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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 November 2008 No. 03

DATE: Wednesday, November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008

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

PLACE: Camp Hill Methodist Church, Harpers Ferry, WV

SPEAKER: Robert E. L. Krick

SUBJECT: Week of Uncertainty: Stonewall Jackson in the  
Seven Days Campaign

#### The Speaker:

Robert Krick has lived or worked on Civil War battlefields almost continuously since 1972. He grew up on the Chancellorsville Battlefield near Fredericksburg and graduated from Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg with a degree in history. He has worked in various historical capacities at several battlefields, including Custer Battlefield in Montana, and Manassas Battlefield. Since 1991 he has been an historian on the staff at Richmond National Battlefield Park. Mr. Krick is widely published on Civil War topics. His first book was a unit history ([The Fortieth Virginia Infantry](#)). In 2003 the University of North Carolina Press published his biographical register of the Army of Northern Virginia's staff officers ([Staff Officers in Gray](#)). He is now at work on a study of the Battle of Gaines's Mill.

## The Subject

During the course of his 110 weeks as a Confederate general, Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson reached unimagined heights of popularity founded on his success. His achievements are well known today: the Shenandoah Valley Campaign, First and Second Manassas, and others. Those triumphs, and Jackson's singular manner of accomplishing things, made him the most famous man in the Confederacy in 1862. That contemporaneous popularity could have--and perhaps should have--suffered a setback in the summer of 1862. With the Confederate army fighting for survival, and the national capital threatened by the Army of the Potomac, Jackson turned in a controversial and un-Jackson-like performance during the critical week of battles now known as the Seven Days. He is directly blamed for shortcomings on June 26, June 27, June 29, and June 30. Mr. Krick's talk will explore the circumstances of Stonewall's troubles, evaluate the criticism they provoked, and offer suggestions as to what caused the worst week of Jackson's Confederate career.

## 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, November 8<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, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 1862

The Federal Army of the Potomac, concentrated in the area of Warrenton, VA, was rocked by the news of McClellan's dismissal. In Tennessee Grant continued reconnaissance from La Grange, with some skirmishing extending to Hudsonville, MI. There was also action on the Cumberland River near Gallatin, TN; Burkesville, KY; Marianna, La Grange, and Cove Creek, AR; and Cato, KA. Confederate cavalry carried out an expedition November 8 – 14 from Hardy into Tucker County, western VA.

In another command change, Major General Nathaniel P. Banks was named to command the Union Department of the Gulf, replacing Major General Ben Butler, whose dictatorial rule of New Orleans had brought charges and countercharges of cruelty, speculation, and dishonesty. In receiving his orders it was made clear to Banks that "The President regards the opening of the Mississippi River as the first and most important of our military and naval operations." The same day General Butler closed up all the breweries and distilleries within the department. (Excerpted from *The Civil War Day by Day*, E. B. Long, published by Doubleday)

## United Daughters of the Confederacy Ellen Renshaw House Chapter 2624

Ellen Renshaw House was 19 years old in 1863 when she began keeping a detailed journal of her experiences in Knoxville, Tennessee, amid the turmoil of the War Between

the States. Her diary has recently been published as *A Very Violent Rebel: The Civil War Diary of Ellen Renshaw House* edited by Daniel E. Sutherland, which may be [purchased](#) from our chapter.

The diary presents a remarkable documentation of the divided loyalties that were so pronounced in East Tennessee and of the daily effects the war had on civilians. A member of a middle-class family that had moved to Knoxville in 1860 from Georgia, Ellen House became, like her parents and siblings, a fervent Confederate—or, as she called herself, “a very violent Rebel.” When Knoxville fell to Federal forces in September 1863, Ellen’s resentments ran deep, and she filled her diary with scornful words for the occupying Yankees. She eagerly followed the news of military actions that might mean the recapture of the city and became an eyewitness to the war’s dangers when Confederate General James Longstreet launched an ill-fated attack on Knoxville late in 1863. Despite her own privations, Ellen gave much of her time providing relief to Confederate prisoners of war in the city. She gathered food, clothing, blankets, and other supplies from friends and neighbors and made daily visits to the prison, at risk to her personal well-being. Since she made no secret of where her sympathies lay, Federal military authorities eventually suspected her of spying and expelled her to Georgia, where she continued to record her thoughts and observations.

Ellen’s descendants, who discovered the diary, worked with Daniel Sutherland, Professor of History at the University of Arkansas, to edit and publish it in book form in 1997. It is a wonderful firsthand testimony to Ellen’s courage and willingness to help the Confederate Cause in spite of the great danger she faced for her efforts.

Miss House is a wonderful example of the courageous women who supported the Confederacy in their day-to-day lives. The organizing members of this chapter felt it most appropriate that she be honored by having a new chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Tennessee Division, chartered in the city where she lived and wrote her diary, named in her honor and memory.

## Two Major Historians Die in July

The deaths of John Y. Simon on July 8 (age 75) and Alan T. Nolan on July 27 (age 85) sent a wave of sadness through the Civil War world.

As editor of *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* between 1962 and his death, John Simon presided over the collection and publication of thousands of documents from the pen of the man who stood second only to Abraham Lincoln in the Union pantheon. It is especially poignant that Simon died just before he could bring his great project to a triumphant conclusion.

Alan Nolan’s major publications appeared 30 years apart. *The Iron Brigade: A Military History* (1961) established him as a leading figure in the field. *Lee Considered: General Robert E. Lee and Civil War History* (1991) triggered hot debates and spawned a gaggle of imitators. Both titles remain in print and continue to find new readers.

**Gary W. Gallagher** (Excerpted from *Civil War Times* December 2008)