



HARPERS FERRY

CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

PO BOX 389, HARPERS FERRY, WV 25425

Vol. 27 October 2007 No. 2

DATE: Wednesday, October 10th, 2007

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

8:00 Speaker's 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: Arthur Candenquist

SUBJECT: Did Anyone Really Know What Time It Was?

The Subject:

In the nineteenth century, there was no standard of time in the United States, much less the world, before Sunday, November 18th, 1883, when, by agreement of some eighty railroads, Standard Railway Time was adopted in the U.S. At noon on that day, known as "The Day of Two Noons," every community in the country ceased keeping local solar time, and order was borne of chaos. By necessity, railroads required a standard of time on each road to avoid train wrecks. This standard of time led to Standard Railway Time, which, in turn in March, 1918, led to time zones and daylight

saving time as we know them today. How time was kept and regulated in the years before 1883, and especially during the turbulent war years of 1861-1865, was nothing short of chaotic. Time balls, “noon” marks, and the widespread use of almanacs all helped nineteenth-century Americans to determine what time it was in their specific locality. It was only when one traveled that confusion reigned, often with tragic results. The U.S. Naval Observatory in Washington began to regulate time beginning in 1845, and the long process began towards the regulation of time today by cesium beam and hydrogen maser clocks whose rates do not vary by 100 picoseconds per day from day to day.

In the presentation provided, which includes both narration and slides, we will examine how time was kept and regulated; how the absence of standard time led to disastrous train wrecks; and the importance that almanacs and time signals played in everyday life. When the War Between the States broke out, railroads in the Union and Confederacy provided for local and railroad time in the stations, and enabled railroads to operate, and the army and navy to conduct military operations with some measure of precision.

We will look at the possibility that non-synchronized watches may have played a role in the lack of success on the battlefield, and how time was regulated in the armies in 1861-1865.

We take time standardization for granted as we enter the 21st century, and scarcely give “time” a thought, except to know that we must be somewhere or do something at a specific time. But it was fewer than 100 years ago that there was no standard of time, and as we examine life in the nineteenth century, we have to stop and wonder: Did anyone REALLY know what time it was?

The Speaker

Mr. Candenquist has been a serious scholar of the War Between the States since 1956, and focuses his attention on the more unusual and lesser-known aspects of the War. He has published two articles on keeping time during the War (there was no Standard Time during the 1860s); an article on Stonewall Jackson’s appropriation of the B&O Railroad equipment in 1861; and an article on the world’s first military railroad—the Centreville Military Railroad, constructed in 1861 between Manassas Jct. and Centreville, VA. He has lectured extensively on wartime railroads, the role of Masons during the War, the Kilpatrick-Dahlgren Raid on Richmond, and the War in Virginia; he is currently working on a biography on the Confederacy’s counterpart to Herman Haupt.

He recently retired after 33 years with Amtrak, as Amtrak’s Manager, Emergency Preparedness, based at corporate headquarters in Washington, DC. He attended Temple University and has a BS in Communications. After college he served with the U.S. Air Force for six years, including service in Vietnam. He is a professional member of the American Society of Safety Engineers; the National Fire Protection Association; and the International Association of Emergency Managers. He currently serves Rappahannock County, Virginia, as deputy emergency management coordinator.

He is a member of a number of historical organizations including the CW Preservation Trust; a life member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans; a life member of the Summers-Koontz Camp № 490 SCV in Luray, VA; a life member of the Surratt

Society; a member of the Brandy Station Foundation; Virginia Historical Society; of the Confederate Military Lodge of Research, and C.W. Lodge of Research № 1865 (two Masonic organizations); of the Museum of the Confederacy; the Lincoln Group of the District of Columbia; the Society of Civil War Surgeons; the Civil War Education Association; the Titanic Historical Society; and a number of other historical organizations. He is also a 32° Mason.

When not dabbling in history or working, Mr. Candenquist serves his community as a volunteer firefighter with 45 years of fire service. He currently serves as Safety Officer with the rank of Captain. He lives near Amissville, Rappahannock County, Virginia.

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 Saturday, October 6th**, to Allison Alsdorf, at 304-535-2101 or you can e-mail her at alsdorf@comcast.net

The Western Theatre

When the Civil War began, the Confederacy possessed fewer military resources and pursued principally a defensive posture while the Union took a more aggressive role. Northern strategy was directed at keeping the Border States of Kentucky and Missouri (along with Delaware and Maryland in the East) within the Union; starving the South by blockading her coastline from Virginia to Texas; regaining control of the Mississippi; and dividing and subdividing the Confederacy.

The Border States were secured by the spring of 1862 and a string of Union victories--Forts Henry and Donelson, Pea Ridge, Shiloh, Island No. 10, and New Orleans--caused many to believe that the Confederacy was finished. The North's blockade of Southern ports to deny the Confederates access to much-needed foreign war material and manufactured goods and to keep them from exporting cotton was slow to take effect. But each year the blockade continued to tighten and more and more Confederate ports fell to Union forces. Union amphibious operations to regain control of the Mississippi River began in 1862 and, although initially thwarted, eventually culminated in Grant's successful Vicksburg Campaign of 1863 and the subsequent fall of Port Hudson. This not only closed down the South's most important commercial waterway; it also severed the Confederacy on a north/south axis.

By 1864, with the development of a unified command system, Northern strategy focused on cutting the Confederacy along an east/west axis in order to destroy its food supply and its war-making industrial capacity in the deep South. Sherman's Atlanta Campaign and his subsequent March to the Sea achieved the desired results by the end of the year. By early 1865, with Sherman's troops pushing northward into the Carolinas, it was clear that the days of the Confederacy were numbered.