

# The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

September 2025, the 29th Campaign



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

## President's Message

### CHANGES

My father, who grew up in a Pennsylvania Dutch farm family, had a wonderful book entitled *The Round of the Year*. The book reads like a journal, the author creating in one's mind subtle images of the changes to be observed in the landscape of our lives if we pause and observe. My wife and I try to spend a little time each day discussing simple signs like the different birds, insects and other critters coming and going as the seasons change. Today we are getting a taste of autumn which for me is just around the corner. You see, for some time I have adopted the meteorological calendar. Autumn, therefore, is September, October and November. Winter is December, January and February. Spring is March, April and May. Summer is June, July and August. I find these groupings more closely match the weather patterns. Anyway, it works for me.

I will not be joining you for the September meeting as I will be traveling. Normally in the September newsletter, I would be welcoming members back to another campaign. Not so this year, as the campaign never ended. I decided to use my space this month to thank everyone for sticking with the Round Table.

We adopted quite a few changes this year. First, we filed a Certificate of Organization with the Commonwealth, formally becoming the First Defenders Civil War Round Table of Berks County. After all these years, we are official! We wrote and adopted by-laws, and applied to the IRS for non-profit organization status (pending approval). After tabulating the results of a survey, the membership approved widening the scope of our topics to include other phases of American history. As if that was not enough angst, I then threw at the group an idea that had been germinating with many members for years: why not try to avoid weather cancellations by running our season from April through December and skipping January, February and March. So far attendance has been good during the summer, and you have my sincere gratitude.

Each year as I review Ev's list of membership renewals, I cannot fail to notice that some members are reaching a point where age and illnesses may prevent them from continuing to join us. Let us all appreciate the fellowship we enjoy and reach out wherever possible to recruit new members while remembering those who can no longer join us.

Have a wonderful meeting in September, and I will see you in October.

*Joe*

### **Round Table Business**

Joe called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Guests this evening included Ray Camp and Barry Flicker. Barry has joined the ranks as a new member.

Joe announced the sudden passing of Dave Unger's wife. A card was sent from the Round Table.

John Scheneman is dealing with some medical issues. Please keep him in your thoughts and prayers. We hope to see him back with us soon.

The membership applications for the 29<sup>th</sup> Campaign that started in June and ends in December 2025 can be found on the website's main page under "VOLUNTEERS NEEDED."

The 30<sup>th</sup> Campaign will be from April 2026 through December 2026

Joe is looking for his copy of "Washington's Crossing." If you may have borrowed it, Joe's stamp is in it, and he would love to have it back.

Bylaws: A motion to accept the new Bylaws retroactive to the date the checking account was opened was made by Ev and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Clark. All in favor.

501c3: Still in progress

### **Treasurers Report**

No report was presented this evening.

### **Membership**

Our membership now stands at 39 for the 29<sup>th</sup> Campaign, which includes seven (7) new members.

We have received an additional \$401 to support the speaker programs.

### **Preservation and Book Raffle**

At our August meeting the book raffle took in \$86. The membership voted to donate \$100 to the American Battlefield Trust for "Help Save 64 Acres at 4 Virginia Battlefields" preservation campaign. The four battlefields are:

1. Chancellorsville, 18 acres
- 2 & 3. 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Kernstown, 40 acres
4. Ware Bottom Church, 6 acres.

The Trust is seeking to raise the final \$60 thousand dollars of the \$2.2 million price. Our one-hundred-dollar donation is worth \$3700 due to a \$37-to-\$1 matching grant.

Our beginning preservation balance for September is \$243.

If anyone has books on subjects other than the Civil War, please bring them to the meetings. We are looking for other historical subject matter. Thank you for your support of battlefield preservation.

<b>29<sup>th</sup> Campaign</b>	<b>Total for all Campaigns</b>
<b>Total amount raised-\$ 243</b>	
<b>Total amount donated-\$ 100</b>	<b>Total amount donated - \$ 39,646</b>
<b>Total contribution w/ matching grants-\$ 3,700</b>	<b>Total contributed w/ matching grants - \$ 566,797</b>

## August Program

### *Robert Todd Lincoln*

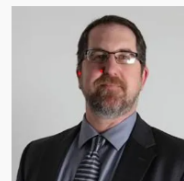
presented by Jason Emerson



Robert Todd Lincoln was Abraham and Mary Lincoln's oldest and last surviving son who led a fascinating life often obscured by his father's long shadow. A lawyer, businessman, and statesman who left his own mark on one of the most progressive and dynamic eras in United States history, "Bob" would bear witness to some of the most dramatic American moments, including Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox Courthouse; his father's final moments; the advent of the railroad, telephone, electrical, and automobile industries; the circumstances surrounding the assassinations of three presidents of the United States; and much, much more. His service to the country is longer and more varied than that of his father, and is hugely significant and interesting in its own right.

*Jason Emerson is an award-winning Lincoln scholar and general historian, the author or editor of eight books and nearly fifty articles. He has appeared as a historical expert on multiple television and radio shows and podcasts, and has lectured around the country. He found Mary Lincoln's "lost insanity letters," which historians had been seeking for 80 years (and which were the basis for his first*

*book), and is the only scholar in the entire Lincoln field to have studied and written about Robert T. Lincoln, Abraham and Mary's oldest son.*



<b>29<sup>th</sup> Campaign Programs</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Program</b>
10/14/2025	Daminish Miller	<i>Women at War: the Female Soldiers of the American Civil War &amp; Those that Wished They Were</i>
November 2025 **	Craig Symonds	<i>David Farragut &amp; Chester Nimitz</i>
12/9/2025	Michael Harris	<i>The Philadelphia Campaign of the Revolutionary War</i>

**\*\* The November 2025 meeting will be held on an alternate date to accommodate Craig Symons presentation. Stay tuned! \*\***

**The Round Table is always looking for a member to present a program. Anyone interested should reach out to Clark.**

## Website

**Craig sent out a new meeting notice that shows the newsletter without having to go to the website. He noted that 74% opened the email which the new program tracks. You can also just click on the link in the email to take you to the website to order your meal. 29 people clicked the link to make their reservations.**

**If you did not receive the email, please check your spam folder.**

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**Dinner Reservations for the Tuesday, September 9, 2025  
Meeting & Program: Deadline to order is September 5<sup>th</sup>, NOON.**

We had 36 in attendance at the August meeting.

Our meal choices for September are:

Broiled Orange Roughy  
Marinated Chicken Breast  
Cheese Ravioli

If possible, please make your reservation on the website. When doing so, you should receive:

- An immediate email “thank you” for making the reservation.
- A follow-up email that includes a copy of your meal selection, and
- A second email confirmation that everything has worked properly (this may be delayed by up to 24-hours).

If you must call in reservations, please, CALL or TEXT your menu selection to Vicky Heffner at 610.413.5543 no later than NOON, September 5, 2025, which is also the deadline for online reservations. The price is \$32.00 inclusive for meals.

**\*IMPORTANT NOTE\*** Once you have made your reservation, there are no cancellations for any reasons afternoon 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!**

Checks may be made payable to “First Defenders Civil War Roundtable”.

**Events / Tours/ and Other Happenings**

Please feel free to share anything that you are aware of and would like added to the monthly newsletter. Please send them to my email me at [Lisa.breneiser@gmail.com](mailto:Lisa.breneiser@gmail.com).

**Venue**

National Museum of Civil War Medicine  
48 East Patrick Street  
Frederick, MD 21705 [+](#)

**Disguised and Determined: Women Who Fought in the Civil War  
September 6 @ 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm EDT**

**Saturday Speaker Series: Tracey McIntire and Audrey Scanlan-Teller**

There are hundreds of documented cases of women who fought disguised as men during the Civil War. Tracey McIntire and Audrey Scanlan-Teller, PhD will discuss and share documentation of some of the more fascinating women and what motivated them to fight alongside men.

<https://www.civilwarmed.org/event/disguised-and-determined-women-who-fought-in-the-civil-war/>

## **New Excursion in Gettysburg! Gettysburg Railway**

### **Gettysburg Excursions Train Ride**

**All Ages! · 1 Hour Round-trip**

- **Stories Along the Rails**

- As the train winds through the countryside, enjoy captivating storytelling about the leaders of the Battle of Gettysburg and historical landmarks along the route.

<https://fareharbor.com/embeds/book/gettysburgrailway/items/?language=en-us&full-items=yes&back=https://gettysburgrailway.com/>

