



HARPERS FERRY

CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

PO BOX 1079, HARPERS FERRY, WV 25425

Vol. 28 February 2009 No. 6

DATE: Wednesday, February 11th, 2009

TIME: 7:00 PM - CWRT Members Dinner
(Dinner Reservations Required)

8:00 Speaker's Presentation and Book Raffle
(Open to the Public)

PLACE: Camp Hill Methodist Church, Harpers Ferry, WV

SPEAKER: David Larsen

SUBJECT: Learning and Remembering History

The Subject:

David Larsen is often asked why learning and remembering history is important. In this presentation, he will focus on the events of John Brown's Raid as well as the crash of United Flight 93 on September 11, 2001 to suggest an answer.

The Speaker:

David Larsen began his career in 1979, volunteering at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. Along the way, he's worked at the Viet Nam Veterans Memorial, the Washington Monument, the National Capital Region Office, the National Archives, the Library of Congress, History Associates Incorporated, and taught outdoor education for

two years at Hard Bargain Farm. In 1995 David helped found the National Park Service's Interpretative Development Program. In the capacity of training specialist and, since 2002 as Training Manager for Interpretation and Education, he has helped develop new training curricula, a peer review certification program, and a distance learning web-based training platform. David has taught hundreds of courses and travelled to more than 100 parks. He has worked with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, numerous state park services, the National Association of Interpretation, and many universities. He has published numerous articles on interpretation, wrote and directed the film *An Interpretive Dialogue*, and edited a textbook *Meaningful Interpretation*. From 2004-2008 he was Co-Chair of the National Education Council and co-wrote the national *Interpretation and Education Business Plan* and *Interpretation and Education Renaissance Action Plan*. In 2006 he was Acting Site Manager for the Flight 93 National Memorial and in 2008 he was Acting Superintendent for the Albright Training Center at the Grand Canyon. David is the recipient of the *Sequoia Award*—the highest award for interpretation presented by the National Park Service as well as the *Crystal Owl Award* for excellence in training.

David lives with his wife Susan Journell, a Loudoun County school teacher in the 1850 Bolivar armorer's house they restored and that has federal Civil War soldiers' graffiti. Together, they take care of the house, their border collie Non, and four cats.

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, February 8th**, to Allison Alsdorf, at 304-535-2101 or you can e-mail her at alsdorf@comcast.net

On this Day, February 15th, 1862 Battle at Fort Donelson

At 5 a.m. of a cold morning the Confederate division of Gideon Pillow moved forward to assault the enclosing Federal lines at Fort Donelson. Pillow was aided by Buckner's division and after a morning's hot fighting the Federal line of McClernand on the right was broken and the way of escape to Nashville open. A victory had been won. But nothing was done. Floyd, after considerable argument, ordered his army to return to their fortifications. Vastly perturbed, Grant ordered his left under C. F. Smith forward, but his advance was checked. McClernand's division, aided by Lew Wallace's, reclosed the gap on the right. By evening the troops were in nearly their old positions. The day's fighting was for nought [sic] for the Confederates, while for the Federals it had been a near defeat. That night in an inn at Dover there was another momentous conference of Confederate generals. It was agreed they must surrender Fort Donelson, but who was to do it was the question. Floyd, allegedly fearing crimination against him for his Washington career, decided to flee, as did Pillow, next in command, leaving the surrender job to General Buckner. In the battle lines that night, "Mother" Mary Ann

Bickerdyke administered to the wounded, self-appointed but with the blessings of all. General Albert Sidney Johnston arrived personally in Nashville ahead of Hardee's forces. (Excerpted from *The Civil War Day by Day*, E. B. Long, published by Doubleday)

Naval Historical Center
civilwar.com
CSS Virginia (1862 – 1862)

On 20 April 1861, when Virginia authorities took over the Norfolk Navy Yard after its evacuation by Federal forces, they found, among other valuable items, the hulk of the steam frigate USS *Merrimack*. Though burned to the waterline and sunk, the big ship's lower hull and machinery were intact. During the remainder of 1861 and the first two months of 1862, the Confederate States Navy raised, dry-docked and converted her into a casemate ironclad ram, a new warship type that promised to overcome the Union's great superiority in conventional warships. Placed in commission as CSS *Virginia* in mid-February 1862, the ship's iron armor made her virtually invulnerable to contemporary gunfire. She carried ten guns of her own, a seven-inch pivot-mounted rifle at each end and a broadside battery of two six-inch rifles and six nine-inch smoothbores. Affixed to her bow was an iron ram, allowing the ship herself to be employed as a deadly weapon.

Virginia made her first combat sortie on 8 March 1862, steaming down the Elizabeth River from Norfolk and into Hampton Roads. In a historic action that dramatically demonstrated the superiority of armored steam-powered warships over their wooden sailing counterparts, she rammed and sank the big U.S. Navy sloop of war *Cumberland* and shelled the frigate *Congress* into submission. In Washington, D.C., many of the Federal Government's senior officials panicked, convinced that *Virginia* posed a grave threat to Union sea-power and coastal cities. They were unaware that her serious operational limitations, caused by her deep draft, weak power plant and extremely poor sea-keeping, essentially restricted her use to deep channels in calm, inland waterways.

However, their worries were relieved the next day. When *Virginia* returned to Hampton Roads to attack the grounded steam frigate *Minnesota*, she found the Union's own pioneer ironclad, USS *Monitor*, waiting. A second historic battle ensued, with the two opponents firing away, without mortal effect, until the action ended in a tactical draw in the early afternoon of 9 March 1862.

Over the next two months, the two ironclads kept each other in check. *Virginia*, repaired and strengthened at the Norfolk Navy Yard, reentered the Hampton Roads area on 11 April and 8 May, but no further combat with the *Monitor* resulted. As the Confederates abandoned their positions in the Norfolk area, *Virginia* was threatened with the loss of her base. After a futile effort to lighten the ship enough to allow her to move up the James River, on 11 May the South's formidable ironclad was destroyed by her crew off Craney Island, some six miles from where she had electrified the World through her battles of 8 and 9 March. CSS *Virginia's* wreck was largely removed between 1866 and 1876. (Excerpted from <http://www.civilwar.com/>)