

Trans-Allegheny Dispatch

The newsletter of the West Virginia Reenactors Association
2016 – Edition 9 – August

Upcoming Events

Sponsored Events

None proposed at this time

Sanctioned Events

None at this time

Events Recommended by WVRA members

Averill's Raid and the 35th Star – Aug 13, Fairmont (movie viewing and living history).

Dry Creek (Greenbrier State Forest) – Aug 19-22

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

Elmwood Manor – Union, West Virginia, August 26-28, 2016, contact Chris Johnson at wwaca@hughes.net

Peterstown, WV (Monroe Co.) Civil War Festival Oct 7-9, 2016. Contact: Chris Johnson-
wwaca@hughes.net

Guyandotte (W. Va.) Civil War Days – November 4-6

Other - 2016

Jackson's Mill – September 2-4, 2016

Sidney, Ohio – Sept. 16-18, 2016 (suggested by the USV)

Cedar Creek – October 14-16, 2016,
www.ccbf.us

Tim asked about Bryan's Battery taking over Droop event. No information was known by membership present. Maybe someone could call Mike Smith at Droop to see if they are going to put it on in future.. Members urged to attend Living History at Union in late August, see/call Chris Johnson. Phyllis said Rich Mountain. hadn't decided what they are doing next year for Rich Mt., would get back with us on their plans. Membership present decided next meeting at Jackson's Mill event on Saturday at a place Stonewall suggested with his dying breath "Let us cross over the river and rest in the shade of the trees" or at least a shady spot.

- Submitted by Mark Tennant\

NEXT MEETING

Jackson's Mill event, Saturday, September 3. More details as when they become available.

Monroe County Heritage Days

Pards,

Here are the preliminary flyers and registration form for the Monroe County Heritage Days' "War Come to Union" event here in Union, WV, August 26-28, 2016 . I could sure use your help on this. I need primarily Federals as this was an 'occupation' of the town. Civilians are also needed to portray the townsfolk. There were also Confederate prisoners and Freedmen in the 'train' that followed the Federal Army. The Living History camp will include a CSA camp. Feel free to pass this info along to any interested parties. Please try and make it if you can.

Thanks,

YOS,

Chris 'CW' Johnson

Chris Johnson (Unit Rep of the 25th Va) has issued a call to all living historians to attend the "Federal Occupation of Union, West Virginia at Union in Monroe County August 26-28, 2016. He says he needs Union troops, Southern civilians, Confederate Home Guard, and artillery demonstrations. Chris asks WVRA members to put it on their calendar now. Details will come soon. The event flyer is now available. I will be happy to email it to you. Contact me at ccritch608@yahoo.com. If you have specific questions about the event Chris Johnson can be reached at wwaca@hughes.net.

July Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order at approx. 3:10 PM, July 23rd on porch of old (1841) Randolph Co. jail by Pres. M. Tennant. Minutes also taken by Pres. Tennant using appropriately enough 19th century dip pens and ink. In attendance were myself, Diane T., Phyllis B., Tim G., Ken C., Thurmond, Mark P., Mr. and Mrs. John Brasuk, Ed. C, Jim and Linda B, Jeff and Sherri Goff (congratulations to the newlyweds). Not attending meeting but saw them at event the Allman Brothers- actually father & son Jim & Jay. Motion made by Pres. Tennant to accept last meetings minutes at Philippi as printed in Dispatch, someone seconded and it passed unanimously. Treasurer's report by Treasurer Jim Barnes said we had approx. \$4,600.00 in bank account. Pres. Tennant made motion to give powder (1/2 lb to military attending Beverly)and give remainder to Rich Mtn. Battlefield. After a short discussion, Tim Glaser seconded motion, passed unanimously. Gave 16 lb to Rich Mt.

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Averill's Raiders & the 35th Star

MOVIE PREVIEW

The WVRA is invited to attend a showing of the movie *Averill's Raiders & the 35th Star* on Saturday, August 13, 2016 at dark (approximately 8 to 8:30). The movie will be shown at the Pavilion at Palatine Park on the Monongahela River in downtown East Fairmont.

The Marion County Historical Society has invited us to participate by setting up displays and/or tents by 6 pm that evening. Any WVRA member who participated in the filming of this movie is particularly urged to attend. If you would like to do some living history at this event, CONTACT MARK TENNANT BY PHONE at 304-363-0935.

The flyer I received indicates that actors, producers, the writer and other reenactors will be present to meet with attendees. There is no cost to attend. More information is available at marionhistorical@yahoo.com.

Jackson's Mill Event

Jason Studenwalt has posted the following on the Conference of West Virginia Reenactors page on Facebook: battles are scheduled for 11 am and 3 pm on Saturday, September 3 and also on Sunday September 4. Camping is behind the church entrance near the Mary Conrad Cabin. Participants may arrive all day on Friday, September 2. But the gate will close on Saturday morning. There will be parking for day trippers. Jason will post more information as it becomes available.

Beverly in Review

By Mark Tennant

More people than usual seemed to visit the event this year compared to last time. Although very hot (probably low 90's) if you stayed in shade it was tolerable. Civil War camps in back yard of old jail and adjoining house seemed just big enough. the Confederate Cannon crew switched to Rev. War uniforms and fired a couple rounds every hour. Les and Mary Carahar (part of Rich Mountain String Band) played music although now they played in a "Jug" band along with a couple other bands, very good music. In the WWII encampment, Comrade Barnsky along with wifesky Linda and two other

Russians had a large display. Several Germans were in attendance (firing an mg-24 machine gun) along with several U.S. soldiers and even a Free French partisan. Several Indians and Revolutionary War frontiersmen had a nice encampment across the Beverly Pike. I set up on porch of old jail a recruiting station and gave out approximately 35 loyalty oath passes (the kids and teenagers thought it was pretty neat to use 19th century technology [dip pen] to sign their names.) Even got the children of the notorious Rebel couple Jeff & Sherri Goff to sign the oaths, Grandpa Ken was not amused.

McConnellsville In Review

Submitted by Ed Chapdelaine

Enclosed is a brief summary of the McConnellsville reenactment for the Trans-Allegheny Dispatch. Ralph McCready from our 1st W. V. did a lot to organize this event. Thos from our organization who were there included Ed Chapdelaine, Ralph McCready, Ross Wetherell, Bill Donegan and Chris Johnson. (Editor's note: Sean McCready, friend of the WVRA was also there.)

Most of us got there Friday evening or Saturday morning. There were talks on Civil War unit mascots and Steve Ball and his wife gave a presentation on Civil War songs.

That afternoon we had a small battle in a sloping city park. We had about 15 Union soldiers and about 20 to 25 Confederates. The Union held the defensive position and each soldier expended about 30 rounds. There were also two small cannons.

After supper, there was the traditional dance in the library parking lot.

The next morning after breakfast, everybody broke camp and traveled out to Doc Richmond's farm where we had the Sunday battle. Here, the Union had six full size cannons. The fired about 4 or 5 volleys. Then our infantry force of about 15 moved out to occupy some defense positions. After firing at each other a number of rebs went down and a truced was called and a horse drawn wagon came on the scene. Fellow using stretchers removed the wounded rebs.

For each day's battle I expended 35 to 30 rounds. The weather was partly cloudy on Saturday and clear on Sunday. For July it was not too hot. Everybody

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seemed to feel it was a pretty good small reenactment.

155th Bull Run in Review

A wise reenactor once said: “I don’t do Northern Virginia in July and August.” A wise man indeed was the reenactor who uttered these words.

Temperature and humidity trumped all the normal topics of conversation and complaint at the 155th reenactment of the Battle of First Bull Run (Manassas) held July 22 through 24 at the Cedar Creek Battlefield. Temperatures each day ranged into the mid 90’s according to my phone, with the humidity adding to the misery and creating heat indexes over 100 degrees.

I will provide a narrative below to illustrate the weekend’s activities. But first, a brief summary. Camp rumor placed registration around 3000 and I am estimating participation at about 2000. The sides actually seemed pretty even in all 3 arms of the service. It was difficult to gauge the actual numbers of each sides as very few soldiers wore coats. Most came out in shirt and accoutrements. I suppose that was accurate to some extent as we had a hard time identifying units entering the field.

The standard amenities were present in sufficient quantity including ice and water. Ice angels circulated constantly during the battles bringing relief to the fighting soldiers. The camps were fine though as is the constant refrain at Cedar Creek, too far from the sutlers. Part of that was helped by the steady shuttle bus service from camps to sutlers. Sutlers were numerous, but not in numbers rivaling past big events.

I arrived Friday afternoon and thanks to my pre-registration I breezed past the check point at the main gate and into camp where I lost 5 pounds just setting up my tent. Being a company commander without a company (nobody from the First there except Surgeon Wenig and wife and Colonel Skaggs) I was assigned a spot on the command row next to the adjutant and the music.

Battle commenced at 7 pm that night. One of the reasons I committed early to this reenactment was this Friday night battle – a reenactment of Rich Mountain. The temperatures were hot; the march long (1 ½ miles with 2 rest stops) and the battle

bearing little resemblance to anything I recognized as connected to Rich Mountain. About 2 dozen artillery pieces participated, which should tell you something about a battle in which one artillery piece was fired. We did push the Confederates off the field, however the rest of the fighting was a puzzle to me.

Soaked in sweat, we returned to camp via shuttle bus and were fortunate enough to catch the handicap bus (Frederick County school buses were being used) with the air conditioning. By this time, the ten I returned to was wedged between the adjutants tent, the 1st Regiment band (many tents) and to my rear a fence separating me from the main gate with the provost guard. Despite all this activity, the heat had rendered me dog tired and I fell asleep with the 1st Regiment band practicing, a steady stream of cars entering behind me and the 6th New Hampshire Contra Band playing 4 streets over. It’s not often I sleep with flaps open, shorts and a t-shirt, but that was the order of the day thanks to heat which only slacked off to about 72 degrees overnight.

Red sky a morning, sailor’s warning? I guess the warning that the morning sky was issuing was HOT, HOT and HOT. A comfortable morning quickly melted away into a steamy morning with temperatures climbing the ladder towards 90. We had a quick drill in the morning, with nothing but shirts, pants and brogans. I quickly departed for the sutler area, the primary target being the open-sided circus-size tent near the modern-day food sutlers. With cool drink in hand, and after a quick tour of sutlers’ row, I parked myself on a folding chair under the tent and watched the living historians and the 2nd South Carolina String Band for about 2 hours. This was preferable to a hot morning under Kevin Skaggs’ fly – nothing against Kevin, mind you. Back to camp, I ventured over to Belle Grove, the plantation house ensconced upon a knoll overlooking the Cedar Creek battlefield. In the basement, the “cooler” temperatures and video presentations provided the incentive to stay right where I was for the next hour or so.

Late that afternoon we prepared for a 5 pm battle. The battle of Blackburn’s Ford, a preliminary skirmish to Bull Run. Another 1 ½ mile march with a couple stops and plenty of ice angels. We marched past the Confederates enroute to our jump off point. In that group I noticed Kevin Mullenex and Jason Studenwalt portraying one of Wheat’s Tigers. Kevin said WVRA member Greg Watterson was also with them. The battle probably resembled the action at

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Blackburn's which was little more than a reconnaissance in force in which both sides fired at each other over Bull Run. It was fought around the Heater House. By the time the battle was over, we were closer to camp than to the shuttle bus, so straggled back, we did at a slow pace. Soaked in sweat, I quickly changed into shorts and a t-shirt and rode the bus to the sutlers. The heat index was very high and we were flirting with heat-related problems. After a large overpriced lemonade and some water, I felt much better.

Saturday night, like Friday night, was early to bed, flaps wide open, sleeping with shorts and t-shirt, and plenty of water. For the first time in many years, I did not get up either night to visit the necessary. I wonder why.

The mornings were cool (low 70's). Sunday's battle was at 1 pm and the temperatures were expected to peak at 95. Some folks began bugging out as the heat was going to be way too much. The previous two days of extreme heat were beginning to tell on my body. So after breakfast, I headed over to Belle Grove to sit in the shade of the large trees on the spacious lawn. Friday and Saturday provided occasional breezes which at times were a great relief along with occasional clouds. But Sunday produced no wind and no clouds. So I stayed very still in the shade with a bottle of water to get ready for the grueling fight at 1 pm in 90 degree weather. Shade became a bit of a premium and eventually, the morning's Catholic Mass was moved into the shade right smack in front of me. So I ended up attending the mass or the mass attended to me. Finally I headed back to camp, got watered up and then dressed. We assembled in the shade, walked about a 1/2 mile this time and plopped down in the shade of a tree line not far from the crowd. We waited here a good half hour or so, cooling off as best we could. Eventually we were ordered to take the ridge in front of us about 1/4 mile. The Confederates there stubbornly resisted our advance but we pushed them off after a suicidal charge by who else but Wheat's Tigers. Once we got the ridge the battle was delayed while the medical ATV rushed off some Confederate. Somewhere to our front Stonewall Jackson's famous stand was reenacted and finally, we were pushed off the ridge. At this point I was helping a member of the 6th New Hampshire to the medical tent (only 200 yards away) and I missed JEB Stuart's cavalry charge. Our regiment formed a square once again, but I had to witness it this time rather than stand in the square watching the horses ride around us.

Back to camp and right into shorts and a t-shirt. The effort required to fight a battle and then tear down camp was too much for some folks. I had to rest a couple times. Kevin Skaggs and Ron and Debbie Wenig were close by and their A-frames with flies took a lot of work in the heat.

In summary, the 155 Bull Run reenactment was like many other big anniversary events. Saturday and Sunday's battles were somewhat representative of what happened. In fact because many soldiers shed their coats, it was hard at times to identify exactly which side was marching on the battlefield. That was a change from the normal. The heat at this reenactment will rank among the top 3 for me. Bull Run 150 (temps in the 100's) and Cedar Mountain 1987 were worse. But this was a killer too. Again, like Bull Run 150 in 2011, everyone was prepared for the heat; water was abundant and ice was everywhere. Reenactors seemed prepared and many reenactors are all too aware as we age what heat can do.

- C. L. Critchfield



Figure 1 - Reconnaissance in Force at Blackburn's Ford

155 Years Ago RECRUITING 1861

From THE LIFE OF BILLY YANK by Bell I. Wiley; They Fought For THE UNION by Francis A. Lord; History of the First Regiment West Virginia Infantry by J. K. Rawlins; Hardtack and Coffee, John Billings;

"The South's attack on Fort Sumter fell like a thunderclap on the country north of Dixie." War had seemed like a distant possibility up to this point. Most Americans hoped for and expected a "peaceful solution" to the crisis, even after the secession of the Deep South states.

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As Bell Wiley states, “Lincoln’s request for troops (75,000 for 90 days service) was in a sense an anticlimax.” The attack and defeat at Fort Sumter created a call to arms that Wiley compares to the attack on Pearl Harbor 80 years later. The “tremendous surge of patriotism” led to a flood of men eager to enter military service. Because of this surge, the Federal government could have accepted many more volunteers than it did.

“The problem of responsible authorities during this flood tide of patriotism was not to obtain more men but to hold volunteers to manageable numbers. Governor Dennison of Ohio, of whom Lincoln on April 15 requested thirteen regiments, wrote a week later that ‘owing to an unavoidable confusion in the first hurry and enthusiasm of ...our people,’ a much larger force had already mobilized.” Dennison noted that he can “hardly stop short of twenty regiments.” And of course, some of his citizens crossed the Ohio River to muster into Virginia regiments, like the 1st (West) Virginia Infantry.

Daily in Wheeling at this time “everybody was on the tiptoe of expectation, events followed so quickly that something more startling than the last was expected to follow; in short, excitement produced excitement and went on increasing. In this condition of the community the First Regiment men were raised.”

“Mass meetings were a standard feature of recruiting efforts. Here leading citizens joined prospective officers in regaling audiences with oratorical outbursts full of allusions to country and flag and breathing defiance at slaveholders and traitors. Between speeches, brass bands played patriotic airs. If veterans of former wars were available they were featured as speakers or as adornments for the platform. The total effect of these influences was sometimes tremendous, especially in the early days of the war, so that when the cry ‘Who will come up and sign the roll?’ was given at the end, men rushed to the front like seekers at a backwoods revival, each vying with the other to be first on the list.”

The female sex was used to persuade the wavering to enlist (although in 1861 their wives were less in demand) by “showing a preference for those who responded quickly to country’s call.” One Indiana soldier wrote “If a fellow wants to go with a girl now he had better enlist.” There was often a “patriotic maiden lady who kept a flag or a handkerchief waving (during a rally)...who ‘would go in a minute if

she was a man.’ “ At a war rally “musicians and orators blew themselves red in the face with their windy efforts.”

Resolved 155 Years Ago

Resolved, That civil war exists by act of seceding States; and we hold the traitors banded together under the “Southern Confederacy,” or otherwise, responsible before God and the world for all the evil that may arise from the unnatural war, this inaugurated.

Resolved, that in this crisis the people of Ohio know but one party – the friends of the Union. We ignore all former partisan distinctions and declare with one voice for our country, our whole country, and nothing less than our country.

Resolved, That we pledge to our Government, in support of the constitution and laws, our property, our lives and our sacred honor.

Resolved, that we hereby pledge ourselves to the volunteers who may go from this county that we will support their families during their absence in the service of their country; and for that purpose therefore:

Resolved, That there be a central executive committee of five in the town of Mount Vernon, and a county committee of twenty-two – one each from each township – appointed.

This is typical of the type of speeches or resolutions made and adopted during early 1861. This one was made and adopted in Knox County, Ohio, home to the Critchfield family at that time.

WVRA Officers 2016 (executive board)

President – Mark Tennant

Vice President – Bill Brisendine

Treasurer – Jim Barnes

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 – vacant

TASAS – Diane Tennant

* Non-voting member of executive board

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The Civil War and the 21st Century

Once again, to those who think history has no connection to today's events, I have heard several references of late to the Native American Party or "nativists." These references arise thanks to the views of current politicians which are similar per some experts on the subject.

This party traced its roots to the late 1820's when in the seaport cities many "complained about the apparently endless flood of impoverished foreigners...who became public charges." City politicians petitioned state leaders to stop the influx of "foreign beggars of both sexes and all ages who infest our streets." Particularly opposed to Irish Catholics, their platform was simple: "Elevate no person of foreign birth to any office of honor, trust or profit in the United States."

- From *"The Nation Comes of Age – A People's History of the Ante-Bellum Years"* by Paige Smith

Editor's Corner

I neglected to thank Peter Baxter last issue. Peter has been very helpful with the publication of the Dispatch. Thank you to Mark Tennant for the minutes of the last meeting and a review of Beverly. Ed Chapdelaine submitted a review of McConnellsville. Thanks to Jim Barnes for his contributions. Thanks to Porter Stiles for sending information on the donation of the late Marvin Miracle's equipment to the museum in Beverly. See picture.

POLITICS – the 1st West Virginia came to a realization years ago that politics should not be discussed around the campfire (or probably anywhere else for that matter) since the group had a surprisingly wide range of political opinions at that time (early 90's). The 155th Bull Run reenactment only emphasized the wisdom of that realization. Too much political talk.

PERSONALS - Mark Tennant is spending a lot of time with his ailing father. If you need to reach him, please call Mark directly. He does not always have access to the internet. I talked with JR Moore who is interested in selling his reenacting gear. His health has not been great, but he and Debbie hope to get out to see us at a reenactment in the future.

At 155 Bull Run I talked with local reenactors Kevin Mullenex and Jason Studenwalt. I think I saw

Jason's wife also. I shook hands with WVRA member Greg Watterson as he lay dead on the field. Kevin, Mr. and Mrs. Wenig were camped right beside me. I didn't find Ross Wetherell and assumed he did not make it.

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. TASAS members who are also spouses of 1st W. Va. members are covered under the USV insurance.

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 annual 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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Figure 2 - Wheat's Tigers at 155th Anniversary of 1st Bull Run (Manassas). Local reenactors including WVRA member Greg Watterson fell in with this group - which was decimated on Sunday.



Figure 1 - Marvin Miracle's reenacting gear has been donated to museum at the Beverly Heritage Center. Left to right Porter Stiles, John Whittaker, Ralph Baumgartner, Jake Nott and unidentified reenactor. All are members of 17th Virginia/6th West Virginia Cavalry according to Porter.



Figure 2 Lt. Colonel Kevin Skaggs commands the troops at 155 First Bull Run reenactment. This is actually a reenactment of Rich Mountain in this picture.



Figure 3 - 95 degrees on Sunday. Here we pause while a Confederate reenactor is removed from the field



Figure 4 - Waiting in the shade after a 1 1/2 mile march to Saturday's reenactment of Blackburn's Ford as part of the 155th Bull Run at Cedar Grove