



HARPERS FERRY

CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

PO BOX 1079, HARPERS FERRY, WV 25425

Vol. 31 September 2011 No. 01

DATE: Wednesday, September 14th, 2010

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

PLACE: Camp Hill Methodist Church, Harpers Ferry, WV

SPEAKER: Dennis Frye

SUBJECT: Rebel Thermopylae: War Erupts on the Border!

The Speaker:

Dennis E. Frye is the chief historian at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. Dennis is a prominent Civil War historian. He has had numerous appearances on *PBS*, *The History Channel*, *The Discovery Channel*, and *A&E* as a guest historian. Dennis served as an Associate Producer for the Civil War movie *Gods and Generals*. Dennis also is one of the nation's leading Civil War battlefield preservationists. He is co-founder and first president of the *Save Historic Antietam Foundation*, and he is co-founder and a former president of today's *Civil War Preservation Trust*. Dennis is a tour guide in demand, leading tours for organizations such as the Smithsonian, National Geographic, numerous colleges and universities. Dennis also is a well-known author, with 70 articles and five books. His latest book is entitled *Antietam Revealed*. Dennis resides near the Antietam Battlefield in Maryland, and he and his wife, Sylvia, have restored the home that was used by General Burnside as his post-Antietam headquarters. Dennis has spoken numerous times at the Harpers Ferry Civil Round Table.

The Subject

Few places in the fledgling Confederacy were more vulnerable to United States attack than Harpers Ferry and the Upper Potomac during the first weeks of the Civil War. Virginia commander Robert E. Lee selected the area as a critical point of defense for the Old Dominion, making it an inviting target for the Federals. Discover how Colonel Thomas Jonathan Jackson intended to fight with the "spirit which actuated the defenders of Thermopylae" as he prepared Harpers Ferry and Jefferson County for expected invasion. Learn how Union nemesis General Robert Patterson expected the first major battle of the Civil War to be fought nearby.

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 emailed in no later than Saturday, September 10th**, to Kyle Wichtendahl at kfwichtendahl@gmail.com or phoned in at 301-639-8855. The meal will be Meat Loaf, Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, Peas, Iced Tea, Rolls, Butter & Dessert.

Medal of Honor

BALDWIN, FRANK D.

Rank and organization: Captain, Company D, 19th Michigan Infantry; First Lieutenant, 5th U.S. Infantry. Place and date: At Peach Tree Creek, Ga., 12 July 1864. Entered service at: Constantine, Mich. Birth: Michigan. Date of issue: 3 December 1891. Second award. Citation: Led his company in a countercharge at Peach Tree Creek, Ga., 12 July 1864, under a galling fire ahead of his own men, and singly entered the enemy's line, capturing and bringing back 2 commissioned officers, fully armed, besides a guidon of a Georgia regiment.

SECOND AWARD

Place and date: At McClellans Creek, Tex., 8 November 1874. Citation: Rescued, with 2 companies, 2 white girls by a voluntary attack upon Indians whose superior numbers and strong position would have warranted delay for reinforcements, but which delay would have permitted the Indians to escape and kill their captives.

BLAGHEEN, WILLIAM

Rank and organization: Ship's Cook, U.S. Navy. Born: 1832, England. Accredited to: New York. G.O. No.: 45, 31 December 1864. Citation: On board the U.S.S. Brooklyn during successful attacks against Fort Morgan, rebel gunboats and the ram Tennessee in Mobile Bay, on 5 August 1864. Stationed in the immediate vicinity of the shell whips which were twice cleared of men by bursting shells, Blagheen remained steadfast at his post and performed his duties in the powder division throughout the furious action which

resulted in the surrender of the prize rebel ram Tennessee and in the damaging and destruction of batteries at Fort Morgan.

CSS Tennessee (1864 – 1864)

CSS Tennessee, a 1273-ton ironclad ram, was built at Selma, Alabama. Launched in February 1863, her outfitting was completed at Mobile, where she was commissioned in February 1864. As flagship of Admiral Franklin Buchanan, she was by far the strongest unit of the naval part of the defenses of Mobile Bay. To counter her, the Federal Navy had to bring ironclad monitors to the Gulf of Mexico.

On 5 August 1864, Tennessee battled against Rear Admiral David Glasgow Farragut's fleet as it steamed past Forts Morgan and Gaines into Mobile Bay. Though she was able to inflict some damage on the Federal ships, Farragut successfully entered the Bay and anchored beyond the reach of the Confederate forts' guns. Admiral Buchanan then took his ship up toward the Union warships, engaging them in an intense battle that ended with Tennessee surrounded by her enemies and battered into surrender.

The former Confederate ironclad was promptly taken into the Union Navy as USS Tennessee. With her combat damage quickly repaired, she was employed during operations to capture Fort Morgan later in August. In the autumn of 1864, Tennessee was sent to New Orleans, Louisiana, for further repairs. She subsequently served with the U.S. Navy's Mississippi Squadron until after the end of the Civil War. Decommissioned in August 1865, USS Tennessee was sold for scrapping in November 1867.

On This Day, September 14, 1862 Battle of South Mountain

The left wing of McClellan's army under Major General William B. Franklin moved toward Crampton's Gap in an effort to relieve the Harper's [sic] Ferry Garrison and to cut off Confederates advancing on that stronghold. Franklin carried the pass against Lafayette McLaws, but believing he was outnumbered, Franklin entrenched and did not push on from Pleasant Valley toward Harper's Ferry. At South Mountain, at Fox's and Turner's gaps, Federal cavalry under Pleasonton fought with D. H. Hill's Confederates until the two Federal corps of Jesse Reno and Hooker of the right wing under Burnside came up. After severe battling the Confederates withdrew late in the evening, both flanks enveloped. Federal Major General Jesse L. Reno was killed. Federal casualties for that day are put at 443 killed, 1807 wounded, and 75 missing, a total of 2325 of more than 28,000. An estimated 325 Confederates were killed, 1560 wounded, 800 missing for a total of 2685 of about 18,000 engaged, but casualties may have been higher. These battles are known as South Mountain, Boonsborough, Boonsborough Gap, Turner's Gap, and Crampton's Gap or Crampton's Pass. (Excerpted from *The Civil War Day by Day*, E. B. Long, published by Doubleday)