

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

October 2018



www.firstdefenderscwrts.us

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I have spent the last several weeks (or were they months or maybe even years?) agonizing over the lack of civility amongst our elected leaders, the screeds of supposed bastions of the world's finest examples of journalism and the discordant bellowing from just about everyone with their own personal electronic trumpet. I have concluded that I have arrived at the same place previously visited by my father and grandfather (and, I suspect, my ancestors before): the current generation is on its way to Hell and is not now a mile off!

Then I try to find solace in my books, and quickly realize the Civil War era was hardly less on that same road to Hell. Republicans and Democrats could hardly agree on anything, and the election of Abraham Lincoln resulted in the country being torn asunder. Even the respective halves suffered through their own inability to...paraphrasing Benjamin Franklin...hang together. Radical Republicans were misguided zealots to their more conservative party brethren, and so-called War Democrats (what today would likely be known as DINOs: Democrats In Name Only) were venomously attacked by the Copperhead Peace Democrats (let THAT oxymoron sink in for a moment!). South of the Mason-Dixon Line, the political battle lines were a bit less murky: there was Jefferson Davis and then there was nearly everyone else.

As this is being written, all eyes are on the Senate Judiciary Committee. "Circus" has been used repeatedly to describe the recent proceedings with respect to a Supreme Court nominee (and one has to wonder what sane individual would actually *want* the job given the over-the-top hate and discontent exhibited by opponents *and* proponents alike). However, the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War far-and-away surpassed anything we are seeing today when it comes to witch hunts, injustice, sanctimony, character assassination and (wait for it!) leaks to newspapers that made no pretension of fair, objective reporting and proudly proclaimed their partisanship while accepting government printing contracts.

And yet, somehow the nation has survived in spite of itself. Perhaps the United States has been truly blessed by an all-powerful God (or, perhaps, the Supreme Being turns to us for comedic relief!). The ship-of-state rocks back-and-forth like the latest amusement park roller coaster, but it never seems to capsize and always ends up safely bringing its passengers back to safety. We survived the Civil War and two world wars that would follow, and managed to make great strides in human dignity

and equality while leading the rest of the world forward in science, industry, technology, medicine and countless other forms of progress. While Hell may appear on the horizon, we can take comfort knowing that others have passed through this crucible before and this fiery trial, too, will become history. We know not how we will survive or what the future portends, but this experiment that is the United States of America will endure, and subsequent generations will have their opportunity to experience seeing Hell just a mile off.

Craig

Round Table Business

Beginning our 23rd Campaign, President Craig Breneiser called the September meeting of the First Defenders Civil War Round Table to order at 6:20 p.m. at the Inn at Reading on September 11, 2018, for 55 members and guests in attendance. Following a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance, Craig welcomed everyone to the meeting following our summer hiatus. One guest, as well as two new members, were introduced.

The first item of business informed those in attendance of Joe Schaeffer's recent illness and of Ev Binns' hospitalization. We wish both gentlemen a speedy recovery and a swift return to the group.

Chair reports then were given as follows:

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Tim Antosy reported a balance in the treasury of \$3092.02 as of September 14, 2018. There is currently \$213.00 available for preservation. The unencumbered balance as of September's meeting stands at \$2879.02. Our membership stands at 92.

Preservation

Welcome back to another season and Season 22 is off to a flying start with a great speaker Chris Mackowski and with raising \$152 from our book raffle and with members making donations. Thanks to all of you for our supporting our Preservation efforts.

In addition the membership approved the round table making two donations. The first is to the American Battlefield Trust for \$200 to put toward a matching grant they are running for \$4.85-\$1 for 3 battlefields-- Shiloh, TN, Glendale, VA, and Fredericksburg, VA. This donation was also made in the name of our speaker, Chris Mackowski.

The second donation is \$100 to the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation for the matching grant that they are running at \$10-\$1 for Fisher's Hill at Cedar Creek. With these donations, this puts our total contribution for this season at \$1970.

Gettysburg once again made the news as WalMart is looking to move the location they currently have in Gettysburg to land across the road from Benner's Hill and the Daniel Lady Farm. The Gettysburg Battlefield Preservation Association which owns the Lady Farm is working on trying to stop WalMart from building. Right now the zoning board for Upper Swatara Township first has to decide on whether to approve allowing WalMart to build there. We will keep everyone posted as news updates are announced.

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.

September Book Raffle

Mark Quattroch and Lisa Breneiser stepped in for Gary Hertzog to hold the monthly book raffle. Sales of tickets were brisk in advance of the drawing for 10 books which were raffled. Thanks to all who buy tickets which have made it possible to donate more than \$256,000 for battlefield preservation over the past 22 years.

Programs

Dave Unger announced that Ryan Quint would be presenting the program in October. His topic is the Battle of Monocacy. You may read more about this program at the end of the newsletter as well as on the website.

Joe's Jaunts-Gettysburg

The next field trip (Joe's Jaunts) will be Saturday, October 13, 2018, on the Gettysburg Battlefield. James Hessler, a Battlefield Guide and author of *Sickles at Gettysburg*, will guide us on a tour of the area where Major General Daniel Sickles, Third Corps fought on July 2, 1863. Mr. Hessler spoke to our round table last spring on this topic, and now we will visit the scene of the action. Daniel Sickles remains to this day one of the most controversial figures at Gettysburg and beyond.

We plan to begin the tour at 9:00 a.m. with the meeting place to be determined. You can expect a 3-hour tour. Some easy-to-moderate walking will be required. Please wear good walking shoes and long pants as we expect to be in fields and woods. Staying with our protocol, please arrange your own transportation and try to carpool.

Please contact Joe Schaeffer at 610-334-2029 or jschaeffer@edgeabstract.com before the October meeting if you plan on attending. If you do not have a ride, we can work on that at the meeting. If we get 15 people, we can expect the guide fee including a tip, to be at or under \$20.00. If interested, I will arrange a place for us to have lunch and a beer after the tour. That worked out well last spring. Thanks. Joe

Newsletter

Linda Zeiber announced that the deadline for newsletter submissions for October is Tuesday, September 18. She will be leaving on a trip so late submissions will not be included in the October newsletter.

She thanked Lisa Breneiser for taking over her responsibilities for the summer board meeting minutes as well as writing and publishing the September newsletter. She did an excellent job on both. If any member would like a copy of the board minutes, let Linda know and they will be provided to you. Call at 610-678-1168 or email to zeibers@comcast.net.

Website

Webmaster Lisa Breneiser reported that our website has been updated. She gave a reminder to everyone to check out all of the book titles available for purchase on the website.. 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.

NEWSFLASH (Beyond the Civil War!): Charter member Rich Kennedy has written a full one-act play, "Following Sisyphus."

It is a modern-day dramedy with several references to Reading. You will connect. Single performance only.

This will be a dramatized staged reading with adult themes on Sunday 4 November at 2 p.m.

DoubleTree "Birch Room" theater at 701 Penn Street. Complimentary parking with validation.

\$10 at the door. Open seating. 100% will be donated to COCA.

Two-character play. Both players are 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!

Adopt-A-Position

The fall date to work at our sites at Gettysburg National Park is Thursday, September 27. We will have eight sites to work on. To accomplish this we need YOU to volunteer. Please let Don Stripling (610-750-3998) or Barbara Shafer (484-336-8995) know if you are able to participate.

October Program

The Battle of Monocacy: In Their Words

The comparatively small action along the Monocacy River near Frederick, Maryland, on July 9, 1864 is often called "The Battle that Saved Washington." There, a pick-up force of Union troops under the command of Major General Lew Wallace stalled the storied Second Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia for much of the day before being compelled to fall back. A tactical loss for the North, it would prove a strategic victory by delaying Jubal Early's Confederates long enough for additional troops to be rushed from the Petersburg trenches to the defense of the national capital. Early may have "scared Abe Lincoln like hell," but he failed to



take Washington. However, rather than looking at the Monocacy commanders, this talk focuses on five common soldiers...three Yankees and two Rebels...who fought the battle by examining their writings to see what the private soldiers on the field can tell us about the "The Battle that Saved Washington."

Ryan Quint graduated from the University of Mary Washington and is a seasonal park historian at the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. His Civil War interests focus on the Union armies and Jubal Early's 1864 invasion of Maryland. He is author of the Emerging Civil War Series book Determined to Stand and Fight: The Battle of Monocacy.



Speakers and Programs for 2018-2019

23rd Campaign

November 13	Kevin Pawlek	Battle of Shepardstown
December 11	Craig Breneiser	Battle of Franklin
January 8, 2019	Mark Quattroch	US Army Medical Dept. in the Civil War
February 12	Wally Heimbach	Phil Kearny
March 12	Jim Lawler	The Sultana Disaster
April 9	Scott Mingus Sr.	The Louisiana Tigers at Gettysburg
May 14	Paul Kahan	U.S. Grant and Reconstruction

Dinner Reservations for the Tuesday, October 9, 2018

Meeting:

If possible please make your meal choices/reservations on the website. Our meal choices for October include: Greek Stuffed chicken with Spinach, Feta cheese, Lemon, Olive Oil; chopped Sirloin with Onion Sauce; Potato Crusted Cod with Dill Cream Sauce; or Rigatoni with Zesty Vegetable Marinara. Salad, 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, October 5, 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.**