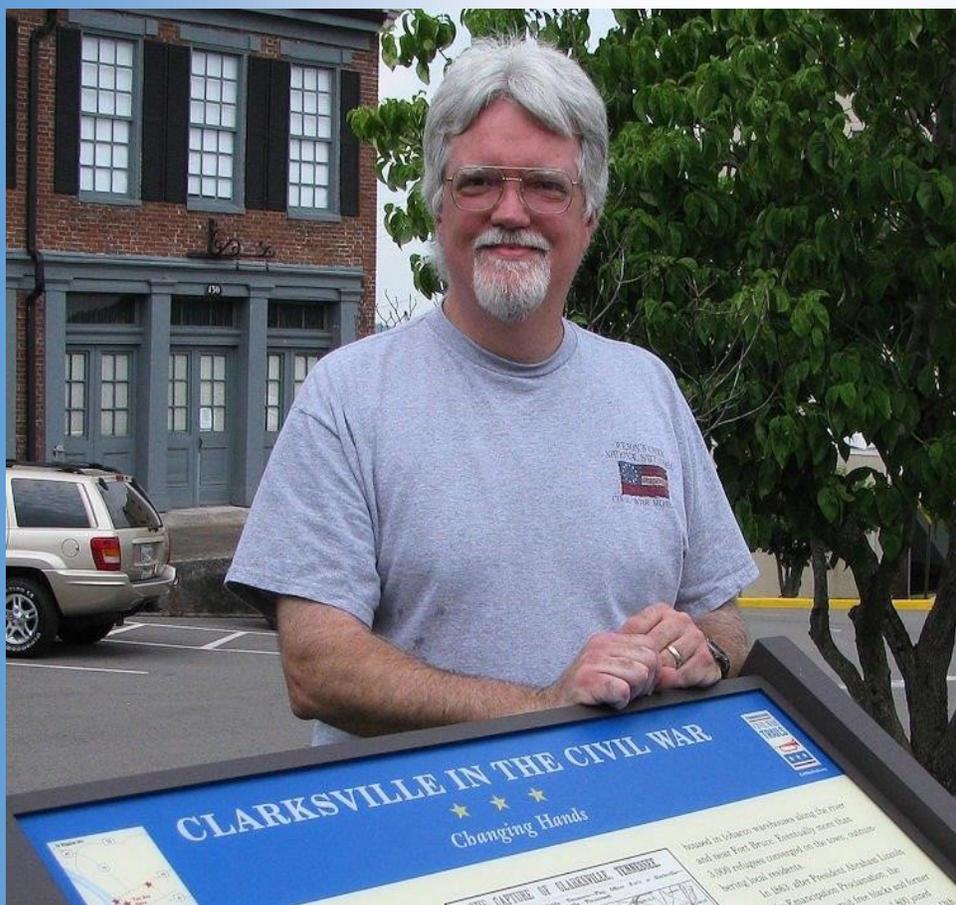
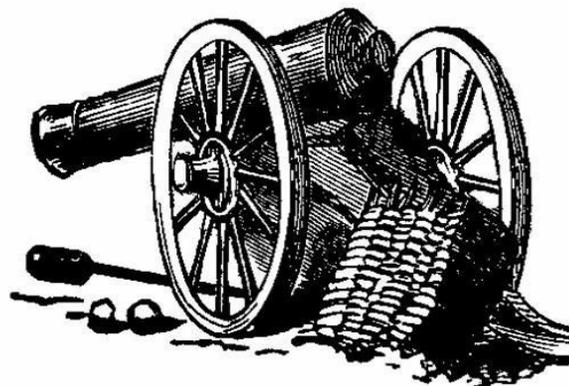


The Grapeshot

May 2019



This month's guest speaker:

Mr. Greg Biggs

On May 21 Greg Biggs will present his fascinating talk *How Johnny Got His Gun: the Confederate Supply System.*

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Scottsdale Civic Center
Library Auditorium

6:00 p.m.

May 21, 2019

About Our May 21 Speaker

How the under resourced Confederacy managed to support its armed forces for four years is the subject of this month's Roundtable speaker, Greg Biggs, who will discuss *How Johnny Got His Gun: The Confederate Supply System*. This is the first Scottsdale Roundtable presentation devoted solely to how the improvised logistical system of the Confederacy developed and operated during the Civil War.

Born in Elmhurst, IL (Chicago suburb); Greg attended college at the University of Tampa in Florida and Stephen F. Austin State University in Texas. Owner of two businesses; one in the music industry and the other a Civil War research firm that includes his work on Civil War flags. While contributing to several books on flags as well as published articles on the topic in *North-South Trader*, *Sons of Confederate Veterans* publications, the *Flags of the Confederacy* web site (www.confederate-flags.org), he has also published Civil War items in *Blue & Gray* magazine, *Hallowed Ground* (Civil War Trust publication), *Civil War Regiments*, an essay on Union cavalry in the Tullahoma Campaign in a recent book and the *Battle of Franklin* Trust magazine.

Biggs is currently working on projects including the 83rd Illinois Infantry in Middle Tennessee, Hood's logistics in the Tennessee Campaign and some flags items. President of the Clarksville, Tennessee Civil War Round Table and an officer of the Nashville and Bowling Green, Kentucky CWRT's doing programs, he is also a member of the Company of Military Historians, the Clarksville Civil War Sesquicentennial Committee, lead historian for the Clarksville Fort Defiance Interpretive Center, former Associate Editor of *Blue & Gray* magazine and past president of the Friends of Fort Donelson Campaign.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Meetings are held at the Scottsdale Civic Center Library Auditorium from 5:40 to 7:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of every month Sept. thru May.



May 21 Greg Biggs, *How Johnny Got His Gun: The Confederate Supply System*

Just a reminder, there will not be a History Discussion group meeting for the month of May. Thanks to all of those that made this season's discussion group fun and informative.

***From Around the Campfire...A Message from Our
President John Bamberl***



This month, Dr. Bamberl

Under the Knife

In 1860 there were 200 operations performed at the Massachusetts General hospital. After the Civil War started there were that many done in a day.

Approximately two out of three Civil War wounds treated by surgeons were to the extremities because few soldiers hit in the head, chest or stomach lived long enough to make it back to a field hospital and if they did there was very little medical knowledge to help them. From a technical point of view, damaged limbs presented the greatest challenge to the surgeon. The wars most common projectile, the large oblong Minie' ball, often tumbled when it hit the body and caused more damage than small-bore musket balls.

One confederate surgeon observed, "The shattering, splintering and splitting of a long bone by the impact of a Minie' or Enfield ball were, in many instances, both remarkable and frightful." When bone was damaged, surgeons had to decide quickly on one of three possible treatments. If it were a simple fracture a simple wooden or plaster splint was applied, but if the bone were shattered the surgeon performed either a resection or amputation. Resection involved cutting open the wound, sawing out the damaged bone, and then closing the incision. It was a time consuming procedure and required considerable skill that few surgeons had.

Besides being a difficult procedure, resection carried a high risk of profuse bleeding, infection and postoperative necrosis of the flesh. And it must be kept in mind that 150 years ago the surgeons had no access to blood transfusions, antibiotics or IV fluid replacement. And they also lacked assistants or time. Resection were not always practical when there were large numbers of patients to treat. The amputation process was very simple. After a circular cut was made completely around the limb, the bone was cut through, and the blood vessels were tied off. It was found after the War that the infection rate for the Confederacy was much lower than for the Union. That was because of the embargo, the South could not get silk sutures from England so they substituted the long hair from a horses tail and to soften them they boiled them in water, thus sterilizing them.

To prevent future pain, nerves were pulled out as far as possible with forceps, cut, and allowed to retract away possible with forceps, cut, and allowed to retract away from the end of the stump. Finally, clippers and a rasp were used to smooth the end of the bone. Sometimes the bloody stump was left open to heal gradually and sometimes a second surgeon would close the stump with excess skin. Speed was essential in all amputations to lessen blood loss and prevent shock. An amputation at the knee was expected to take just three minutes.

Civil War surgeons always had Chloroform to anesthetize patients before an amputation. The chloroform was dripped onto a piece of cloth held over the patient's face until he was unconscious. Although not an exact science, the procedure worked well, and few patients died from overdose. Opium pills, opium dust and injections were available to control postoperative pain. Whiskey was also used liberally.

The mistaken belief that amputations were routinely performed without anesthetics can be partially attributed to the fact that chloroform did not put patients into a deep unconscious state. Bystanders who saw moaning writhing patients being held down on the table assumed no anesthetic was being used. Early in the war surgeons earned the nickname, "sawbones" because they seemed eager to amputate.

*****“sawbones” because they seemed eager to amputate. This eagerness stemmed not from overzealousness but from the knowledge that infections developed quickly in mangled flesh, and amputation was the most effective way to prevent this. The mortality rate for primary amputations was about 25% and for delayed amputations was double that. It is estimated that 3 out of 4 patients who underwent an amputation during the war survived.

Taking care of amputees put a significant strain on both wartime governments. The Union provided its disabled soldiers with prosthetic limbs made from cork wood, metal or rubber and gave amputees \$ 8 a month as a pension. The confederacy was unable to be so generous and by 1864 was providing just 10% of the needed prostheses.

Incredibly, Mississippi’s single greatest state expenditure a year after the war ended was the purchase of artificial Limbs for its veterans which consumed 20 percent of the state’s budget.

Amputation was the most common Civil War surgical procedure. Union surgeons performed approximately 30,000 and the Confederate figures are thought to be about the same but the figures were destroyed when Richmond was burned. John Bamberl.

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Scottsdale Civic Center Library (Auditorium)

3839 N Drinkwater Blvd

Scottsdale AZ

3rd Tuesday of the month

September thru May

5:40 PM - 7:30 PM \$35 Annual Dues (individual)

\$45 Annual Dues (family)

I Didn't Know That...

Editor's note: For the May Grapeshot our resident Civil War scholar Mr. Gary Dorris presents his original essay *Southern Spies in Petticoats*.

The Union military officers and politicians who were targets of women spies were often unaware that they were in a battle, not with guns and swords, but a battle of wits; and many came half armed.

While there were many women in southern states who, from time to time, provided useful information to nearby Confederate forces; there were those who chose a road less travelled and risked their lives to become effective and valuable spies while they lived among the enemy. These three women actively sought interaction with Union politicians and soldiers to gain information. Their unwitting "sources" failed to look past the ladies' charm and talked, sometimes bragged, too much about troop strength and battle preparations. The entire area around Washington DC and Virginia was a hot-bed (pun intended) of espionage by these lady operatives. However, most of the information was not necessarily gained from "pillow talk" but often just careless comments the men made in the presence of these women from whom they, mistakenly, perceived no threat.

Besides their beauty and charm, another advantage for these "spies in petticoats" was the common Victorian courtesy shown women at that time. They were frequently permitted to pass through Union lines into Confederate territory, and back again, with only non-invasive questions and with a nominal search. It was inconceivable for many of the young Union soldiers, who guarded the lines, to suspect that the demure and soft-spoken southern lady would be engaged in such "un-lady-like" behavior.

But Belle Boyd, Antonia Ford, and Rose O'Neal Greenhow were each committed to the secessionist cause and were willing to risk their freedom, and even their lives, in service to the Confederacy.

Belle Boyd lived in Virginia and became known to the Union military within days after the start of the Civil War when, at the age of 17, she shot and killed a Union soldier who had broken into her home. She was arrested but soon released.

By all accounts, she was a charming young woman who, despite her earlier arrest, continued to be able to gain sensitive information from Union soldiers in the area. She often served Confederate Generals Stonewall Jackson and P.G.T. Beauregard, for whom she provided not only intelligence, but carried secret messages as a courier. Belle's frequent trips soon caught the attention of Federal officers and she was again arrested in July 1862 and sent to the Old Capitol Prison in Washington DC. She was released after one month and deported to Richmond, Virginia. They should have saved her room because she was arrested twice more crossing the battle lines and was sent each time to the Old Prison for thirty, then for sixty days. Upon her last release, she became a courier carrying secret Confederate papers to England. Again, she was captured, this time by the Union Navy but Bell conveniently married one of the naval officers who had detained her and they both fled to England. After the war ended, Belle wrote her memoir, which became a best-seller and led to a successful speaking career. She was eligible for a pardon to regain citizenship in the United States but never applied. She died in 1900, an unrepentant defender of secession and slavery.

Antonia Ford was living in Fairfax, Virginia, not far south of Washington DC, when her community was over-run and occupied by Union troops soon after the war started. Only 23 at the time, she began to provide military intelligence to Confederate General J.E.B. Stuart who gave her a written, but unofficial, commission in his Army and acted as a courier for General Stuart and the Confederate Partisan leader John Mosby. In March 1863 she came under suspicion of being a Southern spy after Mosby's Rangers captured Union General Edwin Stoughton, at a remote country inn. The local Union commanders soon learned that Antonia was known to keep the company of both General Stoughton and Mosby, but there was no proof that she had actually aided in Stoughton's capture. (Stoughton, who was not highly regarded by other senior officers, was later exchanged for a Confederate prisoner and quickly forced out of the U.S. Army). To try to obtain proof of Antonia's disloyalty, the Union recruited a woman from a Southern family to seek out Antonia and befriend her. The ruse worked when Antonia shared her written "commission" from General Stuart with her new friend. Antonia was arrested and, like Belle Boyd, was sent to the Old Capitol Prison where a female guard found that she was also carrying secret Confederate documents. In a turn of events similar to Boyd's, Antonia was released at the order of a Union Major who was one of her captors; and they were quickly married. Unlike Boyd, Antonia Ford did regain U.S. citizenship after the War; however, she died at only 33 years of age in 1871. She left no memoir and only anecdotally mentioned her exploits in a few letters to friends and family. Her husband, the former Major who had been stripped of his commission,

never re-married and, only near death, finally confirmed his wife's service for the Confederacy.

On the other hand, there is an ample record of Rose O'Neal Greenhow, perhaps the most famous and effective female spy for the Confederates. Mrs. Greenhow, a wealthy widow, was a fixture in Washington DC society long before the start of the Civil War. She was well educated, attractive, and considered a great conversationalist by her many friends, both men and women; and all were aware that she was a devoted secessionist. Rose had said, "*The Southern states have been hindered, dishonored and wronged by the national government in power.*" When the War broke out, she immediately offered to use her prominent social position in Washington to help the new Confederate Generals gain intelligence about Union troop movements for the initial battles; which most assumed would be just across the border in Virginia.

Because she had been so open about her support for secession before the War, Alan Pinkerton, who was in charge of a newly formed Federal police force, suspected that Rose might be a spy and/or a courier for the Confederates. Pinkerton placed Rose under house arrest, but was then astonished to see how many prominent Union officers and politicians still continued to visit her home. To restrict her contacts he had Rose and her eight year old daughter transferred to the Old Capitol Prison (evidently a favorite holding place). Rose immediately began a series of letters from prison to newspapers and to prominent Union politicians outlining her and her daughter's "*dreadful treatment and unproven charges by Mr. Pinkerton*" and described the harsh condition of her confinement. The general public, newspaper editors, and politicians erupted in outrage and Pinkerton released her; but determined to not allow her to remain free in Washington DC, he arranged for her to be "deported" to Richmond.

There, she was greeted as a returning hero! Jefferson Davis gave her official credentials and asked her to go to Europe to help gain diplomatic and financial support for the Confederate government. With her poise, education, and social manner, she was quickly accepted among the aristocracy and served well in her position. While living in London, she wrote a best-selling memoir in early 1864 (in which she did not name any of her Union sources) and earned substantial royalties. In September 1864, Rose left England with plans to land in North Carolina, before making her way overland to Richmond. On October 1, her blockade runner ran aground while trying to escape Union gunboats and, against the Captain's orders, Rose left the ship in a small lifeboat toward land; taking with her a bag of gold coins, presumably earnings from her book. The rowboat capsized before reaching shore and Rose O'Neal Greenhow, weighted down with the gold, drowned. She was buried with full military honors by a grateful Confederate

government. She was fifty one years old.

Although these three women were committed to the “States in Rebellion” and tried their best to aid in the break-up of the United States, one cannot help but admire their courage and commitment to their cause.

Contact the author at gadorris2@gmail.com or see other articles under BLOGS at www.alincolnbygadorris.com

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Some fun photo's from our last meeting



