

# THE GRAPESHOT

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**BOOK EDITOR:** Don Swanson  
**BOOK TABLE:** Henry Potosky  
**WEBMASTER:** Jay Webber  
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.Meets @ Civic Center Library  
3839 N Drinkwater Blvd Scottsdale  
.on the 3rd Tuesday of the month  
6:45 PM—8:45 PM  
.September thru May  
.\$35 Annual Dues (individual)  
.\$45 Annual Dues (family)  
.Everyone Welcome



**ERIC MINK**

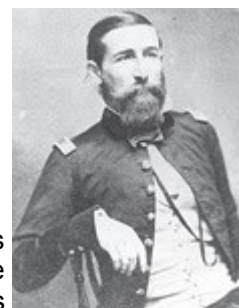
-presents-

**Our Beau-ideal Of An Educator,  
Gentleman and Drill-master:  
Colonel William Gilham  
of the Virginia Military Institute**

**March 16, 2010**

**6:45 PM**

**Civic Center Library**



From 1846 through 1865, William Gilham served as Commandant of Cadets at VMI. On the eve of the Civil War, he was considered by many to be one of the most promising officers in Virginia. Mr. Mink will discuss the career of this all-but forgotten professor, whose behind-the-scenes efforts as an educator and drillmaster proved instrumental in training Virginia's soldiers early in the war. Growing up in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, Eric Mink received his B.A. in Historic Preservation and American Studies from the University of Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg. A historian and cultural resources manager with the National Park Service in Fredericksburg, Virginia, he is the author of a number of articles and book reviews on Civil War subjects. Mr. Mink has spoken widely on Civil War subjects and has conducted numerous battlefield tours.



**DID YOU KNOW?**

.The famous Confederate blockade-runner, the C.S.S. Alabama, never entered a Confederate port during the length of her service.  
.There were more than 10,000 soldiers serving in the Union Army that were under the age of 18.  
.Approximately 130,000 freed slaves became Union soldiers during the war.  
.Many doctors who saw service in the Civil War had never been to medical school but had served an apprenticeship in the office of an established practitioner.  
.80% of all wounds during the war were in the extremities.

**FROM WES' DEN.....**

This year is off to a great start. Membership is 210 and over 130 came to our February program. Thanks for your support and donations at our book/magazine table as they are gratefully received. After all the programs are paid in full, we hope to make another donation to Civil War Preservation Trust this summer.

The Perryville Battle for Kentucky presentation was especially well done. The October 8, 1862 fight had a battle front of almost ten miles and separate armies involved in their own wars in their own sectors. Our speaker, Chris Kolakowski, spent three years there acquiring and developing the battlefield as an Executive Director. When my wife and I stopped there fifty years ago, it was just a little circle with a cannon, flagpole and marker with a CSA monument nearby. I especially enjoyed it and smiles ruled everywhere plus he did sell a lot of books, all autographed.



I remain your most obedient servant..... *Wes Schmidt*

## BOOK REVIEW

reviewed by



Don Swanson, SCWRT Member

### **No Quarter: The Battle of the Crater, 1864**

By Richard Slotkin. Published by Random House. Notes, index. 2009. 432 pp. \$28.00

“It was the saddest affair I have witnessed in this war.” So wrote General Ulysses Grant to Chief of Staff Henry Halleck on August 1, 1864 following the disastrous Union defeat at the Battle of the Crater. Richard Slotkin’s enthralling new book examines the battle that began with igniting a tunnel packed with 8000 pounds of gunpowder under the Confederate works to enable Federal soldiers (including the politically charged U.S. “Colored Troops”) to move into the breach and take the important rail center of Petersburg, Virginia.

Richard Slotkin has written his study of this infamous chapter in Civil War history nearly 30 years after publishing his novel **The Crater** in which he provided a novelist’s insight into the characters involved in the actual event. Slotkin uses that ability as a novelist to write a narrative of the events that rivals his fictional account while providing the researched facts of a tactical battle study that Civil War enthusiasts crave. Lt. Col. Henry Pleasants, the mining engineer who took the original tunneling concept to his chain of command, is portrayed as an honorable, brave soldier, but other Federal commanders do not fare as well. Grant is portrayed as unwilling to intervene when he should have; Meade is seen as unable to trust Burnside’s judgment to lead the breach with his trained, but untried “Colored” division; Burnside is portrayed as the political general unable to harbor enough respect to sell the most important aspects of his plan. The true villain of this account,

however, is James H. Ledlie, the commander who utterly failed to prepare his division for the responsibility assigned to it and who contemptibly sat in a bombproof while his men were massacred.

While the author covers the aspects of the battle many enthusiasts may already know, it is Slotkin’s skill in telling the story that holds the reader. That story recounts the preparation of the plan, an hour-by-hour account of the action, the subsequent court of inquiry and the controversial portrayal of how the battle deteriorated into a race riot targeting Federal African American soldiers. Slotkin describes how these soldiers were given “no quarter” not only by Confederates, but also by some white Federal troops who saw the slaying of these fellow Unionists as necessary for their own survival. This is a gripping account of a truly disturbing event of the war. *Highly Recommended.*



## UPCOMING ROUND TABLES

April 20th

Howard Strouse

*Amazing Grace: Champions Of Abolition*

May 18th

Dave Smith

*Quarrel With His Generals:  
The Mystery of Braxton Bragg*



## MCDOWELL MOUNTAIN CONSERVATORY

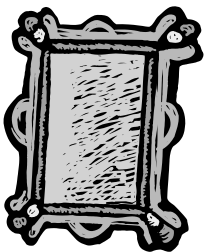
Dr. John Bamberl (SCWRT Member) has recently been elected chairman of the Pastfinders Division of the McDowell Mountain Conservatory which manages the McDowell Mountains for the City of Scottsdale. This group includes historians and archaeologists.

The mission of the Pastfinders Unit, is to work with The City of Scottsdale to generate enthusiasm for the McDowell Sonoran Preserve and Conservatory by informing the general public about the history and activities of the people that have been associated with the preserve from ancient to present times.

If you have any information about the history of the McDowell Mountains, Fort McDowell or The City of Scottsdale...could you please e-mail John at:

[jbamberl@aol.com](mailto:jbamberl@aol.com)

## ORIGINAL CIVIL WAR PICTURES



This website should be of real interest....pictures taken 150 years ago of the Civil War era. Run the cursor over the photo and the "picture caption" will pop up. Wet plate photos were made during the Civil War on glass plate. They lost their appeal and many were sold for the glass and lost. This is an amazing collection.

[www.mikelynaugh.com/VirtualCivilWar/  
New/Originals2](http://www.mikelynaugh.com/VirtualCivilWar/New/Originals2)

# Thanks

Round of thanks this month to several workers in the Scottsdale Civil War organization:

- Wes Schmidt..President since March of 1996! That's fourteen years, folks!
- Mack Stanley...for the excellent programs he continues to round up year after year. Did you know he makes all the travel arrangements for the speakers, picks them up at the airport and takes them to dinner the night of our event? That's dedication.
- Charlie Madigan who has been a Treasurer all his life! Starting with the Boy Scouts!
- John Bamberl-involved in the Stoneman Trail fact finding mission, plus a contributor to *The Grapeshot*.
- Don Swanson who entertains us at the beginning of our meetings with a Civil War video as well as being the Book Editor for *The Grapeshot*.
- Henry Potosky who lugs all those donated books and magazines to each and every meeting for our book table sale.

Needless to say, we have years and years of dedicated service that has made this group 210 members strong.

If you'd like to get involved, please step forward.



The Civil War was a tragedy. It was the bloodiest war in American history. Approximately 620,000 men---360,000 Northerners and 260,000 Southerners--died in the four year conflict. This is the figure that topped the total fatalities of all other wars in which America has fought. Of these numbers, 110,000 Union and 94,000 Confederate soldiers died of wounds received in battle. This figure implies that over 200,000 died of non-gunshot related deaths. That is that only 25-30 % of all deaths were from war injuries.

When the Civil War began, the United States medical staff consisted of thirty surgeons and eighty-three assistant surgeons. Of these, twenty-four resigned to go south and three assistant surgeons were dismissed. Thus the Medical Corp began with eighty-seven medical people and the Confederate States started with twenty-four surgeons. When the war ended in 1865, some 1300 Union doctors had served in the field and in hospitals and the Confederates had 2,000 medical doctors and an unknown amount of volunteers. Union records estimate that 2,000 women worked in Union hospitals. Records for the Confederacy are not available but are thought to be approximately the same.

During the period just before the Civil War, A physician received minimal training. The average medical school was six months to one year and a preceptorship

could be served for two years. Unless he was unusual, he had probably never seen a gunshot wound before. Frankly, they received no clinical experience and were given virtually no laboratory instructions. Harvard University, for example, did not own a single microscope until after the war. No one was prepared for the extent and severity of the Civil War.

Least prepared was the Medical Corp. Surgeons found themselves in a medical state of disaster. Most of the surgeons were from small towns and they were seeing types of wounds they had never experienced before. Warfare and medical technology came together at exactly the wrong time. Union Surgeon General William Hammond lamented that the war was fought "at the end of the medical middle ages".

Rifling of guns had just been developed and the .58 caliber minee ball caused severe injury and shattered bones. The rifled Springfields were accurate at 600 to 1000 yards. Internal wounds were beyond the capabilities of the surgeons and men with abdominal wounds were allowed to die. Abdominal surgery had not been developed yet. There was no knowledge of bone reconstruction and three out of four operations were amputations. It was a life saving operation. It is amazing that so many men with gunshot wounds survived. It must be remembered that there were no antibiotics, blood transfusions or any way to monitor vital signs. Ambulance services were not set up until late in the war. Sterility was not known because germs had not been discovered yet. The power to heal was no where close to the power to maim.

(to be continued next month)