



## Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area

### Civil War Sesquicentennial Kicks Off in Frederick

August Events Commemorate Frederick's Role in John Brown's Raid on Harpers Ferry

#### NEWS RELEASE

#### For Immediate Release

Contact: Liz Shatto, Director, (301) 600-4042, [info@heartofthecivilwar.org](mailto:info@heartofthecivilwar.org)

Date: July 22, 2009

**Frederick, MD** - Abolitionist John Brown's 1859 raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry is considered to be the spark that ignited the American Civil War. The public is invited to explore Frederick, Maryland's unique role in this event that was a defining moment for the nation. Several free public programs will be offered, culminating in a salute to local fire company militia, "Frederick Militia and Fire Company Days" on August 8 and 9 along the south east promenade of Carroll Creek Park.

On the run for the murders of five pro-slavery settlers in Kansas in 1856, abolitionist John Brown leased the Kennedy Farmhouse in Washington County in early July 1859. There, he recruited and trained his "Provisional Army" and finalized plans to capture the federal arsenal in Harpers Ferry. If his plan succeeded, he and his followers would collect enough guns to equip an army of slaves and incite them to rebel. On Sunday evening, October 16, 1859, Brown and his supporters slipped into Harpers Ferry. They seized the federal arsenal, killed seven men and injured about a dozen more. Communications from Harpers Ferry were cut off, but a passing train was able to telegraph the news from Frederick. On October 17, three Frederick volunteer fire companies were the first out-of-state responders, arriving on the scene in Harpers Ferry with company members that were organized as militia units. They were the Independent Rifles, the Junior Defenders and the United Guard.

When news of the attack reached Richmond, the U.S. Marines rushed to Harpers Ferry and began shooting. Brown and the few of his men who were left barricaded themselves in a small brick building and refused to surrender. Finally, a company of Marines stormed the building and captured Brown and his men. During the incident the Frederick militia units patrolled the streets, guarded the railroad bridges and, in the end, stood guard over John Brown and his men.

#### Free Events and Activities

Three Frederick groups have planned a series of free activities and exhibits to illuminate the John Brown story and Frederick's role: The Maryland Room of Frederick County Public Libraries, The Frederick County Fire and Rescue Museum, and the National Museum of Civil War Medicine. Programs include:

**"Firefighters of the John Brown Raid Exhibit,"** on view at the C. Burr Artz Public Library, 110 E. Patrick Street, Frederick, MD August 1-September 20. Sunday 1-5 p.m., Monday - Thursday 10 a.m.-9 p.m., Friday & Saturday 10a.m. - 5 p.m.

This diorama, created by the exhibit team of History In2 Art, faithfully depicts the horse-drawn engines and men from Frederick who participated in this historic event. Antique toy fire trucks will also be on display.

(continued)



## Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area

### CARROLL COUNTY

HAMPSTEAD  
MANCHESTER  
TANEYTOWN  
SYKESVILLE  
UNION BRIDGE  
WESTMINSTER  
NEW WINDSOR

### FREDERICK COUNTY

BRUNSWICK  
BURKITTSVILLE  
EMMITSBURG  
FREDERICK  
MIDDLETOWN  
MYERSVILLE  
MT. AIRY  
NEW MARKET  
ROSEMONT  
THURMONT  
WOODSBORO

### WASHINGTON COUNTY

BOONSBORO  
HAGERSTOWN  
HANCOCK  
SMITHSBURG

### John Brown Anniversary Lecture Series at the C. Burr Artz Public Library Community Room, 110 E. Patrick Street, Frederick, MD; all lectures begin at 7 p.m.:

- **August 3:** Dave Shackleford, Chief Curator of the B&O Railroad Museum, will talk about the B&O Railroad and the Civil War
- **August 6:** Novelist, Bob O'Connor, author of "The Perfect Steel Trap: Harpers Ferry 1859", tells the story of the John Brown raid, trial and execution
- **August 11:** Chip Jewell, local fire fighting historian, will speak about the Frederick fire companies who were the first responders to Harpers Ferry

### Living History Program by C.W. Whitehair and Rhonda Lee Whitehair, August 8 110 E. Patrick Street, Frederick, MD

The Whitehairs have authored several novels set in the period of the Civil War. They also contribute to Civil War journals. Throughout the morning these costumed interpreters will interact with visitors outside the library and along Carroll Creek Park. At 1:00 p.m. they will offer a public program in the Community Room of the C. Burr Artz Public Library about life in Harpers Ferry before the War.

### Frederick Militia and Fire Company Days, August 8 & 9, south east promenade, Carroll Creek Park in downtown Frederick, Maryland:

- **10 a.m.:** Opening Ceremonies will feature a Color Guard with posting of the Colors, and special remarks by Dennis Frye, Chief Historian for Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, who headed up the John Brown 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Quad-State Committee.
- **10 a.m. – 4 p.m.:** Eight vintage pieces of fire apparatus will be on view along Carroll Creek Park. They include the 1821 "Old Lady" hand tub pumper formerly owned by the United Fire Company No. 3 and the Libertytown Volunteer Fire Company, the ornate, ceremonial 1893 hose carriage that is the pride of Independent Hose Company No. 1, and the 1851 hose cart of the Vigilant Hose Company. Throughout each day members of local fire companies will be on view to discuss these impressive works and share stories about local firefighting history.
- Living History Programs will be offered at 10 a.m., 12 noon and 2 p.m. each day. These 15 minute programs will feature Chip Jewell as a 19<sup>th</sup> century Independent Fire Company volunteer, sharing the evolution of the fire company militia and exciting moments in local militia history. Chip Jewell will also be in costume and available to talk with visitors about local firefighting history throughout the two-day event.

### John Brown Surgical Kit Exhibit at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine

48 E. Patrick Street, Frederick, MD

Monday - Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Sunday 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., August 8, 2009 through January 30, 2010

The pristine surgical kit of the doctor who certified John Brown fit to stand trial will be on view in the lobby of the National Museum of Civil War medicine. Learn the fascinating history of this kit that continued in use throughout the Civil War. The John Brown Surgical Kit exhibit is free of charge and the public is encouraged to come and see this unique artifact. Regular fees apply to visit the other museum exhibits.

*(continued)*



## Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area

### CARROLL COUNTY

HAMPSTEAD  
MANCHESTER  
TANEYTOWN  
SYKESVILLE  
UNION BRIDGE  
WESTMINSTER  
NEW WINDSOR

### FREDERICK COUNTY

BRUNSWICK  
BURKITTSVILLE  
EMMITSBURG  
FREDERICK  
MIDDLETOWN  
MYERSVILLE  
MT. AIRY  
NEW MARKET  
ROSEMONT  
THURMONT  
WOODSBORO

### WASHINGTON COUNTY

BOONSBORO  
HAGERSTOWN  
HANCOCK  
SMITHSBURG

Frederick Militia and Fire Company Days, with associated lectures and exhibits, is a signature event of the John Brown 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Quad-State Committee. Comprised of representatives of Maryland's Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area and several counties and attractions in West Virginia, Virginia, Pennsylvania and Maryland, this coalition is coordinating a range of commemoration events, considered to be the kick off of the Sesquicentennial of the Civil War. For more information about Quad-State committee plans, visit [www.johnbrownraid.org](http://www.johnbrownraid.org). Frederick, Washington and Carroll counties in Maryland are part of the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area ([www.heartofthecivilwar.org](http://www.heartofthecivilwar.org)) and the Journey through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area ([www.hallowedground.org](http://www.hallowedground.org)).

Contact the following for more information:

- Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area: Liz Shatto, Director, (301) 600-4042, [info@heartofthecivilwar.org](mailto:info@heartofthecivilwar.org)
- Frederick County Public Library exhibits and programs: Mary Mannix, Maryland Room Manager, (301) 600-1368, [mmannix@fredco-md.net](mailto:mmannix@fredco-md.net)
- Frederick Militia and Fire Company Days: Chip Jewell, (301) 898-5578, [cjedd171@comcast.net](mailto:cjedd171@comcast.net)
- National Museum of Civil War Medicine: Robert Burton, Carty Facility Education Director, (301) 695-1864, [education@civilwarmed.org](mailto:education@civilwarmed.org)