

Trans-Allegheny Dispatch

The newsletter of the West Virginia Reenactors Association
2015 – Edition 17 – December

Upcoming Events

More information will be added later if made available to the editor

Sanctioned Events

None at this time

Events Recommended by WVRA members

Bulltown – October 7-9, 2016 – Hosted by 10th W. Va. and Army Corps of Engineers, contact WVRA member, Sam Krafft for details

2016

Buchanan, Virginia – April 28-29 (suggested by our friends in the 24th Va/83rd Pa)

New Market – May 12-13

153rd Gettysburg – July 1-3

1st Bull Run – July 22-24?(at Cedar Creek Battlefield)

Sidney, Ohio – Sept. 16-18, 2016

Cedar Creek – October, 2016

Next Meeting

The next WVRA meeting will be January 16, 2016, 1:00 – 3:00, at the Steer Steak House, Weston. Officers will be elected.

WVRA Executive Committee Meeting

Steer Steakhouse, Weston
November 14, 2015

Meeting was called to order by President Mark Tennant, at 1:10 pm. In attendance were Chuck Critchfield, John Brasuk, Elizabeth Brasuk, Jack Rush, Tim Glaser, Bill Brisendine, Diane Tennant, and Mark Tennant.

1. Nominations for officers: The following officers were nominated by the Executive Committee.
 - a. President - Mark Tennant
 - b. Vice President – Bill Brisendine
 - c. Secretary – Jack Rush
 - d. Treasurer - Possibly Jim Barnes. (Chuck will be back up until someone is found).
 - e. Newsletter – Chuck Critchfield
 - f. TASAS – Diane Tennant
 - g. 25th Rep – Chris Johnson
 - h. Cav Rep – John Brasuk
 - i. 1st Rep - vacant

(Editor's note: Website master was not discussed and is presently held by Peter Baxter.)

2. Schedule for next year. Some of the mentioned events were:
 - a. Bull Run (1st Manasas). July 22-24 ?
 - b. 153rd Gettysburg July 1-3.
 - c. Sidney Ohio. Sept 16-18.
 - d. Bulltown. Oct 7-9.
 - e. Hurricane
 - f. Guyandotte
 - g. Cedar Creek

No Rich Mountain or Droop Mountain. Rich Mountain may ask for help with living history scenarios.

Definite event dates will be published in newsletter as they are announced.

3. Memorials. No one officially takes care of this. We have no good way of knowing when something happens. We will try to take care of when someone mentions.

We need to do something for Jack Daft's Dad and Mom. Diane will talk to Tonya about where to make memorial contribution.

4. Droop Mountain
Bryan's Battery asked to take over the Droop Mountain Reenactment. They are a group that is local to Droop Mountain. Tim has given them all of the registration materials. This issue will be brought up at the next regular meeting for discussion.
5. Mark asked about his "Respect and Disrespect" article in the last newsletter. All thought that it was OK. It was thought that the actions by the group was not intentional. Mark said that he would not let anyone come in this area if he ran Droop again.
6. Next group meeting will be January 16, 2016, 1:00 – 3:00, at the Steer Steak House, Weston.

Meeting was adjourned.

Respectively submitted,
J. Rush
November 15, 2015

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Members are reminded to renew their membership for 2016. A renewal form will be included when the newsletter is emailed. Please return to C. L. Critchfield, 608 Skyview Drive, Clarksburg, WV 26301. Do not send to the PO Box in Buckhannon. When I receive the dues payments, I will send an email confirmation.... **IF** I have an email address for that member. Individual dues are \$15 and family dues are \$25. Family dues include family members living at home.

The newsletter is being emailed to dues-paying members with an email address and posted to the website. If you would like the newsletter sent through the US Mail, please add \$15 to cover mailing and printing costs.

Members who have renewed:

General

Hunter Lesser
Elizabeth Swiger

1st West Virginia Infantry

Mike Phillips
Christopher Carroll*
Patrick Carroll
Ed ChapdeLaine
Chuck Critchfield

25th Virginia

Tag Ireland
Ken Connell
Bill Brisendine
Tim Glaser

Artillery

JR Moore

TASAS

Art and Pam Dodd
Peter and Phyllis Baxter
Bill Snyder
Brian Ward and family
Jakob Leshner
Jennifer Smith

We need volunteers to step up and fill the WVRA officer positions. Although a number of members have volunteered to stand for election again as officers, we still have vacancies for Treasurer, 1st W. Va. unit representative. Elections will be held at the January meeting. Military officers were not discussed at the Executive Board meeting, but still have to be nominated also.

President – Mark Tennant

Vice President – Bill Brisendine

Treasurer – Tim Glaser

Secretary – Jack Rush

Newsletter editor - Chuck Critchfield*

Website – Peter Baxter*

1st W. Va. Rep – Chuck Critchfield

25th Va. Rep – Chris Johnson

1st Va. Cavalry – John Brasuk

Artillery – Sam and Connie Krafft

TASAS – Diane Tennant

* Non-voting member of executive board

BOOK REVIEW

America's Great Debate

Henry Clay, Stephen A. Douglas, and the Compromise That Preserved the Union

By Fergus M. Bordewich

The Compromise of 1850 – I knew little about it. Yet it is an important act in the political theater that created the Civil War.

By 1850 the shape and character of the United States had changed. The Mexican War added a large new territory to the country in what we call the Southwest now. In part of that territory, gold was discovered, swelling the population as prospectors surged into the territory and creating pressure to make California a state. At that time, the Senate was balanced between an even number of slave states and free states, giving comfort to the South that they had some control over legislation – particularly legislation concerning slavery. California, if a free state would upset that balance and feed the flames of secession for a select number of Southern “Ultras.” At the same time Texas was claiming all land east of the Rio Grande (including the eastern half of what is now New Mexico), while the folks in New Mexico territory, backed by President Taylor, claimed that land as their own. The Deep South sided with the Texans over who began discussions and preliminary actions to raise an army to march into New Mexico to settle the issue.

Stepping into this potential rift, Henry Clay of Kentucky proposed five compromise bills to settle the crisis and put off the dissolution of the Union. This book describes Clay's efforts to push the bills through and the efforts of his allies and his enemies in the ensuing debate that dragged on for a number of months, paralyzing the Senate and preventing any other business from being considered. The old guard giants, John C. Calhoun and Daniel Webster are joined by the rising stars of the Senate Jefferson Davis, William Seward and Stephen Douglas as the drama

[WVRA Officers 2015 \(executive board\)](#)

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unfolds. Henry Foote (Mississippi) and Thomas Benton (Missouri) would add their extensive voices to the arguments as the long, hot and disease-ridden summer unfolded in swampy Washington, D.C.

Clay rolled out five proposals in an effort to keep the Union together and to satisfy both sections of the country.

- The Fugitive Slave Law was made tougher
- Texas was to surrender its claim to New Mexico and those claims north of the Missouri Compromise Line and in return the Federal Government took over Texas' public debt.
- California was admitted as a free state
- The Wilmot Proviso (outlawing slavery in all new territories) was not adopted. The new Utah territory and New Mexico territory were allowed under the principle of popular sovereignty, to decide whether to allow slavery.
- The slave TRADE was outlawed in Washington, DC

The book details the ups and downs of this process starting with Senator Henry Foote's attempt to kill the proposals by rolling all 5 into a single omnibus bill that all knew would not pass. Opposition to the compromise was weakened by the deaths of John C. Calhoun and President Zachary Taylor, both opponents (for opposite reasons) of the compromise. Eventually Stephen Douglas stepped into the breach after the omnibus failed and guided the 5 individual bills through to passage. This political success catapulted Douglas to the forefront of politics which would lead to him to run for president at the end of the decade.

The Compromise of 1850 was hailed by most at that time as saving the union from splitting into slave and non-slave and as some suggested possibly into slave, northeast, northwest and Pacific Coast countries. Both sides gained something. The North, it can be argued gained a free state in California and the slave trade (not practice) was outlawed in DC. The South benefited from the Wilmot Proviso being struck down and by the strengthening of the Fugitive Slave law. Both sides were helped by the Texas territorial settlement, made just before a Texas army was to march on Sante Fe to enforce the Texas claims to New Mexico lands.

It was "a brilliant example of statecraft, But it was, as historian Sean Wilentz has aptly put it, an 'evasive truce,' a balancing act that delayed, but could not prevent, the bloody reckoning over slavery," according to the author. The Compromise began to unravel soon afterward as other states (Kansas and Nebraska) were preparing to request admission to the Union. The author argues that nothing in the Compromise had "more far-reaching consequences than the Fugitive Slave Law." Northern resistance to the law was strong in some areas initially and fully blossomed into open opposition among the North's populace. Despite efforts by Federal and State officials to enforce the law,

local officials and people resisted it outright and sometime violently. Juries often failed to convict those who assisted fugitive slaves.

By 1860 the Compromise had unraveled completely and as we all know war broke out in 1861. Had the Compromise failed in 1850, war would have likely followed soon. Probably over the Texas – New Mexico border dispute. A war that the South probably would have won. Ten years later though, "northerners outnumbered southerners by seven million people, nearly twice as many as in 1850, while northern states added almost twice as many miles of railroad," etc, etc. From this you can see the author argues, as others do, that the additional 10 years provided the North with the foundation for a chance at winning any war with the South. One of the great what ifs of the war.

- C. L. Critchfield

Editor's Corner

I will only add at this point, the necessity of renewing membership, and finding officers to run the WVRA. In addition, Unit Reps need to start the process to find officers for their respective organizations. A ballot for voting should be forthcoming in a future issue.

Please do not send any correspondence to the PO Box in Buckhannon. Membership information can be sent to me. Remember you must be a member of record to qualify for membership benefits. To be covered under the respective insurance policies that the 1st West Virginia and the 25th Virginia infantry units participate in, you must be a member of record.

The newsletter is being sent by email to members of record who provided a VALID email address. It is posted on the WVRA website also. It is mailed to anyone who pays the \$15 mailing costs. It continues to be my plan to publish related articles of interest in addition to the items mandated by our by-laws (meeting minutes, treasurer's report, etc.).

Yours truly, has no connection to the TASAS-WVRA Facebook page and takes no responsibility for it. Nor do I have any responsibility for the WVRA Facebook page. I would suggest that the TASAS-WVRA Facebook page seems to have more up to date information.

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The views expressed here are not necessarily the views of the WVRA

WVRA website - wvra.org

Facebook – *WVRA – TransAllegheny Soldiers Aid Society*

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