



HARPERS FERRY

CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

PO BOX 1079, HARPERS FERRY, WV 25425

Vol. 32 September 2012 No. 02

DATE: Wednesday, October 10th, 2012

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

PLACE: Camp Hill Methodist Church, Harpers Ferry, WV

SPEAKER: Mitch Yockelson

THE Subject: How Ulysses S. Grant Saved the Union

The Speaker:

Mitch Yockelson is an archivist at the National Archives and Records Administration of the United States, where he works in the Office of the Inspector General investigating stolen documents cases. Additionally, he teaches history at the United States Naval Academy and military history at Norwich University. He has published widely in the field of military history, including articles and book reviews in various journals and magazines, and is the author of two books: *Borrowed Soldiers, Americans under British Command, 1918* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2008) and *MacArthur: America's General* (Thomas Nelson, 2010). He received a B.S. from Frostburg State University, an M.A. from George Mason University and a Ph.D. from the Royal Military College of Science, Cranfield University, United Kingdom.

The Subject

Mitch's talk will focus on how Ulysses S. Grant was the savior of the Union. Grant hardly seemed destined for glory. He was a reluctant military student at West Point and resigned from the Army at age thirty-two, only to fail as a businessman and farmer. Mitch will show that whatever Grant may have lacked on the surface, he compensated for with common sense, determination, and an even tempered poise on the bloodiest fields of battle. Because of these attributes Grant saved the Union and thus helped bring the country back together.

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, October 7th**, to Kyle Wichtendahl at 301-639-8855, or you can email him at kfwichtendahl@gmail.com. The meal will be: Spaghetti with Meat Sauce (or Meatballs); Salad Bar, Iced Tea, Coffee, Garlic Bread, Butter & Dessert.

Major General Adelbert Ames: Forgotten Man of the 20th Maine

Adelbert Ames preceded Joshua Chamberlain as colonel of the 20th Maine, and had a stellar military career in his own right. Ames was born in Rockland and spent his early years on Atlantic sailing vessels before entering West Point. He graduated just after the war began in May 1861 and was badly wounded at First Bull Run, fighting as a lieutenant with the 5th U.S. Artillery. Praised for his bravery, Ames became a major and fought with his guns through the Peninsula and Seven Days' campaigns, earning another promotion to lieutenant colonel.

Ames wanted even higher rank, however, and realized he would have to switch to the infantry branch to get it. On August 20, 1862, he was given command of the 20th Maine and the rank of colonel. Colonel Ames commanded that unit until May 1863, when he became a member of Maj. Gen. George Meade's staff. He soon became a brigadier general, commanding a brigade in the XI Corps, leaving Lt. Col. Joshua Chamberlain to gain glory as the 20th's commander at Gettysburg. Ames and his brigade, meanwhile, fought on Barlow's Knoll and Cemetery Hill at Gettysburg.

Following Gettysburg, Ames led commands in South Carolina and Florida and then took part in the siege of Petersburg. In 1865 the peripatetic Ames oversaw the capture of Fort Fisher in North Carolina. He ended the war as a major general.

His postwar career was also successful. He served as the Republican Reconstruction governor of Mississippi and then as a senator from that state. But he was not yet done with the garb of a soldier, fighting as a U.S. brigadier general in the Spanish-American War. An accomplished soldier and politician, Ames died in 1933 at the age of 97, the last surviving general of the Civil War.

At Gettysburg with the Louisiana Tigers

Reviewed by Robin Friedman

The Louisiana Tigers in the Gettysburg Campaign, June-July, 1863

By Scott L. Mingus Sr.,
Louisiana State University Press, 2009

The legendary Louisiana Tigers, one of the more feared units in the Army of Northern Virginia, get a welcome and comprehensive look in Scott Mingus' new book. While the focus of the book is the critical role the Tigers played throughout the Gettysburg Campaign, Mingus gives us so much more by examining the complete history of the brigade and retelling the personal stories of many of its colorful officers and soldiers.

Originally known as "Wheat's Tigers" after Chatham Wheat, their filibustering first commander, the brigade consisted from the beginning of hard-drinking, violent, undisciplined and rowdy soldiers who also happened to be superb fighters. Following Wheat's death and the unit's decimation during the Seven Days' Battles in 1862, the Tigers reorganized as the 1st Louisiana Brigade under fiery General Harry T. Hays. Irish and German immigrants mostly filled the ranks, but other groups fought, too. Notably, the 5th Louisiana had a Jewish commander, Major Alexander Hart, and Private Charles Lutz of the 8th Louisiana was a free black.

With the reorganization of Lee's army following the Battle of Chancellorsville, the Tigers became part of Jubal Early's Division in Richard Ewell's Corps. During Lee's second invasion of the North in 1863, Hays and his Tigers overran a key Union fort in Winchester on June 14, clearing the way for the Confederates to cross the Potomac River into Maryland. On June 26, the Tigers created mayhem during Early's brief occupation of Gettysburg as he headed for York, Pa. After occupying York on June 28-29, Early and the Tigers turned southwest to meet the Union forces moving toward Gettysburg. On the afternoon of July 1, the Tigers routed the Union XI Corps on the fields north of Gettysburg and pushed the corps through the town and onto Cemetery Hill.

Late on July 2, the Tigers, along with men from Colonel Isaac Avery's North Carolinians (Hoke's Brigade), mounted a desperate attack on East Cemetery Hill. The Tigers broke three Union lines, reached the top of the hill and momentarily captured key artillery positions before being compelled to retreat. With an almost Iliadic sweep, Mingus captures the violence, fury and heroism on both sides of the line that terrible evening.

Although the book includes detailed notes, a comprehensive bibliography, complete casualty list and day-by-day summary of the Tigers' activities during the Gettysburg Campaign, maps of the fighting on East Cemetery Hill would have been nice.

