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## HARPERS FERRY

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### CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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**PO BOX 1079, HARPERS FERRY, WV 25425**

Vol. 28 December 2008 No. 04

DATE: Wednesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2005

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

PLACE: Camp Hill Methodist Church, Harpers Ferry, WV

SPEAKER: Dana B. Shoaf

SUBJECT: Odyssey of a Field Officer: Major John I. Nevin  
of the 93rd Pennsylvania Infantry

#### The Speaker:

Dana Shoaf recently became the editor of *Civil War Times* and has served as the editor of *America's Civil War* for eight years. "Dana's development and improvement of *America's Civil War* over the last two years is a remarkable achievement," says Editor-in-chief Stephen Petranek. "His lifelong passion for the Civil War will be immediately obvious to readers."

Shoaf is a frequent speaker at conferences and symposiums, a part-time history professor, and the author of numerous articles on the Civil War. He also has a keen interest in Civil War preservation and serves on the board of the Save Historic Antietam Foundation. *Civil War Times* played a key role in spurring Shoaf's love for history. "I have been reading the magazine since childhood," he says. "And I consider it a privilege to help further its long tradition of excellence."

## The Subject

The 93rd Pennsylvania Volunteers, known as the "Lebanon Infantry," was formed under the direction of Colonel James M. McCarter, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal congregation of Lebanon, in the autumn of 1861. It was mustered into service on October 28 of the same year. The regiment trained for a month at Camp Coleman, now known as Monument Park, at present-day Eighth and Lehman Streets. In addition to service at Gettysburg, it also saw action at Fair Oaks, Antietam, Fredericksburg, the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, Petersburg, and in numerous other battles. It was mustered out at Harrisburg on June 30, 1865.

A full-length documentary on the 93rd. Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry is currently scheduled for release in 2009. The movie is being shot in the Ken Burns style with vintage photos, blending with drawings, illustrations and live action footage shot by high definition video equipment. We also will be shooting background footage on all of the major battlefields on which the 93rd fought. For further information concerning this documentary: <http://www.angelfire.com/pa/Stump44/index.html>

## 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, December 7<sup>th</sup>**, to Allison Alsdorf, at 304-535-2101 or you can e-mail her at [alsdorf@comcast.net](mailto:alsdorf@comcast.net)

## On this Day, September 12<sup>th</sup>, 1862

The Army of the Potomac, marching northward, groping for the Confederate army, began to move into Frederick, MD, as the Confederates were dispersing to their assigned tasks. Jackson was converging on Harper's Ferry.

In the North the archives, bonds, and treasure of the state of Pennsylvania at Harrisburg and Philadelphia were sent to New York. The Mayor of Philadelphia was given full power to defend the city. The Confederate Congress debated the propriety of the invasion of the North. A worried Mr. Lincoln wired McClellan, "How does it look now?" and was told by the general that he was concerned that Lee would re-cross the Potomac before he could get to him.

On September 13<sup>th</sup>, two lounging Union soldiers picked up a paper wrapped around a few cigars. The famous "lost order" was found that gave McClellan a decided advantage which he was to squander. (Excerpted from *The Civil War Day by Day*, E. B. Long, published by Doubleday)

## The Birth of West Virginia

Following Brown's trial and subsequent hanging, the nation hoped and prayed for a diplomatic solution, but that fateful day when southern forces fired on Fort Sumter

marked the end of the debate over the role of slavery in the United States. While the majority of Virginia's state delegates voted to secede, 32 of the 47 delegates who voted to stay in the Union were from western Virginia. Western Virginians were evenly split between those favoring union and emancipation and others favoring the rights of states and slavery. It was even rumored that the vote for western Virginia to form a new and free state had to be rigged, as allegiance to the South was so strong in many areas. In Wheeling, West Virginia Independence Hall served as the home of the Restored Government of Virginia in what became the original capitol city of West Virginia. Now a museum, visitors can see Civil War artifacts as well as listen to costumed guides tell the story of the birth of the Mountain State on June 20, 1863.

With the North and South realizing that allegiances in western Virginia were mixed, they both struggled for dominance and moved in immediately to take over strategic areas. Unknown to many, Parkersburg was once home to thousands of Union troops and placed under martial law due to its Confederate sympathies and its new status as a major river port for oil shipping. The [Parkersburg Oil and Gas Museum](#) looks at the role oil played in early western Virginia and how many of the statesmen pushing for western Virginia's independence were actually newly rich oilmen from the nearby oilfields at Burning Springs. As thousands of troops poured in from both sides, western Virginia divided, brother against brother at times, to join the Civil War.

[Organ Cave](#) is the second largest commercial cave on the east coast and a National Historic Landmark. The walls of the cave glitter with salt petre [sic], a primary ingredient in black powder, used by Robert E. Lee's troops during the Civil War. Within the depths of Organ Cave is the Hopper Room, a well-preserved refinery and one of the largest selections of Civil War Hoppers in the U.S. Visitors can walk the trails used by the troops and enjoy the acoustics of the "Chapel Room," that once housed 1,100 confederate soldiers. (Excerpted from West Virginia Division of Tourism culture page)

## News of Another USCT Camp

A Kentucky heritage park is adding a reconstructed barracks to a campus that already includes an 1846 restored mansion once used as officer's quarters as well as fortifications and a national cemetery. The 3,000 square foot barracks will house a genealogy [sic] research center as well as reenactors who stage an annual living history weekend.

Camp Nelson Civil War Heritage Park, a 400 acre preserve owned and maintained by the Jessamine County Fiscal Court, is a piece of the original 4,000 acre training ground for Union soldiers, including USCT men. The camp served as a Union supply depot, recruitment camp and hospital. Built in 1863 under Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside, commander of the Army of Ohio, it was named for Maj. Gen. William "Bull" Nelson.

When freedmen and former slaves were accepted into the army, housing was created for the families that often accompanied the men. That present day community is known as Hall, named for camp quartermaster Captain Theron E. Hall, who had the barracks and cottages built. The camp, which included warehouses, hospitals, stables, a bakery and a prison was dismantled in 1866.

Camp Nelson's cemetery has more than 2,200 Civil War dead, including about 600 black troops. (Excerpted from *Civil War Times* October 2008 article by Linda Wheeler)

