



**BENTONVILLE
BATTLEFIELD
STATE
HISTORIC SITE**

Volume I, Issue IV

Fall 2011

Megan Maxwell, Editor

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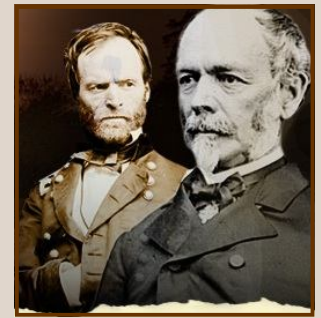
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From the Trenches



News from North Carolina's Premier Civil War Battlefield Site

Bentonville Remembers "Life on the Homefront in 1861"

Fall has arrived! Bentonville welcomed the season with our annual civilian living history program on October 1, 2011. The theme of this year's program was "Life on the Homefront in 1861." Re-enactors with the Carolina Citizens and Tar Heel Civilian living history groups demonstrated spinning, weaving, knitting, and sewing for visitors. The aromas of homemade stew and sweet potato coffee enveloped the Harper kitchen as the Carolina Citizens cooked on the open hearth. Visitors could taste traditional homemade bread or pumpkin bread with an apple butter spread. Children enjoyed learning the "Game of Graces," playing with traditional wooden toys, and making cornhusk dolls.

Although the fall program is traditionally a civilian event, members of the 27th NC Company D were also on hand to demonstrate camp life and drilling for the public. The 27th was scheduled to attend our summer seasonal living history program on August 27, but that program was unfortunately cancelled by Hurricane Irene! Uniform talks and drills took place throughout the day.

More than 300 visitors spent a beautiful fall day enjoying living history demonstrations, touring the Harper House, and exploring the battlefield grounds and exhibits. Our special events could not take place without the dedication and support of our volunteers, so thank you to all of our living historians who are so passionate about sharing history with our visitors.

Top: Jan Tyler demonstrates weaving for a group of interested visitors.

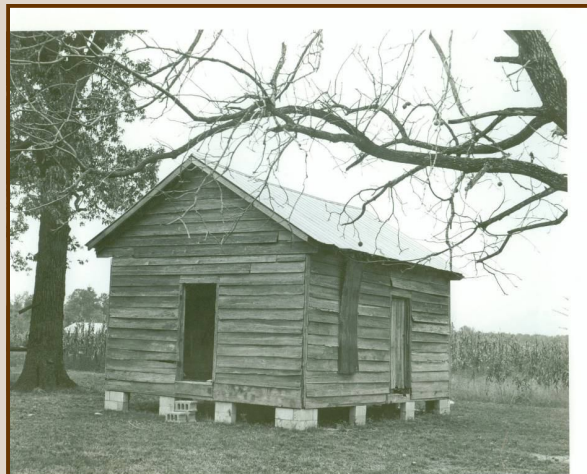
Middle: Members of the 27th NC Co. D fall in for drill.

Bottom: Victoria Cutler cards wool and demonstrates the spinning wheel.

Photographs courtesy of the Goldsboro News-Argus.



From the Bentonville Scrapbook



Top Left: The Harper House as it appeared in 1957.
 Middle: The Harper House during restoration.
 Bottom Left: Kitchen Building prior to restoration
 Bottom Right: A view of the old road next to the Harper House. The road was relocated east of the future Visitor Center location in 1960. The sunken roadbed is still visible today.

Since most of our staff is relatively new to the site, we spend a lot of time researching in the site archives to find the answers to oddball questions and to familiarize ourselves with site history. At Bentonville, we are fortunate to have a valuable historic record right at our fingertips, the Nick Bragg Scrapbook. Nicholas Bragg was an early NC Department of Cultural Resources Historic Site Specialist at Bentonville Battleground, as it was then known. He oversaw the restoration of the house and grounds during his tenure from 1959-1963. He meticulously kept a scrapbook of photographs and newspaper articles from several local papers about the early days of the site. The newspaper articles cover the efforts of the Bentonville Battleground Association, led by H.V. Rose, to raise \$50,000 to purchase the Harper House and grounds from Jake Dunn. The state appropriated \$25,000 towards the purchase, Johnston County contributed \$10,000, and the final \$15,000 was raised by the Battleground Association through private contributions. The deed was transferred to the state in 1957, and restoration began in March of 1960.

While the restoration of the exterior of the house is well documented, we have very little information about the interior work. From newspaper articles in the scrapbook, we can gather that the plaster was redone, moldings and trim were painted, and the floors in at least one upstairs room were cleaned and varnished to remove "meat and grease stains." We do not have any images of the interior of the house prior to this work being completed. If you or someone you know has any early interior images of the Harper House we would love to see them!

In addition to the scrapbook, we also now have digital images of the site's photograph archives. Marshall Jones completed the inaugural Buck Dunn Memorial Internship this past summer. He meticulously scanned in hundreds of images from the early days of the site documenting special events, restoration, and the building of the Visitor Center, among other things. The images are accessible to the public for research purposes and you will see many of them here in our newsletter.



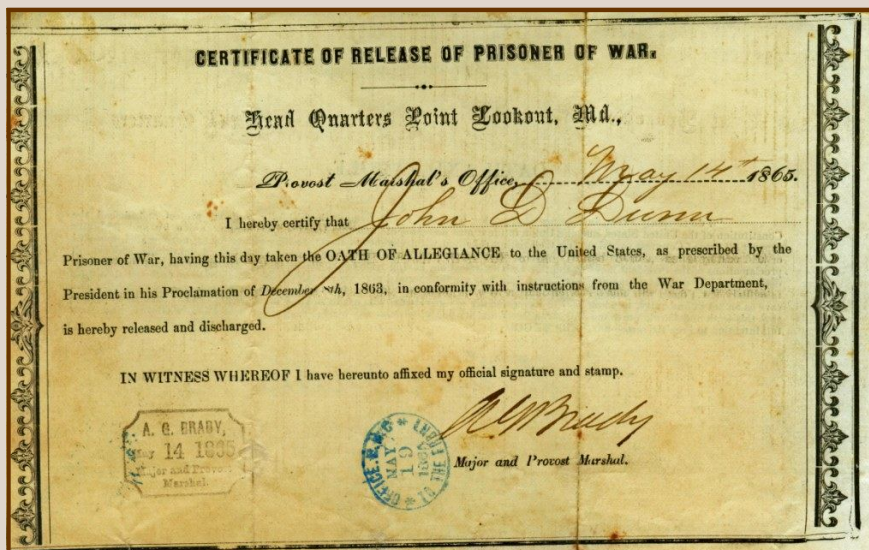
Bentonville Accepts Donation of Civil War Papers

In July of this past year, Bentonville Battlefield State Historic Site accepted a donation of a small collection of Civil War papers from Mrs. Dorothy Jean Dunn, a former Bentonville resident. The papers belonged to John D. Dunn, formerly of Scout Road, Bentonville. According to service records, Mr. Dunn was drafted at the age of 36 and mustered into "H" Co. NC 14th Infantry on June 11, 1863. His enlistment record shows that he was a farmer in Nash County, however later records list his residence as Johnston County. His death certificate also states that he was born in Johnston County. Dunn was hospitalized in Danville, Virginia with a gunshot wound on July 16, 1863, but the place and date he received the wound is not recorded. He recovered from the wound and was present and accounted for on the Company Muster Roll for September and October 1863 and is listed as absent on provost guard at division headquarters from November 15, 1863 through April 1, 1864. Dunn was captured at Staunton, VA on September 28, 1864 and imprisoned at Point Lookout, MD on Oct. 12 1864. He was released on May 14, 1865. Included in the John D. Dunn papers are his Certificate of Release and signed Oath and Parole, as well as a furlough slip issued for October '63 to visit Goldsboro.

The Johnston County Marriage Index shows that John Dunn married his second wife Sarah Grantham of Bentonville in February of 1882, and likely moved to the Bentonville community at this time since he could not be located in the Bentonville census for 1880. According to census records, John and Sarah had three children that lived to adulthood: Mary, Laura, and Elbert. Mary and Laura were both school teachers, and Elbert became a farmer like his father. Mr. Dunn died in 1919 at the age of 91.

Although Mr. Dunn was not present at the Battle of Bentonville, the papers are historically valuable for the site because they document the service of a Johnston County native and a Bentonville resident. Further research may provide additional clues about the John D. Dunn family. The John D. Dunn papers are currently available to be viewed by the public for research purposes and we hope to incorporate them into a future exhibit.

The staff would like to thank Mrs. Dorothy Jean Dunn for thinking of us, and selecting Bentonville Battlefield as a repository for these papers. We would also like to remind our readers that we do accept artifact donations that are relevant to our historical interpretation at the site. All artifacts received are carefully preserved and stored according to the NC Division of Historic Sites collection policy guidelines and may be used in future exhibits.



Left: John D. Dunn's Certificate of Release from Point Lookout, MD, dated May 14, 1865.

Top Right: Photocopied image of the John D. Dunn family. John D. Dunn and Sarah Grantham Dunn are seated on the left. Standing on the right is Elbert I. Dunn. Two of the three younger ladies standing are Mary and Laura Dunn. The other family members present are possible Grantham relatives.

MANAGER'S MESSAGE BY DONNY TAYLOR

It was a hot and thankfully busy summer at Bentonville Battlefield. We had strong visitation during the season despite the high gas prices and the economy slowing down travel. We are seeing more and more visitors making Bentonville a destination stop as the site is becoming a more nationally known battlefield.

Throughout the summer our Buck Dunn intern, Marshall Jones, completed digitizing and categorizing hundreds of photo and newspaper articles from forty years of site history. In addition to this project Marshall and Victoria Marcheski, also a part-time summer employee, were a tremendous help greeting visitors, giving tours and helping with the gift shop. We very much appreciate the support of the Bentonville Battlefield Historical Association for funding these positions, which also allowed for the site to be open on Sundays for summer hours.

The Summer Seasonal and 2nd Saturday programs were well attended and visitors had a chance to learn about quilts, civilian and military life, and to buy fresh

farm raised fruits, vegetables, and jams. The August 27th program was cancelled due to Hurricane Irene but was rescheduled on October 1st in conjunction with our civilian living history program. This gave the visitors a chance to see both home front and military demonstrations on the same day.

Hurricane Irene did very little damage at the site. One tree fell across the road to the Michigan Engineer trenches and a few limbs fell around the Harper House requiring only a few hours of cleanup. Some of our sister sites were not as lucky and had many large fallen trees, although no buildings were damaged. Johnny Carter, Maintenance Mechanic took the site tractor and front end loader to Tryon Palace in New Bern and removed debris for two days. Once this was completed Johnny and Jeff Fritzingler traveled to the CSS Neuse and Historic Halifax to help with cleanup of debris.

On October 23rd a meeting was held at the site to establish a new official site support group. In attendance at the meeting

were fourteen individuals very interested in establishing this group and promoting the battlefield. Six others expressed interest in participating, but were unable to attend. A steering committee was formed and will be chaired by Mr. Dean Harry to work on the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. The steering committee decided to name the new organization the Friends of Bentonville Battlefield. This will make Bentonville Battlefield unique in the fact we will have an official support group and two supporting groups, the Bentonville Battlefield Historical Association and the Harper House/Bentonville Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. We look forward to working together with our support and supporting groups.

Until next time,



Fall Field Trip Season in Full Swing!

Bentonville is buzzing with school groups this fall! October and November are generally the busiest months of the fall field trip season, and this year is no exception. Over 400 students from third through twelfth grades visited the site in October and an additional 300 students are scheduled for the first few weeks in November.

All field trip groups view our orientation film and exhibits in the Visitor Center and take a guided tour of the Harper House. Additional activities by request include a musket demonstration and uniform talk by a costumed interpreter, Civil War medical talks, and an artillery drill activity. Admission is free and there is no additional cost for any of these activities. Volunteers are always welcome to help with our school groups, contact the site for more information!

In honor of the Sesquicentennial of the Civil War, the NC Division of Historic Sites has launched *The North Carolina Civil War Experience: A Comprehensive Education Program*. The program website <http://civilwarexperience.ncdcr.gov> offers teachers access to 12 site based units, as well as supplemental site specific materials and lesson plans. Designed for 8th graders with the NC Standard Course of Study curriculum in mind, the lessons may also be adapted for use in high school history courses. The program covers all twelve of our Civil War era NC Historic Sites and is a valuable resource for field trip planning, as well as classroom learning with pre-visit, onsite, and post visit activity ideas, as well as primary source accounts, site narratives, supplemental reading materials, and bibliographies.

To schedule a field trip to Bentonville Battlefield contact Megan Maxwell at megan.maxwell@ncdcr.gov. Due to limited staff, the site can accommodate up to 125 students per day. Reservations are required and must be made at least two weeks in advance. The availability of activities depends on the grade level and availability of staff on the date the trip is scheduled.



Johnny Carter provides a uniform talk and musket demo for 8th graders from Riverwood Middle School in Clayton.

Staff Rides Give Modern Military Appreciation of Historic Battle

By Derrick Brown, Assistant Site Manager



Bentonville Battlefield State Historic Site is pleased to offer battlefield tours to military groups of twenty or more, and to civilian groups of thirty or more by reservation only. Typically, tours of the battlefield are self-guided using a map provided to visitors at the Visitors Center. The map shows the location of the four existing driving tour stops featuring wayside exhibit panels, and the twenty-four roadside historical markers, which were first erected in the 1960's. To gain a better comprehension of this chaotic battle, military and large civilian groups have the option of taking in everything the site traditionally offers, plus the added benefit of a battlefield guide.

Bentonville is not an easy battle to comprehend. Licensed Gettysburg battlefield guide Dean Harry has said on numerous occasions that Bentonville is much harder to tactically understand than Gettysburg, the bloodiest battle of the war. Although Bentonville did not witness nearly as many soldiers fighting, or lives lost as Gettysburg, the battle was still very large, being fought over 6,000 acres in a much more disorganized fashion than Gettysburg. Further complicating matters, is that unlike Gettysburg or many of the other major battles of the war, the Confederate units fighting at Bentonville had not yet been formally organized into a homogenous army. It was literally a ragtag bunch of Confederates (in the truest sense of the word) thrown together just in the nick of time to give battle to Sherman's large army. To make matters worse for our visitors, the grey-clad units that

were here at Bentonville were shells of their former selves. Our battle maps on the waysides use terms like "The Army of Tennessee," "D.H. Hill's Corps," and "Cleburne's Division." These unit names may sound impressive being read off of a map, but the entire Army of Tennessee at Bentonville consisted of less than 7,000 men! A quality battlefield guide can provide such context that waysides cannot, bringing some order to an otherwise extremely confusing battle.

So how do I get a battlefield tour? Groups meeting the criteria interested in a tour should have their own transportation, preferably a bus(es) or passenger vans. Those without such transportation are required to carpool for the tour in as few vehicles as possible due to parking constraints at some of the tour stops. Your tour will begin with the Visitor Center, and the Harper House, to provide context for what you will see on the battlefield. Additionally, the site requires a preliminary meeting with the tour organizer at least two weeks before your visit to help maximize the effectiveness of your trip to Bentonville. To organize your preliminary visit, please call the site or email derrick.brown@ncdcr.gov.



Images of a Marine Corps Striker Battalion touring Bentonville Battlefield.

UDC Collecting Donations for Cemetery Project

The Bentonville/Harper House Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy is accepting donations towards the cost of the twenty new headstones installed to mark the graves of unknown Confederate soldiers who died of wounds sustained during the Battle of Bentonville. The previously unmarked cemetery is located between the Goldsboro Rifles Monument and the Harper Family Cemetery. Because the soldiers buried there are unknown, we were unable to receive markers from the Federal government, but the UDC graciously put forth the money to make this project a reality. Donations may be sent to: Bentonville/Harper House UDC Treasurer, Rhonda Langston at 3590 Alex Benton Rd. Newton Grove, NC 28366. Please make checks payable to the Bentonville/Harper House UDC and note the donation is for the Confederate Cemetery.



BENTONVILLE BATTLEFIELD STATE HISTORIC SITE

5466 Harper House Rd
Four Oaks, NC 27524

Phone: 910-594-0789
Fax: 910-594-0070

E-mail:
Bentonville@ncdcr.gov

Site Hours

April-September
Mon-Sat 9 am-5 pm

October- March
Tues-Sat 9 am-5 pm
Closed Sundays and
Mondays

Call for Holiday
Schedule

Admission is FREE

Site Staff

Donny Taylor, Site Manager
Derrick Brown, Assistant Site
Manager
Megan Maxwell, Programs
Coordinator
Jeff Fritzingler, Interpreter
Johnny Carter, Maintenance
Mechanic

Website

[http://
www.nchistoricsites.org
/bentonvi/bentonvi.htm](http://www.nchistoricsites.org/bentonvi/bentonvi.htm)

Become a fan of Benton-
ville Battlefield on
Facebook!

Scene of the last major Confederate offensive of the Civil War

The Battle of Bentonville, fought March 19-21, 1865, was the last full-scale action of the Civil War in which a Confederate army was able to mount a tactical offensive. This major battle, the largest ever fought in North Carolina, was the only significant attempt to defeat the large Union army of Gen. William T. Sherman during its march through the Carolinas in the spring of 1865.

Today, visitors can take a self-guided driving tour of the preserved battlefield and view four wayside exhibit areas, follow a short walking trail to view original trenches from the battle, and visit the Harper family cemetery and monument area. The Visitor Center contains exhibits and a brief orientation film. Guided tours of the c. 1855 Harper House, a Union field hospital, are available on the hour beginning at 10:00 a.m. with the last tour at 4:00 p.m.

Special Events

December 3, 2011

"A Civil War Christmas"

Annual holiday open house event. Costumed interpreters decorate the kitchen in festive themes using natural greens, berries, and fruits. Visitors can enjoy cookies and cider while listening to period music. 10:00-4:00

March 17-18, 2012

"War So Terrible" A Civil War Medical Living History Program 147th Anniversary Event

Learn about Civil War medicine during this living history event featuring re-enactors portraying wounded soldiers, surgeons, and hospital stewards at the Harper House field hospital. Compare and contrast the treatment received by soldiers during the Civil War with the treatment that our wounded warriors receive in Iraq and Afghanistan by viewing modern military field hospital set ups. Demonstrations and displays include triage, surgery, and embalming. Artillery and musket demos will also take place throughout the day.
10:00 am- 4:00 pm

Nighttime Hospital Tours Saturday March 17

The Harper House and grounds will be transformed back in time to the 14th Corp Field Hospital as it may have looked on that first night of the battle, 147 years ago. Tour guides will lead visitors on a historical journey as they search for loved ones that were injured in the fighting. Tours will run every 15 minutes beginning at 7:00 pm with the last tour leaving at 10:15 pm. 30 tickets will be sold for each time slot, and visitors can select their own tour time as long as it is not sold out. Tickets may only be pur-

chased the day of the event. The cost is \$5.00 per person. Due to the graphic nature of this program, parental discretion is advised. 7:00 pm -10:15 pm

June 9, 2012

"Civil War Camp Life"

Discover how Civil War soldiers lived in camp and what role the enlisted man played in battle during Bentonville Battlefield State Historic Site's Summer Living History Series. Period-costumed living historians from the 18th NC/53rd PA and 1st NC/11th NC will demonstrate how soldiers made meals, maintained their weapons and uniforms, trained for battle, and much more. Also features musket and artillery demonstrations. 10:00 am- 4:00 pm

July 14, 2012

"From Slaves to Soldiers: The African American Experience in North Carolina during the Civil War"

Guest speakers and living historians will provide lectures and living history demonstrations shedding light on the African American experience in North Carolina during the Civil War. Discussions and demonstrations may include but are not limited to slavery, emancipation, United States Colored Troops, and reconstruction. Speakers and schedule to be announced.

