

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

December 2023



www.firstdefenderscwrt.us

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Five words. Only five words can hold a potent meaning. Consider some of the memorable invocations from the past...

"I come to bury Caesar..."

"All men are created equal..."

"Fourscore and seven years ago..."

"Yesterday, December Seventh, Nineteen Forty-One..."

"I have a dream today..."

Throughout history, words have been fused together to portend something dramatic, often life-changing. A mere five words of the English language placed in a particular order can stimulate deep thought, change the trajectory of a nation or alter the course of an individual. Sometimes, they are personal...

"You have a malignant tumor..."

Those five words we experienced quite unexpectedly last May.

Having just recalled Lincoln's "few appropriate remarks" at Gettysburg, I realize that I have unconsciously begun to rededicate myself to the notion of leaving the world (eventually!), or my place in it, better than when I arrived. I have no illusions that what I have said or done (or will yet say or do) will go down in world history, nor do I need to worry myself that some future generation will "cancel" me by melting down a statue (!) that will never be created in the first place. But, I plan to do my part to do good works.

As we enter this season of thanksgiving and renewal, let us seek out the "better angels of our nature" as we continue on life's journey. Peace, love, blessings and happiness (five words!) to you all this holiday season!

Craig & Lisa

Round Table Business

The November meeting of the First Defenders Civil War Round Table was called to order on November 14, 2023, at 6:23 p.m. by President Craig Breneiser. Ev Binns offered a prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Forty-seven members and guests attended. Vice President Joe Schaeffer was welcomed back following knee replacement surgery. Several members introduced their guests some of whom joined the Round Table. Our number keeps growing at this point. Bringing a guest is the best way for a potential member to see our fine organization in action.

President Breneiser gave a brief description of a "Craig's Cruise" taken by three members to the Bucks County Civil War Museum and Library in Doylestown earlier in November. He discussed a huge lithograph of the stockade at Andersonville as well as a good library. Those who visited came away with a positive impression of the facility which is open Saturdays from 10:00 a.m.-2 p.m.

Joe Schaeffer reported that all programs for the 2024-2025 campaign have been booked. He also thanked everyone for their inquiries and get well wishes throughout his ordeal.

Membership

The time to renew your membership for the 27th campaign of 2023-2024 has passed. However, if you have not already done so, it is never too late. Just fill out the membership form found on the website and return it with your check as soon as possible. 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 even if you have been a member for many years.

Current membership stands at 56.

December Book Raffle News

Gary Hertzog reported we started a new, special raffle. The raffle consists of four prizes, two grand prizes and two feature prizes. The grand prizes are a Gettysburg Cyclorama Shadowbox and Gettysburg Battlefield map. The feature prizes are a Pen & Key Chain set crafted by one of our members and a 4-volume 1934-35 set, "R. E. Lee," a biography by Douglass S. Freeman.

Feature prize tickets will be drawn first and, if your ticket is the first ticket selected, you will have your choice of the feature prizes. Following the drawing of the two feature prizes, tickets will be drawn for the two grand prizes. If your ticket is the first drawn in that category, you will have your choice of the grand prizes. The raffle will be running until our April 9, 2024, meeting. Ticket prices are the same as our monthly raffle.

Thanks to Kerry Williard, Michael H. LeWitt, Sue Boardman, and Linda & Gerry Zeiber for the prize donations.

In our November raffles, we took in \$142.00 for our preservation efforts. THANK YOU to everyone who continues to support our preservation efforts.

Preservation

What a great November meeting with Harold Holtzer as our guest speaker. During the meeting we were able to raise **\$142** from both our Book Raffle and our Special Raffle. As always, thank you to all who bought tickets for the book raffle, the special raffle or donated. It is greatly appreciated!

Mark Quattroco reported from the meeting the membership approved a donation of **\$200** to the American Battlefield Trust. The Trust is running a Matching Grant of **\$30-\$1** Matching Grant for: Mine Run, Reams Station, Boydton Plank Road, Dinwiddie Court House, and a portion of the field where the Breakthrough occurred on April 2nd during the Battle of Petersburg. With the Matching Grant, our Total Contribution is **\$6,000**.

Treasurer

Treasurer Lori Border reported a balance in the treasury as of November 14, 2023, beginning at \$1810.76 and ending at \$1933.33. The preservation fund currently has \$286.00. More details will be in next month's report as membership fees are added.

Meal Captain

Kathy Little reminded everyone that meal reservations are always due on noon the Friday before the meeting. Most members make reservations online; but, for those who call them in, keep in mind that Kathy must be called by the same deadline. All reservations are due by noon on December 8th for the December 12th meeting.

Newsletter

Articles for inclusion in the monthly newsletter are always due on the Tuesday following the monthly meeting. Contact Linda Zeiber at 610.678.1168 or zeibers@comcast.net with questions or concerns.

If you have an interesting story or informative article, please submit it for consideration. Several seasons ago, we had published several personal ancestor stories of our members. We would like to pick up these once again in the newsletter. If you have a story to share, please forward it. Thank you for your continued support, especially to President Craig for his endless patience and assistance with navigating the wonderful world of technology.

Website

Webmaster Lisa Breneiser reminded everyone that we now have a Facebook page linked to our website: **firstdefenderscwrt.us**. We also encourage current members to invite guests to attend one of our meetings and see the workings of our group.

Future 27th Campaign Programs		
Date	Speaker	Program
1/9/2024	Craig Breneiser	<i>General John Hartranft, the 1899 Exeter Train Wreck & Beyond</i>
2/13/2024	Wally Heimbach	<i>Colonel Edward Cross at the Wheatfield</i>
3/13/2024	Greg Mertz	<i>Intelligence Gathering Issues for Lee and Meade in the Gettysburg Campaign</i>
4/9/2024	Brad Gottfried	<i>Lee Invades the North: A Comparison of the Antietam & Gettysburg Campaigns</i>
5/14/2024	Kevin Pawlak	<i>-To Be Announced-</i>

Remembrance Day Weekend

The annual Remembrance Day Weekend was held in Gettysburg November 17-19, 2023. Town was bustling when we arrived there Friday the 17th at noon. For the first time in many years, the weather was warm, dry, and temperate. On Saturday, the parade of reenactors was comprised of Union and Confederate reenactors along with ladies from both sides in their Victorian garb. Many bands accompanied the marching units. While there were no cavalry units *per se*, there was no shortage of horses.

There is no denying the aging of the men and women who participate in this weekend each year. While some youthful members participated, many veterans struggled to walk the route. There also seemed to be a dearth of youngsters along the parade route which reminds us that our youth are not being exposed to such events in any discernible numbers.

The luminaries in the cemetery were inspiring as usual on Saturday night. Over 3000 luminaries adorned the graves of the Union Civil War dead. Each soldier's name was read aloud throughout the evening followed by taps. It's impossible not to be moved in the dark and quiet solemnity of the candles' glow.



Sadly, the ceremony in the National Cemetery scheduled for Sunday morning, November 19th, the actual anniversary of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, was moved to the Majestic Theater in the event of a government shutdown. The shutdown never happened, of course; but plans would not be changed. We have endured harsh cold and wind over the years for this ceremony, but this past year would have changed that with the unseasonably temperate weather. It was a letdown at the end of an otherwise perfect weekend. Unfortunately, "We" the people had no say in the event. I do not believe that Mr. Lincoln would have approved. How could the President dedicate a cemetery for the dead with no cemetery in view?

Linda & Gerry Zeiber

December's Program

Many members may recall when we took time out of our regularly scheduled programs to hold a "forum" and discuss Civil War topics. After the audience participation in Ev Binns' program during the last campaign, our December program will feature a return to the forum concept, but with a fun twist as we play...

"Civil War Jeopardy"

moderated by Ev Binns

Politicians	Battles	Capitals	Generals	Potpouri
100	100	100	100	100
200	200	200	200	200
300	300	300	300	300
400	400	400	400	400
500	500	500	500	500

Team participation in a First Defenders version of the fan-favorite "Jeopardy" will test your knowledge of Civil War people, places and things. A new and fun way to get into the holiday mood, and a chance to win a cool grand prize!

Dinner Reservations for the December 12, 2023 Meeting & Program

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

Broiled Crab Cake Veal Marsala Linguini w/mushroom sauce

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 8, 2023, which is also the deadline for online reservations. The price is \$31.00 inclusive for meals.

***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. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.**