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## **HARPERS FERRY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE**

BOX 389, HARPERS FERRY, WV 25425

Vol. 26 January 2007 No. 5

- DATE:** Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2006
- TIME:** 7:00 PM - CWRT Members Dinner  
(Dinner Reservations Required)
- 8:00 Speakers Presentation and Book Raffle  
(Open to the Public)
- PLACE:** Hilltop House Hotel,  
400 East Ridge St. Harpers Ferry, WV  
(Follow signs for Hilltop house from Washington St.)  
(Turn Right on Ridge St. and go to the end of the street.)
- SPEAKER:** Betsy Estilow
- SUBJECT:** Clara was not alone - the women of Antietam

### **The Subject:**

Betsy Estilow's presentation will focus on many of the women who were present before, during and after the battle. Several of these women followed the armies onto the field and cared for the wounded of both sides while others were caught in the devastation left in the wake of these events.

### **The Speaker**

Betsy Estilow currently serves as Professor of Biology and adjunct instructor in Civil War history at Hood College in Frederick, Maryland. She received a BS degree in biology from Albright College, Reading, Pennsylvania, and a certificate in medical

technology from the University of Pennsylvania Medical Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. After completing a Master of Science degree in clinical microbiology at West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia, she became the director of the microbiology laboratory at Washington County Hospital in Hagerstown, Maryland. In 1975, she joined the faculty at Hood College where she has taught courses as varied as biology of aging to mechanisms of infectious disease. She also developed and taught a week-long course on Civil War history for Hood Elderhostel entitled "In the Footsteps of the Blue and Gray." Ms. Estilow is the recipient of the Mortar Board Excellence in Teaching Award, an award given by the students. A native of southern New Jersey, Betsy got involved in Civil War history at a very young age. As a young man, her grandfather began collecting books and materials on Abraham Lincoln, a passion he passed on to his son and granddaughter. Some of Ms. Estilow's earliest memories involve sitting on the floor of her grandfather's library looking through Lincoln books and visiting various Lincoln sites and battlefields with her family. She currently serves as a docent and as Vice President of the board of directors of the National Museum of Civil War Medicine. She is a co-founder of the Society for Women in the Civil War. She has researched, written and lectured on the role of women, especially in medicine, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## The Meal

A family-style meal will be served at 7:00 PM prior to the program. The cost of the meal is **\$11.00** per person. Reservations for the meal **must be phoned in no later than Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup>**, to Allison Alsdorf, at 304-535-2101 or you can e-mail her at [alsdorf@adelphia.net](mailto:alsdorf@adelphia.net)

## January 1862

The dawn of 1862 was dismal, uncertain, sobering, in both the North and the South. The past year had seen much: a new nation, an engulfing war, and agony of body and spirit. And yet at the same time there was a realization that the issues had been joined and there were jobs to be done. In the South their freedom had been proclaimed; it must now be solidified by the fire of war. In the North there was a disrupted Union to be rejoined in another concept of freedom.

How were these tasks to be completed? Would the coming year see them at an end? Some still hoped so; other were uneasy and disturbed.

It was a cold, bitter winter to those in camps from northern Virginia through the Kentucky line to Cairo and beyond. For those at home things were not yet too bad in the North, except when the casualty lists came or the regiments left for the South. To those at home in the South the stark verities of the battle for their rights were impregnating the whole Confederacy. There were still songs, still rallies, still a crusade; but the glitter was dimming.

In the White House at Washington a worried Mr. Lincoln virtually had to take command of the armies, for his top general was seriously ill. Besides, George Brinton McClellan, it appeared, had accomplished little of substance in five months. In the White House at Richmond an equally worried Mr. Davis watched his armies diminish in manpower, as many went home to fix things up so they could come back in the spring. The blockade was more than paper now, its impress growing with the days. There was not enough of anything, really except valor.

At Provincetown, Massachusetts, on Cape Cod four men boarded the British sloop of war *Rinaldo* en route to Halifax and Europe; the imprisoned Confederate commissioners Mason and Slidell and their secretaries had left Fort Warren in Boston harbor after the Federal government had acceded to British demands for their release. The *Trent* Affair was finished, but it left a bad taste. (Excerpted from The Civil War Day by Day, An Almanac 1861 – 1865, E. B. Long, Doubleday, 1971)

## **West Virginia Battlefield Parks**

### **Rich Mountain Battlefield Civil War Site**

On July 11, 1861, in one of the earliest engagements of the Civil War, Union troops under the command of General McClellan routed the Confederates holding the pass over Rich Mountain near Beverly, (West) Virginia. This victory gave the Union control of northwestern Virginia, and allowed these western counties to form the government that later led to the new state of West Virginia.

### **Droop Mountain Battlefield State Park**

Droop Mountain Battlefield, West Virginia's oldest state park, was dedicated on July 4, 1929, as a memorial to the men who took part in what is generally considered to be the largest Civil War battle fought on West Virginia soil. Located in Pocahontas County, five miles south of Hillsboro, the park offers scenic mountain vistas, hiking and picnicking, but is most noted for its historic significance as the site of a fierce struggle which took place between the North and the South on November 6, 1863. Moving over the mountains of West Virginia from Beverly, heading for Lewisburg, Federal forces under Brigadier General William W. Averell encountered Confederates blocking the road at Droop Mountain. Averell divided his force, sending a major portion of his men on a lengthy detour to the rear of the Confederates under Brigadier General John Echols. In mid-afternoon the two Federal forces attacked and the Confederates were forced to pull away down the pike of scatter into the woods.

### **Carnifex Ferry Battlefield State Park**

Nestled on the rim of the Gauley River Canyon near Summersville, West Virginia, Carnifex Ferry Battlefield State Park is an important Civil War battle site. On September 10, 1861 Union troops led by Brigadier General William S. Rosecrans' engaged the Confederates and forced them to evacuate an entrenched position on the Henry Patteson farm which overlooked Carnifex Ferry. The Confederate commander, Brigadier General John B. Floyd retreated across the ferry to the south side of the Gauley River and on eastward to Meadow Bluff near Lewisburg. This Civil War battle represented the failure of a Confederate drive to regain control of the Kanawha Valley. As a result, the movement for West Virginia statehood proceeded without serious threat from the Confederates.