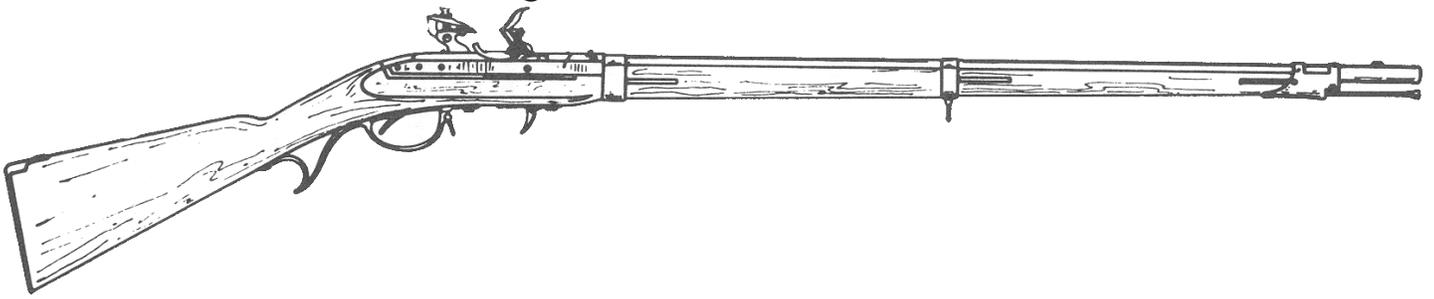




Community Bulletin



John Hall: A Greater Degree of Perfection

Born in 1781, John H. Hall descended from Yankee stock and grew up around Portland, Maine. He joined the militia at age twenty-two and developed an interest in firearms and technology that would last his entire life. Around 1808 he opened a woodworking business in Portland where he worked as a cooper, cabinetmaker and boatbuilder. In 1811 he designed a breechloading rifle which his attempt to patent were denied due to a conflicting claim. Hall eventually agreed to a joint patent.

Hall invested his personal savings and that of his mother to manufacture and market his rifles. In order to proceed he needed credit and sought a government contract. In 1819 he signed a contract with the War Department to produce 1,000 breechloading rifles. Under the terms of the contract Hall came to Harpers Ferry, where he occupied an old Armory sawmill along the Shenandoah River. The site soon became known as Hall's Rifle Works, and

the small island on which it stood was called Lower Hall Island. Hall spent several years tooling new workshops and perfecting precision machinery for producing rifles with interchangeable parts – a boldly ambitious goal for an industry which was traditionally based on the manual labor of skilled craftsmen.

During his two decades at Harpers Ferry, Hall developed and constructed drop-hammers, stock-making machines, balanced pulleys, drilling machines, and special machines for straight-cutting, lever-cutting, and curve-cutting. Hall's straight-cutting machine was the forerunner of today's versatile milling machine, and a critical tool used in the fabrication of precision metal firearm components.

Hall's success at Harpers Ferry was attested to by Colonel George Talcott of the Ordnance Department, who wrote in 1832 that Hall's "manufactory has

been carried to a greater degree of perfection, as regards the quality of work and uniformity of parts than is to be found anywhere – almost everything is performed by machinery, leaving very little dependent on manual labor."

From 1820-1840, John H. Hall devoted his uncompromising attention to the "uniformity principle" of interchangeable manufacture, laying a solid foundation for America's developing factory system at Harpers Ferry.

Eli Whitney and Simeon North attempted to devise a manner of production that would allow complete interchangeability on a mass scale, acceptable to government needs and contracts, only John Hall met and exceeded the needs and expectations set forth by way of a fully mechanized process; as a result the American military system and the industrial process were forever changed.

New Museum Acquisition

Recently, a circa 1864 MacNutt Melodeon Reed Organ was donated to the Park by Mr. and Mrs. Phillip Province. This beautiful instrument will be used during special musical programs and displayed in period exhibits.

John Brown gave his daughter a similar melodeon, which was played at his funeral- an interesting fact that adds to the interpretive value of our instrument.

Mr. and Mrs. Province (right) with musicians Richard Greene (seated), Greg Adams and Maggie Corfield-Adams.



May Volunteers of the Month

Please join Harpers Ferry National Historical Park in honoring Harpers Ferry Middle School Students as Volunteers of the Month for May 2011.

Harpers Ferry Middle School (HFMS) partners with Harpers Ferry National Historical Park on several service-learning and educational projects each school year. One of these projects has allowed students to create short historical videos (vodcasts) from the students' point of view. Since 2009 teachers, together with over 175 sixth through eighth grade students, have participated in this innovative school/park volunteer program. This school year alone 59 students contributed nearly 1500 hours during the production of their vodcasts.

The collaborative work of the students started back in October when the entire student body of HFMS hiked to Lower Town Harpers Ferry and spent a day learning about how war came to the area in 1861. From there students were asked to participate in



the service-learning project, brainstorming topics for the videos and selecting roles they would like to have in the film-making process. Teams were led by student-directors with park staff assistance. Each team researched historical documents, wrote screenplays and storyboards, made and fitted costumes, filmed in the historic setting, created and selected music, and edited film footage. The final projects were revealed on April 14, 2011.

The students' time would not have been possible without great collaboration from Principal Joseph Spurgas and the teachers of Harpers Ferry Middle School. Their guidance and support allowed students to make their own history by teaching other students throughout the world about this special place where they live and learn. All of these students are truly inspirational contributors and superb additions to the park's diverse volunteer program.

Upcoming Events

June 4 - "National Trails Day"

Time: 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Location: Lower Town

Special displays and guided hikes to breathtaking overlooks. Bee Hive Oven baking demo.

June 11 - "How Does Your Garden Grow?"

Time: 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Location: Lower Town: Paymaster Garden

Spring planting at the 1810 Armory Paymaster's Garden with Historic Master Gardener Carol Anderson.

June 25 – 10th Annual Don Redman Heritage Concert & Awards

Time: 6:00 PM **Location:** Camp Hill

The event and concert commemorate the internationally acclaimed and influential 1920 graduate of Storer College, Don Redman featuring Dr. Larry Ridley, Larry Willis, and the Howard

Burns Quartet.

June 25-26 – "Under Fire: The Battle of Harpers Ferry"

Time: 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Location: Bolivar Heights Battlefield
Artillery firing demonstrations at 1,2,3 p.m

July 2 - "Wonders of the Modern World 1860:

Celebrating the Glorious Fourth"

Time: 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Location: Lower Town
Wonder at the innovations brewing at our Federal Armory and beyond. Special programs @ 1,2,3 and 4 p.m.

July 3 - "Ices and Creamed Ice"

Time: 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Location: Lower Town
Join Confections & Foodways Expert Carol Anderson to discover 1860 summer-time cold treats.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

The history of Harpers Ferry has few parallels in the American drama. It is more than one event, one date, or one individual. It is multi-layered, involving a diverse number of people and events, decisions and actions that influenced the course of our nation's history. Visit Harpers Ferry and step into history.

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park
P.O. Box 65
Harpers Ferry, West Virginia 25425

Visitor Center
304-535-6029

Harpers Ferry Historical Association Bookshop
304-525-6881

Harpers Ferry NHP Home Page
www.nps.gov/hafe/

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.