert
4. *The Civil War and Reconstruction* by J. G. Randall & David H. Donald
5. *The Civil War Narrative (Fredericksburg to Meridian)* by Shelby Foote
6. *Gettysburg July 1* by David G. Martin
7. *Campaigning with Grant* by Horace Porter
8. *Brothers in Arms (The Lives and Experiences of the Men Who Fought the Civil War—in Their Own Words)* by William C. Davis

There will be several other titles available to purchase. Our Special Raffle will conclude in December and, hopefully, we will begin another raffle in 2022 as we celebrate our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. We had a very good collection of funds in November as we took in \$137.00 between the two raffles. **Thanks to everyone** for your donations and support!!!

## Joe's Jaunts

Joe Schaeffer gave a synopsis of the Saturday, November 6<sup>th</sup> jaunt to Gettysburg. We traveled to East Cemetery Hill where Charlie Fennell gave a comprehensive tour of the actions that occurred on that part of the battlefield. Being a great guide and erstwhile comedian, Charlie commanded our complete attention. The cost for the tour, divided among the participants, was \$10.00. It was a real bargain and always a joy to share such an experience with other members.

The next Jaunt is scheduled for some time in April once again with Charlie Fennell. The topic and location will be General Greene at Culp's Hill. Stay tuned for more details closer to the spring.

As always, we offer our thanks to Joe for putting the tours together. It's always a great experience.

## Member Information

Lori Border, who joined the meeting virtually, reported that her membership number confirms Tim Antosy's report at 52. Although membership dues should have been paid by the October meeting, it is never too late for former members as well as new members to join the Round Table. Membership dues are used exclusively for our speakers and the website.

## Website

Lisa Breneiser reported the website has been updated with the new preservation totals through the 24<sup>th</sup> Campaign and the Booklist has been updated.

The member area includes the links to our previous presenters and their presentations. Our website address is: <http://firstdefenderscwr.us> Please reach out to Lisa at [Lisa.breneiser@gmail.com](mailto:Lisa.breneiser@gmail.com) if you need access to the member area.

Please verify that First Defenders is a trusted email address, in your address book. There have been reports of members not receiving their meal confirmations. Gmail, especially has been cracking down on email blasts. Please check your spam folder for our emails.

## Newsletter

Please keep in mind that items to be included in the newsletter are due one week from the meeting date. All items of interest and information are welcomed. Send your articles to Linda Zeiber, [zeibers@comcast.net](mailto:zeibers@comcast.net) or call 610-678-1168 for further information.

## December Program

### Meade's Pipe Creek Line

*featuring Chris Army*

In late June 1863 George Meade unexpectedly and suddenly found himself in command of the Army of the Potomac. A battle with the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, already on the loose in south-central Pennsylvania, appeared imminent, and there was little time to waste and less time to organize. As he grasped the reins of command, Meade's engineer training was put to the test, and from that he developed a defensive position along Pipe Creek in Carroll County, Maryland. A source of contention both during the imminent Battle of Gettysburg and for years after, veterans and historians have long referred to the "Pipe Creek Line" in an effort to either show Meade as a thoroughly-competent soldier planning for all contingencies or as evidence of cowardice and an unwillingness to cross swords with Robert E. Lee. This presentation will discuss this plan that never came to fruition and which is seldom discussed and (almost) never visited.



*Chris Army is a Licensed Battlefield Guide at Gettysburg National Military Park, and has led tours around the Battlefield for groups of all demographics from private car tours to West Point Cadets. Chris is the author of an article for Blue & Gray Magazine about the North Carolinian Brigade of Alfred M. Scales and is currently working on several Gettysburg related projects. Chris co-authored three resource guides on Civil War actions in Culpeper, Virginia, and has served as a co-moderator of Military History Online. A Past Board President of the Adams County Historical Society, Chris is a product instructor for Johnson Controls. He lives with his wife, Connie, in Dover, Pennsylvania.*



Coming Silver Anniversary Campaign Programs		
Date	Speaker	Program
11 JAN 2022	Rick Schaus	<i>Lee is Trapped - Williamsport</i>
8 FEB 2022	Dave Fox	<i>Henry Washington Sawyer - Cape May's Civil War Hero</i>
8 MAR 2022	Charlie Fennell	<i>Greene's Brigade - Saviors of Culp's Hill</i>
12 APR 2022	John Schildt	<i>The Hospitals of Antietam</i>
10 MAY 2022	**To Be Announced**	

### **From Tim Antosy...**

On October 23 of this year, I was at Fredericksburg, VA, for the first time. I was impressed with Chris Mackowski's tour. At one point we stopped at the Slaughter Pen Farm which, without that part of the Battle, Fredericksburg would not make much sense. That's how important that piece of property is to the understanding of that battle. To show you just how important that property is, the Virginia Central Preservation Group there paid \$12 million for that property. We should all be proud and enthusiastic when we contribute to preservation. It is so important.

The Slaughter Pen Farm was on the left flank of the Union Army and was the place General Meade and his Pennsylvania Volunteers attacked Stonewall Jackson's front, and, for a short time, did hold a part of that flank. If General Franklin had done the right thing and had brought his troops forward, there never would have been the Battle of Fredericksburg and the terrible Union casualties; but, of course, it didn't happen, and Burnside had no other choice except to attack Marye's Heights the way the Union Army did.

To me, one of the most iconic symbols of the Civil War is the wall at Marye's Heights. Of the original 900 yards that the Union Army fought and died on, there is maybe 150 yards left. That is what can happen if we don't keep buying up properties for preservation. I just wanted you all to know how that affected me, and I hope you all continue to contribute to preservation when you can. Thanks.

### **Dinner Reservations for the Tuesday, December 14, 2021 Meeting & Program:**

If possible, please make your meal choices/reservations on the website. Our meal choices for December are:

- Broiled Crab Imperial
- Chicken Piccata
- Manicotti

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 Dec. 10, 2021, which is also the deadline for online reservations. The price is \$30.00 inclusive for meals.

**\*IMPORTANT NOTE\*** Once you have made your reservation, there are no cancellations for any reason after noon on the FRIDAY preceding the meeting. This is the policy of the 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 Round Table 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.**

Our 25<sup>th</sup> Campaign Anniversary celebration will be held at our April 12, 2022 meeting. We hope to see you there!