

FLASH ANNOUNCEMENT:

ATTENTION BATTALION!

THURSDAY, 10 August 2017 will be the next meeting of the Tennessee Valley Civil War Roundtable!



Elks Club at 5:30 pm. Come have supper with us and socialize before the meeting ---“fellowshipping”. If you like Southern food, the Elks have it!

Elks Club at 6:30 pm. Program

SUBJECT: “Guntersville Teenage Civil War Diarist: Catherine Fennell” by Whitney Snow

Catherine Margaret Fennell, born 5 December 1842, was the daughter of James and Matilda Fennell who lived near Fort Deposit close to Guntersville, Alabama. Her father was a skilled physician who also owned a large plantation and about seventeen slaves. Though one of ten children, Catherine was sent to Norton’s Boarding School in Washington, D.C. It is there, in 1859, that she began keeping a diary. The first “book,” as she called it, ranged from studies and trips to the White House, Senate, House, and Smithsonian to shopping, gossip, and teenage angst. In many ways, these entries show a child preoccupied with indulgences like bonnets and ice cream, but in others about ill friends and political observations, they depict an observant young woman who was wise beyond her years.

It is the second “book,” however, in which Catherine rapidly transitions from girl to woman as she faces the perplexity and terror brought by the Civil War. The war held many tragedies for Catherine as her home town was destroyed, not once, but twice by the Federals. The loss of her immediate family and home as a result of the war was a microcosm of what many Southerners suffered.

She also provides a detailed description of the war in Guntersville. When the war finally ended, a dejected Catherine wrote until 24 June 1865 and abruptly stopped. On 27 December 1866, she married Andrew Esslinger and later had six sons and one daughter. Sadly, on October 9, 1884, at just 42 years of age, Catherine died of pneumonia.

Come hear the rest of this interesting story by Whitney Snow at the 10 August meeting.