



HARPERS FERRY

CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

PO BOX 1079, HARPERS FERRY, WV 25425

Vol. 29 October 2009 No. 02

DATE: Wednesday, October 14th, 2009

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

PLACE: Camp Hill Methodist Church, Harpers Ferry, WV

SPEAKER: Calvin Goddard Zon

SUBJECT: The Good Fight That Didn't End: *Henry P. Goddard's Accounts of Civil War and Peace*

The Speaker:

Mr. Calvin Goddard Zon is a Washington, D.C. based journalist who was a staff writer for the Washington Star daily newspaper for nine years, after which he wrote for labor and other publications, and is now an editor for BNA's Daily Labor Report. He has a B.A. in history from Davidson College and an M.A. from American University. He has presented his book at bookstores and Civil War Round Tables in Virginia, Maryland, D.C. and Connecticut. He is the past commander of the Lincoln-Cushing Camp of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War.

The Subject

Personal accounts of Civil War service are common enough in the literature (as we all know), but ones that deeply extend into and beyond the Reconstruction years are less so.

Such are the writings of Norwich, Connecticut's Henry P. Goddard, compiled and edited by his great-grandson Calvin Goddard Zon and published as [The Good Fight That Didn't End: Henry P. Goddard's Accounts of Civil War and Peace](#) (University of South Carolina Press, 2008). After a brief stint in the 2nd New York Cavalry's "Connecticut Squadron," Goddard joined the newly formed 14th Connecticut in June 1862. Beginning his service as a sergeant major and ending it as a captain, Goddard's combat experience in the infantry extended from Antietam through his resignation in April 1864 (with a disability certificate).

Mr. Calvin Zon, who contributed the book's introduction and index as well as brief transitional narratives and occasional notes, has skillfully arranged Goddard's writings, which include letters, diary entries, and post-war reminiscences. Other sources, such as Charles D. Page's *History of the Fourteenth Regiment, Connecticut Vol. Infantry*, are extensively excerpted by Zon, to provide context and additional information.

The last third of the book comprises Goddard's journalistic work for Connecticut and Baltimore newspapers. In these articles he critically explores important issues of race relations, Reconstruction, and national reconciliation. While his newspaper writings advocated for black civil rights, they also reflected the deeply conflicted feelings many in the public had over Reconstruction policy.

This book is an obvious labor of love on the part of the editor. Zon's work is an exceptionally thoughtful compilation of his ancestor's writings, which comprise useful source material for researchers of the military campaigns of the eastern theater as well as historians interested in the key issues raised by the societal upheaval of the post-war decades, North and South (Excerpted from "Civil War Books and Authors," <http://cwba.blogspot.com/>)

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. The menu is Spaghetti with Meat Sauce (or Meatballs); Tossed Salad, Iced Tea, Garlic Bread, Butter & Dessert.

Reservations for the meal **must be phoned in no later than Sunday, October 10th**, to Allison Alsdorf, at 304-535-2101 or you can e-mail her at alsdorf@comcast.net

Webb Garrison's Civil War Dictionary:

An Illustrated Guide to the Everyday Language of Soldiers and Civilians

by Webb Garrison and Cheryl Garrison, Cumberland House Publishing,

Reviewed by James Hall

There's a pretty good chance a waiter today would either stare you down or laugh in your face if you happened to order a big slice of "secession bread" and a pint of "possum beer" to wash it down. But these were common tablefare [sic] during the Civil War.

In an updated release by Cumberland House Publishing, the daughter-in-law of well-known historian Webb Garrison, who was a veteran linguist of Civil War vernacular, has packaged the fruits of 30 years of research and study into a palatable dictionary format.

Contained in Garrison's dictionary are colorful words and phrases – including nicknames and slang – commonly used at the time.

Where appropriate, examples and anecdotes are included to illustrate meanings. All told, there are more than 2,500 entries and 250 illustrations that help explain the vernacular of the times, equipment names and organizations of common soldiers, their officers and civilians.

And in case you're wondering: "Secession bread" was made from rice flour instead of wheat flour, and "possum beer" was a home-brew libation based on persimmons. (Excerpted from *Civil War Times* June 2009)

The Heavens are Hung in Black by James Still

Reviewed by Chris Howland

The Heavens are Hung in Black, James Still's new play about Abraham Lincoln that just completed its opening run at the newly renovated Ford's Theatre, is by no means perfect. For one thing, with a running time of nearly three hours, even with two intermissions it is still probably 20 to 30 minutes too long. Second, Still's succession of dream sequences, interwoven with historical fantasy and fact, strays at times, forcing perhaps even the most ardent Lincoln admirer to clamor for crib notes.

But there are enough moments of story-telling brilliance, heart-tugging drama and understated humor in *Heavens* to make it well worth the price of admission. A prime example is the dream sequence that opens Act 2, in which a barefoot, nightgown-clad Lincoln trades witty barbs with Jefferson Davis about the causes of civil war and the divided nation's future.

Still focuses on the five months in 1862 between the death of Lincoln's son Willie and his first draft of the Emancipation Proclamation. Veteran stage and screen actor David Selby, as Lincoln, masterfully captures the president's grief as well as his guilt over burgeoning war casualties. Fortunately, Lincoln's lighter side is frequently evident too, as when he fends off Davis' pointed jabs with his trademark folksy, self-deprecating humor. And Shakespeare himself would likely tip his cap to Still for the scene where Lincoln joins a rehearsal of *Henry V* featuring Edwin Booth, brother of his would-be assassin, and delivers on cue one of Henry's haunting soliloquies.

Through the play Lincoln, and also the audience, are reminded of death's close proximity. And while *Heaven's* would be compelling on any stage, seeing it at Ford's Theatre, with its bunting-draped presidential box, brought an extra fillip of drama to a dramatic interlude from the past. (Excerpted from *Civil War Times* June 2009)

On this Day, October 14th, Tuesday, 1862

Congressional election in Iowa, Ohio, Indiana and Pennsylvania resulted in gains by the Democrats, except in Iowa, where the Republicans carried the state. President Lincoln ordered the removal of army bakeries from the basement of the Capitol building.

Confederate lieutenant General John C. Pemberton assumed command of the department of Mississippi and Eastern Louisiana. There was fighting at Hazel Bottom, MO; Trenton, AK; and continuing action in Kentucky at Manchester, Lancaster and Crab Orchard Road. (Excerpted from *The Civil War Day by Day: An Almanac 1861 – 1865* by

E. B. Long with Barbara Long, Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, New York, 1971.)