



NEWS

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OUR MARCH MEETING – 3/16/2021

“*Gone With the Wind* and the Construction of Civil War Memory “

Leslie Goddard

Seventy-five years after its blockbuster premiere in 1939, *Gone with the Wind* continues to inspire both passionate devotion and academic criticism. One historian has called it “almost certainly the single most powerful influence on American perceptions of the Civil War.” In this illustrated slide lecture about the history of the movie, we’ll consider both the accuracy of its portrayal of the American Civil War and its lasting influence in shaping popular understanding of Civil War history. What accounts for this film’s widespread – and enduring – popularity among viewers? Does *Gone with the Wind* still matter in scholarly and popular conversations about the Civil War?

Leslie Goddard holds a Ph.D. from Northwestern University specializing in U.S. history and American studies, as well as a master’s degree in theater. A former museum director, she is the author of two books on Chicago history and currently serves on the executive board of the Chicago Civil War Round Table. She speaks frequently on topics in history with particular expertise in the areas of Civil War history, women’s history, and Chicago history.

ZOOM INFORMATION WILL BE EMAILED CLOSER TO THE EVENT

**FOR THOSE WITHOUT COMPUTER ACCESS,
YOU MAY DIAL IN ON YOUR PHONE BY CALLING:**

(312) 626-6799



First Minnesota Monument at Gettysburg

2020-2021 SPEAKER SCHEDULE

May 18, 2021 – John Haymond:

“The Infamous Dakota War Trials of 1862: Revenge, Military Law, and the Judgment of History.”

THIS MONTH IN CIVIL WAR HISTORY – MARCH

- 3rd 1863 – Abraham Lincoln signs the Conscription Act creating the first National military draft in U.S. history.
- 4th 1861 – Abraham Lincoln is inaugurated 16th President of the United States of America.
- 7th - 8th 1862 – Battle of Pea Ridge, Arkansas
- 9th 1862 – USS Monitor and CSS Virginia battle at Hampton Roads, Virginia
- 16th 1865 – Battle of Averasboro, North Carolina
- 17th 1863 – Battle of Kelly’s Ford, Virginia
- 19th-21st 1865 – Battle of Bentonville, North Carolina
- 23rd 1862 – First Battle of Kernstown, Virginia. The opening battle of Gen. Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson’s 1862 Valley Campaign.
- 26th – 28th 1862 – Battle of Glorieta Pass, New Mexico Territory

CIVIL WAR BIRTHDAYS – MARCH

- 2nd 1828 – Gen. Jefferson C. Davis U.S.
- 6th 1831 – Gen. Phillip Sheridan U.S.
- 9th 1799 – Simon Cameron, U.S. Secretary of War
- 17th 1828 – Major Gen. Patrick Cleburne C.S.
- 22nd 1817 – Gen. Braxton Bragg C.S.
- 28th 1818 – Lt. Gen. Wade Hampton C.S.
- 29th 1829 – Brig. Gen. Robert Rodes

From the Dusty Collection #9

Two Broken Guns and Their Stories



The winning side on a Civil War battlefield controlled the ground and what it contained. Victorious soldiers buried the dead, burned animal remains, and processed vast quantities of detritus dropped or abandoned by both sides. Reports were prepared, useful materials recycled and unwanted items potentially useful to an enemy were destroyed. Back in the 1970s the National Park Service trained living history enactors to portray members of a Confederate quartermaster unit on the Chancellorsville Battlefield to tell this little-known story. More recently I marveled at the quantity of decaying

WWI military gear on the vast Verdun battlefield - each item smashed or pierced by the pickaxe of a French cleanup crew. And my father told me about a pond he saw outside Swebda Germany in 1945 where Germans had thrown hundreds of weapons; still there?

Here are a couple of Civil War weapons used in battle, abandoned, and then broken by northern soldiers but fortunately preserved to tell us their story.

A Partisan Ranger's Shotgun from Baton Rouge

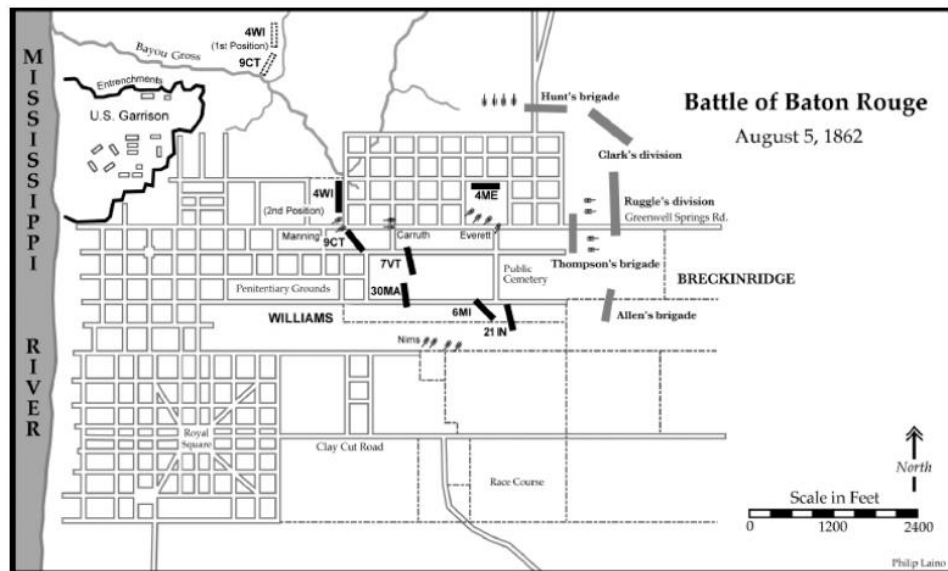
The partial remains of a double-barreled percussion shotgun would be of little interest to a collector, except for an interesting inscription carved into the stock 158 years ago: *Captured on the Battlefield of BATON ROUGE Aug. 5, 1862 P.J.S. 4th Wis.*



A son of the veteran gave the artifact to a fellow collector friend decades earlier. It took many years of my pleading before he finally passed it on to me. "P.J.S." were the initials of Paleman J. Smalley, a Wisconsin veteran who retired to Minnesota. Nineteen-year-old Smalley was clerking in his father's Manitowoc iron foundry when he enlisted in 24 May 1861 in Company C of the 4th Wisconsin Infantry. The 4th started out as infantry, then was issued horses to serve as fast moving mounted infantry, and finally made the full transition into the 4th Wisconsin Cavalry. While with the Wisconsin infantry unit Smalley authored a series of descriptive letters under the pseudonym "Camp" which were published in the Manitowoc Herald. After the war he went on to a long and successful career in law and journalism, as did at least one of his sons in St. Paul.

Private Smalley was discharged on 24 August 1863 to accept commission as First Lieutenant Smalley of the 15th U.S. Colored Troops. Stationed in New Orleans, Smalley married a young southern lady named Emma G. Winburn in New Orleans 20 March 1865. Their first children were born in Louisiana, and the rest back north in Wisconsin. Elements of the family ended up in Minnesota along with the broken shotgun that their father had treasured.

The 4th Wisconsin Infantry was part of the Federal garrison of captured Louisiana state capitol Baton Rouge in the summer of 1862. Confederate General John C. Breckenridge moved out of Vicksburg



with 4,000 troops to re-capture the city. With fewer than 3,000 effectives he launched furious attacks against Baton Rouge on the morning of 5 August 1862. Smalley's regiment had formed in line at 3 AM with Company C mustering only 22 men and no commissioned officers. They would spend most of the battle lying on the ground in reserve behind Magnolia Cemetery. A member of the 4th reported the devastation wrought on Confederate attackers against a well-protected Federal line.

Both sides withdrew after several hours of fighting with the Federal commander killed and Breckenridge himself seriously wounded. Shortly thereafter on the adjacent Mississippi River federal Navy gunboats engaged the rebel Ram Arkansas which was eventually disabled and scuttled. Confederates went on to occupy and fortify Port Hudson; Union troops abandoned Baton Rouge for New Orleans later that month. Although little remains of the long-urbanized battlefield today, the 4th Wisconsin's position behind Magnolia Cemetery can still be located.



Several accounts describe Union soldiers scouring the battlefield for souvenirs. The shotgun was forcibly broken in half, probably against a tree. Today it reminds us of how poorly armed many western theater Confederate soldiers were into the second year of the war. Part of Breckenridge's attacking force was a unit of Partisan Rangers, and it may well have been one of these irregular combatants who abandoned the short-range weapon. While devastating when loaded with buckshot and fired at close range, shotguns like this stood little chance against modern rifle muskets.

A Fayetteville Rifle from Gettysburg

By the Battle of Gettysburg Confederates in the eastern theater were generally better armed thanks to capture from the enemy, foreign import through the blockade or local manufacture. Before the war a northern armory at Springfield Massachusetts and a southern armory at Harpers Ferry Virginia turned out machine-made rifles and the longer rifle muskets for the army and state militias. With Virginia's secession Federal authorities burned the arsenal and 15,000 muskets. When Colonel Thomas J. Jackson occupied the site in April 1861 he salvaged what he could from the arsenal ruins, including 300 gun making machines and 57,000 tools and rifle stocks, and shipped them to Richmond. Rifle muskets were manufactured there throughout the war.



The salvaged manufacturing equipment for the shorter rifles was shipped to Fayetteville North Carolina where well-made long-range rifles were produced, each boldly stamped C.S.A. on the

lock and brass butt plate. The arsenal was destroyed by Kilpatrick's Cavalry in 1865 and was a soon to be developed historical park when I visited it from nearby Fort Bragg many years ago.



One of these rifles was in the hands of an unknown Confederate soldier as he crossed the Sherfey farm outside Gettysburg on July 2, 1863. Many different units fought in and around Sherfey's Peach Orchard so it is impossible to know which might have carried this Fayetteville rifle.



The rifle's owner was almost certainly killed on the Sherfey property. The rifle was forcibly destroyed, perhaps by smashing it against a tree after the battle or possibly even by the artillery fire that devastated South Carolina and Mississippi regiments fighting there. The iron tang from the barrel's breech plug was snapped off and remains in the stock, and the lock screws were pulled from the plate by the force of the blow. But the rifle's condition is much as it would have looked in 1863 thanks to it having been sealed into a display case in the 1880s and not removed for the next 90 years.

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CONTACT US:

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Can you contribute to a future newsletter? Writers are wanted to submit Civil War related articles to this newsletter.

Please submit your drafts to Bruce Cooper: earlofbruce@hotmail.com