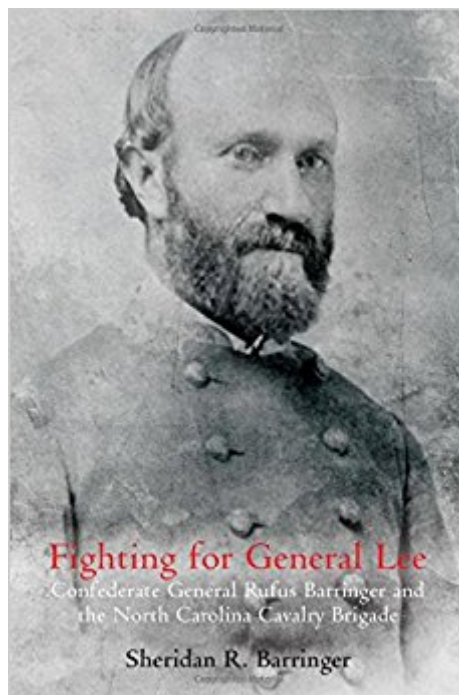




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# Fighting For General Lee: Confederate General Rufus Barringer And The North Carolina Cavalry Brigade



## Synopsis

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for General Lee* by Sheridan R. Barringer draws upon a wide array of newspapers, diaries, letters, and previously unpublished family documents and photographs, as well as other firsthand accounts, to paint a broad, deep, and colorful portrait of an overlooked Southern cavalry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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Book Review:"Fighting for General Lee: Confederate General Rufus Barringer and the North Carolina Cavalry's Brigade"Posted on April 13, 2016 by Ryan Quint - Emerging Civil War Book Reviews

Great Confederate cavalry commanders in the Civil War's Eastern Theater continue to evoke admiration amongst some and fascinating study. But for every Jeb Stuart or Wade Hampton there were numerous subordinate commanders who brought just as much to the table in terms of command ability and tenacity. One of those commanders, Brig. Gen. Rufus Barringer, now has a full-fledged biography devoted to his extraordinary life thanks to the efforts of one of his descendants, Sheridan R. Barringer. *Fighting for General Lee: Confederate General Rufus Barringer and the North Carolina Cavalry Brigade* (Savas Beatie, 2016) brings to the front the life of a man who is usually found in the background of military studies and monographs. Barringer's war experience with the North Carolina cavalry brigade is narrated from his rise to command from the early days of war as a company commander all the way to leading the brigade into action with the war's closing days. These actions included a grievous wound at Brandy Station in the war's largest cavalry battle and leading a desperate rearguard at the Battle of Namozine Church on April 3, 1865. The book's battle narratives are accompanied by maps excellently created by Hal Jespersen--a mainstay that now accompanies most Savas Beatie publications. Rufus Barringer's life story involved more than just the four years of warfare, however, and Sheridan Barringer does a commendable job of contextualizing his ancestor within Rufus's own time period. One of the more striking elements of this life was Barringer's support of Reconstruction politics, breaking ranks with such former rebels as Jubal Early. Further shattering the mold, "Rufus held progressive positions. ... including strong support for black suffrage" (246). Such political positions put Barringer in direct confrontation with men like his brother-in-law, D.H. Hill, who treated Barringer much like they did James Longstreet, another notable Confederate who joined ranks with Republicans after the war and were treated as pariahs because of it. Such political ostracizing was nothing new to Barringer's life, as even before the war one such political spat

almost led to his assassination--another story that Sheridan Barringer dramatically conveys. This work is a welcome addition to Civil War historiography, especially cavalry aficionados and those who wish to know what some Confederate officers did after their swords were beaten into plowshares.

• Sheridan R. Barringer, *Fighting for General Lee: Confederate General Rufus Barringer and the North Carolina Cavalry Brigade*. Savas Beatie, 2016. 304 Pages. Footnotes, Bibliography, Index, 10 Maps. Signed (and personalized, if you wish) copies of this book can be ordered for \$ 32.95 - free shipping - from the author, Sheridan Barringer, at: 23 Horse Pen Road, Newport News, VA 23602.

“General Rufus Barringer was a major figure in Confederate military history and enjoyed a colorful postwar career, but this is the first full biography of the soldier and the man. The undeserved historical neglect has been ably redressed in this volume, which relies to a large extent on primary research sources. It will be of interest to all Civil War enthusiasts, especially fans of Confederate cavalry operations and personalities (Edward G. Longacre, retired historian for the Department of Defense and author of numerous books, including *Lee’s Cavalrymen*, *Lincoln’s Cavalrymen*, and *The Cavalry at Gettysburg*) Comrades described him as “one of the most excellent officers who displayed great skill and valor in battle, and as one of the best organizers and disciplinarians in the service, but until now, General Rufus Barringer escaped the attention of serious biographers. It fell to Sheridan Butch Barringer, a cousin of the Tar Heel cavalryman, to pen this welcome and deeply researched biography. *Fighting for General Lee* ably fills a gap in the historiography of North Carolina’s contribution to the war that will surely stand as the definitive word on General Barringer.” (Chris Hartley, author of *Stuart’s Tarheels: James B. Gordon and His North Carolina Cavalry in the Civil War*) “Although General Rufus Barringer was a capable and accomplished commander of cavalry, for a variety of reasons he remains one of the least well-known of the Confederate mounted leaders. The very capable Barringer was involved in battles large and small. Mix in the fact that he was Stonewall Jackson’s brother-in-law of, and his story becomes even more interesting. The author, a relative of the general, spent many years documenting the general’s life and service to produce this well-written and deeply researched biography of his ancestor. It is a must-read for any student of Confederate cavalry operations in the Eastern Theater of the Civil War.” (Eric J. Wittenberg, historian and author of numerous books, including *One Continuous Fight: The Retreat from Gettysburg and the Pursuit of Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia, July 4-14, 1863*, and *Out Flew the Sabers: The Battle of Brandy Station, June 9, 1863*) *Fighting for General Lee* may be an obvious labor of love for Sheridan Barringer, but it is also

a serious biography that ably captures the life of a Tar Heel cavalry general whose account has long been neglected. Rufus Barringer fought at the head of a regiment, was wounded at Brandy Station, and ended the war as a brigadier general in Rooney Lee's division. Captured by Custer's cavalry near Namozine Church on April 3, 1865, Barringer became the first Confederate general taken prisoner during the final campaign of the war in Virginia. Sent back to City Point near Petersburg, the general's chance meeting with Abraham Lincoln exemplifies the healing the president would show toward the North's former enemies. (Chris Calkins, author and historian, Petersburg, Virginia, and author of The Petersburg Campaign)

May ??, 2016 -- Special Announcement: To be added shortly!

It's a lot more entertaining than I thought it would be. Great granddaddy Basil rode with Barringer in the 3rd NC Cav.

Very enjoyable reading. General Barringer is my husbands relative and he learned a lot about the general.

Good book!

It is not up to snuff with other civil war biographies.....

If there is one thing which I have loved while reviewing Civil War books, it is learning about people I had no idea about. Fighting for General Lee is one of those books. I had never heard of Rufus Barringer until I began to see the press for this release. I was intrigued about the man and instead of running to research him myself, I waited to read this book. What this book offers is what the Civil War world needs now: something different. After reading this book, I am more informed and interested about not only Rufus Barringer, but those around him who affected his life. The author, Sheridan R. Barringer is a descendent of Rufus Barringer and this is his first book. He graduated from Virginia Tech and was a mechanical engineer and project manager with NASA, with whom he worked forty years with. His interests in the Civil War are mainly with the Cavalry, and physics and cosmology. He has two other works coming soon, one on General Thomas Rosse and an edited memoir written by Rosser. He is also working on a biography of Colonel Thomas. T. Munford. As I

said in the introduction, I love reading books about people which I do not know about. Some of the stories seem so incredible that I am surprised they have not been written about before. This biography of Barringer has such moments. When Rufus Barringer entered the world of politics, I was not surprised to see that North Carolina was heavily divided, but I was interested to know that his progressive political nature helped to create some interesting policies during his tenure while serving the state before the war. As the narrative continues and we learn about his rise to cavalry officer, we hit some major points in the war and in his life. This was a man touched with personal grief and sorrows. While he had been wounded at the Battle of Brandy Station through the mouth, he would then have his wife, Rosalie taken from him. The author takes us through the rest of his Civil War career, including his time as a prisoner, and even gives us a little about the fights in reconstruction which Barringer witnessed. When he returned home, he found very little the same and the town was even part of a race riot. The author gives the readers a clear idea of the troubles of this time period and the environment which most Confederate soldiers returned to after the war. This biography is a treasure to the Civil War world. I highly recommend this book not only to those interested in the Cavalry, but those who are looking for a person not written about in the past. Sheridan R. Barringer has done the Civil War world a great favor by bringing this man to life in the pages. His narrative gives grace and dignity to this man and does justice to his memory. Any information anyone could have ever wanted about General Rufus Barringer can be found in these pages, and what is presented is excellent. Highly Recommended.

"Fighting for General Lee" brings history to life as author Sheridan Barringer introduces Rufus Barringer's grandfather and father in a way that provides historical and family context. The inclusion of personal data continues as Rufus Barringer's early life and careers unfold. We join his struggles with the events leading to the Civil War, its battles and its aftermath. Though I am not a Civil War buff, I found "Fighting for General Lee" both interesting and very readable. The tremendous amount of research evidenced in this book brings characters to life through personal letters and journals, as well as historical documents. And, thanks to the editors for putting the footnotes at page-bottom enabling me to keep up with references and/or additional information without losing track of the narrative. It's a real treat to find such a scholarly account in so good a read -- "Fighting for General Lee" is highly recommended.

I had the good fortune of meeting the author at a book signing and bought the book on a whim. I can say without reservation it was one of the best Civil War biographies I've read in a long time. There

couldn't have been many men on either side who experienced as much time under enemy fire as did Barringer and still survive the war. His war record was astonishing. I knew very little about the exploits of the North Carolina Cavalry Brigade, commanded by Barringer, until I read this book. The account of Barringer's meeting with Abraham Lincoln shortly after his capture in the last days of the war alone was worth the price of the book. I also found interesting his relationship with Stonewall Jackson as well as Jackson's revelations to Barringer on the former's "Black Flag" policy. Finally, the section on reconstruction was illuminating. He was truly a unique and heroic individual in many respects who aligned himself with radical Republicans after the war. Barringer's indiscretions as a young man up until his first marriage and his relationship with a slave all provided very interesting texture to this complex man. I highly recommend this book. It is a quick read. Civil War buffs will love it as will anyone who appreciates the story of an independent minded man grappling head on with the great issues of his day.

WOW! What a great read. I was overwhelmed by the exhaustive research. Take your time and read slowly, read the footnotes as you go along. Yes it takes a lot longer to do so, but it is well worth it. It is interesting to see all the family members, as well as others in the day. I was from the Virginia, and the Carolinas; so the maps put a smile on my face. "I know where that place is." The revealing personal history and family dynamics makes this a tell all book. To conclude this little review, This is not just a history book, it's a great book.

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