

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

February 2024



www.firstdefenderscwr.us

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way...

So said Charles Dickens in the opening paragraph of his 1859 classic "A Tale of Two Cities." A historical novel set with the background of the French Revolution at the dawn of the 19th Century, one can easily ask whether Dickens' thoughts were rooted in the distant past on the European continent or the increasingly turbulent present "across the pond" in America. With the "most important election in the history of the nation" only a year away, the former colonies in 1860 were told they faced a choice between justice and tyranny. Indeed, democracy would be on the ballot.

Here we are at the dawn of another presidential canvass, and, if we believe the chattering class, it seems Dickens' words have returned to haunt us as we are again facing the "most important election in the history of the nation." We are told democracy is, again, on the ballot. Yet, as students of history, we know democracy is *always* on the ballot as we, members of a free society, are afforded the right to choose our leaders and weigh in on the national direction. Alas, history is not for the "cool kids" or the modern elites today, and their screed grows louder. We can look, though, to words from Abraham Lincoln to calm the hysteria with a soothing balm of better perspective:

By the frame of the Government under which we live this same people have wisely given their public servants but little power for mischief, and have with equal wisdom provided for the return of that little to their own hands at very short intervals. While the people retain their virtue and vigilance no Administration by any

extreme of wickedness or folly can very seriously injure the Government in the short space of four years.

Unhappily, Lincoln's words were unable to calm troubled waters, and it is unlikely they will do so in our day when few will turn to and contemplate them. We know, though, regardless of the outcome on November 5th the republic will survive. We shall celebrate our semiquincentennial in grand style in 2026, and rejoice in how far we have come while reckoning on the road yet to be travelled. Then, once we recover from those jubilations and festivities we will be ready for 2028, just in time for the next "most important election in the history of the nation."

Craig

Round Table Business

The January meeting and program was cancelled due to the threat of adverse weather. Round Table business discussions will return in February!

February's Program

"Colonel Edward Cross & the 'Fighting 5th'"

presented by Wally Heimbach

Edward Cross did not aspire to be a soldier, but at the outset of the Civil War he would receive a commission as colonel of the Fifth New Hampshire volunteers which, under two years of his leadership, would see action on the Peninsula, at Antietam, Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. The "Fighting 5th" was considered one of the best regiments in the Army of the Potomac, and Cross would be one of the best colonels who never what a general's star. Twice wounded, Cross was known to where a red bandana on his head when going into battle so his men could recognize him. With a premonition of his own death, he would sport a black bandana on July 2, 1863 while on his way to the Wheatfield at Gettysburg where he would be mortally wounded early in the fight and die the next day in a field hospital. This program traces the recruitment and reputation of the 5th New Hampshire and the leadership of Edward Cross.



Wally Heimbach is a long-time Round table participant who seems to know almost everyone who is anyone in modern-day Civil War touring, research and writing. He has previously presented twice to the First Defenders on Generals Winfield Scott Hancock and Phillip Kearny.

Future 27th Campaign Programs

Date	Speaker	Program
3/13/2024	Greg Mertz	"Jackson Is With You!" - The Battle of Cedar Mountain
4/9/2024	Brad Gottfried	Lee Invades the North: A Comparison of the Antietam & Gettysburg Campaigns
5/14/2024	Kevin Pawlak	Fire on the Mountains: The Battles of South Mountain and Harpers Ferry, September 12-15, 1862

Dinner Reservations for the Tuesday February 13, 2024
Meeting & Program:

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

Soup
Broiled Crab Imperial
½ Black Diamond Steak
Cheese Tortelli

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, February 9, 2024, 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.**