



HARPERS FERRY

CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

PO BOX 1079, HARPERS FERRY, WV 25425

Vol. 34 November 2014 No. 03

DATE: Wednesday, November 12th, 2014

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

PLACE: Camp Hill Methodist Church, Harpers Ferry, WV

SPEAKER: Tim Snyder

SUBJECT: The C&O Canal in 1864 and 150 Years Later

The Speaker:

Tim Snyder of Hagerstown, Maryland is one of the leading authorities on the role of the C & O Canal in the Civil War. He holds an M.A. degree in history from Shippensburg University and is the author of *Trembling in the Balance: The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal during the Civil War*, published in 2011 by Blue Mustang Press. Tim has written extensively on local history and the Civil War, including a dozen other articles published in publications such as the *Maryland Historical Magazine*, *Catoctin History*, and the *Maryland Cracker Barrel*.

The Subject

Trembling in the Balance: The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal during the Civil War is the story of a canal company's struggle to operate a significant business enterprise in one of the nation's major theaters of war. Since the C&O Canal company was located on Maryland's southern border with Virginia, it experienced much of the war firsthand. Mr.

Snyder will look particularly at the canal's role in the events of 1864. During Confederate General Jubal Early's invasion of that summer and related raids and incursions, the canal suffered more extensive damage than it did in the previous years of the war.

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 made no later than Sunday, November 9th**, with Kyle Wichtendahl at kfwichtendahl@gmail.com or 301-639-8855. The meal will consist of Baked Meat Loaf, Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, Seasoned Green Beans, Iced Tea, Coffee, Rolls, Butter, & Dessert.

Behind the Scenery: Gettysburg's Cannon Shop

In an out-of-the-way industrial building in Gettysburg, National Park Service preservation workers literally grind it out day after day. This is the focus of the Gettysburg National Military Park's cannon carriage restoration shop.

More than 1300 monuments and 400 cannons mark the fields at Gettysburg. All are silent sentinels telling the story of the battle. They were placed here long before "National Park Rangers" were invented.

The majority of the cannon tubes are original, but the carriages were wooden during the Civil War, and, in order to withstand time, early park managers had cast iron carriages created to closely resemble what the artillery units used at Gettysburg. The carriages were purchased by the War Department beginning in 1895 through about 1910. They were manufactured in Gettysburg by Calvin Gilbert's foundry.

The park's cannon carriage restoration program is supported by the Gettysburg Foundation. The Foundation has rented space for the shop in a former factory building in Gettysburg since January 1999. The shop is not open to the public.

More than 300 of these historic carriages have been restored by Gettysburg National Military Park staff and returned to the battlefield. The current staff include Michael Wright and Brian Knepper, preservation workers, and a number of very dedicated volunteers.

The first step in the process is sandblasting to remove the primer coat that was initially put on in the late 1990's after the lead paint had been removed. Park staff then inspect the carriages to assess their general condition, structural defects and missing hardware. Many of the load-bearing elements have stress fractures or damaged castings due to their age and to exposure to the elements for more than 100 years on the battlefield. Often the spokes and/or fellows are badly damaged and need to be repaired or replaced. To do this, the wheel must be removed. All welded repairs are ground and dressed. Craters and defects are filled with polyester based automotive body filler. At this point, the implements are attached to the carriage, including the sponge chain holders, elevator screws and prolonge hooks. The joints are caulked, and each carriage gets two coats of primer and two coats of official "Gettysburg artillery green" paint, with black paint applied to all the hardware items. This work is done almost exclusively by volunteers.

Park staff are more than 75% of the way through the process of restoring every single carriage at Gettysburg. Efficiency will improve in 2015 when we move the shop into the three-bay garage at Gettysburg's former Armory. The Gettysburg Foundation is raising funds for this project. <http://www.gettysburgfoundation.org/56/monument-preservation> is the web site where you can find more information on how you can help.

This painstaking restoration process for Gettysburg's cannon carriages requires approximately a month of a craftsman's time per carriage. Next time you're on the Gettysburg battlefield, we invite you to take a closer look at these carriages and the craftsmanship that goes into their care and preservation. They are fragile artifacts that commemorate the service of those who fought here. Please join us in their protection.

Beginning November 1, the National Park service has announced that the Gettysburg National Military Park will change to its winter visiting hours for the battlefield: from 6 a.m. until 7 p.m. daily. The Museum and Visitor Center's hours will be from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. daily. Winter visiting hours will continue through March 31, 2015. From April 1 through October 31, the park will remain open from 6 a.m. until 10 p.m. daily.

During the winter visiting hours, park-approved special events such as the annual *Remembrance Illumination* and park sponsored public meetings would continue to be permitted. Certain park avenues will continue to be accessible 24 hours/day for vehicular through-travel only: Buford Avenue, Doubleday Avenue, Granite Schoolhouse Road, Howard Avenue, Millerstown Road, Reynolds Avenue, Wadsworth Avenue, West Confederate Avenue, and Wheatfield Road.

For more information contact Gettysburg National Military Park at (717) 334-1124, or visit the park web site at <http://www.nps.gov/gett/index.htm>

On This Day: Saturday, November 12, 1864

Sherman's army now "stood detached and cut off from all communications with the rear." Four corps totaling 60,000 infantry, plus about 5,500 artillery, were ready for one of the great military adventures. Sherman sent his last message to General Thomas and began to concentrate his force toward Atlanta. In that city the Federals were at work destroying the city except for houses and churches. Far to the north, in the Shenandoah Valley, action picked up briefly as Early's and Sheridan's men fought at Newton or Middletown, and at Cedar Creek and Nineveh, Virginia. Out in Missouri troops skirmished near Centreville. On Sunday, Confederates in the Shenandoah moved back to New Market and a good portion of Early's force was detached to strengthen the siege lines at Richmond and Petersburg. Since June, Early marched some 1,670 miles and fought 75 engagements of one kind or another. The 1864 Valley Campaign was to suffer by comparison with Jackson's in 1862, but considering the condition and size of the Confederate force and the strength of Sheridan's opposition, it had been a memorable attempt to bring the war closer to the North. As happened so often these days, conflict with Indians flared, this time at Ash Creek near Fort Larned, Kansas. In Missouri, Federals carried out a four-day scout against guerrillas in Pemiscot County. (Excerpted from *The Civil War by Day*, E. B. Long, Doubleday 1971)