

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

December 2018



www.firstdefenderscwrts.us

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Perceptions. We all develop our own as they relate to the people, places and things that adorn our lives. It is natural for us to perceive someone as either a delightful individual or a complete fool. A favorite mountain retreat for one could be sheer agony to the rest of the family. And an evening with friends and Civil War programs could be a relaxing getaway that causes our significant other to roll their eyes so hard they can almost see their brain! Our perceptions may not extend to others, and this is sometimes difficult to accept. Especially when those perceptions are long-held and deeply-engrained.

This truth came to mind a few weeks ago when I intended a living history interpretation with Mary Todd Lincoln. I was immediately struck by her southern accent, but, upon reflection, why would I be surprised given that Mary was born and reared in Kentucky? Still, Sally Field displayed no accent in her *Lincoln* performance a few years ago, and Mary Tyler Moore similarly spoke *sans drawl* in Gore Vidal's *Lincoln* back in 1988. Although many portrayals of Mrs. Lincoln relegated her to little more than speechless window dressing, it is difficult to recall even one with a Kentucky twang.

The perception extends further as we see Mary as somewhat loony and a stress on her husband at times when he certainly did not need more stress. We know her as hardly being thrifty, concerned with her own image, incapable of accepting the death of Willie and, eventually, being committed to an asylum by Robert. Yet we seldom consider that she was very well educated (somewhat unusual for antebellum Southern belles), bore four sons of which three would pre-decease her, celebrate her China Anniversary to Abraham while in the White House, serve as an unofficial counselor to the President of the United States while also being a comfort to him during his depressions and would be tenderly holding his hand on April 14, 1865 when an assassin fired a derringer less than two feet from her left ear.

Taken as a whole, my perception of Mary Todd Lincoln has changed. This change is not based on newly-discovered facts or research, but on things often overlooked, not considered important or greatly overshadowed by more salacious characterizations passed on for more than fifteen decades.

In an era of clearly-biased news reporting and cinematic political correctness, it is easy to develop and harbor perceptions. Searching more deeply, though, and opening one's mind to different interpretations or additional information can often lead to an interesting and unexpected catharsis as we continue our life's journey. Embrace the change!

Craig

Round Table Business

President Craig Breneiser called the November meeting of the First Defenders Civil War Round Table to order at 6:18 p.m. at the Inn at Reading on November 13, 2018, for 63 members and guests 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 7:00 p.m.

Chair reports then were given as follows:

Preservation

November's meeting has come and not only did we have a great speaker in Kevin Pawlak; but, thanks to all of you who either bought book raffle tickets or donated money, we raised \$170 for preservation. Thanks to all of you who support the book raffle or donate money. Your support is greatly appreciated.

The Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Association has come up with a matching grant to purchase 209 acres of the Huntberry Farm property that is part of the Third Winchester Battlefield. They are offering a 2:1 match on the first \$31,000 that they receive. This grant is made possible from donors Rod and John Graves and the Luray Caverns Corporation.

There are no new updates in the fight to keep Wal-Mart from building a new store on land near Benner Hill and the Daniel Lady Farm in Gettysburg. The plan Wal-Mart has is to close their current location on the York Road (Route 30) and to move it to the new location. The Gettysburg Battlefield Preservation is leading the effort to fight Wal-Mart and to keep the Upper Swatara Township Commissioners from approving. There are also no new updates on the Camp Letterman site. We will keep you updated as information comes out.

Until next time!

Mark

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Tim Antosy reported a balance in the treasury of \$3706.05 as of November 14, 2018. There is currently \$320.00 available for preservation. The unencumbered balance as of September's meeting stands at \$3386.05. Our membership stands at 76.

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 President Craig Breneiser will be presenting the program in December. His topic is the Battle of Franklin. You may read more about this program at the end of the newsletter as well as on the website. Be sure not to miss one of "our own" at the December meeting.

Joe's Jaunts-Gettysburg

Joe Schaeffer reviewed the most recent jaunt to Gettysburg led by LBG Jim Hessler. Jim made a presentation on General Sickles to the round table in the fall, and the battlefield tour was a companion to his program. Those who attended gave the day high marks in every way.

There are two tours in the planning stages. The first will be to Harper's Ferry on May 4, 2019, led by historian and Guide Dennis Frye. Dennis is well-known to First Defenders and has given several programs in the past. In the fall of 2019, Jim Hessler will once again lead a battlefield tour at Gettysburg covering Longstreet's march and counter-march preceding the July 1863 battle. Details for both tours are forth-coming.

Membership

Joe Schaeffer reported that there are 76 round table members to date with four people signing up prior to the November meeting; but many more members are needed. He encouraged everyone to talk to family and friends about joining the round table. We have a contract with the Inn at Reading for a specific number of dinners per month. We failed to reach that number in October, and, as a result, ended up paying for a dinner that was not eaten. Discussion will be in order in the future to deal with our reduced roster in 2018.

Website

Webmaster Lisa Breneiser 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.

Lisa asked that anyone finding things that need updating to please let her know.

December Book Raffle

Just a reminder that we will have a special raffle for *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*. It is a 9-volume set including an index. The set was published between 1953-1955. Tickets will be sold 3 for \$2.00.

While we do not have any books on Craig Breneiser's 2nd Battle of Franklin topic scheduled for December, we have several biographies on different personalities that were present at that battle. These will be at our December meeting. Thank you for your continued support of our preservation efforts.

Thanks, Gary Hertzog

From Mike Straus--

I have slept in this corner for many a night,
A prisoner of war in a pitiful plight,
I have ate my corn dodger, my bacon and rice,
And have skirmished my shirt and my drawers for lice.

Here's health to Jeff Davis and bad may it be,
May mercy and pardon after him flee,
May he find, when too late, to his sorrow and cost,
that not only the Confederacy, but Heaven he's lost.

In and Out of Rebel Prisons

Page 262

Lt. Alonzo Cooper

Do You Have a CW Ancestor?

If you would like to share information about a Civil War ancestor/s, please forward this to Linda Zeiber at zeibers@comcast.net for inclusion in upcoming newsletters. We are all interested in personal connections to the past.

Space in the newsletter will be a consideration so be patient as to the dates of publication. I will edit or compose if needed. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me.

Linda

Speakers and Programs for 2018-2019

23rd Campaign

January 8th	Mark Quattroch	"The U.S. Army Medical Department in the Civil War"
February 12th	Wally Heimbach	"Phil Kearny"
March 12th	Jim Lawler	"The Sultana Disaster"
April 9th	Scott Mingus	"The Louisiana Tigers at Gettysburg"
May 14th	Paul Kahan	"Ulysses S. Grant & Reconstruction"

December Program

The Second Battle of Franklin

On November 30, 1864 one of the most sanguinary battles of the Civil War took place south of Nashville near the sleepy town of Franklin, Tennessee. By the end of the day, the Confederate army of John Bell Hood had engaged in an assault nearly twice as large as Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg the year before. Crashing up against prepared Yankee breastworks, the resulting carnage in just five hours totaled more than 6,500 Rebel casualties, more than 20-percent, including six general officers one of whom, Patrick Cleburne, was arguably the finest division commander in the Confederate armies. The heart and soul of the Army of Tennessee was gone, and two weeks later that once-valiant fighting force was all-but eliminated in front of Nashville.



The Battle of Franklin is often overlooked.

No national military park exists there, and almost the entire battlefield has been swallowed up by modern development. But, a new battle is in progress, one which is focused on preserving that which is left and interpreting the titanic struggle and its aftermath in a 21st Century fashion. The Second Battle of Franklin is intended to remedy the oversights of the past, pay homage to those who struggled there in what may have been the climactic battle of the Western Theatre and shine a well-deserved spotlight where it has long-been absent.



Craig Breneiser is serving his fourth term as president of the First Defenders Civil War Round Table. This is his second presentation to the group, and he has been long-intrigued by the 1864 Tennessee Campaign that has been eclipsed in history by Sherman's March to the Sea, but which almost certainly played a more critical role in the outcome of the Civil War. Craig is the retired director of the Berks County 9-1-1 Center, and currently works as a consultant for Essential Management Solutions, LLC. He lives with his wife, Lisa, in Lehigh County where he continues to contemplate writing his book.

Dinner Reservations for the Tuesday, December 11, 2018 Meeting:

If possible please make your meal choices/reservations on the website. Our meal choices for December include: Cornbread Stuffed Chicken with Supreme Sauce; Honey Roasted Ham with Grilled Pineapple Sauce; Stuffed Flounder; or Stir-Fry Vegetable Symphony and White Rice. 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, December 7, 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.**

Remembrance Day at Gettysburg 2018

