



Banner of the Blue and Gray

Newsletter of the Frederick County Civil War Roundtable Frederick, Maryland
Founded January 30, 1989

276th Meeting

March 2019

Volume 45, Issue 7

March 21, 2019, 7:00 PM National Museum of Civil War Medicine 48 E. Patrick St, Frederick, Maryland

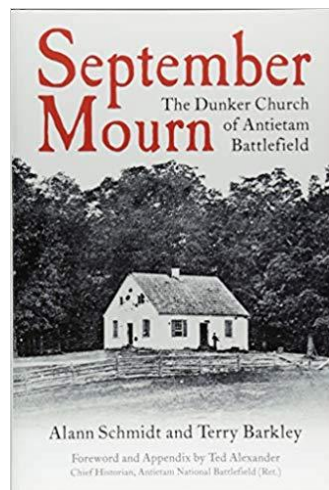


Speaker: Alann Schmidt

Topic: "The Dunker Church at Antietam"

Alann Schmidt spent fifteen years as a park ranger at Antietam National Battlefield. He earned degrees from the University of Pittsburgh, Shippensburg University, Shepherd University, and the Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science. While a severe case of Lyme disease forced him into early retirement, he currently serves as a pastor for the Churches of God, and lives with his wife Tracy (and their many cats) on their family farm near Fort Littleton, Pennsylvania.

The Dunker Church is one of the most iconic structures of the American Civil War. Surprisingly, few people know much if anything about its fascinating story or the role it played within the community of Sharpsburg and its importance during and after the Battle of Antietam. *September Mourn: The Dunker Church of Antietam* by Alann D. Schmidt and Terry W. Barkley rectifies this oversight in the first book-length study of its kind.



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF
CIVIL WAR MEDICINE

Divided by Conflict, United by Compassion®

In Case You Missed It.....

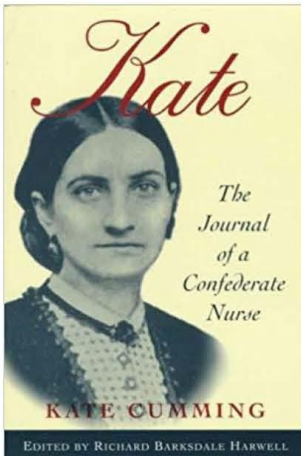


At our February 21st meeting held at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine we were treated to Jake Wynn's presentation "After Letterman-The Army of the Potomac's Medical Department in the Overland Campaign." The Overland Campaign witnessed the transfer of US Army medical oversight from Major John Letterman to Surgeon Thomas A. McParlin. Letterman's departure from the army in early 1864 left Surgeon McParlin to face the challenges of an army in constant motion from near Fredericksburg to the outskirts of Petersburg. Field hospitals and surgical staff could not remain long in any one place, and soon became strung out along the lines of the Union army advance. At the Wilderness about 200 soldiers perished in flames since they could not be recovered from the field in time. The hundreds of

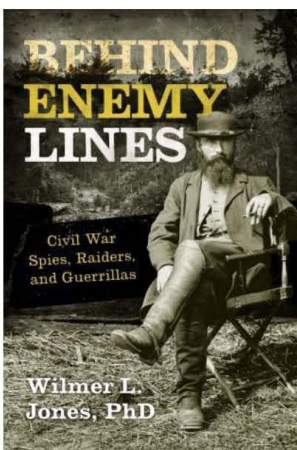
surgeons accompanying the army were soon overwhelmed by thousands of wounded from the battles of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, and fighting along the march between them. As the war in the east developed into a more static contest, the medical corps was relieved to the comparative simplicity of more permanent hospitals with well-secured supply lines. Jake explained the challenges faced by the medical corps and provided period descriptions of the bloodiest campaign of the war.



MARCH BOOK RAFFLE



Kate Cumming was one of the first women to offer her nursing services for the care of the wounded Confederate soldiers. What else sets her apart is her detailed journal which provides a look behind the medical and administrative workings of the Confederate hospital system. Against her family's wishes, she worked in Mobile, AL and in Chattanooga, TN nursing the soldiers who were ill or injured in local battles.

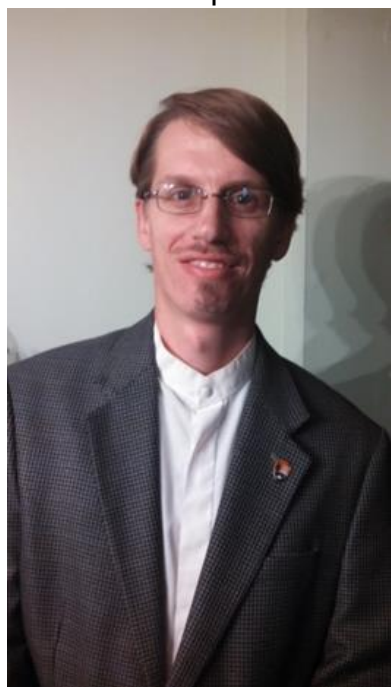


This book is filled with tales of espionage and guerilla warfare activities during the war. Operating outside of the restrictions of military convention, raiders were able to wreak havoc on the enemy and frequently caught them by complete surprise. Spies used multiple methods of obtaining and passing on information about the enemy's plans and operations. The book features such characters as Turner Ashby, John Mosby, John Brown, and William Quantrill.

Prez Sez

It is hard to believe that it is already March! We have just a few more meetings for this season and as such it is time to start thinking about all those history programs and trips for the Spring and Summer of 2019! Our regional National Park Service sites, Monocacy and Antietam National Battlefields, as well as Harpers Ferry National Historic Site have put out their event schedules for the year. We will be sure to keep you abreast of upcoming events in the newsletter and on our Facebook Page, so stay tuned.

Speaking of upcoming events, we also will keep you in the loop regarding this summer's trips! The Frederick County Civil War Round Table is planning another joint venture with our friends at the Pipe Creek Civil War Round Table in Westminster. We intend to take a tour of Monterey Pass Battlefield up near Gettysburg. This site deals with the cavalry clashes on the retreat from the Battle of Gettysburg and the pursuit of Lee's army.



We have also been asked by our hosts, the National Museum of Civil War Medicine, to spread the word about their Spring Bus Tour! Members of the Medical Museum, as well as our Round Table membership will be able to partake in a bus trip to Point Lookout in southern Maryland, site of a major POW camp and hospital complex during the Civil War. We will keep you informed on this as details are still coming in.

With all these upcoming events in mind I look forward to seeing you all on March 21st, for our speaker Alann Schmidt. A former ranger at Antietam National Battlefield, Alann has written the first full length account of the German Baptist Brethren (Dunker) congregation on the battlefield and how they dealt with the battle. Hope to see you there!

~ Matt Borders

Nearby March Events

(For any event listed please remember to confirm it's happening before hitting the road.)

2019 Winter Lecture Series at Gettysburg NMP

January 5 - March 31, Saturdays and Sundays at 1:30 pm. Gettysburg National Military Park Museum and Visitor Center

National Park Service rangers and leading historians from across the country offer free hour-long talks exploring important aspects of the American Civil War and the Battle of Gettysburg. All programs are free of charge and open to the public. Schedule is subject to change. Limited seating is available on a first come - first serve basis.

Sat. March 2- The Wills Family & Lincoln's Visit: Life in a Northern Town, Troy Harman

Sun. March 3- Roger B. Taney and His Changing Place in American History, Karlton Smith

Sat. March 9- Scapegoat or Scandal?: JEB Stuart during the Gettysburg Campaign, Matt Atkinson

Sun. March 10- Twilight at Gettysburg: The 1938 Reunion of the Blue and the Gray, Christopher Gwinn

Sat. March 16- College Students in the Battle of Gettysburg: A Different Kind of Soldier, Troy Harman

Sun. March 17- "On the Tenuous Edge of Freedom: Gettysburg's African-American Community Before, During, and After the Battle," John Hoptak

Sun. March 24- If These Things Could Talk: Artifacts in the Collection of Gettysburg National Military Park, Tom Holbrook

Sat. March 30- Scapegoat or Scandal?: JEB Stuart during the Gettysburg Campaign, Matt Atkinson

Sun. March 31- Lincoln Mythed: Memorial Biographies and the Damage Done to History – A Discussion, Bert Barnett

April 6 at 9 am, Volunteer at Monocacy National Battlefield for Park Day. Monocacy National Battlefield Frederick, MD, 301-662-3515

Seminars and Conferences

March 22-24, Civil War Weekend, “Civil War Leadership,” The Inn at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA. www.cpe.vt/cww

April 10-13, 2019- “Give the Enemy No Rest” – Sheridan’s 1864 Shenandoah Campaign Front Royal, Virginia. The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation’s 4th Annual National Civil War Conference will focus on Sheridan’s 1864 Shenandoah Campaign. The conference will include talks, programs, special events, and tours of Third Winchester, Fisher’s Hill, and Cedar Creek. Guides and speakers will include Gary Ecelbarger, Caroline E. Janney, Robert K. Krick, William Miller, Jonathan A. Noyalas, Scott C. Patchan, Ralph Peters, Nick Picerno, and Jeffry Wert.

June 14-19, 2019, Civil War Institute Summer Conference, Gettysburg College- The 2019 CWI Conference will feature a wide range of topics, including the 1864 Atlanta campaign, the political crisis of the 1850s, Civil War artifacts, Nat Turner’s Rebellion, the combat experience of Civil War soldiers, and more. Join us for a blockbuster year of CWI speakers! We are thrilled to feature eminent Civil War scholars, **Gary W. Gallagher, Ed Ayers, Carol Reardon** and **Peter S. Carmichael** within a line-up of over 35 distinguished speakers and tour guides. www.gettysburg.edu/cwi/conference



FCCWRT SNOW POLICY

The winter storm season is almost over, but March can still bring nasty weather. Due to foul weather conditions, we may need to cancel our monthly meeting. If Frederick County Schools and/or the National Museum of Civil War Medicine (meeting location) announce closures for the afternoon/evening of the meeting our meeting will be cancelled. We will make every attempt to send an email and Facebook notification as soon as the cancellation decision is made. Please use your best judgment in making safety your top priority.

Volunteer Opportunities

Interested in volunteering to keep the FCCWRT running and growing? Let us know at a meeting or send an email to our President Matt Borders. Areas of need are listed below. We will have board elections at the end of the season for members interested in leadership positions. If you have an interest in becoming a board member, please make your interest known!

Areas in which to assist the Round Table:

Programs (help with acquiring possible speakers, field trips, etc.)

Website (maintain and update group's website)

Outreach

Marketing

Newsletter

Other

BOOK REVIEW BY MATT BORDERS

William A. Fletcher, *Rebel Private Front and Rear: Experiences and Observations From the Early Fifties and Through the Civil War*. 128pp., \$9.99 (softcover), ISBN: 145360474X Reviewed by Matthew A. D. Borders

The individual soldier experience has long been a topic of interest for Civil War scholars and enthusiasts alike. Why did these men fight, what did they have to endure, how did they survive? These topics have been covered in some depth, first by the veterans themselves in such classics as *Hardtack and Coffee*, *Company Aytch*, and *Rebel Private Front and Rear*. This last work I had been encouraged to look into for some time and needing a quick read over the holidays, picked it up.

Readers of wartime memoirs will recognize some of the themes immediately, William Fletcher establishes who he is, where he was from, and gives the reader some background on his family and their political leanings before the war. Born in Louisiana, Fletcher was actually in Texas with his father when the war came. His father was an overseer and well read on the contentions in the country over slavery. He was also one of the few people, according to William, who believed the war would be a drawn-out affair. Regardless of his fear of a long, bloody conflict, William's father allowed his son to enlist in Company F, of the 5th Texas Infantry. This regiment was destined to become part of Hood's famed Texas Brigade.

William Fletcher details his travels to the Virginia front and the early days of his enlistment. Like many privates of either side he pays attention to drill and does his duty but does not necessarily take military discipline to heart. He was more than prepared, not only in his early days, but throughout his service, to slip away from camp at night to find fun or food. These guard dodging skills, come to find out, paid off in his later service. As does the scrounging techniques he learns for himself and from his comrades, whom he refers to throughout the work as "pards".

The 5th Texas saw action in the most iconic battles of the Army of the Northern Virginia, beginning with their efforts to save Richmond, during the Seven Days in the early summer of 1862. Fletcher served with this 5th during that series of engagements, helping to push the Union army back from the Confederate capital. He was with them still at 2nd Manassas where the 5th Texas helped to defeat the Union Army of Virginia and where William Fletcher received his first wound. Cut across the stomach by a minnie ball, Fletcher, as well as many of his parads, felt he had taken a lethal wound. He however surprised them all by returning to his unit in time to participate in the Battle of Fredericksburg.

William Fletcher's narrative goes into specific detail about his foraging exploits and techniques for obtaining food, as well as the movements of his units in combat. The narrative is not complete however as large swathes of camp life, marching and even some engagements are left out. This appears to be due to the passage of time as William Fletcher wrote *Rebel Private*, forty years after the war. He goes on to describe the use of the Texas Brigade at Gettysburg and being pinned down by sharpshooter fire from the Round Tops, as well as being transferred west in late 1863 to assist Confederate forces under Bragg. This addition of forces to the western theater allowed Bragg to win the Battle of Chickamauga, where Fletcher was wounded for a second time. This wound to the hip was the end of his military career as an infantryman.

Fletcher spends the rest of his narrative with another iconic Texas command, Terry's Texas Rangers. Still wanting to serve, but unable to keep up with the march, William Fletcher was allowed to join the Rangers. This proved to be a series of adventures all their own as Confederate cavalry were expected to keep themselves mounted, no horse could be provided by the Confederacy. Throughout this last section of the book Fletcher is raiding against Union patrols and wagon trains, as well as civilians. He would need to be re-horsed on several occasions and was captured during one attempt. His exploits at this point become almost comical as he helps a fellow prisoner escape by being a distraction for the guard, and eventually throws himself from a moving train to escape.

The narrative ends with a drawn-out chapter on the surrender and the return to Texas through a devastated South. As he and his comrades were deciding on when to head home and how to do it, Fletcher had a poignant conversation with another soldier, a veteran from North Carolina. When asked if he had any bacon, Fletcher responded in the affirmative and was told to "grease and slide back into the Union" (117). He appears to take this advice to heart and soon shakes off the depression of defeat and is excited to return home. Riding with some comrades, William Fletcher succeeded in reaching Texas after several weeks of riding. He eventually took up his father's carpentry tools to make a living a makes a point that he ended up about 100 feet from where he started his four-year adventure.

Told in an easy to read, narrative style, *Rebel Private Front and Rear*, is a fantastic addition for anyone interested in the unpolished, truthful experiences of a Confederate private during the Civil War. Fletcher's exploits at times approach the fantastic, but his humility and self-deprecating style leaves one believing him, or at least believing that what he writes is what he remembers. As with many of the veterans who were writing during this period, he was proud of his service, was willing to fight and kill for his comrades, but holds little to no ill will to the other side once the fighting was done.

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



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

Gary Dyson is our “face” for Facebook.

Help us spread the word about OUR FCCWRT!! We now have 318 “likes” to date with even more “followers!”

Join Facebook. Share posts with friends! You'll get more timely notice of events when you check us out on Facebook. Post things you'd like to share!

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

Please join us for our next meeting on Thursday, April 18th at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine on East Patrick Street. Sharon Murray from the Museum will be presenting “Grimes Davis and the Escape from Harper’s Ferry.”

2018-2019 Board of Directors

Matt Borders, President /Webmaster
mborders@comcast.net

Vacant, Vice President

Bob Kozak, Treasurer
301-644-1396 kzagr@aol.com

Gary Dyson, Secretary, Facebook, Newsletter
garyldyson@gmail.com

Lucy Tannozzini, Book Raffle.
llucyzzini@yahoo.com

Jack Sheriff, At Large
301-371-4148 jbsheriff1@comcast.net

Joe Collins, At Large, froggyjoe@aol.com

Tom Dumm, At Large thomas.dumm@obg.com

Todd Morris, At Large, Todd.b.morris@gmail.com

For questions, comments or dues, contact:
FCCWRT
P.O. Box 3232, Frederick MD 21705-3232
www.frederickcountycivilwarrt.org