

Published for the
Members and Friends
of the Harpers Ferry
Historical Association

Summer 2012



2012 Civil War Sesquicentennial Special Event: “Prelude to Freedom: The 1862 Battle of Harpers Ferry”

September 13 - 15

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, with support from the Harpers Ferry Historical Association and the West Virginia Humanities Council, will hold three days of public events to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Harpers Ferry.

“Prelude to Freedom: The 1862 Battle of Harpers Ferry,” will interpret the battle’s significance in the Maryland Campaign, the role it played in the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation, contraband (slaves who escaped to Union lines) living in Harpers Ferry, and the citizens of a border town under bombardment.

Highlights of the event include:

- Battle of Maryland Heights Sesquicentennial Hike. Discover Maryland Heights, the key to defending Harpers Ferry. Hike with a ranger across the Potomac River to the Naval Battery. (2 1/2 miles round trip)
- Archeology Discovery Tent. Engage in “Hands on History” as you discover objects relating to everyday life in 19th century Harpers Ferry.
- Family/Youth Tent. Have your photo taken as a Civil War soldier. Dress up and learn Civil War drill. Go on a map search and win some Civil War trading cards.
- “Defeat & Victory” Ranger Walk (Bolivar Heights). Discover how the capture of 12,500 Union soldiers led to the freedom of over 4 million people.

- “African American Lives in Limbo: Contraband Camp” Step back to the tense days when runaways and freedmen’s lives were in limbo.
- “Songs of the Civil War” Music by Magpie duo Greg Artzner and Terry Leonino.
- “The Desperate Hour” Evening lantern program (Lower Town). Who will be trapped and who will escape Confederate General Thomas Jackson’s ring of fire?
- “Like Rats in a Cage: Yankees Trapped in a Ring of Fire” (Bolivar Heights). Experience the weapons, clothing, tactics and the stories of the doomed garrison.
- “Drive the Enemy into Extinction: Confederate General A.P. Hill Outflanks the Yankees” (Murphy Farm). Confederate living history demonstration.
- Keynote Address: “September Suspense” Dennis Frye, Chief Historian, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. Book signing to follow.
- “Marching As To War” Join this Musical Presentation by the Wildcat Regimental Band and experience the music and milieu of 1862.

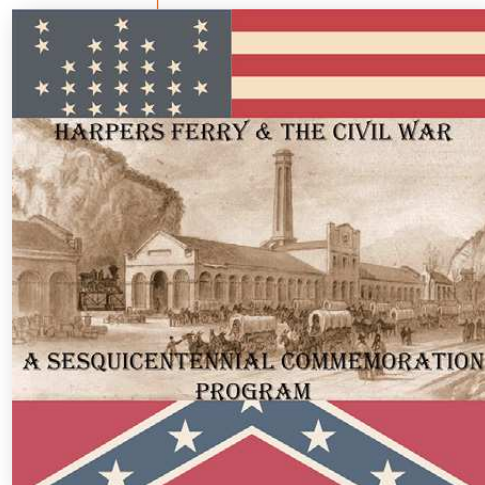
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1862: Beyond the
Battle

HFHA Partners
with Sharpsburg
Historical Society



The picture which appears on our newsletter's nameplate, dating from 1803, is one of the oldest prints of Harpers Ferry. Twenty years earlier, in 1783, Thomas Jefferson had declared that this view was “worth a voyage across the Atlantic.”

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memory of Jim Kuhn
and Alexander and Mary
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*"JACKSON AND A. P. HILL BEFORE HARPERS FERRY" watercolor by Garnet Jex
(courtesy Sharpsburg Historical Society)*

Prelude to Freedom Continued from Page 1

- "Cowards of Harpers Ferry" Learn the story of the Yankee surrender and parole and the enormous consequences.

The event will also feature a panel discussion, evening lectures, and a special battlefield bus tour. See below for detailed information on these special programs. For a complete schedule, visit www.nps.gov/hafe. (Schedule subject to change.)

Harvard President, Gettysburg Historian to Speak at Sesquicentennial

Two evening lectures will highlight Sesquicentennial events at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. The lectures are part of the Maryland Campaign Sesquicentennial Evening Lecture Series.



On Thursday, September 13, 7:00 to 8:00 p.m., D. Scott Hartwig will present "For God's Sake, Don't Fall Back – The Battle for Maryland Heights."

Hartwig is a 31-year veteran with the National Park Service and is currently the Supervisory Historian at Gettysburg National Military Park. For the sesquicentennial of Antietam and the Maryland Campaign, Hartwig has written a two-volume study of the campaign and climactic battle, *To Antietam Creek: The Maryland Campaign of September 1862*. The first installment takes the reader from the controversial return of George B. McClellan as commander of the Army of the Potomac through the Confederate invasion, the siege and capture of Harpers Ferry, the day-long Battle of South Mountain, and ultimately, to the eve of the great and terrible Battle of Antietam.

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Panel Discussion: “Harpers Ferry 1862: Beyond the Battle”

Several noted historians and authors will participate in the panel discussion “Harpers Ferry 1862: Beyond the Battle.”

This panel, complemented by scheduled tours and living history vignettes, will tell the history of the 1862 Battle of Harpers Ferry and describe and discuss the war as it impacted the border town.

How were the thriving community of Harpers Ferry and its citizens affected by war? What happened to the homes and jobs of the civilians in the town? What was life like for the soldiers stationed at Harpers Ferry? How did they spend their time when they weren’t fighting? What happened to the 12,500 soldiers captured here?

The discussion will be held Saturday, September 15, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m., in the author/sales tent. Book signing to follow. Participants include:

Dr. William A. Blair, research professor and Director of the George and Ann Richards Civil War Era Center, Penn State University. Having completed his B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. at Penn State, his interests focus on the Civil War era and Reconstruction. He has written two books and edited three books on the Civil War, including *Lincoln’s Proclamation: Emancipation Reconsidered*. He is also the founding editor of *The Journal of the Civil War Era* published by the University of North Carolina Press, and prior to that was the editor of *Civil War History* for ten years.

Dr. James K. Bryant, II, Associate Professor of History at Shenandoah University. His areas of expertise include 19th and 20th century American history, African American history, U.S. Military history, Civil War history, American South, Virginia history, Atlantic Slave Trade, Comparative Slavery, and Oral history. He received a B.S. in History Education from Hampton University, a M.A., History from the University of Vermont and a Ph. D., History, from the University of Rochester. He has published two chapters on “Antebellum Compromises” and “Reconstruction” for “Conflicts in American History” series from Facts on File. He is author of two books in the Civil



Dr. James K. Bryant, II

War Sesquicentennial Series published by History Press, Inc., *The Battle of Frederickburg: We Cannot Escape History*, and *The Chancellorsville Campaign: The Nation’s High Water Mark*.

Kathleen Ernst, full-time author who has published numerous children’s titles with the American Girl series. She has worked as an education specialist, speaker, instructor, curator, and has served as script writer and project director for educational public television in Wisconsin. She grew up in Pennsylvania and nearby in Maryland. She received a B.S. degree from West Virginia University in Environmental Education, and a M.S. degree from Antioch University in History Education and Writing. Her published books include *Civil War fiction Night Riders of*

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Noah Mehrkam
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Battlefield Bus Tour: “Stonewall’s Greatest Victory”

Join author and Harpers Ferry NHP Chief Historian Dennis Frye for this special Sesquicentennial event. Explore sites where General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson conquered Mother Nature and the Harpers Ferry garrison—resulting in the largest surrender of United States troops during the Civil War—and enabled General Robert E. Lee to stand at Antietam.

- When: September 14 and 15, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.
- Where: Meet at the Cavalier Heights Visitor Center.
- Due to limited bus space, advance reservations are required. Call 304.535.2078 for reservations.

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Harvard President, Gettysburg Historian
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Saturday, September 15, 7:00 to 8:00 p.m., will feature "Telling War Stories:



Dr. Drew Gilpin Faust

Reflections by a Civil War Historian" by Dr. Drew Gilpin Faust.

Dr. Faust is the 28th President of Harvard University and the Lincoln Professor of History in Harvard's faculty of Arts and Sciences. She was raised in the Shenandoah Valley, received her bachelor's degree in history from Bryn Mawr College, and her master's and doctoral degree in American Civilization from the University of Pennsylvania.

Faust served as the Annenberg Professor of History at the University of Pennsylvania, where she was a member of the faculty for 25 years. She is the author of six books including *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* for which she won the Francis Parkman Prize in 1997. Her most recent book, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* looks at the impact of the Civil War's enormous death toll on the lives of 19th century Americans. It won the Bancroft Prize in 2009, was a finalist for both the National Book Award and a Pulitzer Prize. She has also received many awards for her writing, teaching and research.

Both evening lectures will be held at the Mather Training Center. Reception and book signings will follow.

Panel Discussion
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Harpers Ferry and Bravest Girl in Sharpsburg. She also wrote the non-fiction adult book

Too Afraid to Cry: Maryland Civilians in the Antietam Campaign.



Kathleen Ernst

Also participating will be **D. Scott Hartwig**, Supervisory Historian at Gettysburg National Military Park. Hartwig will also present "For God's Sake, Don't Fall Back – The Battle for Maryland Heights," on Thursday evening as part of the Sesquicentennial Lecture Series. See page 2 for details.

Moderating the panel will be **Dr. Allen Guelzo**. A renowned Abraham Lincoln scholar, Dr. Guelzo is the Henry R. Luce III Professor of the Civil War Era at Gettysburg College, and Director of the Civil War Era Studies Program. Dr. Guelzo earned a M.A. and Ph.D. in history from the University of Pennsylvania. He is the author of *Abraham Lincoln: Redeemer President* and *Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation: The End of Slavery in America*, both of which won the

Lincoln Prize. His most recent publication is *Fateful Lightning: A New History of the Civil War and Reconstruction*.



Dr. Allen Guelzo

This event is being presented with financial assistance from the West Virginia Humanities Council, a state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this program do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

 **WEST VIRGINIA
HUMANITIES COUNCIL**

A Stand on the Potomac

by David L. Larsen

In early September 1862, the American Civil War was technically not about slavery. Many people, Northern and Southern, white and black, cared passionately about the subject and understood things might be changing. But officially, the North continued to wage war for the reunification of a United States in which slavery was sanctioned.

On September 15, 1862, 12,500 Union troops surrendered to Confederates at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. Most of the southern forces left the scene of their victory quickly, marching 17 miles north to Sharpsburg, Maryland, where just two days later they fought the Battle of Antietam.

In a way, things looked pretty good for the 12,500 surrendered Union troops. They were likely to be paroled and sent home. Paroles were common at that stage of the war. A prisoner would sign a piece of paper promising not to fight again until he was duly exchanged, and then he was free to go on his way. At Harpers Ferry the process moved quickly. Enlisted men surrendered their weapons, but officers were allowed to keep their sidearms.

Colonel William Trimble, the commander of the 60th Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiment was concerned. He had a number of free African Americans who had been working as servants and teamsters for his regiment since they enlisted in Ohio. Confederate troops were rounding up hundreds of “contrabands” or runaway slaves that had previously moved behind the Union lines at Harpers Ferry. In 1862, thousands of enslaved people left bondage, went to the United States military, and worked as laborers, teamsters, cooks, scouts, spies, making a significant contribution to the North’s military effort.

The Confederates were taking the captured African Americans in Harpers Ferry and sending them back into slavery. Colonel Trimble did not want his free blacks from Ohio to mistakenly be taken with the runaways. Trimble approached Confederate General A. P. Hill. General Hill agreed to give passes to Trimble’s men and the issue seemed settled.

On the morning of September 16, Trimble and the 60th Ohio prepared to march across a pontoon bridge into Maryland. A Confederate cavalry squad was stationed there to keep things orderly and make sure no blacks slipped across with the troops. Trimble showed the Confederates the passes that General Hill had provided for the free blacks with the 60th Ohio. The Confederates, however, refused to allow the African Americans to pass.

Colonel Trimble responded by reaching into his holster, drawing his revolver, and holding the Confederate officer at gunpoint until the entire 60th Ohio, African Americans and all, were across the river.

No one knows his motivation. Trimble may have been an abolitionist, may have felt some special duty to those men, may have been tired of losing, or may simply have hated the Confederates.

In any case, Colonel Trimble’s stand on the Potomac River represents countless such incidents in which individuals had to make choices about race and slavery. The war was indeed changing. Just a week later, after the Battle of Antietam, Abraham Lincoln issued the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation.

As messy and corrupt and tragic and immoral as it would continue to be, the war had also become about freedom.



CDV of Colonel William Trimble dated September 1862. (Courtesy Nicholas Picerno Collection)

Donations to the David L. Larsen Memorial Fund

can be sent to:

Harpers Ferry Historical Association
P.O. Box 197
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425
Attn: David L. Larsen Memorial Fund

The full version of this story appears in *The Harpers Ferry Anthology: Civil War-era Stories by Park Rangers and Volunteers* (HFHA, 2011), available at the Park Bookshop or online at www.harpersferryhistory.org.

facebook

The Harpers Ferry Historical Association is now on Facebook! Search Facebook for "Harpers Ferry Historical Association". "Like" our page to receive notifications of upcoming park special events, bookshop news, and related park information.

"THE UPPER POTOMAC IN THE CIVIL WAR" watercolor by Garnet Jex (courtesy Sharpsburg Historical Society).

HFHA Partners With Sharpsburg Historical Society on New Publication

Harpers Ferry Historical Association in partnership with the Sharpsburg Historical Society is proud to announce the publication of *The Upper Potomac During the Civil War*, a collection of watercolors by artist Garnet W. Jex.

In the 1960s, Jex—a Washington, D.C. artist and Civil War enthusiast—painted 51 opaque watercolor images to commemorate the Civil War's 100th anniversary. The collection originally appeared in black and white in a booklet published by the District of Columbia Civil War Centennial Commission. Now, after nearly five decades of obscurity, the collection has been republished to commemorate the Civil War Sesquicentennial and to share these full-color paintings with a new audience.

This new book contains the 1965 Foreword by D.C. Centennial Chairman Paul J. Sedgwick, a new Preface, and a short bio of Garnet Jex. Each image includes Jex's original margin notes and new text which expands the original narrative, clarifies Jex's

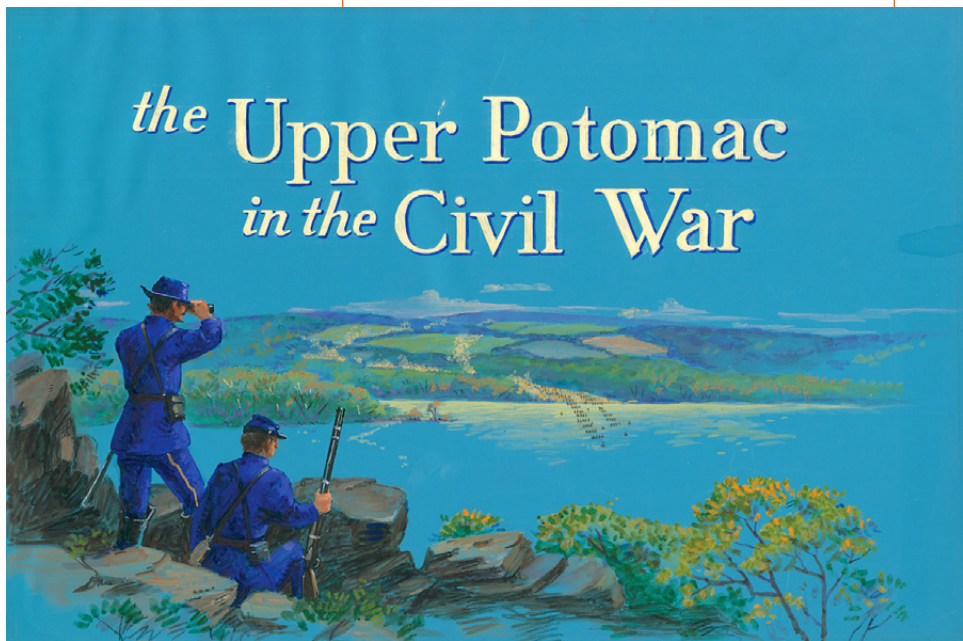
exposition, or highlights something in the painting itself. The paintings chronologically depict battles and skirmishes along the Upper Potomac.

The paintings will be on exhibit the month of September at the Washington County Arts Council, 14 W. Washington Street, Hagerstown, MD, 21740. See www.washingtoncountyyarts.com for hours.

The Sharpsburg Historical Society, owner of the collection, will host three Friday evening programs in addition to the exhibit:

- **September 7** - Opening Reception, 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. There will be presentations by John Frye, curator and archivist of the Washington County Free Library's Western Maryland Room, and by appraiser Cliff Springer. Noted singer/songwriter Jennie Avila will be singing songs of the Civil War.
- **September 14** – 6:00 p.m. Historian (and HFHA member) Timothy R. Snyder will discuss the historical content of the Jex paintings. Tim's insight and hours of research for the new book were invaluable. Tim is the author of *Trembling in the Balance: The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal During the Civil War*.
- **September 28** – 6:00 p.m. HFHA Executive Director Debbie Piscitelli will present Jex: *The Artist and the Art*.

The programs as well as the month-long exhibit are free and open to the public. Books as well as prints of ten selected images will be available for purchase during the programs. For more information call 301.791.3132.



Save the Date!

Membership Meeting, Sunday September 16

The 2012 annual membership meeting will be a catered breakfast in Lower Town Harpers Ferry on Sunday morning, September 16.

Watch for an email or postcard with more details. We look forward to seeing all of you there!

With Sincere Gratitude

HFHA wishes to say good luck and thank you to Marsha Wassel, charter member and former interpretive specialist/public information officer at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. Our publications (including *The View*) would not have been possible without Marsha's photographs, media information, guidance, and expert eye. For over two decades she has helped us through all of the events (rain, shine, or ferocious



wind) and evacuations. She has been our NPS ally, officemate, and friend, and will be truly missed around the Bookshop. On behalf of all of the Harpers Ferry Historical Association Board of Directors, staff, and members, we extend our sincere appreciation and best wishes for the future. Even if she doesn't bring her camera, we look forward to seeing Marsha at all of our HFHA events!



Harpers Ferry Historical Association Membership Application

- ☐ I wish to join the Harpers Ferry Historical Association (*new member*)
☐ I wish to renew my membership (*renewal*)

Please enroll me in the following member category (*check one*):

- ☐ **\$25 Armory Worker** – Basic membership for a family household. Benefits include a newsletter subscription, a 15% discount on all bookshop purchases, a vinyl decal, and invitations to annual meeting and events.
- ☐ **\$25 Sarah Jane Foster** – An alternative basic membership for educators. Benefits include the above plus open house for teachers and discounts on programs for teachers.
- ☐ **\$45 Millwright** – For those members who are frequent visitors to the park. Benefits are the same as Armory Worker category plus a 12-month Harpers Ferry Park entrance pass.
- ☐ **\$100 Master Armorer** – A supporting membership category. Includes all benefits of the Millwright category plus a *Harpers Ferry in the Civil War* pictorial book, member recognition in our newsletter and at our annual meeting, and a special tour.
- ☐ **\$250 Paymaster** – For businesses, vendors or family donors who wish to contribute to the Association's mission. Benefits include 15% discount on all bookshop purchases; a newsletter subscription; vinyl decal; invitations to annual meetings, events, and association-sponsored education programs; a 12-month park pass; *Harpers Ferry in the Civil War* pictorial book; recognition in newsletter and at annual meeting; special tour; and additional membership card.
- ☐ **\$500 Armory Superintendent** – For supporters (individual and corporate) who wish to perpetuate Association and Park education programs. Benefits include 15% discount on all bookshop purchases; a newsletter subscription; vinyl decals; invitations to annual meeting, events, and education programs; *Harpers Ferry in the Civil War* pictorial book; recognition in the newsletter and at annual meeting; special tour; an America the Beautiful pass (for use in all parks) for individuals; and a display plaque for businesses.

- ☐ I would like to make a donation to the **David L. Larsen Memorial Fund** to support Harpers Ferry Park internships.

- ☐ I am not interested in receiving member benefits, but I would like to make a contribution in the amount of _____ to aid the mission of the Harpers Ferry Historical Association.

- ☐ I am a Charter Member and would like to make a donation of _____.

- ☐ Check if this is a new address for you

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City State Zip

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Please clip and mail to:

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P.O. Box 197
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425

Phone: (304) 535-6881

Fax: (304) 535-6749

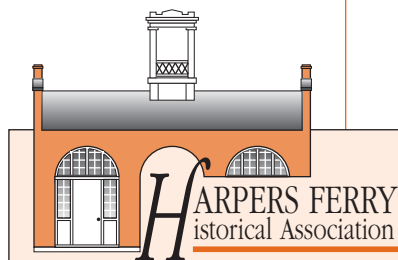
Email: hfhfa@earthlink.net

The Harpers Ferry Historical Association operates the National Park Bookshop in Lower Town Harpers Ferry. Profits from sales are returned to the park to support interpretive and educational programs to enhance your visit.

You are invited to join this unique organization and be a part of Harpers Ferry's special family. For more information call (304) 535-6881, send e-mail to hffa@earthlink.net, or visit our website at www.harpersferryhistory.org.

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New Titles in the Bookshop

Author and historian Dennis Frye has two new titles in the Park Bookshop. *September Suspense: Lincoln's Union in Peril* (Antietam Rest Publishing, 2012), explores September 1862 as the most trying month for President Abraham Lincoln and the nation. General Robert E. Lee has marched his Confederates onto Union soil, sending major Northern cities like Baltimore, Harrisburg, Philadelphia, and Cincinnati into a panic. No one

knows Lee's exact target, or where the Rebels will strike first. The dramatic story unfolds mostly through the words of period newspapers, bringing the reader through the first-hand fears and frustrations of the time.

Scheduled to be in print by September is the *History and Tour Guide of Stonewall Jackson's Battle of Harpers Ferry* (Blue & Gray Magazine,

2012). This book is an in-depth exploration

of the September 1862 capture of the Harpers Ferry garrison with photos, maps, and a driving tour of the entire Harpers Ferry National Historical Park battlefield. Much of the narrative originally appeared as *Stonewall Attacks!* in the August-September 1987 issue of *Blue & Gray Magazine*, and proved instrumental in the fight to preserve the Harpers Ferry battlefield.

Both titles are also available at our online Bookshop at www.harpersferryhistory.org. Members, don't forget to apply your 15% discount at checkout!

Visit the Park Bookshop at
www.harpersferryhistory.org

September Suspense

Lincoln's Union in Peril



Dennis E. Frye

