

Trans-Allegheny Dispatch

The newsletter of the West Virginia Reenactors Association
2014 – Edition 9 – December, 2014

Upcoming Events

More information will be added later.

WVRA Sponsored Events

Rich Mountain – July 10-12

Droop Mountain – October 9-11

Events Recommended by WVRA members

Bentonville, March 20-22

Appomattox – April 10-12

<http://www.appomattoxhistoricalsociety.org/150th.htm>

Grand Review – May 17th

Permits obtained and plans moving forward to parade down Pennsylvania Avenue

McConnellsville, Ohio – July 10-12 (Contact Ralph McCready for more information)

USV Annual meeting weekend of Jan. 10

Mountain reenactment. Jim and Linda Barnes have volunteered to order and pick up the meal.

Nominations to date:

- President, Mark Tennant
- Vice President, Bill Brisendine
- Secretary, Jack Rush
- Treasurer, Tim Glaser
- Website, Peter Baxter
- Newsletter, Chuck Critchfield
- 1st W. Va. Unit Rep –
- 25th Va. Unit Rep – Chris Johnson
- 1st Va. Cav. Unit Rep –
- Artillery Unit Rep
- TASAS Unit Rep –

I have received no reports of any military nominations. Just a reminder that it is time to renew your membership for the 2015 season. Send the renewal to Tim Glaser or me.

Next Meeting Is the Annual Meeting – January 3, 1 pm.

President Mark Tennant has set the date for the next meeting at the Weston Steer House off I-79 at Exit 99 (Weston /Buckhannon exit).

The Executive Board will meet at noon, January 3. The General Meeting will begin at 1 pm and will end by 3 pm. We have moved the meeting time to accommodate those driving great distances, to allow them to return home in the light. In case of inclement weather, we will postpone meeting until next time we can get reservations.

Keep in mind that we changed the reenacting year to a calendar year. We no longer run the reenacting year from March 1 until February 28. So that makes this the annual meeting to discuss upcoming events, elect officers etc.

Here is the agenda:

- Nominations for officers.
- Rich Mountain
- Droop Mountain
- School of the Soldier
- Other Units joining the WVRA

President Tennant reports that the Pocahontas County County Drama, Fairs & Festivals is giving us a \$1,500 grant for the Droop

Last Year's Droop Mountain Memorial Dedication Revisited



It's been a year, but I don't think we mentioned the dedication of the new monument at Droop Mountain in the Dispatch to date. So yours truly, the editor, has revisited last year's ceremony, held exactly 150 years after the 1863 battle, the last significant Civil War battle in what is now West Virginia.

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Mike Smith, Droop Mountain Battlefield State Park. Superintendent and historian, planned and organized the moving ceremony, in which the new monument was dedicated. He also designed and installed the natural monument to remember the men who died at the battle or died as a result of wounds.

WVRA members helped to make up the honor guard that participated in the ceremony. Kevin Skaggs, Mark Tennant, Chuck Critchfield, Tim Glaser, Chris Johnson and Bill Brisendine were present along with friends of the WVRA, Tim Boggs and Jake Thompson. The names of the fallen were read one by one during a memorial ceremony and monument dedication at 2 p.m., with *“both Confederate and Federal re-enactor honor guards representing both sides flanking the plaque and standing as one West Virginia.”*

“It probably was the first time ever that the names of men killed in battle were read one by one before a crowd of park visitors,” Smith said. “More than 100 individuals were in attendance for the service. This event was the pinnacle of historical presentation and preservation of statehood history conducted during the sesquicentennial year.”

The afternoon memorial service included the unveiling of a large sandstone monument with a bronze plaque listing the fallen. A poem, “Droop Mountain” by Louise McNeil Pease, was read by Helena Gondry. Terry Lowry, author of “Last Sleep,” made remarks about why Droop Mountain should be remembered. Re-enactors and historians then reverently read the names of the soldiers as the monument were unveiled.

Following the unveiling, Rick Wolfe read a proclamation from Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin recognizing Nov. 6 as the 150th anniversary of the Battle at Droop Mountain. Vegetable soup and cornbread were provided by the Pretty Penny of Hillsboro as attendees mix and mingled following the playing of taps by Rob

Taggart of Green Bank. Taggart also plays the fife before and after the ceremony. “The entire day was a most moving experience for everyone in attendance,” Smith said.

The afternoon was one to remember for this reeanctor. We were able to honor our brave ancestors who participated in this fight that was part of the terrible Civil War which still shapes our nation today.

The monument rests on a pedestal just to the edge of our “dance floor” between the museum, the Ranger’s quarters and the tree line where the sutler’s normally set up. See pictures at end of newsletter.

- C. L. Critchfield with large excerpts from ww.wv.gov website story about the dedication.

Traveller

Traveller's sire was 'Grey Eagle', a 16-hand gray racehorse that was famous for running in a \$20,000 stake race in Louisville, Ky., in 1839. 'Grey Eagle' sired numerous successful race horses and saddle horses, and James W. Johnston purchased a mare named 'Flora' that had been bred to 'Grey Eagle', and had her shipped to his home in Greenbrier County, Va., where the colt was born in 1857. Johnston foretold the beast's Confederate affiliation by naming him 'Jeff Davis' after Mississippi senator who had gained fame in the Mexican War. It would be several years and another name before the horse was rechristened 'Traveller'.

Before Robert E. Lee acquired 'Traveller' he was in the service of another Confederate officer, Captain Joseph M. Broun, a quartermaster of the 3rd Infantry of Wise's Legion who had purchased the horse for military service from Legion Captain James W. Johnston, a son of the horse's original owner. Captain Broun changed the animal's name from 'Jeff Davis' to 'Greenbrier'. Lee changed 'Greenbrier's' name for the last time, calling him 'Traveller' because of his ability to walk at a fast pace.

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Robert E. Lee first encountered 'Traveller' in Greenbrier County in Western Virginia, the horse that would carry him through most of the war. When Lee became ill in September 1870 and later died on October 12 at his home in Lexington, Virginia, 'Traveller' would accompany his 'master' one last time at Lee's funeral. 'Marse' Robert's faithful war horse would be well cared for up until his death in June of 1871. He is interred just outside Lee Chapel on the campus of Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia... just next to his General's tomb.

- submitted by Chris "CW" Johnson

Listen to the Rebel Yell

Copy and paste this in your browser

http://www.smithsonianmag.com/videos/category/3play_1/what-did-the-rebel-yell-sound-like/?no-ist=

This is how I do it!

<http://www.26nc.org/History/Rebel-Yell/rebel-yell.html>

Many a Yankee was terrified by the dreaded Rebel Yell. But not all: "I hate to hear the Rebles cheer when they make a charge, they put me in mind of small schoolchildren about the time school is out." (The Vacant Chair, p. 15, by Reid Mitchell)



Droop Dedication 2013

THEY SAID IT DIDN'T HAPPEN THAT WAY!

This hobby's purists or experts are adamant that Civil War armies fought in battlelines of two ranks. I have heard that debated by the self-proclaimed experts of 19th-century American warfare. But to every rule there is an exception.

Brigadier General August Willich was one of the Federals "foreign" generals. A former Prussian officer forced out during one of Europe's many 1848 revolutions, he emigrated to the United States and in 1863 was commanding a brigade in the George H. Thomas' XIV Corps at Chickamauga.

"Willich, (Brigadier General Richard H.) Johnson's most trusted brigade commander believed the moment was ripe for another charge....As far as Willich was concerned, the standard two-rank infantry line was insufficient, so he developed a technique he called 'advance fire.' With each regiment formed in four ranks instead of two, the front rank advanced a few steps and fired, then reloaded while the next rank passed through it to do the same, and so on in turn. The result was a rolling wall of fire that could advance or retreat with equal ease." Excerpted from *The Maps of Chickamauga* with a quote from "*The Fifteen Ohio Volunteers and its Campaigns War of 1861-5.*"

THEY WOULD NOT HAVE DONE THAT!!

Would They?

At Antietam's Bloody Lane, a New York regiment pursued some Alabama boys into the cornfield east of the lane. The attack, ran out of steam and the New York boys dropped back.

"The Yankees put on a defiant show. Plucking apples as they retired from the fray, they

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leeringly munched on them between shots in the faces of the Confederates who had not been allowed to plunder the trees for themselves. Major H. A. Herbert (8th Alabama) nearly ordered his entire command to shoot a rude, but undeniably heroic Yankee who fired every round in his cartridge box. His ammunition gone, the cheeky soldier turned his back to Herbert's men, bent over, and nastily patted his backside before skedaddling for the security of Bloody Lane. Herbert and his soldiers, though angered by the invitation to kiss the Yankee's rump, refrained from killing him in recognition of his bravery." *From Antietam: The Soldiers' Battle*

EVERY SOUTHERNER IS WORTH 10 YANKEES

When the "Prince of the Fire Eaters" Robert Rhett delivered a speech during a South Carolina legislative session in late 1860, he assured the audience that Yankees were too spineless to fight should it come to that. Which led Congressmen Milledge L. Bonham to remark "I have seen them fight in Mexico" and they like John Brown, were hardly cowards.

As the South Carolina secession convention droned on in December at Columbia's First Baptist Church, South Carolina attorney and politician James Louis Pettigru was stopped on his way to the church one day and asked for directions to the state insane asylum. The lonely Unionist replied that it stood "upon the outskirts of town," but added pointing at the First Baptist Church "I think you will find the inmates yonder."

Pettigru's most famous quote came after South Carolina voted to succeed from the United States and form the "State of South Carolina an Independent Commonwealth." A disappointed Pettigru was heard to remark that South Carolina "was too small to be a nation and too large for an insane asylum" *From the "Year of Meteors"*

WVRA Officers 2014

President – Mark Tennant
Vice President – Bill Brisendine
Treasurer (interim) – Tim Glaser
Secretary – vacant (Need a volunteer)
Newsletter editor (interim) Chuck Critchfield*
Website – Peter Baxter*
25th Va. Rep – Chris Johnson
1st Va. Cavalary – John Brasuk
Artillery – Connie & Sam Kraft
TASAS – Tonya Daft

* Non-voting member of executive board

Editor's Corner

Thank you to Chris "CW" Johnson for his large contributions to this issue. This is a volunteer organization and volunteers will be needed to help with Droop and Rich Mountain in 2015.

Mandatory Wintertime reading for Yankees (if you have not read them already): *Billy Yank, Hardtack and Coffee, They Fought for the Union and Soldiering, The Civil War Diary of Rice C. Bull.* Rebs should read *Johnny Reb and Co. Aytch.*

Did anyone watch the Battle of Fairmont on the link we sent in a past newsletter? I couldn't get it to load on my computer.

Merry Christmas!

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

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Facebook

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Droop Mountain Memorial Dedication, November 2013. Mark Tennant, Chris Johnson, Chuck Critchfield and Jake Thompson



Tim Boggs, unidentified, Jack Daft and Bill Brisendine