

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

December 2017



www.firstdefenderscwrt.us

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thanksgiving. A time to give thanks which, as we learned in elementary school, began way back in 1621 when the Pilgrims first took time to express their appreciation to God for seeing them through the trials and tribulations of the previous year.

It was nearly 170 years later when George Washington made the first presidential Thanksgiving proclamation in November 1789. By then, the first rudimentary settlements in the New World had officially become the United States of America, and most Americans were certain they had been especially blessed by Providence.

The Father of Our Country could hardly have anticipated that only seven decades in the future there would be "dueling" proclamations for thanks from competing presidents of the nation he had sired:

- November 15, 1861: Jefferson Davis calls for a "Day of Fasting & Humiliation" seeking Divine support for, "...victory over our enemies, preserve our homes and altars from pollution and secure to us the restoration of peace and prosperity."
- April 10, 1862: Abraham Lincoln proclaims thanksgiving for his people to, "...reverently invoke the divine guidance for our national counsels, to the end that they may speedily result in the restoration of peace, harmony and unity throughout our borders and hasten the establishment of fraternal relations among all the countries of the earth."
- September 18, 1862: Jefferson Davis calls for a day of thanksgiving so that, "...we should bow down in adoring thankfulness to that gracious God who has been our bulwark and defense, and to offer unto him the tribute of thanksgiving and praise."
- August 6, 1863: Abraham Lincoln again proclaims a day of thanksgiving, "...for augmented confidence that the Union of these States will be maintained, their Constitution preserved and their peace and prosperity permanently restored."

It would be Father Abraham who would finally have the last word on Thanksgiving when on October 3, 1863 he would call, "...to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a day of thanksgiving and praise to our benevolent Father who dwelleth in the heavens...with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience...and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it, as soon as may be consistent with the divine purpose, to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility and union."

Leading lights of the age knew where to seek help for a distressed people and to whom thanksgiving was due. Perhaps it is time to forsake football and turkey and again focus on the time-honored way to seek "peace, harmony, tranquility and union."

For the Glory,

Craig

Round Table Business

President Craig Breneiser called the November meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. at the Inn at Reading on November 14, 2017. Everyone was reminded to buy raffle tickets and note that the 12-volume set, *The Rebellion Record*, published in 1868, was being auctioned in addition to the usual assortment of books. At 7:10 p.m., Craig offered a prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance for the 53 members present.

Two new members were welcomed bringing the total membership to 87 for the current campaign. Craig reported that Membership chair Dave Sweigert is having major surgery on November 22nd. We wish him and Ev Binns, who's been experiencing respiratory problems, speedy recoveries. We hope to see both Dave and Ev soon.

Preservation

The November meeting has come and gone and we raised another \$231 for Preservation. Of this, \$156 came from the Book Raffle and \$75 came from a Silent Auction for the *Rebellion Records* Series of books. Thanks to all of you who purchased tickets for the book raffle and who made bids for the Silent Auction. Your support continues to be greatly appreciated.

The Civil War Trust came out with a Matching Grant of **\$14,10-\$1** to save 1053 acres across 7 Battlefields. They are: Brice's Crossroads, MS, Cedar Creek, VA, Champion Hill, MS, Corinth, MS, Monocacy, MD, Second Deep Bottom, VA and Prairie D'Ane, AR. The membership approved donating **\$200** towards this grant making our Total Contribution **\$2820**.

Here are the updated Preservation totals:

Season 21

Total Amount Raised: **\$584**

Total Amount Donated without Matching Grants: **\$400**

Total Contribution with Matching Grants: **\$4820**

All Seasons(to present)

Total Donated without Matching Grants: **\$30,779**

Total Contribution with Matching Grants: **\$233,753**

Mark Quattrock

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Tim Antosy presented his report at the November meeting. Our balance as of November 15, 2017, stood at \$ 4,238.43 with \$425.00 ear-marked for preservation. The unencumbered balance as of November 15, 2017, is \$3,818.43 with 87 members paid. Thanks to the membership. The book auction brought in \$75.00--all of it for preservation. Thank you.

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.

Newsletter

Linda Zeiber reported the deadline for the December newsletter is November 21st. The deadline is always one week following each meeting. Everyone has done a great job in submitting articles promptly for the December edition.

Book Raffle

There will be another special auction at December's meeting of *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* published in 1884. This set of 4 volumes is in excellent condition and would be a great addition to anyone's library. Gary Hertzog reports an abundance of books in his possession and is considering listing titles on our website where books could be purchased for \$5.00 each. All money raised will be put into our preservation fund.

Remembrance Day Weekend in Gettysburg 2017

In last month's newsletter, I urged everyone who had never attended a Remembrance Day weekend to do so since the experience is unique and moving...a must-see for Civil War and Gettysburg students. This past Remembrance Day weekend was a totally new experience for me. The political upheaval which is disrupting life in America has arrived in Gettysburg.

The Gettysburg Times had received a credible, threatening letter, the contents of which were not divulged but to authorities. Visitors and reenactors were warned to be vigilant and report any suspicious items or activities. Park Service, FBI, ATF, and various police descended on our beloved town.

Friday's disruptive event involved a Confederate/Nazi flag burning in front of the Adams County Courthouse. While a reporter from the *Gettysburg Times* described a "crowd" present, the number was around 40 people which included local authorities. No obvious press presence was probably responsible for a quick dispersal of participants and passersby.

The parade scheduled for Saturday was halved in length so that police could concentrate their presence along the route. All side streets along Baltimore Street from the Gettysburg Middle School to the Park entrance on Steinwehr were blocked off with snow plows, dump trucks, police cars and vans, and any other large vehicles which prevented vehicles access to Baltimore Street. Snipers were present on top of the 1863

Inn! Mother Nature stepped in to lend a hand with several hours of pouring rain. Many reenactors chose to skip the parade, but a surprising number of spectators cheered on the hearty participants who marched during that driving and bone-chilling rain.

Of course, the luminaries in the cemetery were cancelled because of the wind and rain; however, the Dedication Service in the National Cemetery went on Sunday morning as scheduled with dry skies and much security. Keynote Speaker and Lincoln Scholar Harold Holtzer gave an insightful address about monument destruction. Everyone interested in retaining or destroying monuments should have heard to his wise words.

This is the new reality that I fear we will experience in the future. The weekend has never been about "celebration"--rather somber reflection and memory to honor those who fought, died, and lived in Gettysburg in 1863. Those forces who would choose to wipeout memory of our past will no doubt keep showing up. Despite all of it, I have made my reservations for next November!

Linda Zeiber

From Correspondent Mike Straus--

Reenlistment Incentives
Strawberry Plains, Tennessee
29 Dec '63

Our brigade has camped for a few days near a railroad bridge at the Tennessee River. Last June, this bridge was destroyed by our cavalry, and we must rapidly work on it in order to rebuild it.

Our soldiers have arduous work, because they must carry all the wood a long way to the construction site- such work would be better suited to a team of six mules than to poor soldiers. But a mule would be ruined, they cannot be used so hard.

We are also deficiently supplied with food. Lately they supply us with almost nothing but corn meal containing the husks that one normally separates from the meal before feeding it to the swine. Bacon, without which nothing can be done with the corn meal, is given to us in such small quantities that it is hardly worth the effort.- So it is also with the coffee and salt, the last article we must sometimes buy ourselves, and at high prices.

It is not only about the lack of food about which we have to complain, but also clothing.- We departed from Chattanooga with completely tore up shoes, socks, shirts, etc., and have received nothing since then other than a single time several pairs of shoes, socks, pants and shirts, barely a tenth of what is needed by a regiment. Most of us were obliged to buy shoes and socks and pay outrageous prices.

They do not seem concerned about us at all. We must do our duty, whether we stand barefoot in our torn up shoes or not, whether we lack an overcoat or cover to protect us from the cold and rain day or night. Our tents have been worn out for a long time, so they barely protect us against the wind, let alone against storms. Getting new ones is not being taken care of and if we requisition new ones then we are responsible for paying for them ourselves.

Today the various orders regarding re-enlistment were first read to us by Colonel Erdelmeyer. There is opportunity until the 5th of next month, for all who intend to serve to notify company commanders.

Gallant Dutchmen
Civil War Letters from the 32nd Indiana
Pages 167-8
August Willich

December Program

October 8, 1862- Perryville-The Battle That Wasn't Supposed to Be

As the summer of 1863 waned, the two major armies of the fledgling Confederacy go on the offensive. One, the Army of Northern Virginia led by the indelible Robert E. Lee, begins what has become known as the Maryland Campaign. The other, the Army of Mississippi, led by a new general, Braxton Bragg, initiates his Kentucky Campaign. Both campaigns will test the mettle of the armies and men involved. Heroes will be created, mistakes will be made and for one general his ability and tactics tested.

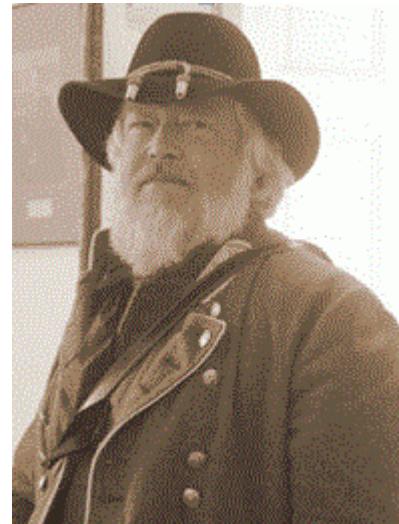
The Maryland Campaign of Robert E. Lee culminates with the tactical draw at Sharpsburg, and has been heavily researched and reported. But, what of the other major campaign? What do you know of the Kentucky Campaign, other than the Battle of Perryville coming three weeks after Lee's return to Virginia?

First Defender Greg Stull will give an overview of the planned Kentucky Campaign and another unplanned battle which, much like Sharpsburg, wasn't supposed to happen.

Greg Stull has had a lifelong interest in the War for Southern Independence. He grew up listening to the rich family history being told by relatives during summer visits to his grandparent's home in Mississippi and his aunt's farm in Tennessee. He is a descendant of Leonidas Polk, the Fighting Bishop, through his mother, and also had relatives that fought with the 1st Tennessee Cavalry. In addition to relatives on his mother's side fighting in the western campaign he also had relatives on his father's side with the 27th & 22nd Virginia infantry regiments as well as a few on Yankee side with the 6th & 7th Maryland infantry units.

Greg and wife Sherri have four children and two grandchildren (their youngest son is currently serving proudly with the 173rd Airborne). He is also a Lutheran Lay Minister and is employed as an engineer for a steel company. In his spare time, Greg is a member of the SCV, Meredith Poole Camp. He and his wife are also active members of Lee's Lts Army of Northern Va, living history group as well as with the 21st NC

Reenactor group. As living historians, Greg and his wife portray Francis and Lt. General Leonidas Polk. With the 21st NC, they both take the field as privates. Greg has given many speeches in first person as Gen Polk over the years at Round Tables (this is his second for the First Defenders!) and organized re-enactments.



Speakers and Programs for 2017-2018

January 9	Dale Kratzer: "Naval Schemes, Plots & Interesting Tidbits"
February 13	David Ward: "96th PA Volunteers"
March 13	Wayne Motts & Jim Hessler: "Pickett's Charge"
April 10	Ed Bearss: "Shiloh"
May 6	Jim Hessler "Sickles at Gettysburg"

Dinner Reservations for the Tuesday, December 12, 2017 Meeting:

If possible, please make your meal choices/reservation on the website. Our meal choices for December include: Chicken Cordon Bleu; Roasted Pork Loin with raspberry sauce; Stuffed Flounder; or Linguini Forno with fresh vegetables tossed in garlic sauce and pasta. Soup, starch, vegetables, dessert, rolls, coffee, tea, and water are included. The price is \$25.00 inclusive for meals.

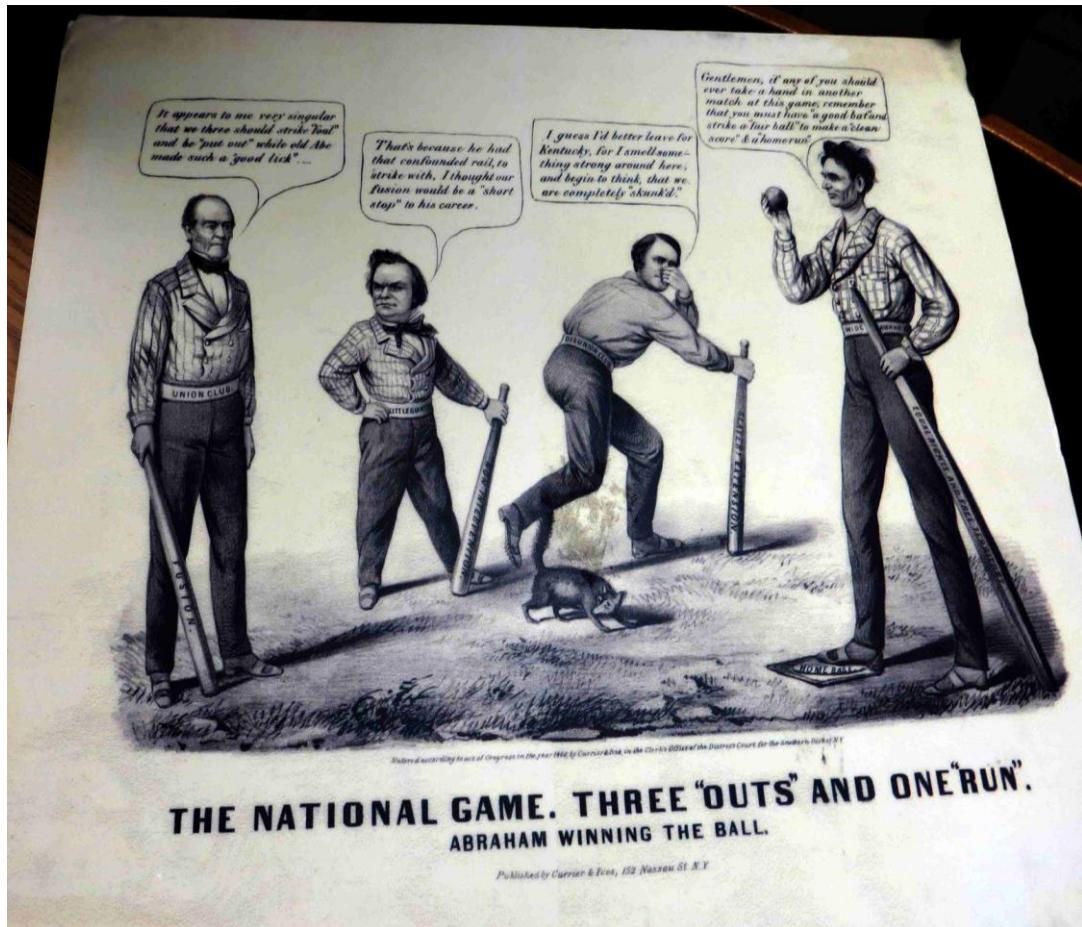
If you make your reservation online and you do not receive a thank-you and/or a confirmation email, your reservation did not go through. If you must call in reservations, please call your menu selection to Kathy Little at 610-367-8082 no later than noon Friday, December 8, 2017, which is also the deadline 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.**



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The Election of 1860 gave rise to the above political baseball cartoon. Joe Schaeffer, Ron Emge, Wally Heimbach, and Errol Steffy took a "jaunt" to the Baseball Hall of Fame recently and were given a behind-the-scenes tour which included viewing this original document. Thanks, Errol, for sharing this with us!