

# The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

November 2023



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

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We recently sold my parent's house...my boyhood home...and I wondered what would become of the old place once new owners moved in. Surely some of the decor would change, and there were some areas overdue for refurbishing or modernization. The wallpaper would likely go, and (I'm told) paneling is no longer in style. Possibly the neutral paint colors will give way to something more vibrant, and the oak hardwood floors might disappear under wall-to-wall carpeting. This is, they say, the Circle of Life. Sad for me, perhaps, but a new space for a new family to make their memories.

Towns and cities are like that, too, I suppose. Reading's Penn Street in the post World War II era with its vibrant storefronts and movie theatres, has given way to less glitzy office space, a hotel and a civic center. It doesn't look much like it did back in the sixties as new generations have changed downtown's appearance. (Alas, a railroad still bisects the city, but it's no longer the one you find on the Monopoly Board.)

The people of Charlottesville, Virginia, have opted to change their furnishings, too. Gone now is the statue of Robert E. Lee, a central work of art for nearly 100 years, secretly melted down just last week into bronze ingots that will someday become a new work of art appealing to a new generation. Marse Robert likely would have frowned at ever being cast in bronze in the first place, and almost certainly would have shunned being the center of attention in modern-day culture wars. Perhaps he would be happy to quietly leave the stage and, as another general once said, just fade away.

There may come a day when the Centre Park equestrian of David Gregg will follow the Charlottesville Lee, or the City Park First Defender will be reduced to rubble. New owners will want to decorate their surroundings according to their tastes, not those of their forebears. To those of us who have grown up in these familiar surroundings and have embraced the stories and history these monuments were intended to illustrate, it's a sad, head-shaking reality that life continues to pass before us ever changing.

Perhaps, though, while we still walk this Earth, we may yet have the opportunity to convince those who follow that, while they *should* decorate to their tastes, there may yet be a place for legacies of previous generations to add to the tapestry of their surroundings.

*Craig*

## Round Table Business

The October meeting of the First Defenders Civil War Round Table was called to order on October 10, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. by President Craig Breneiser. Thirty-eight members attended. Vice President Joe Schaeffer's absence was due to Covid 19 which had postponed pending knee replacement surgery. All of those in attendance wished Joe a successful surgery and a speedy return to the Round Table and the golf links.

A few minutes before the speaker for the evening, Tim Talbott, was to begin the program, Giannotti's experienced a power blackout. It seemed a bit early for a Halloween fright, but we endured the darkness for a short time and eventually the power was restored.

### 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 November 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 51.

### November Book Raffle News

Thanks to everyone for your support of battlefield preservation. Last month, we tried something different and that was the "Book Bonanza". We offered a selection of books that were available for a donation. Any donation was accepted. It seemed to work out well since we were able to thin out old inventory, and members picked out some book selections that appealed to them. It was a win\win situation for battlefield preservation and for our members. We added approximately \$40.00 to our preservation efforts in addition to the regular raffle proceeds. We will repeat the "Bonanza" in the near future.

Gary Hertzog will accept a few more books at the next meeting. Wally Heimbach brought 4 boxes to the October meeting. A few other members also brought several selections from their personal libraries. Thanks to Wally and everyone else for your donations. They are greatly appreciated.

At the November meeting, we should be able to start a "Special Raffle". This raffle will include the "Cyclorama piece", which was donated to us by Sue Boardman. There will also be 3-4 other prizes available. There will be more information at the November meeting.

### Preservation

October was a fantastic meeting with Tim Talbot giving a great presentation on the Battle of New Market Heights. Thanks to all of you who came to the meeting, we raised another **\$153** for Preservation. This includes money from our book raffle, donations that were made, and we had extra books from our inventory put out on a table for people to pick up and donate whatever amount you cared to give.

In Preservation News, the American Battlefield Trust has come out with a new Preservation project involving Gettysburg. They are looking to purchase 15 acres of land where the Gettysburg Country Club was located. The plan originally was for a developer to come in and to tear down the buildings from the Country Club and to construct a brand new 3 story Apartment complex. This project fell through and ABT is moving

quickly to try and preserve this area of the battlefield. The acres they are looking to preserve are part of the 1<sup>st</sup> day's battle and is in the area where Confederate General Henry Heth and part of his division fought. In addition, ABT is offering a **\$2-\$1 Matching Grant** for this project.

Finally, here an update on our Preservation Totals for this Season:

- Total money raised: **\$260**
- Total money donated: **\$130**
- Total Contributed with Matching Grants: **\$15,210**

### **Treasurer**

Treasurer Lori Border reported a balance in the treasury as of October 10, 2023, beginning at \$1062.79 and ending at \$1810.76. The preservation fund currently has \$281.00. 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 November 10 for the November 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](mailto: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 attended a Civil War conference recently and learned some tricks to increase Round Table membership. As a result, 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.

### **Joe's Jaunts**

While Joe Schaeffer is out of commission as the jaunt organizer, "**Craig's Cruises**" will take care of Round Table travel. On Saturday November 4, 2023, from 10:30 am-12:00 pm, the Bucks County Civil War Library & Museum will have a program at their museum and library. The emphasis is on the region of Bucks County and the town's own famous 104<sup>th</sup> PA Volunteer "Ringgold" Regiment.

Included in the exhibits are works of art, maps, photographs, flags, and sculptures on permanent loan from the Bucks County Civil War Round Table and regional collections.

Contact Craig Breneiser about carpooling information and travel to this event.

# November's Program

## "Lincoln & the Press"

presented by Harold Holzer

In a nation where "freedom of the press" is enshrined in the Constitution, it is only natural that presidents will face hostile, supportive and middle-of-the-road journalists. While recent years have brought the Fourth Estate to its lowest ebb in many years (depending on which side of the political spectrum you consult), the 19th century press was unabashedly political and proud of it. Abraham Lincoln would face self-described Democratic or Republican newspapers which often make no secret of reporting what today is known as "fake news."



Early in his career, Lincoln actually had ownership of a newspaper, and he spent his entire political career seeking to control the news to his benefit. This did not change when he moved into the White House, and he would spend four years perusing newspapers, providing stories, currying favor with some editors and trying to minimize damage caused by others in his quest to keep the nation united while winning a Civil War. Close analysis suggests Lincoln mastered the press in such a way that his message ensured the people would stand behind his war policy.

Harold Holzer is one of the leading authorities on Abraham Lincoln, having served as the co-chair of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, the chair of the Lincoln Bicentennial Foundation and current chair of the Lincoln Forum. President George W. Bush awarded him the National Humanities Medal in 2008, and an essay he wrote was included in the official re-inauguration program of President Barack Obama. Author of dozens of articles and books, Holzer explored Lincoln's relationship with the press with his 2014 work "Lincoln and the Power of the Press: the War for Public Opinion." More recently, he has expanded his analysis with "The President vs. the Press: the Endless Battle Between the White House and the Media - From the Founding Fathers to Fake News."



Future 27th Campaign Programs		
Date	Speaker	Program
12/12/2023	Group Participation	<i>Civil War Jeopardy</i>
1/9/2024	Craig Breneiser	<i>General John Hartranft, the 1899 Exeter Train Wreck &amp; 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 &amp; Gettysburg Campaigns</i>
5/14/2024	Kevin Pawlak	<i>-To Be Announced-</i>

**Dinner Reservations for the Tuesday November 14, 2023**  
**Meeting & Program:**

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

**Salad**  
**Steamed Shrimp**  
**Grilled Chicken Breast**  
**Eggplant Parmesan**

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, November 10, 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.**