



Banner of the Blue and Gray

Newsletter of the Frederick County Civil War Roundtable Frederick, Maryland
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253rd Meeting

October 2016

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October 20, 2016 National Museum of Civil War Medicine 48 E. Patrick St, Frederick, Maryland



Speaker: Dan Vermilya

Topic: James Garfield and
the Civil War

When the United States was divided by war, future president James Abram Garfield was one of many who stepped forward to defend the Union. While his presidency was tragically cut short by his assassination, Garfield's historic life covered some of the most consequential years of American history. From humble beginnings in Ohio, he rose to become a major general in the Union army. Garfield's military career took him to the backwoods of Kentucky, the fields of Shiloh and Chickamauga and ultimately to the halls of Congress. His service during the war helped to save the Union he would go on to lead as president. Join historian Daniel J. Vermilya to discover the little-known story of James Garfield's role in the Civil War.

Daniel J. Vermilya is a Civil War historian who currently works as a park ranger at Gettysburg National Military Park. He has previously worked at Antietam National Battlefield and Monocacy National Battlefield. In 2012, he was awarded the first Joseph L. Harsh Memorial Scholar Award by the Save Historic Antietam Foundation. He is a native of Kirtland, Ohio, and has previously done volunteer work for the James A. Garfield National Historic Site. Daniel is the author of two books on the American Civil War, including *The Battle of Kennesaw Mountain* (History Press, 2014) and *James Garfield and the Civil War: For Ohio and the Union* (History Press, 2015). He is currently writing a short history of the Battle of Antietam for the Emerging Civil War Series. He lives in Frederick, Maryland, with his wife Alison.

NEARBY OCTOBER EVENTS

October 1- Walking tour, "Death and Destruction in Downtown Frederick," begins at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick. 3 pm. A "pay what you please" event. civilwarmed.org

October 1-2- Living history at Fort Frederick State Park near Big Pool. Camps and demonstrations 10 am-3 pm both days. \$5/car. 301-842-2155.

October 8- Talk, "Period Photography," at the Newcomer House, 18422 Shepherdstown Pike, Keedysville. 11:30 am. Free. heartofthecivilwar.org/events

October 15- Hikes and movie at the Monocacy National Battlefield in Frederick. A series of two-hour, ranger-led walks of the battlefield with evening movie at the Thomas Barn. Free. nps.gov/mono

October 16- "At All Times Ready: The US Marines Reacting to the Raid 1859," living history at the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. 11 am-4 pm. Free with park admission. nps.gov/hafe

October 22- "Archeology and the US Armory Grounds," special ranger program at the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. 2 pm. Free with park admission. nps.gov/hafe

This list is by no means all inclusive. Some of these events will repeat during the month. You can always use our Facebook page to connect with members taking their own tours during the month. What better way to explore local battlefields and historic sites than to go with your fellow members!



If you didn't attend our September meeting you missed a fine presentation by Mark Tooley about "The Peace That Almost Was." Delegates from the mid-South, border states, the Midwest, and even some Republicans from New England met at the Willard Hotel in Washington, DC in a last ditch effort to avert war. Some of the 131 delegates included Samuel P. Chase, James Seddon, Stephen Douglass, John Breckinridge, Dan Sickles, John Tyler, and President Buchanan. Although measures passed to prevent disunion, so many concessions were made to the South that it would have been nearly impossible for convention results to gain national approval. In the end, war may have been postponed for just two months.

PREZ SEZ

We're excited about our lineup of speakers for the Roundtable this season here at NMCWM. Please come out and support us as well as our speakers. Many are authors and you can purchase their books after the meetings. When you come to the meetings try and bring a friend or neighbor to share the discussions with.

I look forward to seeing everyone again in October.

Jack

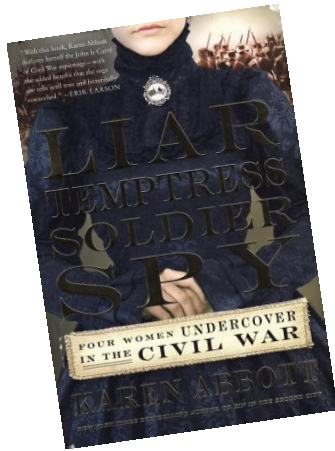


Ramblings from the Raffle



Table

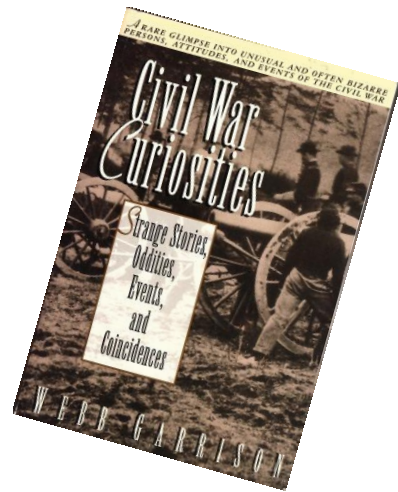
October and Halloween comes to mind although candy canes are already rudely shoving the candy corn aside in the supermarket aisles. So what shall I offer you for Trick or Treat this month: Ghoulies, Ghosties or Things that Go Bump in the Night? Take your pick but you have to buy a raffle ticket if you want to go home with one of my treats.



Bewitching Tales of four daring ladies who put it all on the line whether for the Cause or to preserve the Union. Karen Abbott's Liar Temptress Soldier Spy will keep you Spellbound as you enter into the exploits of Belle Boyd, Rose Greenhow, Elizabeth Van Lew, and Emma Edmonds in these pages. It is a fascinating read for a dark & stormy night.

And with another stir of my literary cauldron:

Webb Garrison has collected an amazing assortment of stories aptly titled Civil War Curiosities. Surely some of these tales were whispered around campfires as sparks whirled into the night sky, like the devil horse that no man lived to ride. Win this book if you dare.....



I'll see you at the October Meeting (& your little dog, too!)



Kathi

BOOK REVIEW by Matt Borders (condensed)

Makely, Wesley and David R. Bush. I Fear I Shall Never Leave This Island: Life in a Civil War Prison. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011.

When Confederate General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia began its retreat from Gettysburg following its defeat on July 3rd, 1863, Lee was relying on the cavalry brigade of Brigadier General John D. Imboden to protect his trains of supplies and wounded while also acting as a rearguard against any potential Union pursuit. One of the regiments in Imboden's brigade was the 18th Virginia Cavalry, which was commanded by his brother Colonel George W. Imboden. The Confederate cavalry was successful in escorting Lee's beleaguered Confederates to Williamsport, Maryland where they intended to cross the Potomac into what is now West Virginia. High water and a destroyed pontoon bridge however would keep the Confederates from immediately crossing, forcing them to dig in around Williamsport. As this drama was unfolding the Confederate cavalry did its best to rest and resupply while waiting for the river to fall. On July 8th, Wesley Makely a Captain in Company D of the 18th Virginia Cavalry was captured near Clear Spring, Maryland while attempting to acquire provisions for his company's horses.

Makely, who was called Nessa by his wife Catherine, whom he called Kate, was quickly packed off to Camp Chase, Ohio before being transferred to Johnson's Island on July 18th, 1863. He would remain on the island until his exchange and transfer back east on March 21st, 1865. His time on the island, just over a year and eight months, would produce a fascinating collection of correspondence between himself and his wife that would not only give clues as to life on the island but also how Confederate prisoners of war, particularly those with means, dealt with their incarceration.

As with other prisoner of war depots north and south, Johnson's Island became a community in and of itself. It is by looking at the physical byproducts, the archeological evidence of the camp and its inmates, that the editor of the Makely letters, Dr. David R. Bush, chose to focus *I Fear I Shall Never Leave This Island: Life in a Civil War Prison*. The book itself is a fairly straight forward collection of letters from Wesley to his wife and young daughter. There is also a smattering of letters to his brother included in the work. What makes this collection so special is that in most cases we are privy to the entire conversation as Catherine's letters in reply have also been transcribed into the book.

In conclusion, *I Fear I Shall Never Leave This Island: Life in a Civil War Prison*, is a fascinating work that allows the reader access to the private lives of the Makely's and the trials and tribulations they face over the course of Wesley's imprisonment. The book covers not only the production of prisoner made jewelry and discussions on exchange and sickness, but also delves into the how prisoners dealt with the day to day boredom of imprisonment. In many cases these activities ranged from the mundane such as reading or playing games, to the brilliant, as was the case of Lieutenant Robert Smith of the 61st Tennessee Infantry who not only managed to make his own working photo studio (pg. 71) but managed to earn over two hundred dollars while imprisoned by taking pictures of his fellow inmates (pg. 74)! These stories and the accompanying images provided by Dr. Bush make *I Fear I Shall Never Leave This Island* well worth the read and a must for researchers of both Civil War prisoners of war and the southern home front.

We are on Facebook! Please check out our page for timely updates, local events, or comments.



<https://m.facebook.com/fccwrt>

Gary Dyson is our “face” for Facebook.

Help us spread the word about OUR FCCWRT!! We have 113 “likes” to date.

Join Facebook. Share posts with friends! You'll get more timely notice of events when you check us out on Facebook.

Our MISSION

TO cultivate and preserve

Frederick County’s Civil War heritage and broaden the understanding of the Civil War Era and its impact on our nation.

TO explore the many facets of the Civil War from the battlefield to first-person narratives, including guest lectures by writers and historians.

TO support historical projects and activities aimed at increasing public interest and appreciation of our Civil War history, both locally and nationally.

Looking Ahead

While our speaker list for this season is set, please let us know of any topics or speakers that you’d like to hear about. We hope to see you at our next meeting, November 17th!

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As our 2016-17 begins we have begun our membership drive anew. We can't continue this Roundtable without your support. We're always looking for new members to join our ranks too. Recruit your friends!

For those who remembered to renew your FCCWRT membership, thank you! Your dues make it possible for us to continue to fulfill our mission. We can't continue without your support! Please ask your friends to join so we can do even more!

As a member of our group, you'll enjoy these benefits:

- receive the current newsletter
- receive email updates of local events related to Civil War history
- always have a place to be on the third Thursday of the month

Our yearly dues are:

- \$30.00 for an individual
- \$50.00 for a family up to four
- \$5.00 for out of state members and members under 16 years of age