



NEWS

Issue 19: November 2021

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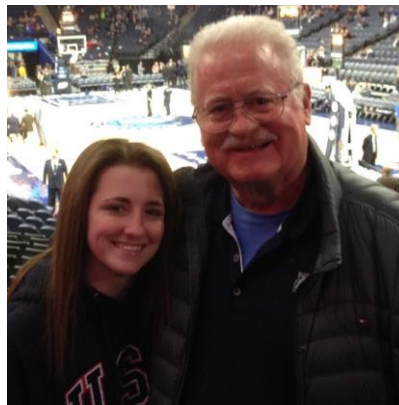
NEWS Editor: Bruce Cooper



First Minnesota Monument at Gettysburg

MEMBER PROFILE OF THE MONTH

ROD MYERS



I've been a member of the TCCWRT for about 12 years. I've really enjoyed being a part of this group. Great programs, interesting topics, and interesting people all make this something that I really look forward to on my calendar.

As a child I was told that my great-grandfather had been in the civil war. I was a kid, big deal, what's that to me? As an adult, really a retired adult, I was feeling a little differently about "old people." I attended a program at our church where members sat at different tables in a large room to discuss their hobbies and things they enjoyed in their free time. There sat Mark Pridgeon. I already knew Mark and I knew he was really the go-to guy if you had any history question, but I didn't know about his interest in and involvement in studying the civil war. Mark invited me to the next TCCWRT meeting at Ft Snelling Officer's Club. I was IN after just one meeting! Shortly after that, another church member, Larry Pearson, told me about classes at St Thomas on the 5 years of the civil war era that were going to be held by a retired professor that Larry considered to be quite an authority on the subject, Joe Fitzharris. It was GREAT series of lectures! If Dr. Joe

ever does another program like it, I'll be in the front row.

Thank you Mark & Larry.

I find the most interesting subject of the era to be the motivations of the people on each side of the issues and how they became so passionate about them. Studying this helps to better understand (if I do) the issues that appear to divide us today. How does anything become so important to you that you are willing to slay your fellow countryman? I guess because he is so clearly wrong and you are so clearly right! Yes, that must it. So, if he's wrong and I'm right, then he has to die, right? Clear as mud. I also find it interesting in trying to understand how individual soldiers got so motivated to participate in a war that was so distant from their lives. But hasn't that always been the case in nearly every war?



My great grandfather was quite an active participant in the civil war. Valentine Myers was born in Germany 1833. He immigrated to USA 1858 and settled in Minier IL. He enlisted 9 Aug, 1862, fought in Co H, 115 ILL Voluntary Infantry and mustered Out 1 July 1865 Springfield IL.

He was captured 20 Sept 1863 and interned for 17 months at 5 Confederate prisons, including 15 months at Andersonville GA. There is very interesting reading concerning Andersonville Prison and even a movie. Small place, too many prisoners, lousy conditions, virtually no shelter, insufficient food, primitive sanitary situation (water supply also served as sewer, or vice versa). Numerous escapes attempts (with nowhere to go) led to many an early death.

His final three months of captivity were at the Florence Stockade, Florence SC. Grampa was transferred From Andersonville early Dec 1864 as General Sherman was making his March to The Sea through GA.

My brother and I recently visited Andersonville Prison. What a sad place, but it also has a rather good POW Museum that shows how US inmates were treated in different conflicts.

At lunchtime we went into Andersonville to a small café. To our surprise, there in the middle of town was a monument to Henry Wirz, Commandant of Andersonville Prison. We were astonished. How could there be such a thing honoring such a terrible man and a terrible place? We wondered what great grandpa Myers would think of such a monument. We agreed, he would

piss on it.



I am retired from the US Army, 25 years of service, 10 active 15 National Guard, CW4 Rotary Wing Aviator (helicopter pilot). As my grandchildren would say, “big deal, everything you flew Grandpa is in the museum!”

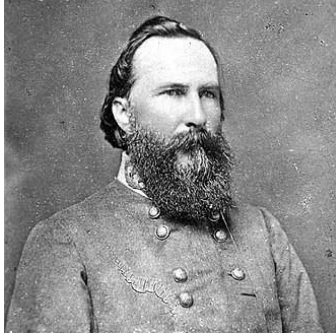
STEVEN SCHIER’S CIVIL WAR TRIVIA QUESTION OF THE MONTH:

What Civil War general was sent to Minnesota after a major defeat in the war's eastern theater?

(See the last page for the answer)

OUR NOVEMBER MEETING – 11/16/2021 (Please Note Change in Speaker)

“James Longstreet in Chattanooga and Knoxville” - COL (ret) Ed Lowe



Following the Battle of Gettysburg, James Longstreet's First Corps of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia was sent to support Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee. As the Army of the Cumberland and William Rosecrans withdrew to Chattanooga after their defeat at Chickamauga (September 1863), Bragg's army setup a partial siege of Chattanooga. A tumultuous command climate soon arose within Bragg's army. Upon the arrival of General Grant and the Confederates losing its stranglehold on Union supply efforts, Bragg sent Longstreet to handle Ambrose Burnside and the Union forces in and around Knoxville, TN to the north. A stifled attack on Fort Sanders in Knoxville and the threat of Union reinforcements obliged Longstreet to withdraw deeper into East Tennessee. During this period, Longstreet had to handle his own command issues with some of his more senior commanders. Eventually, Longstreet's First Corps reunited with Lee just in time for the Battle of the Wilderness in early May, 1863.



COL (ret) Ed Lowe served 26 years on Active Duty with deployments to Operation Desert Shield/Storm, Haiti, Afghanistan (2002 & 2011), and Iraq (2008). He attended North Georgia College and has graduate degrees from California State University, U.S. Army War College, U.S. Command & General Staff College, and Webster's University. He is currently an adjunct professor for the University of Maryland/Global Campus where he teaches humanities and government. He is awaiting publication of his first book with Savas Beatie that covers Longstreet's First Corps from Gettysburg to East Tennessee. He currently serves as President of the Chickamauga & Chattanooga Civil War Round Table, reconstituted in September of 2020.

THIS MONTH IN CIVIL WAR HISTORY – NOVEMBER

- 2nd 1861 – President Lincoln removes General John C. Fremont from command of the Department of the West
- 6th 1860 – Abraham Lincoln is elected President.
- 7th 1863 – Battle of Rappahannock Station, Virginia
- 10th 1865 – Swiss born Henry Wirz, Commandant of Andersonville prison camp, is executed for war crimes.
- 18th 1860 – The Georgia legislature appropriates one million dollars to arm the state in preparation for war.
- 24th 1863 – Battle of Lookout Mountain, Tennessee

- 25th 1863 – Battle of Missionary Ridge, Tennessee
- 29th 1864 – Battle of Spring Hill, Tennessee
- 30th 1864 – Battle of Franklin, Tennessee

CIVIL WAR BIRTHDAYS – NOVEMBER

- 3rd 1798 – James Murray Mason Confederate diplomat involved in the Trent Affair.
- 5th 1818 – Major General Benjamin Butler U.S.A
- 5th 1832 – Brevet Major General William W. Averell U.S.A.
- 9th 1825 – Lt. General A.P. Hill C.S.A.
- 19th 1831 – Brig. General James A. Garfield U.S.A
- 19th 1835 – Major General Fitzhugh Lee C.S.A.

2021-2022 SPEAKER SCHEDULE

December 21, 2021

“How Christmas Won the War” George Romano

January 18, 2022

“Black Confederates” Larry Babits (Please Note Change in Speaker Schedule)

February 15, 2022

“U.S. Grant in Missouri: The Re-education of a Civil War Legend” Dave Page

March 15, 2022

“Competing Memories of the Civil War” Caroline Janney

May 17, 2022

“Trust in God and Fear in Nothing: Confederate General Lewis Armistead” Wayne Motts

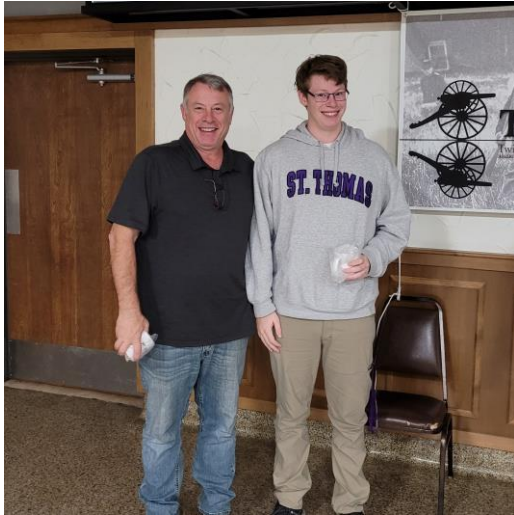
TCCWRT MEMBERS: NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday to all our members with November Birthdays!

11/2	Bill Heise
11/3	Gerry Briggs
11/16	Brian Glass
11/29	Kirk Sikorowski

OUR NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome our new members.



Erich and Owen Mische



Jay Swanson with President Bob Svacina

Other new members (not pictured):

Timothy Williams of North Carolina
Chad Cox of Iowa
Shea McAdargh
David Murphy
Craig Sharpe

FROM THE PRESIDENT

When we get together on Tuesday nights, I can't help but think of Bruce Springsteen's words from "**Thunder Road**"

*So you're scared and you're thinking that maybe we ain't that young anymore
Show a little faith, there's magic in the night*

The words are personal to me. I've hit 74 and over a third of my high school class are gone. On Tuesday night instead of laboring under today's issues that didn't exist 50 years ago we are together learning of an extraordinary time in our country's history. Few outside of our colleagues realize how critical the events were that led to President Abraham Lincoln re-election. Without his re-election how would two bickering North and South nations have done

in WWI and WWII?

Collectively we are probably as knowledgeable as some of our speakers. Many of you have been to historical Civil War sites and I know from books that I've bought from other members, there are highlighted and dogeared pages that were important to you.

My interest has been the Army of The My

My interest has been the Army of The Tennessee, specifically the XVI Corps under General Grenville Dodge. I will do a little show-and-tell at our November meeting's social hour. Let's see how that goes. Maybe someone else has pictures, stories, or memorabilia of a battlefield, a Civil War leader, or weaponry who could do a December show-and-tell.

We are coming back from the Covid year. While other Round Tables may never recover, our membership numbers are holding steady. At our September meeting, hearing of *Milliken's Bend*, we had 68 fellow members present. At our October meeting, hearing of *Bleeding Kansas*, we had 72 fellow members present. That is a positive direction. Please come when you can and participate together.

We can use your help. The more participation we have the better our Round Table will be. Here are the committees and the chairs:

Technical Committee – Bob Svacina
Membership Committee – Carol VanOrnum
Marketing Committee – Ken Flies
Programs Development Committee – Brett Johnson
Advisory Council - Darryl Sannes

In addition, much of the Symposium that is for all nine Minnesota round tables is staffed by our Round Table and led by Stephen Osman.

Thanks,
-Bob

HELP WANTED!

TECH HELP NEEDED

No experience necessary.

Help needed for A/V setup, recording, and transferring to YouTube. Inquiries to President Bob Svacina, bob_svacina@msn.com.

Pay: One official Twin Cities Civil War Round Table coffee mug

Were Women in the Ranks at Civil War Fort Snelling?



Hundreds if not thousands of women disguised themselves as men to join the Union and Confederate Armies. A good friend of this author was a near neighbor of one such soldier, Albert (Jennie) Hodges, shown here, who served in an Illinois Regiment. He told me she was a bitter old woman who once threatened to shoot his little dog. But did any of those disguised soldiers pass through Fort Snelling?

Recruiting in Minnesota, as elsewhere, was less than selective. Only free white males between the age of eighteen and thirty-five were allowed. Minors under the age of twenty-one needed written permission of parent or guardian. In practice parental permission was rarely obtained. In some cases soldiers who had lied about their age at enlistment were not allowed to leave the army if they had turned eighteen prior to raising the legal issue.¹

Around 15% of the Union Army was age eighteen or younger. Andrew Jackson Fisk had a typical experience at Fort Snelling. “At the age of 14 years and nine months, on the 13th day of October 1863, I left school in St. Paul and enlisted in a squad for assignment to the 2d Minn. Cav... At the time I enlisted I was tall for my age, and weighed 175 pounds. Of course my appearance was youthful. Old Major Nelson, of the regular army, mustered us in. When he came to me he stopped, put his hand on my shoulder and tried to push me, but did not succeed. “Young man,” said he, “how old are you? “Eighteen,” I replied. “I think you are a liar,” said he, “but you are a good chunk of a boy and I’ll pass you.” And so I became a soldier in Uncle Sam’s army.”²

Major Anderson Nelson was a familiar figure to the soldiers at Fort Snelling. The respected career soldier mistook more than just the age of one recruit and more surprisingly medical examiner Doctor Thomas Reed Potts³ made the same mistake! Among the new soldiers of the Minnesota Mounted Rangers was a boyish looking but very efficient squad leader distinguished by proper military bearing. The colonel commented on the recruit’s youth and insisted that he procure written consent from his parents.

The same week “the highly esteemed daughter of a well-to-do and respectable farmer in an interior county of this State, suddenly disappeared, and no traces could be found of her. From remarks that she had made to her mother, wishing she was a man, so that she could volunteer and hunt down the Indians, &c., a suspicion was aroused that she might have undertaken to carry her wishes into effect. The father proceeded to Fort Snelling, where, in our young hero, he found his daughter.” The colonel refused to release his efficient young soldier without a court order. As

¹ The Mankato Weekly Record, March 28, 1863. James D. Tennant of the Tenth Minnesota enlisted without parental permission at age seventeen, but was not allowed out of the army because he was eighteen when the case was brought before a judge.

² Diary of Andrew Jackson Fisk, James Liberty Fisk and Family Papers, 1856-1968, Minnesota Historical Society.

³ Doctor Potts reportedly had a fondness for alcohol which might help explain his lapses.

“a last resort, the young man was properly introduced to the Colonel as the daughter of the old gentleman, and she was then promptly discharged. The Colonel has, however, kept their secret, and to this day the soldiers forming her squad do not know the facts about their young Orderly.”⁴

The soldier in question was very likely nineteen-year-old Mary McDonald from Sibley County who had assumed the name of her younger brother Abraham. Part of a squad recruited by Captain Eugene Wilson of the Rangers; McDonald is listed as having been discharged by a writ of habeas corpus on October 25, 1862. McDonald was not the only young woman to spend time at Fort Snelling as a recruit, disguised as a man. A Terrence Thompson who enlisted in the First Company, Minnesota Sharpshooters and later Company F of the Sixth Minnesota Infantry and the Third Battery Light Artillery is listed in the 1860 Minnesota Census as a female. And an intriguing Civil War photograph, shown here, is identified on the reverse as “Catherine Lewis, 2nd Minn. Vols.”⁵

Francis Clayton was the best-known Minnesota female soldier, primarily because she posed for a pair of widely published photographs. One shows her in the uniform of a cavalryman and the other in a fashionable woman’s dress. Clayton returned to St. Paul as a veteran of two years service in the Missouri Cavalry, which



prompted a local newspaper to report that she “wore a man’s shirt with turn down collar and breast-pin, and seemed very much to enjoy the flavor of a fragrant Havana, which she was smoking with a perfect nonchalance. We met a young man, - a soldier, who professed to know her well – had often played “poker” in the regiment with her, but neither he nor any of his comrades had the slightest knowledge of her sex. She was known in the regiment by the soubriquet of “Jack Williams,” and is described as having been a capital swordsman and an accomplished horseman. She had her regular discharge papers with her, thus proving the truth of her story, and left on the afternoon train for St. Anthony, near which place she has friends residing.”⁶



We will never know how many females passed as underage young soldiers, but there are enough historical clues to prove that some disguised Minnesota women were among those thousands of young Civil War patriots.

⁴ The Saint Paul Daily Press, December 20, 1862.

⁵ All of these stories remain shrouded in mystery. The author is indebted to Patricia Bauer, Michael Gray, Roger Norland, Wayne Jorgenson and David Grabitske for sharing their research.

⁶ The Saint Paul Pioneer, May 26, 1863

STEVEN SCHIER'S TRIVIA QUESTION ANSWER:

John Pope

CONTACT US:

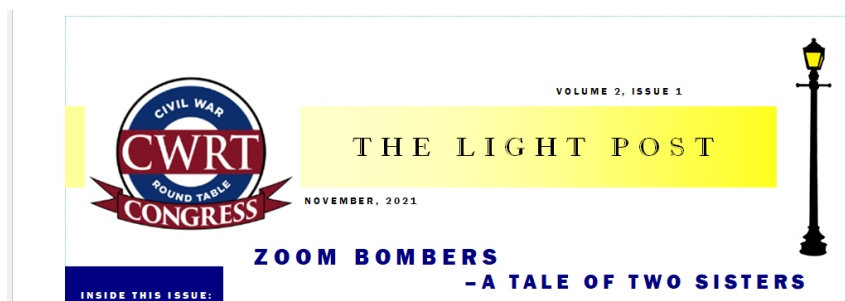
Twin Cities Civil War Round Table

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<https://tccwrt.com/>

Can you contribute to a future newsletter? Writers are wanted to submit Civil War related articles to this newsletter.

Please submit your drafts to Bruce Cooper: earlofbuce@hotmail.com



For the November 2021 edition of *The Light Post*, the CWRT Congress's newsletter, please press [here](#).