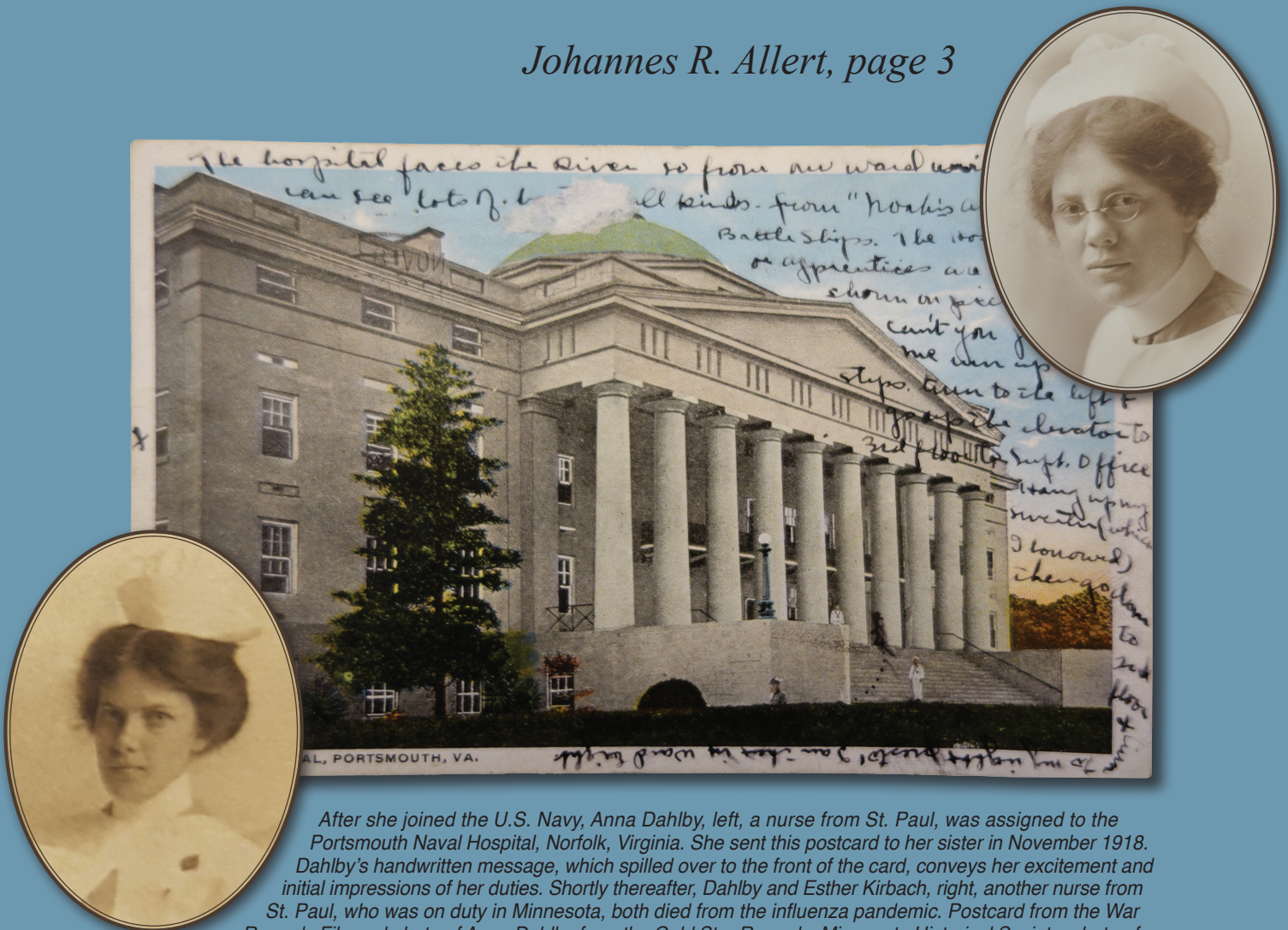


The Ties That Bind: Mounds-Park Nurses and the Great War

Johannes R. Allert, page 3



After she joined the U.S. Navy, Anna Dahlby, left, a nurse from St. Paul, was assigned to the Portsmouth Naval Hospital, Norfolk, Virginia. She sent this postcard to her sister in November 1918. Dahlby's handwritten message, which spilled over to the front of the card, conveys her excitement and initial impressions of her duties. Shortly thereafter, Dahlby and Esther Kirbach, right, another nurse from St. Paul, who was on duty in Minnesota, both died from the influenza pandemic. Postcard from the War Records File and photo of Anna Dahlby from the Gold Star Records, Minnesota Historical Society; photo of Esther Kirbach from the Mounds-Midway Nursing Museum, St. Paul.

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THE MISSION STATEMENT OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON JANUARY 25, 2016:

Preserving our past, informing our present, inspiring our future

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A Message from the Editorial Board

In this issue, Johannes Allert shares the stories of nurses trained at the Mounds-Park Nursing School who volunteered to serve in the military during World War I. In addition to helping wounded servicemen, they faced an unexpected challenge: the devastating influenza epidemic of 1918. At the same time, as Don Empson tells us, John Wardell was operating his Highland Spring Company, which furnished water from a natural spring near Randolph and Lexington to homes and businesses throughout the city. During Prohibition, Wardell's associated soft drink business had a spike in popularity! And M.D. Salzberg describes how, at the Minnesota State Fair, a Boy Scout Service Camp gave scouts the opportunity to live in a tent city while assisting visitors during that Event. Don't miss John Guthmann's review of our latest book, *Fort Snelling and the Civil War*. Come out to hear Steve Osman, its author, at our annual Members' Event on September 14! Please see our website at www.rchs.com or call 651-222-0701 for more details or to reserve tickets.

Anne Cowie
Chair, Editorial Board

Book Review

Fort Snelling and the Civil War

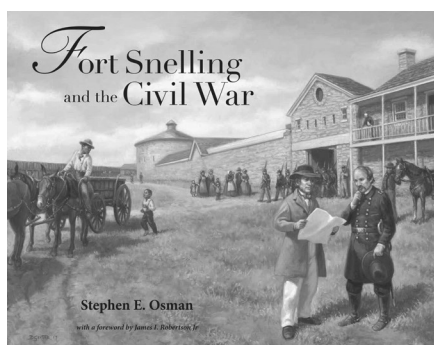
Stephen E. Osman

St. Paul: Ramsey County Historical Society. 323 pages; photos and maps; softcover; order online at www.rchs.com/news/fort-snelling-civil-war/

Reviewed by John H. Guthmann

The Winter 2005–06 issue of *Minnesota History* magazine included the story behind a recently discovered photograph depicting the May 21, 1861, visit to Nicollet Island by the newly formed Company D of the First Regiment of Minnesota Volunteer Infantry. Company D was among eight companies of the regiment that marched to and from Fort Snelling to train and to seek recruits in Minneapolis and St. Anthony. The article was written by Stephen E. Osman. Mr. Osman's biography referenced the fact that "[h]e is currently finishing the manuscript for a book on the fort's role in the Civil War." It was worth the wait. This spring the Ramsey County Historical Society published Osman's excellent volume—*Fort Snelling and the Civil War*.

Any discussion of white settlement in the Upper Midwest and the growth of Minnesota is woefully incomplete without including Fort Snelling in the conversation. Separate volumes could be devoted to the Fort's role in securing the American fur trade against British transgression, the relationship between the United States government and the Ojibwe and Dakota tribes in the Upper Midwest, and its function as a training center for soldiers participating in World Wars I and II. As made clear in the opening chapter of the book, uses ranging from frontier outpost to sheep farm to State Fair site to the metropolis



that never was, earned Fort Snelling its iconic status by 1860. Nevertheless, no Minnesota history topic has captured more public attention than Minnesota's participation in the Civil War, and Fort Snelling is a central part of the story.

Considering the pivotal impact that both the Fort and the Civil War had on Minnesota citizens during the state's first century, it is surprising what little attention historians have paid to the Civil War years at Fort Snelling. William Folwell's *A History of Minnesota* and Theodore Blegen's *Minnesota: A History of the State* devote barely ten pages between them to Fort Snelling and its role during the Civil War. Now, for the first time, Fort Snelling's significant local and national role between 1861 and 1865 receives the full treatment it has long deserved.

Author Stephen E. Osman is no stranger to Fort Snelling or the Civil War. He was a co-creator of the fort's innovative living-history program in the early 1970s and served as Fort Snelling's site manager for over 35 years. He's published many articles focusing on the Civil War and is the author of *Fort Snelling Then and Now: The World War II Years* (2011). Osman began collecting Civil War artifacts during his youth and he has been a Civil War reenactor since his college days.

Mr. Osman's understanding of Minnesota during the Civil War is unparalleled and that familiarity comes through emphatically in his book. This is no dry history of facts, dates, and regiment numbers. Many interesting stories are told and, through meticulous research, those stories are often told in the first person. Even the typos are included to put the reader in touch with the original storyteller. While they learn about the routine of daily military life at the fort, readers meet both obscure figures and famous people. Osman also uses Fort Snelling's status as a hub of activity to dissect the most famous and infamous events of Minnesota's Civil War years, such as the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 and its aftermath.

As a history nerd, I always look for hidden treasures in the endnotes and Mr. Osman did not disappoint. The notes to chapters 8 and 9 are particularly useful. They permit readers to dig much deeper into original source material related to the U.S.-Dakota War.

In addition to its interesting and readable content, this is one visually pleasing book. David Geister's original cover art presents a microcosm of key period characters and activities. The interior layout is generous with both white space and a variety of photographs, some of which have never before been published. Mr. Geister's contribution to the book also includes a number of specially commissioned maps that help the reader visualize the author's descriptive narrative. The result is an easy-to-read volume that is accessible to both Civil War buffs and persons new to the period.

John H. Guthmann is the Chief Judge of Minnesota's Second Judicial District and a member of the Ramsey County Historical Society's Board of Directors.

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This is a 1910 bottle that once contained a soft drink sold by the Highland Spring Water Company in its early years. The bottle is particularly significant because its paper label is so well preserved. The backside of the bottle, visible through the glass, reads: CONTENTS OF THIS BOTTLE MANUFACTURED BY HIGHLAND SPRING WATER. Within a decade, the company discontinued its soft drink business. Bottle courtesy of Mark Youngblood. For more on the origins of the Highland Spring Water Company, see Donald Empson's article on page 18.