

## Discussion Questions for "Ghost Riders" by Sharyn McCrumb

(Questions compiled by Sharyn McCrumb)

1. Zeb Vance once called the Civil War "a rich man's war, and a poor man's fight." How does the choice of narrators illustrate that?
2. Zeb Vance and Keith Blalock were both born poor in the North Carolina mountains. What factors put them on opposite sides of the war?
3. Compare the relationship of Zeb and Harriett Vance to that of Keith and Malinda Blalock.
4. Counting crows refers to an old British superstition: "One for sorrow, two for mirth, three for a funeral, four for a birth." Can you find instances of counting crows in the book making the prediction come true?
5. Consider the story of the Bridge-Burners in east Tennessee and the men of Shelton Laurel who stole the salt and what was done to them in retaliation. How would you feel about the Confederate neighbors, if you were the child or grandchild of one of the bridge-burners or a resident of Shelton Laurel? What would you do about it?
6. How is Malinda Blalock's view of war different from that of her husband and/or of other male bushwhackers that she rode with?
7. In what way is Tom Gentry "qualified" to join the "ghost riders" ?
8. The present day war in the mountains is not the one that the re-enactors are staging, but the one between the mountain people and the new people. In what ways does this conflict resemble the original divisions of the Civil War in the mountains?
9. How does Maggie Raincrow's story about the moment-that-lasts-forever relate to the ghost riders?
10. Compare pictures of quilt patterns and pictures of Celtic rock carving designs. Discuss Nora Bonesteel's statement that quilt patterns are remnants of "old magic."