



NEWS

Issue 67: November 2025

DON'T MISS THIS EXCITING PROGRAM FROM THE WCHS ON NOVEMBER 5TH



Travel 10,600 miles with the Seventh Minnesota

The Washington County Historical Society (WCHS) is excited to announce a program at the Washington County Heritage Center about the Seventh Minnesota Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War on Wednesday, November 5 at 7:00 PM.

The presentation will give a brief history of speaker Eric Linner's great-grandfather Sergeant James Madison Canfield, with a primary focus on the 10,600 mile journey the Minnesota Seventh traveled starting with the 1862 Dakota War and ending with the Battle of Spanish Fort, Alabama in 1865. The unit faced conflicts in Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Alabama and participated in the Battle of Tupelo and the Battle of Nashville.

Linner's family has a long history of Army veterans, including himself, two brothers, his father, grandfather, great-grandfather and great-great grandfather. His inspiration to research his great-great-grandfather's journey with the Minnesota Seventh in the Civil War-West started 50 years ago when his grandmother piqued his interest in family history.

This event is free to the public and no reservations are required. Event attendees may attend either in-person at the Washington County Heritage Center or virtually on YouTube. To access

the YouTube link, please visit wchsmn.org/event/civilwar. The Washington County Heritage Center is located at 1862 Greeley Street S., Stillwater, MN 55082.

For questions, contact the Washington County Historical Society at information@wchsmn.org or 651-439-2298.

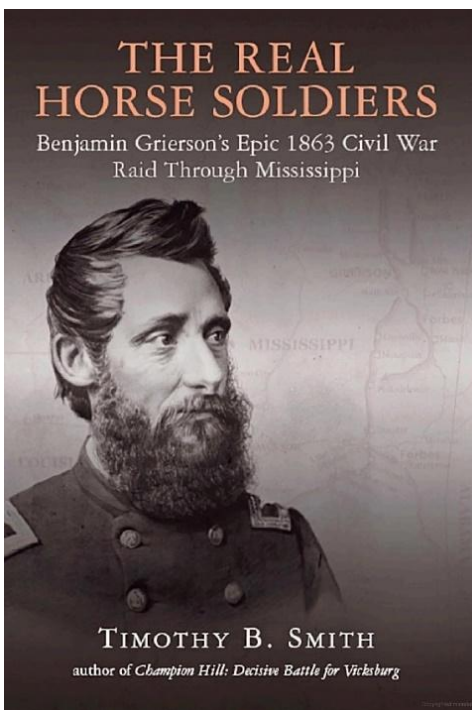
STEVEN SCHIER'S CIVIL WAR TRIVIA QUESTION OF THE MONTH

More soldiers died in the civil war than what two other wars combined?

(See the last page for the answer)

OUR NOVEMBER MEETING – NOVEMBER 18, 2025

“The Real Horse Soldiers” – Tim Smith



Benjamin Grierson's Union cavalry thrust through Mississippi is one of the most well-known operations of the Civil War. There were other simultaneous operations to distract Confederate attention from the real threat to Vicksburg posed by U. S. Grant's Army of the Tennessee, but Grierson's operation, mainly conducted with two Illinois cavalry regiments, has become the most famous, and for good reason. For 16 days (April 17 to May 2) Grierson led Confederate pursuers on a high-stakes chase through the entire state of Mississippi, entering the northern border with Tennessee and exiting its southern border with Louisiana. The daily rides were long, the rest stops short, and the tension high. Ironically, the man who led the raid was a former music teacher who some say disliked horses. Throughout, he displayed outstanding leadership and cunning, destroyed railroad tracks, burned trestles and bridges, freed slaves, and created as much damage and chaos as

possible. Grierson's Raid broke a vital Confederate rail line at Newton Station that supplied Vicksburg and, perhaps most importantly, consumed the attention of the Confederate high command. While Confederate Lt. Gen. John Pemberton at Vicksburg and other Southern leaders looked in the wrong directions, Grant moved his entire Army of the Tennessee across the Mississippi River below Vicksburg, spelling the doom of that city, the Confederate chances of

holding the river, and perhaps the Confederacy itself. Novelists have attempted to capture the large-than-life cavalry raid in the popular imagination, and Hollywood reproduced the daring cavalry action in *The Horse Soldiers*, a 1959 major motion picture starring John Wayne and William Holden. Although the film replicates the raid's drama and high-stakes gamble, cinematic license chipped away at its accuracy. Based upon years of research and presented in gripping, fast-paced prose, Timothy B. Smith's *The Real Horse Soldiers: Benjamin Grierson's Epic 1863 Civil War Raid through Mississippi* captures the high drama and tension of the 1863 horse soldiers in a modern, comprehensive, academic study. This talk, based on the book, will bring you along for the ride.



Timothy B. Smith (Ph.D. Mississippi State University, 2001) is a veteran of the National Park Service and currently teaches history at the University of Tennessee at Martin. In addition to numerous articles and essays, he is the author, editor, or co-editor of more than twenty books with several university and commercial presses. His books have won numerous book awards, his trilogy on the American Civil War's Tennessee River campaign (Forts Henry and Donelson, Shiloh, and Corinth) winning a total of nine book awards. He has recently finished a five-volume study of the Vicksburg Campaign for the University Press of Kansas and a new study of Albert Sidney Johnston for LSU Press. He lives with his wife Kelly and daughters Mary Kate and Leah Grace in Adamsville, Tennessee.

OUR 2025 – 2026 PROGRAM SCHEDULE

December 16, 2025	“Sherman’s Woodticks: The Remarkable Travels of the Eight Minnesota Infantry During the Civil War” – Paul Hodnefield
January 20, 2026	“Parole of Prisoners of War in the Civil War” – Stefan Lund
February 17, 2026	“Had it Been a Defeat Instead, the Nation Could have Scarcely Lived Over” Battle of Stones River 1862-1863 – Chris Kolakowski
March 17, 2026	“The Union in Peril: Lincoln and the Secession Crisis 1960 – April 1861” – Ian Iverson
April 25, 2026	Annual Symposium
May 19, 2026	“Disunion in the Confederacy or What If Lincoln Lived?” – Brian Jordan

Two Stories in Bad Taste **From the Dusty Collection #59**

Stephen E. Osman

Enough of the relic stories. Here are two unusual reports gleaned from Minnesota Civil War newspapers that cast a *somewhat different* light on the noble defenders of the Union. But after all, they weren't really that different from some of our fellow citizens today, were they?

Mankato was garrisoned by the Seventh Minnesota Infantry under command of Colonel, later governor, Stephen Miller during the winter of 1862-63. It was not bad duty. Good, clean entertainment and food was available for the young men quartered in relatively warm vacant buildings. But boys will be boys. The local newspaper had long complained about a "house of ill repute" outside town, and insults to citizens made by returning, inebriated soldiers. Calls to action went unheeded until April 1863 when the establishment was the scene of a Civil War skirmish long (and thankfully) forgotten...until now:



BIG TIME – On last Thursday evening, “Old Haas,” keeper of a house of “easy virtue,” gave the soldiers a benefit in the shape of a dance. Some of the officers, suspecting all was not right, informed the Col. Commanding of their fears, whereupon he ordered a roll call at 10 o’clock p.m., by which means the Colonel ascertained that about 30 were absent,-- He then ordered a provost guard out, and commanded them to repair immediately to Haas’. When they arrived within a short distance of the house, the officer formed his men in line of battle, threw out skirmishers, and placed his pickets along a rail fence. He then made a bold dash up to the house, and ordered the inmates to surrender. A few gave themselves up, and the rest bid him an affectionate good night. The besieged had with them a cavalry force, mounted on U.S. mules, and when they saw the attacking party coming up, they made a

bold dash through their lines. The commander of the guard ordered them to halt, but the chief of the cavalry, in stentorian voice shouted, forward. The Lieut. then ordered his men to fire, and they did fire. The retreating boys say that Wood Lake was nothing to it—that the balls flew like hail around their heads. A ball passed through one fellow’s hat, and another passed another’s eyes, so close that it made him stagger in his saddle. The absentees were all arrested in the morning, and had some of their pay stopped.¹

Additional details on the “1863 brothel skirmish” are undoubtedly in the Seventh Regiment’s order book held at the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington.

¹ The Independent, Mankato, 17 April 1863.

Back in December 1861, Haas traded liquor to a respected Ho Chunk elder who then froze to death.² The sheriff arrested Haas and hauled him before a judge for a \$50 fine. According to the newspaper: *Haas is a desperate character, and has long been under the surveillance of our officers, but has hitherto succeeded in eluding their vigilance.*³ Earlier that same year his female employees fled to Mankato for help after they tried to leave and Haas confiscated their clothes. When they returned with male companions who stoned the establishment, Haas fired buckshot from a window and wounded several.⁴ Back to court he went.

The next spring Haas once again made the local paper. *Joseph Haas (Old Hoss) was again arrested by deputy Marshall Cleveland on Tuesday last, charged with selling liquor to Indians. He was taken before Commissioner Willard for examination, and after hearing of the evidence, was acquitted. He*

was immediately arrested and put upon examination on another charge--the latter offense having been committed on the day previous. On this charge he was required to give bail in the sum of \$400 for his appearance at the U.S. District Court, in default of which he was conveyed to the Saint Paul Jail....All good citizens will rejoice that the lawless



*characters who have so long violated the laws and outraged the sentiment of the community, are at last in a fair way to meet with richly deserved punishment.*⁵

When the Dakota Conflict erupted in August 1862, nearby New Ulm was twice attacked. An ad hoc Mankato militia company marched to its defense and most of those members fought valiantly. One of the listed privates was Joseph Haas, mustered in as a rifleman 31 August and mustered out 12 October 1862. His presence during the battles cannot be confirmed. But by late fall, part of his native customer base had fled to Dakota Territory and he was eagerly serving new clients in blue uniforms, to the consternation of the citizenry.

*Situated a mile or two below town is a notorious brothel kept by an old reprobate named Haas, which is getting to be a perfect hell-on-earth. The old reprobate who keeps it is a well known character in this community, having been indicted for some offense of this nature nearly every term of court, for the last three years, and one so brazen faced that he doesn't even attempt to disguise the nature of his business... We should be happy to record in our next that the vile old rookery is completely gutted, and old Hass and the inmates of his harem tarred and feathered.*⁶

² "Captain Jim" was a Ho Chunk combat wounded veteran of the War of 1812 who had also fought in the 1832 Black Hawk War, and chief of a small band on the nearby Winnebago Reservation

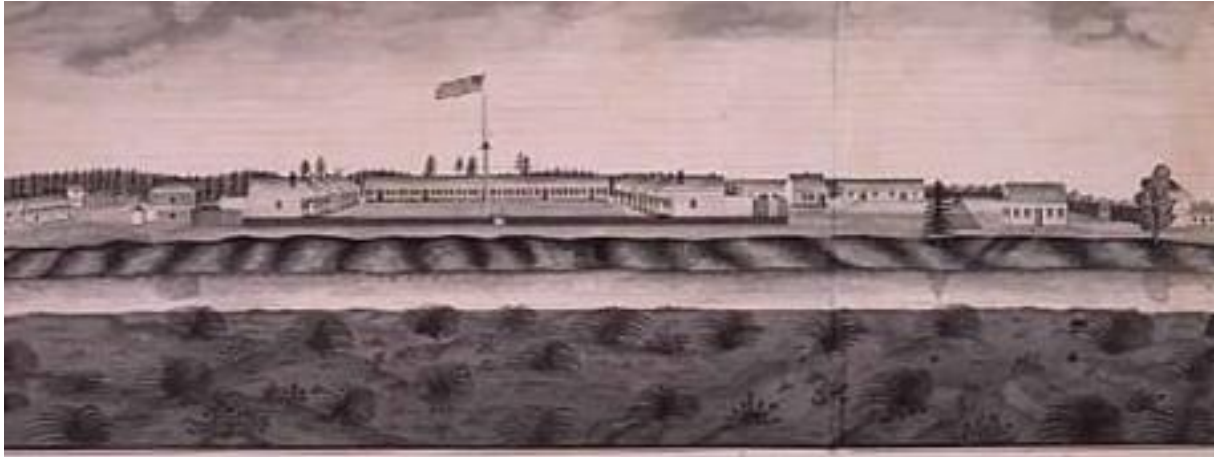
³ *The Independent*, Mankato, 2 December 1861.

⁴ *The Mankato Record*, 20 August 1861.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 8 May 1862.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 17 April 1863.

That June Haas faced serious federal charges and a bond of \$500. His last newspaper mention in 1868 was for unpaid property taxes. To read more about Joseph Haas' salacious conduct including an attempted murder, follow this link to the Minnesota Newspaper Hub (a fascinating research tool.) <https://www.mnhs.org/newspapers/lccn/sn83016592/1863-08-14/ed-1/seq-3>



Meanwhile up at Fort Ripley the Eighth Minnesota Infantry spent a tedious winter at the edge of Ojibwa territories. Companies and squads rotated in and out of the garrison to man small outposts and to ride as scouts. But a letter to the editor of the Stillwater Messenger revealed that:

During the winter the clothes-lines about the garrison would sometimes be relieved of females' underclothing. Guards were sent out to search the Indian tents in the neighborhood, but without gaining any knowledge of the clothes or the thief. But about four weeks since, the clothes were found in the possession of a man belonging to a company not raised on the St. Croix. He was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to be marched around the parade ground dressed in the clothes he had stolen, and ten days solitary confinement. His appearance caused much amusement, dressed in a lady's chemise and skirt, followed by the band playing the Rogue's March. It seems he was an old offender against the law, and but little sympathy was felt for him at the time.⁷

Listen to the Rogue's March here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xt-zFMJUQ0w>

The unfortunate prisoner had previously been on the sick list for some time. Just two weeks after his solitary confinement in a frigid cell, he died of pneumonia in the post hospital. The letter to the Messenger went on to regret the barbarity of the soldier's confinement when ill, and placed blame squarely on the post surgeon: *Among the appointments made it is not surprising that there should be some whose god is their belly, and whose joy is in lager beer. If there are any such in the service, they are welcome to take this to themselves; if not, they know the penalty for taking what does not belong to them.*⁸

⁷ The Stillwater Messenger, 7 April 1863. The "letter to the editor" is only signed X. Read it here: <https://www.mnhs.org/newspapers/lccn/sn84031074/1863-04-07/ed-1/seq-2>

⁸ Ibid.

The regimental roster published in Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars identifies Dudley Fearing, age 27 and from Belle Plain as the only member of the Eighth to die at Fort Ripley in March 1863. His two younger brothers were in the same Company I. Dudley had



married teenaged Anna Mahoney in March 1861 and in 1862 fathered a son who died two years later. Anna filed for a widow's pension in 1865 and received \$8 per month back to March 30, 1863. The 30 pages of documentation are digitalized and available on Fold 3. Readily available records give no further details on the offense that led to his court martial, confinement and demise, however the Eighth Regiment's books at the National Archives probably record the court martial proceedings. Today Dudley Fearing lies in a soldier's grave at Belle Plain, the true reason for his court martial offense lost to history. As to the unnamed surgeon

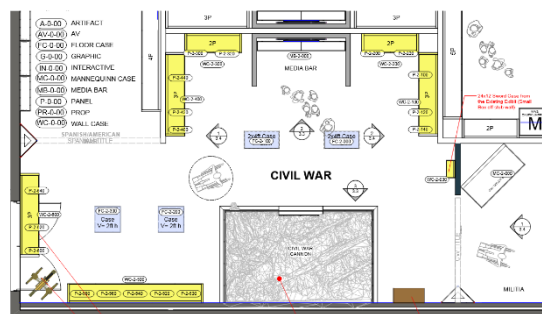
impugned as negligent in the letter to the newspaper, he was identified in the widow's pension file as "F. Rieger." Prussian born 31-year-old Francis Rieger was appointed Surgeon to the Eighth Minnesota by Governor Ramsey in 1862. The St. Paul resident resigned in April 1864 and continued to practice medicine after the war.

The reports that prompted this article came from the extensive archive of Minnesota Civil War newspaper clippings painstakingly collected over decades by my late friend Roger Norland of North Mankato. Organized in binders by unit and topic, and including files on hundreds of Minnesota veterans, the archive was recently donated to the Minnesota Military and Veteran's Museum by Roger's wife Gail. It will be an extremely valuable resource for future researchers.

New Minnesota Military and Veteran's Museum Update

Construction is moving on schedule at 65% completion. Gun #3 from the USS Ward is now in the museum's paint shop for restoration, macro artifacts like a Vietnam War and a Korean War helicopter are going into place, and the dry walled surfaces are being painted.

Draft text for the Civil War gallery has been completed. A preliminary list of artifacts and images has been prepared. Some items are from the museum's own collection with others on loan from the Minnesota Historical Society and private collectors.



Round Table member donations are coming in slow but steadily. We have a \$50,000 minimum challenge and now just over \$47,025 pledged of which \$28,575 has already been received from 33 TCCWRT donors.

Have you made your pledge?

The challenge runs through 2026, so fully tax-deductible donations span two years. Some of us have used the required minimum distribution from our IRAs as a qualified charitable donation, thus reducing our taxable income. Each donor will receive a personal acknowledgement letter from the



501(c)3 museum.

There are three easy ways to donate:

- Visit the museum website and make an electronic donation, noting that you are with the Twin Cities Civil War Roundtable. <https://www.mnvetmuseum.org/new-site-facility>
- Mail a donation to the museum, noting in the check memo “Twin Cities Civil War Roundtable.” MN Military and Veterans Museum, Camp Ripley, 15000 Highway 115 Little Falls, MN 56345-4173.
- Or hand a check to Stephen Osman at a meeting to be forwarded up to the museum.

Please let Stephen know *in all cases* that you have donated or that you intend to donate in 2025 or 2026 so that he can add you to the tracking documents. foragecaps@comcast.net

Check the museum web site to see a conceptual fly over and through the new building.

<https://www.mnvetmuseum.org/new-site-facility>

Here are two a live camera views of the museum under construction:

<https://www.mnvetmuseum.org/live-cameras>

TCCWRT MEMBERS WITH NOVEMBER BIRTHDAY

11/2 Bob Heise

11/28 JoAnn Martin

11/3 Gerry Briggs

11/29 Rudi Martignacco

11/8 David Wilson

11/29 Stephen Silberfarb

11/13 Gary Carlberg

11/30 Bob Slaney

11/16 Brian Glass

11/17 Jim Joyce

Happy Birthday, Members!

WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBER



Charlie Mahar

JOIN OUR TEAM!

We're looking for a TECH person to help the TCCWRT grow to become video/media visible. No experience necessary, but if you've got it - all the better!

**Assist with SOUND, CAMERA, VIDEO
PREPARATION AND EDITING, and caring for
the HARDWARE equipment.**

**Contact Bob Svacina
at bob_svacina@msn.com, James Mewborn
at jfmewborn1@gmail.com, or Brett Johnson
at brettbjohn@hotmail.com.**

SPOTLIGHT ON NOVEMBER 1861:

- 1st Lincoln names General George McClellan general in chief of all Union armies.
- 2nd General David Hunter replaces Union Western Department Commander John C. Fremont.
- 3rd-7th Battle of Port Royal, South Carolina.
- 6th The Confederate States elect Jefferson Davis President.
- 7th Battle of Belmont, Missouri
- 19th Julia Ward Howe writes the poem (lyrics to) the “Battle Hymn of the Republican”

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STEVEN SCHIER'S TRIVIA QUESTION ANSWER:

World War I and World War II combined.

CONTACT US:

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**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**