



HARPERS FERRY

CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

PO BOX 1079, HARPERS FERRY, WV 25425

Vol. 33 March 2014 No. 07

DATE: Wednesday, March 12, 2014

TIME: Dinner 7:00 PM; Program 8:00

PLACE: Camp Hill Methodist Church, Harpers Ferry, WV

SPEAKER: Gene Schmiel

SUBJECT: Jacob Dolson Cox and the Creation of West Virginia During the Civil War

The Speaker:

Eugene (Gene) Schmiel is a retired U.S. Department of State Foreign Service Officer who served overseas in embassies or consulates in Sweden, South Africa, Kenya, Djibouti, and Iceland. He was acting Ambassador in Iceland, Djibouti, and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau for a total of two years. Before joining the Foreign Service, he was an Assistant Professor of History at St. Francis University (PA), and taught as an adjunct professor at Marymount, Shenandoah, and Penn State universities. He holds the Ph.D. degree from The Ohio State University and co-authored with his wife Kathryn a book on life in the Foreign Service. In April 2014 his book, *Citizen-General: Jacob Dolson Cox and the Civil War Era*, will be published by the Ohio University Press.

The Subject

While George McClellan and William Rosecrans are well known as the Union army commanders who led Union efforts to push the Confederacy out of West(ern) Virginia and protect civilian efforts to move toward creation of the new state of West Virginia, Jacob Dolson Cox's critical role in that effort as their subordinate and as their successor has all too often been forgotten. A citizen general (non-West Point), Cox led the first Union venture which took control of Charleston and Gauley Bridge in 1861. Working with Rosecrans, he pushed Lee, Floyd, and Wise out of the region in late 1861. In early 1862 he led an autonomous campaign paralleling Fremont's campaign against Jackson, securing Union control all the way to Flat Top Mountain. Cox led his "Kanawha Division" in the Maryland campaign, co-commanding the left wing at Antietam. After the Confederacy pushed back Union forces in his absence, Cox returned to re-establish Union control in Charleston as West Virginia formally gained statehood in June, 1863.

The Meal

A family-style meal will be served at 7:00 PM prior to the program. The cost of the meal is \$15.00 per person. Reservations for the meal **must be phoned in no later than Sunday, March 9th** to Kyle Wichtendahl at 301-639-8855 or you can email him at kfwichtendahl@gmail.com. The meal will Corned Beef and Cabbage, Carrots, Potatoes Iced Tea, Coffee, Irish Soda Bread, Butter & Dessert.

Ask Congress to support Civil War Battlefield Preservation Program

The federal Civil War Battlefield Preservation Program is the primary tool used by the Civil War Trust to save battlefield land. Thanks to this program, every dollar we raise to preserve eligible battlefield land is matched by Uncle Sam — at least doubling the value of your donation. Without the matching grants provided by this program, there is simply no way the Trust would be able to save as much endangered battlefield land as we do.

I urge each and every one of you to contact your U.S. Senators and Representatives, asking them to support full funding for the Civil War Battlefield Preservation Program for fiscal year (FY) 2015. Please:

- (1) use our [simple online advocacy form](#) to write your elected officials on Capitol Hill; and
- (2) make a phone call to each of these officials, politely urging them to support the program.

Nothing gets an elected official's attention faster than a thoughtful, direct and well-reasoned call from a constituent. Please help us fight for the future of battlefield preservation by urging continued funding for this invaluable program.

Our Message:

1. As our nation commemorates the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, I would urge you to support full funding for the federal Civil War Battlefield Preservation Program administered by the National Park Service (NPS).
2. The battlefields already protected as a result of this program are among the most famous in history: Antietam, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Shiloh, Vicksburg and many more.
3. The program's matching grants formula encourages investment from nonprofit groups and private donors like me.
4. The program enjoys broad bipartisan support, and has appeared in every Presidential budget since 2004 (under both Presidents Bush and Obama).
5. Preserved battlefields are living memorials – not just to the men in blue and gray who fought there – but to all American veterans who have honorably served their country in uniform.
6. Preserved battlefields also serve as outdoor classrooms, teaching young and old alike about the sacrifices made to preserve the freedoms we enjoy today. Battlefields also promote tourism, which creates jobs and economic benefits.
7. I recognize that these are difficult economic times and believe everyone should share in the belt-tightening. However, I wanted to make you aware of the program's success.
8. I fear that any reduction to the program's funding would cause battlefield preservation efforts around the country to grind to a halt. With time rapidly running out to save these hallowed grounds, full funding for the Civil War Battlefield Preservation Program will enable us to protect as many key battlefield lands as possible in the limited time remaining.

On this Day, March 15th, 1861

In an important cabinet meeting President Lincoln requested the written opinions of members on whether or not to provision Fort Sumter. He asked, "Assuming it to be possible to now provision Fort-Sumpter [sic], under all of the circumstances, is it wise to attempt it?" Seward was opposed unless it could be done peaceably, for "I would not provoke war in any way *now*." Chase approved, unless it would bring about war. Cameron thought it unwise because of the opinion of military men that it was "perhaps, now impossible to succor that fort, substantially, if at all." Wells was opposed both on military and political grounds. Smith added his opposition to relief as did Bates, while Blair was opposed to evacuation and favored Gustavus Vasa Fox's plan for provisioning. The President postponed his decision. (Excerpted from *The Civil War Day by Day*, E. B. Long, published by Doubleday)