

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

November 2017



www.firstdefenderscwrts.us

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Flexibility. I've learned a lot about this word over the past few weeks. My life has never really been "routine" because of my work in emergency services fields, but I have recently had a run of days where my best-laid plans were laid to waste by 8:05 (well, okay, one day I actually kept on track until almost 8:15!).

Placing this in perspective, I reflected on Civil War luminaries who found the need to be flexible as their plans went awry. Sometimes they managed to adjust like George Meade on the second day at Gettysburg or Ulysses Grant throughout the Overland Campaign. Stonewall Jackson displayed flexibility west of Chancellorsville when he found the Union troops were not where he supposed them to be, and Robert E. Lee spent the Seven Days Campaign with his plans repeatedly miscarrying but exhibiting the flexibility to recover and achieve a dazzling strategic victory by forcing George McClellan to "change his base" well away from Richmond.

Of course, there were those who proved to be unable to exhibit any flexibility in their thinking. John Pope was absolutely certain the Confederates were in retreat at Second Manassas despite warnings to the contrary; James Longstreet's crushing flank assault proved him wrong. William Rosecrans was having his own way with Braxton Bragg at Chickamauga right up until one bad order resulted in a Rebel breakthrough that "stunned Rosecrans, like a duck hit on the head" (according to Abraham Lincoln).

Perhaps it was Lincoln himself who would prove to be the master of flexibility as he threaded his way through the early days of the war, outflanked supposedly wiser and more experienced political minds, backed or sacked generals despite the public and media clamor to the contrary and would seize upon precisely the right moment to change the character of the War by issuing the Emancipation Proclamation. Just before signing the final Proclamation on New Years Day 1863, Lincoln would define flexibility for Congress when we wrote, "the dogmas of the quiet past, are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise -- with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country."

While none of us may encounter a mountain as high as that faced by Lincoln, we do need to recognize our own "dogmas of the quiet past, are inadequate to the stormy present" and we need to "think anew, and act anew" to meet life's challenges. We must strive to remain as flexible as grain before the storm, or we will break as surely as a dry twig. So, stay loose, my friends!

For the Glory,

Craig

Round Table Business

President Craig Breneiser called the October meeting to order at 6:25 p.m. at the Inn at Reading on October 10, 2017. Ev Binns offered a prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. There were 59 members present. Craig asked for information regarding members who may be ill, and Dave Fox reported that he had spoken to Bob Shuman's wife Pauline recently.

Bob remains in a nursing facility in Hamburg, PA. Bob's current address is Laurel Nursing Home at 125 Holly Road, Hamburg, PA 19526, Room 326 N. Pauline assures everyone that all cards and notes are greatly appreciated.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's Report Tim Antosy presented his report at the October meeting. Our balance as of October 12, 2017 stood at \$ 4,364.38 with \$394.00 ear-marked for preservation. The unencumbered balance as of October 18, 2017, is \$3,970.38 with 80 members paid.

Preservation

Mark Quattroch reviewed initiatives for preservation at the current time as well as leverages available. He reported that over 20 years, total contributions to land preservation as of the 10th of October amount to \$30,571. With matching grants, the total rises to \$230,933. We have already gotten to \$2,000 in contributions this year.

Membership

Dave Sweigert reported 11 re-enlistments at the October meeting bringing membership to a total of 80. This is well below our usual number by this point in a new campaign. Dave reminded everyone that you will not be able to make a reservation for the November meeting if you have not paid your annual membership fee.

Joe's Jaunts

Joe Schaeffer announced that the fall "jaunt" scheduled for November has been cancelled. He suggested that there may be two jaunts in the spring. Stay tuned.

Website

Webmaster Lisa Breneiser reported that work on our website is not completely finished but is nearing completion. Lisa explained that, in addition to blogs, we can now tell how many "hits" have occurred on the site. The new site was funded by Craig Breneiser and will have the same address: www.firstdefenderscwrt.us.

Meal Captain

Kathy Little reminded everyone that the deadline for ordering meals is Friday at noon before the next meeting. If you have any problems ordering, please call Kathy. Her number is available in the section for Dinner Reservations.

AAP

We had a gorgeous work day for AAP on Thursday, October 5 at Gettysburg National Park.

Roger Cotterill, Gary Hertzog, Rick Hostetter, Barbara Shafer and Don Stripling met at Benning's Brigade (TX) on South Confederate. The next monument we worked at was 18th PA Cavalry located at Big Round Top. We then worked at WV 1st Cav (Farnsworth) and took a lunch break.

After lunch we worked at the 6th PA Cavalry. We painted the fence posts and a section of the fence at Greggs Shaft on East Cavalry Field. Our last monument was the 8th PA Cavalry.

All of the sites looked much improved with our effort.

We did look at another site for a future adoption.

Our next work date will be in the Spring of 2018. We will be painting Greggs Shaft so you will again have an opportunity to see our fashionista, Roger Cotterill, dressing for the occasion.

Individuals and/or groups can volunteer to participate in AAP. The criteria is a two-year commitment to work a minimum of one day each during the spring and fall program.

The individual or contact representative for a group will arrange a date two weeks before the time that a work party will be at the adopted site. All work at the project site must be pre-arranged with the AAP Coordinator. The coordinator at Gettysburg Park is: Alyce Evans at (717) 338-4479.

If you would like a current list of sites to adopt you can contact contact Alyce at Gettysburg National Military Park.

Submitted by Barbara Shafer



Remembrance Day Weekend in Gettysburg

If you have never spent a Remembrance Day in Gettysburg, you owe it to yourself to make the sojourn. Sunday morning, November 19th, will feature a ceremony in the National Cemetery commemorating Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. New citizens will be sworn in, and a speaker of renown will deliver a keynote address. The ceremony is quite moving from beginning to end.

Saturday, November 18th features a parade of reenactor units from far and wide. It seems that the parade grows each year. There are many other events throughout the weekend which are detailed on the Gettysburg website.

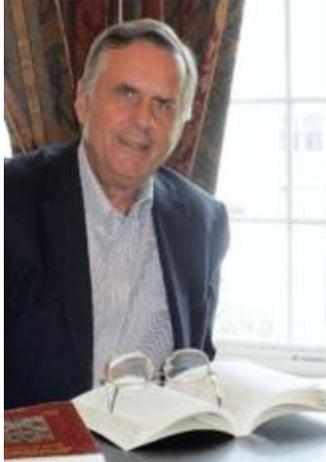
Flags adorn each grave in the cemetery in the daylight and are exchanged for luminaries at night.



November Program

General Jacob Dolson Cox - Citizen General

Jacob Dolson Cox is one of the most exceptional leaders of the Union Civil War effort who is almost unknown. However, author Gene Schmiel has



turned a spotlight on Cox in an effort to give him his long-deserved recognition. Serving in both major theaters of the war, Cox would come to be relied upon by more stellar lights such as George McClellan, William Sherman and Ulysses Grant (none of whom were particularly fond of citizen political generals). Cox would be the tactical commander on the Union left at Antietam, and would later find himself on the road to Atlanta with Sherman and in command of the Union center at Franklin. His post-war career looked golden, but his tepid support of Reconstruction and endorsement of civil service reforms before the time was ripe would relegate him to the might-have-beens in American politics. In citizen pursuits, though, he would find success as

the president of the Wabash Railroad, dean of the Cincinnati Law School and president of the University of Cincinnati. Perhaps his most lasting legacy were his *Military Reminiscences*, an even-handed work that is still frequently used as a primary source by modern historians.

Gene Schmiel is a retired Foreign Service Officer and former Assistant Professor of History. He received his Ph.D. in History from the Ohio State University, and has taught at St. Francis University (Pa), as well as Marymount and Shenandoah Universities in Virginia. In addition to his interest in general Cox, Mr. Schmiel is active in theater in his local area.

Speakers and Programs for 2017-2018

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| December 12 | Greg Stull | Leonidas Polk at Perryville |
| January 9 | Dale Kratzer | Naval Schemes, Plots & Interesting Tidbits |
| February 13 | David Ward | 69th PA Volunteers |
| March 13 | Wayne Motts | Picketts Charge |
| | Jim Hessler | |
| April 10 | TBA | |
| May 6 | Jim Hessler | Sickles at Gettysburg |

Dinner Reservations for the Tuesday, November 14, 2017 Meeting:

If possible, please make your meal choices/reservation on the website. Our meal choices for November include: Stuffed Turkey with cornbread stuffing; Honey Roasted Ham with grilled pineapple sauce; Seafood Pot Pie; or Vegetable Penne with vodka sauce. Soup, starch, vegetables, dessert, rolls, coffee, tea, and water are included. The price is \$25.00 inclusive for meals.

If you make your reservation online and you do not receive a thank-you and/or a 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, 2017, which is also the deadline for online reservations.

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 the Inn at Reading, 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.**

Newsletter contact: Linda Zeiber, zeibers@comcast.net

