



Fighting for General Lee: Confederate General Rufus Barringer and the North Carolina Cavalry Brigade

Sheridan Barringer

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Rufus Barringer fought on horseback through most of the Civil War with General Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, and rose to lead the North Carolina Cavalry Brigade in some of the war's most difficult combats. *Fighting for General Lee: Confederate General Rufus Barringer and the North Carolina Cavalry Brigade* details his entire history for the first time.

Barringer raised a company early in the war and fought with the 1st North Carolina Cavalry from the Virginia peninsula through Second Manassas, Sharpsburg, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville. He was severely wounded in the face at Brandy Station, during the opening hours of the Gettysburg Campaign. Because of his severe wound, he missed the remainder of the Gettysburg Campaign, returning to his regiment in mid-October, 1863. Within three months he was a lieutenant colonel, and by June 1864 a brigadier general in command of the North Carolina Brigade, which fought the rest of the war with Lee and was nearly destroyed during the retreat from Richmond in 1865. The captured Barringer met President Lincoln at City Point, endured prison, and after the war did everything he could to convince North Carolinians to accept Reconstruction and heal the wounds of war.

Fighting for General Lee by Sheridan R. Barringer draws upon a wide array of newspapers, diaries, letters, and previously unpublished family documents and photographs, as well as other firsthand accounts, to paint a broad, deep, and colorful portrait of an overlooked Southern cavalry commander. Despite its subject matter, the book is a balanced account that concludes Barringer was a dependable, hard-hitting warrior increasingly called upon to lead attacks against superior Union forces.

This remarkable new biography teaches us many things. It is easy today to paint all who wore Confederate gray with a broad brush because they fought on the side to preserve slavery. Here, however, was a man who wielded the sword and then promptly sheathed it to follow a bolder vision. Barringer proved to be a bold champion of the poor, the black, and the masses—a Southern gentleman and man decades ahead of his time that made a difference in the lives of North Carolinians.

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