

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

October 2023



www.firstdefenderscwrt.us

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Patience. If there is one thing I have inherited from my father it is his legendary patience. I never witnessed him getting flustered by delays even in his days as a firefighter or emergency medical technician. Wait in line? No problem. Somewhere along the way, my youthful restlessness has given way to Dad's patience.

For the past eighteen months, Lisa and I have been embroiled in building projects. First an addition onto our home, and now a garage. What should have begun a very long time ago has stretched into what seems an eternity. Sure, we could have raised a ruckus, looked for alternative professionals or plain out fired people, but it is doubtful our projects would have been completed any sooner.

When my patience is tasked, though, I am reminded of a conversation President Lincoln had with Senator Ben Wade who insisted that George McClellan be replaced. "With whom?" asked Lincoln. "Why, anybody!" was Wade's reply. In sage fashion, the President said, "Wade, anybody will do for you, but not for me. I must have somebody." Like Old Abe, Lisa and I must have somebody to complete our work.

It would take another two years for Lincoln to find that somebody in Ulysses S. Grant. Although the president had not always remained nonchalant in dealing with his recalcitrant generals, his patience finally paid off and brought him the answer to his problem of how to end the war and restore the union.

After a month of almost continual combat in the spring of 1864, Grant wired the War Department to announce he was crossing the James River. Upon reading the telegram, Lincoln responded, "I begin to see it. You will succeed." While it would still take another ten months, Lincoln's patience was paying off.

Patience is not easy, and we all have our moments of anxiety when things do not move as quickly as we would like. In the end, we need to trust that all will turn out for the best. Although it may take almost as long to finish our modern-day campaign, thanks to my inherited patience I, too, can begin to see it. (Thanks Dad!)

Craig

Round Table Business

The first meeting of our 27th season was called to order on September 12, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. Forty-six members and guests attended. Jeff Newman offered a prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. We were happy to welcome the following five new members: Faith Binns, Lisa Newman, Steve Wilson, Ronald Jameson, and Tom Kulp.

Membership

It's time to renew your membership for the 27th campaign of 2023-2024. If you have not already 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 is October 10, 2023. If you plan to pay your dues in person at the October 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.

October Book Raffle News

Our 27th Campaign is underway, and we're off to a great start! At our inaugural meeting, we collected \$107 dollars which was donated to the American Battlefield Trust. Our donation will go to battlefields in Kentucky and Tennessee (Battlefields of Belmont, Franklin, Nashville & Richmond) and is part of a matching grant. Thanks to all of you (members & guests) who continue to support our raffle and battlefield preservation efforts.

If any of our members have books that they wish to donate, Gary will be accepting those donations for the next couple of meetings. So, bring a box, bag, or just couple of books that will help clean off your book shelves. Thank you for your contributions.

A reminder: Gary will be bringing a number of books (20 to 30) to our October meeting to clear out some of our inventory. These books will be offered to members and guests. They will be available for a donation---whatever you wish to give; it's up to you. So, perhaps you wish to bring a couple extra dollars in case you find a selection for your CW library. Of course, any funds collected will go to battlefield preservation.

A special raffle is in the works, and hopefully will be ready for our November meeting.

Preservation

Welcome back everyone to Season 27, and we are off to a great start having raised **\$107** for Preservation from our Book Raffle. Thank you to everyone who bought tickets for the raffle or donated money. It is greatly appreciated.

The American Battlefield Trust currently is offering six Matching Grants:

- A **\$117-\$1** Matching Grant for the battlefields at Franklin, TN, Nashville, TN and Belmont, KY.
- A **\$30-\$1** Matching Grant for the battlefields in VA at: Mine Run, Boydton Plank Road, Reams Station, the area of the Breakthrough on the Petersburg Battlefield, and Dinwiddie Court House
- A **\$29.70-\$1** Matching Grant for Gettysburg-South Cavalry Field where, Wesley Merritt's Cavalry Brigade fought, and Second Deep Bottom
- An **\$18-\$1** Matching Grant for Chickamauga, Wyse Fork, NC, Bentonville, NC and Shiloh, TN
- A **6.50-\$1** Matching Grant for Chickasaw Bayou and Champion Hill, MS
- A **\$4-\$1** Matching Grant for New Market and Spotsylvania Court House in VA

During our September Meeting the membership approved a donation of **\$130** to the **American Battlefield Trust** and it will be in the name of **Chris Mackowski**. This donation will go towards the **\$117-\$1** Matching Grant and with this donation our Total Contribution with the Matching Grant is **\$15,210**. Thanks everyone!!

In other Preservation news Mark reported:

- The proposed Super Wal Mart that was going to be built in Gettysburg near the area of Benner Hill **has been cancelled and shelved**. This is great news! The plan was to close the current Wal Mart on Route 30 (**York Road**) and to build a new Super Wal Mart.
- The Gettysburg Foundation and the National Park Service have decided on what the next project is after the rehabilitation of Little Round Top is completed. The next project will involve rehabbing the **National Cemetery** and, will include rehabbing both Cemetery gates. The price tag for the project is approximately **4 million dollars** and the Foundation has agreed to fund the entire project.

Treasurer

Our new treasurer Lori Border reported a balance in the treasury as of August 28, 2023, of \$1062.79. The preservation fund had \$168.00. More details will be in next month's report as membership fees are added. President Craig Breneiser reminded everyone that your membership pays for speakers each month, and this season promises excellent programs.

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 will be on vacation during the deadline period of time for October's meeting. Leave a message on her voice mail or, if possible, call early with your meal selections.

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. Thank you for your continued support, especially to President Craig for his endless patience and assistance with navigating the wonderful world of technology.



Civil War Round Table Congress

As many already know, Civil War Round Tables are local groups with a common interest in the Civil War era. There is no national or state leadership, chapters or affiliations. Just local folks who get together, often in a haphazard manner, to enjoy a mutual interest. Since the first Round Table organized in Chicago even before the start of World War II, hundreds of Round Tables have appeared (and, sadly, many have also disappeared) to advance the understanding of what is, arguably, the most important time in American history.

The interest in our collective past is not what it once was, and even the most devoted educators have difficulty keeping up with the continuing evolution of U.S. history. With many other pastimes now available to a more mobile and connected populace, Round Tables have struggled to exist, much less remain relevant.

A few years back, several individuals put their heads together and formed what would become the **Civil War Round Table Congress** with its sole mission to inspire Round Table leaders to adapt, adopt and maintain strategies for sustainability. The CWRT Congress began holding annual conferences, and at its most recent in August 2023 in Gettysburg, more than three dozen Round Tables came together to share their stories. The key takeaways from the conference included:

- **Every CWRT is facing similar issues.**
- **Sister CWRTs are a great way to share the load.**
- **Community partnerships can be a win-win.**
- **When choosing a meeting venue, think long-term.**
- **Costly dinner meetings can be a hindrance to younger members.**
- **"You can't fail if you do nothing."**
- **Leaders need to be flexible.**
- **Build a winning team rather than rely on one person.**
- **Projects that "give back" are attractive to potential new members.**
- **Ask your members periodically about their desires and needs.**

We will be talking more about our Round Table future in the coming months including the possibility of embarking on the **CWRT Congress Sustainability Challenge**. For more about the Challenge and what it entails, go to <http://www.cwrtcongress.org/challenge.html> or check out the program details on our website under the "Special Dispatches" tab of the Newsletters section.

More to follow in coming months!

October Program:

We Fight for Our Rights, Liberty, Justice and Union: the Battle of New Market Heights, September 29, 1864 **presented by Tim Talbott**

Early on the morning of September 29, 1864, the Third Division of the XVIII Corps (Army of the James) stepped off to do battle and stepped into history. In what is arguably the most significant moment in African American military history, this United States Colored Troops division attacked and drove the famous Texan Brigade from their entrenched position and in doing so performed heroic actions that resulted in 14 Black soldiers and two White officers receiving Medals of Honor.



Often confused with the Battle of New Market which happened four months earlier in the Shenandoah Valley, and overlooked due a pervasive unwillingness to give proper credit to Black soldiers in the years following the war, the Battle of New Market Heights offers valuable lessons and a thrilling story of perseverance over prejudice.

Tim Talbott is presently the Chief Administrative Officer for the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust in Fredericksburg, Virginia. He was formerly the Director of Education, Interpretation, Visitor Services, and Collections, at Pamplin Historical Park and the National Museum of the Civil War Soldier in Petersburg, Virginia. Before returning to Pamplin Park, Tim also worked with student and educator audiences while with the Kentucky Historical Society for six years. Talbott is the founding member and President of the Battle of New Market Heights Memorial and Education Association. He earned bachelor's degrees from Milligan College (Communications) and East Tennessee State University (History), and an M.A. in Public History from Appalachian State University. Tim is a contributor and the book review editor for the Emerging Civil War blog, and has published articles in both book and scholarly journal formats. His current project is researching soldiers captured during the Petersburg Campaign.



Future 27th Campaign Programs		
Date	Speaker	Program
11/14/2023	Harold Holtzer	<i>Lincoln & the Press</i>
12/12/2023	Group Participation	<i>Civil War Jeopardy</i>
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>

Dinner Reservations for the Tuesday October 10, 2023
Meeting & Program:

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

Salad
Breaded Haddock
Marinated Chicken Breast
Pasta with Grilled Veggies

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, October 6, 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.**