

The First Defenders Civil War Round Table Newsletter

August 2025, the 29th Campaign



www.firstdefenderscwrt.us

SOMETIMES EXPECTATIONS DO NOT MATCH RESULTS

Sunday, February 9, 2025, was Super Bowl Sunday, and the long NFL season was drawing to a close. Many fans spent the day doing anything to be distracted from their nervousness. Some other anxious fans spent the day watching an endless stream of experts analyze and dissect exactly how the game would play out. Sixty more minutes of football and a championship team would celebrate. To many, the outcome was a forgone conclusion. The Chiefs were riding high having won three of the last five Super Bowl games. Surely this night they would win another ring. The Eagles stood in their way, but didn't the Chiefs always find a way to win? They were confident to the point of arrogance and they would pay dearly. By halftime the game was out of reach, and the Eagles had won a decisive victory.

Similar thoughts come to mind when we consider the Confederate invasion of Pennsylvania in June/July 1863. Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia were on a roll. Time after time in battles against the Army of the Potomac they found a way to win. The Rebel soldiers felt themselves to be invincible. Lee had outwitted a succession of Union commanders. "Fighting Joe" Hooker still commanded the Union army, and Lee had just embarrassed him at Chancellorsville. Now he had designs to do so again. He planned to steal a march on the Yankees and be in Pennsylvania before Hooker could react. A decisive battle might be fought on ground of Lee's choosing, and if the Army of the Potomac suffered a serious defeat north of the Mason-Dixon line, Lincoln would lose face and Northerners might sue for peace. Beyond that, this invasion would keep the Union army from devastating Virginia farms while on the flip side the Rebels might return home fat with captured Yankee livestock and supplies.

Sadly, for Lee and his army, the Yankees did not cooperate. George Gordon Meade assumed command of the Army of the Potomac on June 28th and led them to victory at Gettysburg. The Rebels fought well but made mistakes. The Yankees fought better and made fewer mistakes. When my son, Andrew, was in college at Penn State, he took a class taught by Carol Reardon. She graciously signed for me a copy of her book, "Pickett's Charge in History and Memory," and I have just finished reading it for the second time. She does not attempt to tell the definitive truth of the details of the attack, instead focusing on how the telling of the story evolved over time. Few, if any, authors have approached the story in this way, and I highly recommend the book.

Those Rebel and Yankee soldiers who survived the battle to tell their stories had each seen only that which took place in their tiny universe. Many told a different tale as years passed, sometimes remembering others tales as their own. Some attacked the reputations of others while defending their own actions. Many soldiers, particularly officers who may have added valuable pieces to the puzzle, did not survive while others remained silent.

One of the most interesting chapters in Reardon's book deals with the expectations of the Southern people waiting nervously for news of the outcome. Newspapers for days printed stories of a glorious victory for Lee. As a whole, they refused to consider the possibility of a defeat. Only when hard news filtered through and the casualty lists were published, were their hopes dashed.

The Battle of Gettysburg did not spell the end of the Civil War or Lee's army. It was, however, the beginning of the end: expectations did not match results.

Joe

Round Table Business

Joe called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

There are two new members that have joined us, Bobby Hampson and Bill Clyde. No guests joined us this evening.

Joe noted that a few of our members are having some health issues, but hope to return.

The membership applications for the 29th Campaign starting in June and ending in December 2025 can be found on the website's main page under "VOLUNTEERS NEEDED."

The 30th Campaign will be from April through December 2026.

Treasurers Report

Chuck Bezler reported the balance as of July 8th in the general fund is \$ 652.03, as well as \$157.00 in Preservation.

Membership

Our membership now stands at 27 members for the 29th Campaign, which includes 3 new members.

We received an additional \$ 241 for the 29th Campaign, to support the speaker programs.

Preservation and Book Raffle

At our July meeting the Book Raffle took in \$85. We did not make any donations. Our current Preservation balance is \$242.

The American Battlefield Trust (ABT) is currently seeking to raise money for a Gettysburg Restoration project. The project is divided into 3 phases:

The 1st phase is to remove the Gettysburg Battlefield Military Museum along the Baltimore Pike near the entrance to the GNMP Visitor Center. The land will be restored to its 1863 appearance. Trails, signs and interpretive waysides will be put in place. The total cost of the project is \$700 thousand. The ABT has already raised \$212 thousand, and is attempting to raise the remaining \$488 thousand. This is a \$1 for \$1 match.

Phase 2 concerns the restoration of ground around General Pickett's Buffet off Emmitsburg Road.

Phase 3 is the restoration of the area encompassed by the Gettysburg Country Club off the Chambersburg Pike.

The ABT also has a campaign "Help Save 64 Acres at 4 Virginia Battlefields." The land targeted is 18 acres at Chancellorsville, 40 acres at Kernstown (1st & 2nd Battles) and six acres at Ware Bottom Church Battlefield. Total cost of the acquisition is \$2.2 million. The ABT has already raised 97% of the money needed with only \$60 thousand remaining to complete the purchase. There is a \$37 to \$1 matching grant.

First Defenders CWRT Preservation Score			
29 th Campaign:		Total for all Campaigns:	
Total amount raised-	\$ 157		
Total amount donated-	\$ 0	Total amount donated -	\$ 39,546
Total with matching grants-	\$ 0	Total with matching grants -	\$ 563,097

August Program

Colonel Edward Cross & the "Fighting 5th"

presented by Wally Heimbach

Edward Cross did not aspire to be a soldier, but at the outset of the Civil War he would receive a commission as colonel of the Fifth New Hampshire volunteers which, under two years of his leadership, would see action on the Peninsula, at Antietam, Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. The "Fighting 5th" was considered one of the best regiments in the Army of the Potomac, and Cross would become one of the best colonels who never wore a general's star. Twice wounded, Cross was known to wear a red bandana on his head when going into battle so his men could recognize him. With a premonition of his own death, he would sport a black bandana on July 2, 1863 while on his way to the Wheatfield at Gettysburg where he would be mortally wounded early in the fight and die the next day in a field hospital. This program traces the recruitment and reputation of the 5th New Hampshire and the leadership of Edward Cross.



Wally Heimbach is a long-time Round Table member who seems to know almost everyone who is anyone in modern-day Civil War touring, research and writing. Once the youngest Gettysburg Licensed Battlefield Guide, Wally has previously presented to the First Defenders on Generals Winfield Scott Hancock and Philip Kearny.

29 th Campaign Programs		
Date	Speaker	Program
9/9/2025	Jason Elmerson	<i>Robert Todd Lincoln</i>
10/14/2025	Daminish Miller	<i>Five Women in the Civil War</i>
November 2025 **	Craig Symonds	<i>David Farragut and Chester Nimitz</i>
12/9/2025	Michael Harris	<i>The Philadelphia Campaign (Revolutionary War)</i>

**** The November 2025 meeting will be held on an alternate date to accommodate Craig Symonds presentation. Stay tuned! ****

If you would be interested in presenting to our membership, please reach out to Clark Zimmerman.

Website

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! – The 29th Campaign renewal form is located on the main page of the website under the “Volunteers Needed” icon.

Frank Garmon’s June presentation on “Charles Cowlam; A Wonderful Career in Crime” has been uploaded to the website for members-only viewing.

Dinner Reservations for the Tuesday, August 12, 2025 Meeting & Program Deadline to order is August 8th, NOON.

We had 34 in attendance at the July meeting including our Speaker, Scott Mings.

Our meal choices for August are:

Shrimp Scampi w/ Linguine
½ Black Diamond Steak
Rigatoni w/ Tomato Sauce

If possible, please make your reservation on the website. When doing so, you should receive:

- An immediate email “thank you” for making the reservation.
- A follow-up email that includes a copy of your meal selection, and
- A second email confirmation that everything has worked properly (this may be delayed by up to 24-hours).

If you must call in reservations, please, CALL or TEXT your menu selection to Vicky Heffner at 610.413.5543 no later than **NOON, August 8, 2025**, which is also the deadline for online reservations. The price is \$32.00 inclusive for meals.

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 Giannotti’s, 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.**

Checks may be made payable to “First Defenders Civil War Roundtable”.

Events / Tours/ and Other Happenings

Please feel free to share anything that you are aware of and would like added to the monthly newsletter. Please send them to my email me at Lisa.breneiser@gmail.com.

National Museum of Civil War Medicine Upcoming Events:

Clara Barton Missing Soldiers Office Museum 10th Birthday Party

July 26 @ 11:00 am - 5:00 pm EDT

Join us on Saturday, July 26th, as we celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the Clara Barton Missing Soldiers Office Museum opening!

We will be celebrating the Museum's 10th birthday with **free admission**, guided tours from Clara Barton's perspective, and a very special lecture from Clara Barton interpreter and historian Carolyn Ivanoff on the Missing Soldiers Office.

<https://www.civilwarmed.org/event/clara-barton-missing-soldiers-office-museum-10th-birthday-party/>

Visit the Pry House Field Hospital Barn



The Pry House Field Hospital Museum tells the story of a home that became a hospital during the Battle of Antietam. Visit the Pry Barn (Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.) to see our replica Civil War ambulances and discover how emergency medicine evolved during the Civil War. Special docent talks every Saturday at 1 p.m.

<https://www.civilwarmed.org/event/visit-the-pry-house-field-hospital-barn/2025-05-24/>

Emerging Civil War Symposium "Cities of War"

August 1-3rd

Stevenson's Ridge, Virginia

Sign up here: https://emergingcivilwar.com/ecw_event/2025-symposium/



In Person Sign up: <https://68664.blackbaudhosting.com/68664/Summer-Symposium-2025---History-Meets-Healthcare>

Virtual Sign up: <https://68664.blackbaudhosting.com/68664/Summer-Symposium-2025---History-Meets-Healthcare---Virtual-Attendance>

**A Tour in Pictures: “The New and Improved Little Round Top”
Pictures Courtesy of Vicky Heffner’s Father, Richard Barrell**



Little Round Top



Little Round Top



Looking down at Devils Den



Looking at the Confederate Right Flank



Looking towards the Wheatfield



Looking up at Little Round Top



Looking up at Little Round Top