



The Preacher's Tale: The Civil War Journal of Rev. Francis Springer, Chaplain, U.S. Army of the Frontier (The Civil War in the West)

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In the fall of 1861, fifty-one-year-old Rev. Francis Springer enlisted in the Union army. The following spring, Springer, a friend and one-time neighbor to Abraham Lincoln, rode away with the 10th Illinois Cavalry. A witness to the Battle of Prairie Grove (December 1862), Springer was later named post chaplain at Fort Smith, where, in addition to preaching and ministering to the troops, he was placed in charge of refugees—widows, orphans, and contrabands—the displaced victims of virulent guerrilla warfare in Northwest Arkansas. Springer also wrote articles and columns in the Fort Smith New Era under the pseudonym, "Thrifton." Springer's honest appraisals of life in the Army of the Frontier make for fascinating reading, and his unique perspective as moralist, educator, and journalist provide new insight into the Civil War and how it was fought in the West. The book includes several never-before published photographs and appendixes which feature accounts of six military executions that Springer participated in as a Union Army chaplain, the hitherto unpublished last letters home of two rebel soldiers condemned and executed at Fort Smith, as well as a eulogy for Abraham Lincoln.

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