With over 80 in attendance at the TCGS meeting, which included over 20 Charbonneau residents, this might be the largest group assembled for a society meeting since its beginning in 1961. Our speaker invited by Art Kelly was Mike Inman from Spokane, an expert in Civil War history. He started his presentation wearing a broad-brimmed hat called the slouch hat. After removing his slouch hat and uniform jacket, he put on his bloody surgical apron, and wore a kepi hat. Mike asked if anyone has seen the Civil War movie ‘Gods and Generals.’ It covers the early years before the Battle of Gettysburg.

Does anyone know who started the nursing corps during the Civil War? It was Dorothea Dix. There was no pay given to volunteers who were required to be single, matronly looking, very plain without makeup, hair without curls, and clothes had to be very dark and worn high up the neck and down past the ankles. The women served in general hospitals in selected cities. It’s possible that since inline skates existed during the Civil War, the nursing corps used them in hospital corridors. At that time, the skates were called parlor shoes. But at a cost of $35, that was a lot of money then.

Joseph Hooker was a Civil War 2-star General, but supposedly also a womanizer. There is a legend that ‘hooker’ is a slang term for a prostitute derived from his surname. However, the term ‘hooker’ was actually used 20 years before he was a public figure.

Mary Ann Bickerdyke was a nurse and Union hospital administrator who had no fear of military officers and often told them exactly what she wanted from them and didn’t allow them to question her authority. When Major General Henry Halleck complained to Major General William Tecumseh Sherman about Bickerdyke, Sherman said he couldn’t do anything to help him because “She outranks me!” Apparently Bickerdyke carried a letter of authority written from President Lincoln.

Mary Edwards Walker was a surgeon and a prisoner of war, and to date is the only woman who ever received the Medal of Honor. She was also the only female in either the North or South to be a commissioned officer. She was a prisoner of war because she was captured as a spy for the North after her 1 year as an assistant surgeon in the Union Army.

Elizabeth Blackwell, born in England, was the first woman to obtain a medical degree in the U.S. Everyone wasn’t required to earn a medical degree, and there was no licensing to be a doctor in the 1860’s, but in order to practice medicine, they still had to pay $80 which was the average U.S. medical school tuition. The medical schools were two 9-month semesters with the second 9 months being a repeat of the first 9 months. All courses were lecture-style and required that a ticket be purchased for entrance; but the lectures could be sold out, and each lecture had to be attended twice to graduate.
The first major Civil War battle occurred at Antietam Maryland and was also the bloodiest single-day battle in American history with a combined total of dead, wounded, and missing around 24,000. Another 24,000 casualties were lost in the second bloodiest Battle of Shiloh Tennessee that occurred over a 2-day period.

Do you know Ulysses Grant's real name? It was Hiram Ulysses Grant, but he got the name Ulysses S Grant due to a mistake on his West Point application form. The middle initial ‘S’ allegedly refers to Simpson, his mother's maiden name. But having the name U S Grant gained Hiram the nickname “Sam”–as in Uncle Sam–among soldiers. From the time that Lee surrendered to Grant in Virginia at Appomattox, 2 more months of fighting continued in the South before the surrender was realized.

Diarrhea and dysentery caused more deaths than the actual war did. Each regiment consisted of 1,000 soldiers, but 800 of them might be ill at the same time, leaving only 200 for service. Most wounds during the Civil War were caused by gunshots. The Minie ball, which was the standard bullet of the war, was made of very soft lead. When it struck human tissue, it would create a very ragged wound and could splinter once inside. This led to infection which could be fatal. The large bullets could also shatter bones. Shell fragments from artillery were the next most common cause of wounds. Bayonet wounds were rare because soldiers weren’t apt to use them for close infighting. Even when wounds were treated with great care, infection could easily set in. Medical knowledge in the 1860’s did not understand about bacteria and germs and how they could be transmitted. They did not properly sterilize the tools and equipment, and bacteria easily spread from patient to patient. This lack of understanding of germs and bacteria led to the spread of disease that killed more soldiers than enemy bullets during the entire war.

The Battle of Gettysburg lasted from 1-3 July 1863, involved 150,000 soldiers and 50,000 casualties. The two armies (Union Major General George Meade’s Army of the Potomac and Confederate General Robert E Lee's Army of Northern Virginia) just happened to come together there where the civilian population of Gettysburg was only 2,000. Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address didn’t take place until 19 Nov 1863.

At Gettysburg, surgeons from both the North and the South treated the most severe cases first, with remaining soldiers suffering in the open air, waiting their turn on the surgeon's table. A large tent camp was set up in the field that remained at Gettysburg until Nov 1863 when the last remaining patients left. For some of the wounded, the horrors of the battlefield were only equaled by the horrors they experienced in a field hospital. Over 30,000 soldiers of both armies lay wounded in temporary field hospitals which were not real hospitals, but private homes and buildings. Every barn, church, warehouse, and outbuilding within 10 miles was filled with wounded soldiers. Still, not all of those men could be saved, and many died from the results of their wounds or infection. An average of 800 men per day were shipped by rail to hospitals in northern cities of Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington. A Gettysburg cemetery was established near the camp and burials took place every day.

For the most part, surgery was avoided on the central part of the body—the head, chest and abdomen. The surgeon would probe around an arm or leg wound with a finger to determine if the limb was shattered. If so, amputation was the only option. Because of deafness experienced by soldiers due to battlefield noises, the surgeon often had to scream questions at the soldier, asking for name, rank and unit information. After giving the soldier a sedative, a tourniquet was placed on the limb to apply pressure on
the arteries to stop or limit bleeding during amputation, and it was turned with a very large jail key. A flap surgery would result in skin being able to cover the end of the bone, so the surgeon used a knife to cut V-shapes in the skin, cut the muscles and section the bone. If the veins and arteries were successfully tied off, when the tourniquet was released, blood would not gush out. The bone was sanded down to round it before the skin was sewn around the wound. Silk was used for sewing wounds, but if silk wasn't available, boiled horse hair was used. Amazingly, boiling the horse hair resulted in better healing compared to the silk that hadn't been sterilized. If bandages weren't available, then corn husks were sometimes used. An 18-year-old in the audience volunteered to be the ‘wounded soldier’ and Mike demonstrated the Civil War procedure used for an arm amputation, which usually took a surgeon about 15 minutes. Mike gave the young volunteer a real lead bullet to keep as a souvenir from the Civil War.

Contrary to popular myth, most amputees did not experience surgery without anesthetic. Doses of chloroform or ether were given, and opiates, morphine powder and quinine were available afterward. If they survived their wounds and surgery, there was still a high risk of infection. Sterilizing equipment wasn't known. Due to water shortages, surgeons often went days without washing their hands or instruments, passing germs from one patient to another. They thought pus was a benefit in healing, so if a soldier’s wounds were not generating pus, they would transfer some from another patient. Despite the odds, nearly 75% of the amputees survived. Amazingly, meticulous notes were kept of all procedures which were often recorded by the least capable ‘wanna-be’ physician.

There were 400 women who served in the Civil War who snuck in, pretending to be men.

During the Battle of Perryville, Kentucky, in Oct 1862, after the area had experienced a drought for months, both sides were desperate to get access to fresh water. Medical units performed procedures and surgeries for 72 hours straight, without water for drinking or for cleaning patients, instruments or supplies.

During the Civil War, large cannons called Dahlgren guns were fixed in position and could not be raised or lowered when fired, so were only effective in close range. But the howitzer was a cannon that could be raised or lowered to more effectively hit a distant target. Unlike some battlefields like Gettysburg, Shiloh and Antietam which are flat, Vicksburg in Mississippi is very hilly. In Vicksburg, one of the Dahlgren cannons was buried in the hills to keep the Union from getting access to it. Decades later a woman was digging in her flower bed and hit the buried cannon. After much negotiating with a buyer who wanted the cannon, the family finally sold the cannon to the buyer who agreed to purchase the entire house.

The St. Andrew’s Cross is on the Confederate battle flag. The Confederate battle flag is square, not rectangle. Despite its military surrender, the South has never surrendered its spirit.

National flags are rectangle. This next image is the Confederate flag known as the ‘stars and bars.’ But confusion sometimes arose when soldiers couldn’t
differentiate which flag was whipping in the wind on land or on ships at sea. Another flag was then designed but was later criticized for being "too white" and could be mistaken for a truce flag. The battle flag with the St. Andrews cross is often mistakenly referred to as the 'stars and bars.'

The Naval jack or ensign, commonly referred to as a 'Rebel flag,' carried by ground troops is a rectangle.

The Union flag from 1861-1863.

Have any of you read the book Cold Mountain? It's about an ancestor of Mike's named William Pinkney Inman who was the youngest brother of Mike's great great grandfather, James Anderson Inman. W P Inman in the Cold Mountain story fought with Mike's other great great grandfather, David Nelson Franklin, who served with Company F of the 25th North Carolina Infantry Regiment. In the book, the soldier supposedly deserted after being wounded at the Battle of Malvern Hill in Virginia; and he tried to make it home to his sweetheart in Cold Mountain, North Carolina. Many liberties were taken writing the book which made up different dates, battles and facts.

TCGS member Maureen Reichmuth asked what happened to injured horses. The ferriers who shod the horses also had to have veterinary skills, so they were the ones who cared for the horses and determined if their wounds were life threatening.

There was only one civilian killed in Gettysburg. Her name was Ginnie Wade, and she was killed on the third day of battle by a stray bullet. She was probably engaged to childhood friend, Johnston Hastings 'Jack' Skelly, a Corporal in the 87th Pennsylvania Regiment, who had been wounded 2 weeks earlier in the Battle of Winchester. He died from his injuries on 12 Jul 1863, unaware that Ginnie Wade had died days earlier. Ginnie Wade, Jack Skelly, and Wesley Culp were childhood friends all living in Gettysburg. Wesley was killed in the battle of Gettysburg as a Confederate soldier on Culp's Hill owned by his family, and he was the only one in his unit to die there on that hill. The three young people died as a result of war and not knowing the fate of each other. Just one more tragic story of the Civil War.

The largest slave owners were not white people, but black. According to Mike, one of the largest black slave owners was also very mean. A question was asked from the audience who the largest black slave owner was, so Mike said he would look it up and email the information to Art Kelly. [Research from the Internet: The majority of slaveholders, white and black, owned only one to five slaves. However, some freed blacks each owned 84 even in 1830. At that time, 25% of the free black slave masters in South Carolina owned 10 or more slaves; eight owning 30 or more. By 1860 in New Orleans, over 3,000 (28%) of free blacks owned slaves. The statistics show that, when free, blacks disproportionately became slave masters. In 1860 there were at least six blacks in Louisiana who owned 65 or more slaves The largest number, 152 slaves, were owned by a black widow and her son, P C Richards, who owned a large sugar cane plantation. Another black slave magnate in Louisiana, with over 100 slaves, was Antoine Dubuclet, a
sugar planter. In 1860 Charleston, South Carolina, 125 free blacks owned slaves; six of them owning 10 or more. In North Carolina, 69 free blacks were slave owners. By 1860, a black man named April who had been born in slavery and freed at age 26, 3 years later took the name of his white slave owner, William Ellison, and became South Carolina's largest slave master. He demonstrated that he had no problem perpetuating an institution from which he had been released. His wealth was 15 times greater than that of the state's average for whites. And Ellison owned more slaves than 99% of the South's slaveholders. Although a successful businessman and cotton farmer, Ellison’s major source of income derived from being a slave breeder. Ellison had a reputation as a harsh master. His slaves were said to be the district’s worst fed and clothed. On his property was located a small, windowless building where he would chain his problem slaves. After his death, his will stated that his estate should pass into the joint hands of his free daughter and his two surviving sons. He bequeathed only $500 to the slave daughter he had sold.]

Arizona was the state located farthest west where Civil War battles occurred.

The gravestone of Dred Scott (1799-1858) is often covered in pennies. He was the black man at the center of the 1857 U.S. Supreme Court case that ruled that as an African American, he was not a U.S. citizen and had no right to sue for his freedom. This decision voided the 1820 Missouri Compromise Act that restricted slavery in certain territories and contributed to the strife that led to the Civil War. Even though Scott died before the Civil War, the Lincoln pennies are a tribute to the President who signed the Emancipation Proclamation that freed the slaves.

Mike Inman explained about the pieces in his collection of surgical instruments. In addition to scalpels, knives and other sharp devices, he had an hour-glass-shaped metal tool, open on both ends, that was used to listen for heartbeats. Since it was only effective if all was silent in the surrounding area, the surgeon probably just put his ear to the chest to listen or his finger to feel a pulse in an artery. Mike also has a trepanning tool that was used to drill a hole in the skull to relieve pressure. There was a tooth extractor that was used after the surgeon sliced a cut inside the cheek next to the gum, anchored the extractor and popped off the tooth. Unfortunately, when the tooth shattered, forceps had to be used to dig out the rest. He also brought a Civil War crutch that was made without nails. When massive numbers of soldiers were wounded, the surgeons would rely on local butcher shops to provide additional sharp saws. Mike concluded by showing several very heavy Civil War weapons including: .69 caliber musket, .58 caliber rifle, Henry 16-shooter, which was a precursor to the Winchester; 1866 Winchester called the ‘yellow boy’ (1866 was the first year it was produced); 1860 Colt .44 caliber revolver; a small Derringer like the one that was used to kill President Lincoln; and a .42 caliber LaMat 10-shot revolver with a 20-gauge shotgun—that’s a large handgun!

[Thanks to Susan Davis Faulkner for sharing photos that she took at the TCGS Civil War presentation.]