

# The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

November 2018



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

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*"We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."*

So spoke Abraham Lincoln in March 1861 as he assumed the presidency of a deeply divided nation tottering on the brink of civil war. Soothing words intended to act as a balm to long-standing animosities...some legitimate, others less so...in an effort to avoid dissolution of the United States and what Lincoln feared would be a bloody struggle. And the war came.

The nation is again deeply divided, and passions are strained. While there is not yet any martial display to fire passions, we are witness to more than a little political bluster, news media pontifications and marching in the streets. Like Lincoln's "house divided" speech, we are told it must become all one thing or the other. A middle ground is not possible.

We are told the mid-term canvass on November 6th is "the most important election in our lifetime." While this seems to be an increasingly bi-annual description of a then-pending national election, there is little question that monumental and divisive questions face our Union in 2018.

In the midst of the darkest days of the Civil War, 1864 dawned as an election year. Lincoln saw clearly, "We can not have free government without elections." 154 years later, that prophecy still rings true. Regardless of your political leaning, the ability to cast a real ballot in a free and fair election is one of our most important birthrights handed down for nearly 250 years. Elections were then, and continue to be, determined by who shows up. Make sure that you show up on November 6th!

*Craig*

## **Round Table Business**

President Craig Breneiser called the October meeting of the First Defenders Civil War Round Table to order at 6:20 p.m. at the Inn at Reading on October 9, 2018, for 51 members in attendance. Following a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance, Craig welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited everyone to enjoy dinner and then resumed the meeting at 7:05 p.m..

Chair reports then were given as follows:

### **Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Tim Antosy reported a balance in the treasury of \$3296.45 as of October 11, 2018. There is currently \$170.00 available for preservation. The unencumbered balance as of September's meeting stands at \$3126.45. Our membership stands at 63.

### **Meal Captain**

Kathy Little announced as a reminder that the deadline for ordering meals is always Friday at noon before the next scheduled meeting. If you have any problems ordering, please call Kathy. Her number is available in the section for "Dinner Reservations" each month. You should receive two replies by email after making reservations online. If you do not, be sure to let Kathy know by telephone. Your reservations may not have gone through. She also thanked everyone for cooperating with this procedure.

### **Programs**

Dave Unger announced that Kevin Pawlak would be presenting the program in November. His topic is the Battle of Shepherdstown. You may read more about this program at the end of the newsletter as well as on the website.

### **Joe's Jaunts-Gettysburg**

On Saturday, October 13, 2018, on the Gettysburg Battlefield, James Hessler, a Battlefield Guide and author of *Sickles at Gettysburg*, guided 11 round table members on a comprehensive tour of the area where Major General Daniel Sickles and his Third Corps fought on July 2, 1863. Mr. Hessler spoke to our round table last spring on this topic, and on Saturday we visited the scene of the action. Daniel Sickles remains to this day one of the most controversial figures at Gettysburg and beyond.

From the base of Little Round Top to the Sherfy House, we studied for 3 1/2 hours the topography of the field while Jim filled in the information needed to visualize and understand what occurred on July 2. It is safe to say that all in attendance had a top-notch tour followed by lunch before heading home.

Joe is to be congratulated and thanked for a terrific day. He has already done the groundwork for Saturday, May 4, 2019, for a spring jaunt to Harpers Ferry with Dennis Frye taking charge of the tour. Dennis has given programs several times at the round table and never disappoints with his knowledge and enthusiasm. The fall of 2019 offers still another jaunt to Gettysburg studying Longstreet's march/counter-march with Jim Hessler as our guide once again. If you have not participated in any of the "jaunts", you are missing a unique opportunity for small-group study and fellowship with other members.

## Adopt-A-Position

We had our work day for AAP on Thursday, September 27 at Gettysburg National Park. Roger Cotterill and Don Stripling worked on the Buford and Reynolds Equestrian Monument while Gary Hertzog, Kathy Little And Barbara Shafer worked on Benning's Brigade (TX) on South Confederate, 18th PA Cavalry located at Big Round Top and 6th PA Cavalry.

The two groups met for lunch. We then worked on Greggs Monument, we are waiting on a decision of the Park to paint the fence surrounding the monument.

We then worked at WV 1st Cav (Farnsworth), removing vegetation along the stone wall. We completed about half of the removal when it started to rain. We will concentrate on this area in the spring. Our last monument was the 8th PA Cavalry where we returned our equipment.

Our second group went to Gettysburg Baking Company located on the Square. Our driver ate his dessert one block away from it and was ready to get another dessert. It was a great ending for the day and expect it to be part of future work days.

All of the sites looked much improved with our effort. We did identify another site for a future adoption. When we adopt another site, our first visit requires the most effort. Maintenance is needed after that point.

Our next work date will be in the spring of 2019. We will wait the Park's decision on painting Gregg's 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 part will be at the adopted site. All work at the project site must be prearranged with the AAP Coordinator. The coordinator at Gettysburg is Caitlin Brown at 717-338-4479. If you would like a current list of sites to adopt, contact Caitlin at the Gettysburg National Military Park.

## Website

Webmaster Lisa Breneiser reported speakers through December have been booked. She reminded everyone to check out all of the book titles available for purchase on the website. The list is being updated. There's no need to wait for the book raffle if you see something that you would like to purchase. Just give the titles to Gary Hertzog. Remember that all proceeds go toward battlefield preservation.

## Book Raffle

Gary Hertzog thanked our speaker Ryan Quint for donating one of his books, *Determined to Stand and Fight*, to our book raffle for the evening prior to the raffle. A \$200 donation with a leverage was made to the American Battlefield Trust in Ryan's name. Gary thanked members for helping our efforts for preserve battlefield lands.

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**NEWSFLASH (Beyond the Civil War!):** Charter member Rich Kennedy has written a full one-act play, "Following Sisyphus," a modern-day dramedy with several references to Reading. You will connect. Single performance only in the DoubleTree "Birch Room" Theater at 701 Penn Street in Reading on November 4th at 2 PM with complimentary parking. The cost is \$10 at the door with open seating. 100% of the proceeds will be donated to COCA. This is a two-character play with both players being accomplished actors from Lancaster and Dauphin Counties. It is directed by Dr. John Rohrkemper of Elizabethtown College. **Sit down--buckle up--hold on. It gets bumpy!**

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## Clark Hartman Wells

from Dave Unger

This is a summary of a *Reading Eagle* article written by Ron Devlin.

Clark Hartman Wells of Reading, a Naval Academy graduate in 1846, was a Civil War hero during part of his excellent 37 year career in the United States Navy. In the Battle of Port Royal in 1861, he was the executive officer of the USS *Susquehanna* under Captain James Lardner. There he was commended for his bravery and service in the successful capture of Port Royal Sound in South Carolina.

In 1862 he was an executive officer of the Philadelphia Naval Yard and then in 1864 joined the West Gulf Squadron as commander of the *Galena*, an ironclad gunboat. During the Battle of Mobile Bay, Wells bombarded Fort Morgan and commanded two vessels when another captain was wounded. Admiral David Farragut, commander of the Union Navy at Mobile Bay commented on Captain Wells' bravery in his official report. He said about Wells in his official report, "The command of two vessels, devolved upon you, and were carried through the battle with great gallantry,....." I take pleasure in giving my official testimony to your meritorious conduct in that engagement."

Wells was commissioned a commander in 1866 and promoted to captain in 1871. His distinguished service and high reputation won him the Legion of Merit from the French government in 1875.

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### From Mike Straus--

Lt. Alonzo Cooper, 12th New York Cavalry, was made a prisoner at Plymouth, North Carolina on April 20, 1864. He records fortunately that he was not doomed to be a resident of Andersonville. Whereas out of eighty- five comrades who belonged to the same detachment of cavalry, and who were destined to suffer the blood-curdling horrors of Andersonville, only eighteen ever lived to relate the fiendish cruelty to which they were obliged to submit.

Along with the other officers, he was separated from the enlisted men and sent to Camp Oglethorpe in Macon, Georgia. They would sing:

In the prison pen I sit, thinking mother most of you,  
And the bright and happy home so far away,  
While the tears they fill my eyes, spite of all that I can do,  
Though I try to cheer my comrades and be gay.

Tramp, tramp, tramp the boys are marching,  
Cheer up, comrades, they will come,  
And beneath the starry flag, we shall breathe the air again,  
Of the free land, in our own beloved home.

In the battle front we stood, when their fiercest charge was made,  
And they swept us off, a hundred men or more,  
But before we reached their lines, they were driven back dismayed,  
And we heard the shout of victory o'er and o'er.

Tramp, tramp, tramp the boys are marching,  
Cheer up, comrades, they will come,  
And beneath the starry flag, we shall breath the air again,  
Of the free land, in our own beloved home.

So within the prison pen, we are waiting for the day,  
That shall come and open wide the iron door,  
And the hollow eye grows bright, and the poor heart almost gay,  
As we think of seeing friends and home once more.

*In and Out of Rebel Prisons*

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Lt. A. Cooper

## **Speakers and Programs for 2018-2019** **23rd Campaign**

<b>December 11th</b>	<b>Craig Breneiser</b>	<b>"The Second Battle of Franklin"</b>
<b>January 8th</b>	<b>Mark Quattroco</b>	<b>"The U.S. Army Medical Department in the Civil War"</b>
<b>February 12th</b>	<b>Wally Heimbach</b>	<b>"Phil Kearny"</b>
<b>March 12th</b>	<b>Jim Lawler</b>	<b>"The Sultana Disaster"</b>
<b>April 9th</b>	<b>Scott Mingus</b>	<b>"The Louisiana Tigers at Gettysburg"</b>
<b>May 14th</b>	<b>Paul Kahan</b>	<b>"Ulysses S. Grant &amp; Reconstruction"</b>

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### **November Program** **Antietam Endgame**

The events leading up to the Battle of Antietam have been recounted many times and are generally familiar to most Civil War students: Lee's decision to move into Maryland following his summer triumphs over two Union armies, Lincoln's decision to restore McClellan to command of the Army of the Potomac, the famous "Lost Order," the struggles at South Mountain, Jackson's capture of 12,000 Federal soldiers at Harper's Ferry, and, finally, the bloodiest day in American history on September 17, 1862 along the banks of the Antietam Creek near Sharpsburg. But, the story does not end when the sun sets on that late summer day, and more than 72 hours remain in the Maryland Campaign. This program examines the next three days...September 18-20...and their repercussions for the Lee's first venture across the Potomac.



*Kevin Pawlak works as a Licensed Battlefield Guide at Antietam National Battlefield and is education specialist for the Mosby Heritage Area Association. Kevin also sits on the Board of Directors of the Shepherdstown Battlefield Preservation Association, the George Tyler Moore Center for the Study of the Civil War at Shepherd University, and the Save Historic Antietam Foundation. Previously, he has worked and completed internships at Harper's Ferry National Historical Park, The Papers of Abraham Lincoln at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, and the Missouri Civil War Museum. Kevin graduated in 2014 from Shepherd University where he studied Civil War history and historic preservation. He is the author of Shepherdstown in the Civil War: One Vast Confederate Hospital, published by The History Press in 2015.*

## **Dinner Reservations for the Tues. November 13, 2018 Meeting:**

If possible please make your meal choices/reservations on the website. Our meal choices for November include: Roasted Turkey with Cornbread Stuffing; Roasted Sirloin of Beef; Key West Salmon; or Eggplant Parmigiana with Fettuccini and Marinara Sauce. 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 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, Nov. 9, 2018, 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.**