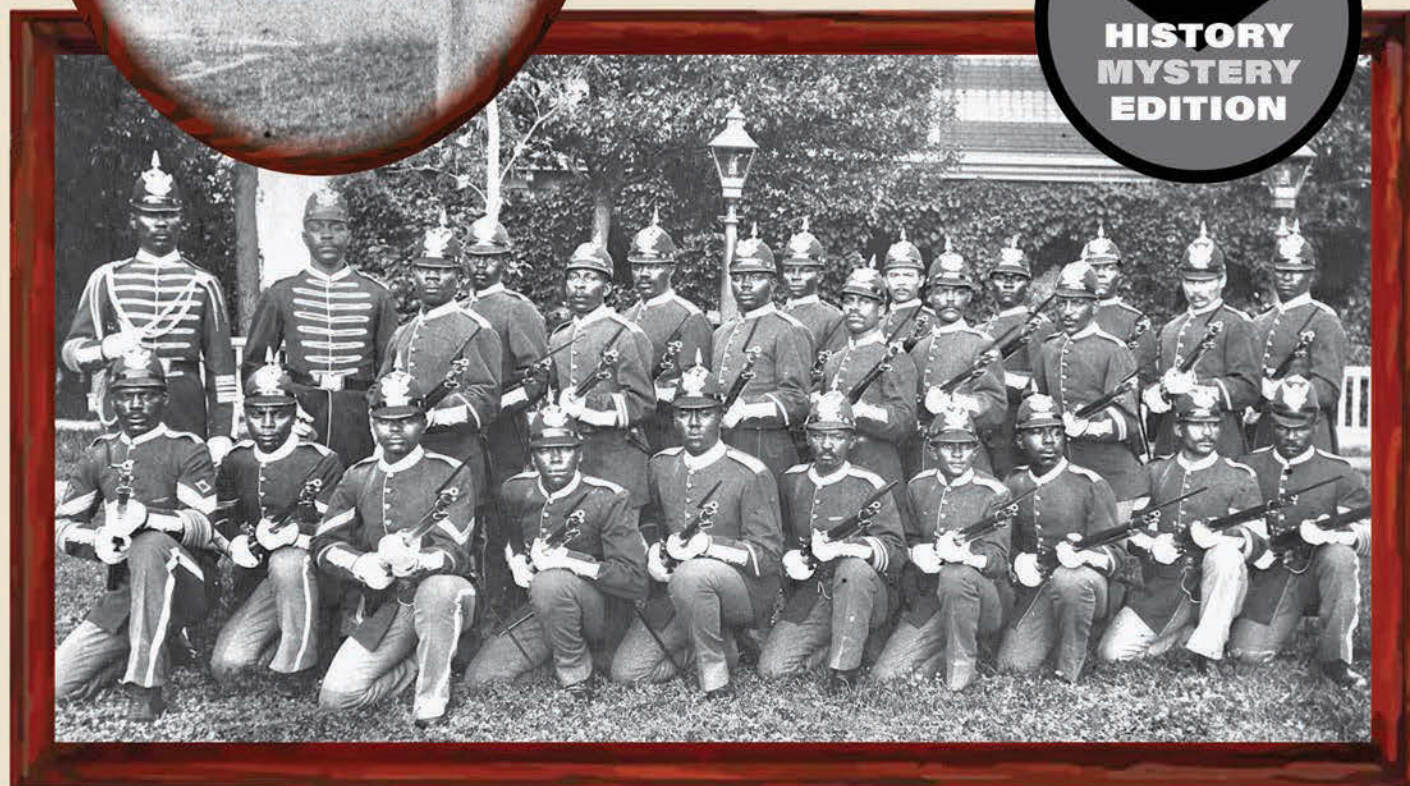
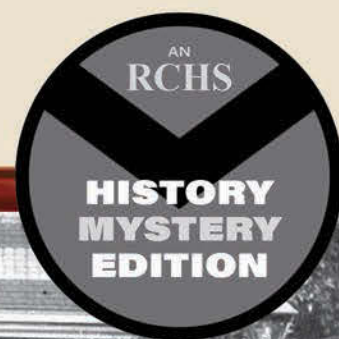


A Fort Snelling History Mystery

The Lost Barracks and the Twenty-Fifth US Infantry Regiment

MATT FLUEGER, PAGE 1



By the Numbers . . .

For a few years in the 1880s, the African American Twenty-Fifth US Infantry Regiment was stationed at Fort Snelling:

Number of soldiers from the Twenty-Fifth that arrived in 1882:

206

Number of Twenty-Fifth Infantry companies living at the fort:

4

Number of children born to enlisted men of the Twenty-Fifth in the post hospital (records kept from 1884-88):

8

Number of years the Twenty-Fifth spent at the fort:

5½

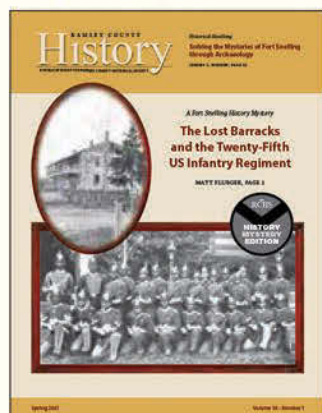
Number of enlisted men from the Twenty-Fifth buried at Fort Snelling:

9

To learn more about this regiment and the mysterious building in which many of the men lived, see Matt Flueger's article "A Fort Snelling History Mystery: The Lost Barracks and the Twenty-Fifth US Infantry Regiment" on page 1.

SOURCES: John Nankivell, *History of the Twenty-Fifth Regiment, United States Infantry, 1869-1926* and various files at the National Archives. See article endnotes, pages 9-11.

ON THE COVER



Very few images of the 1878 "lost barracks" at Fort Snelling exist (top left photo). This cropped image is one of three that are known today. To see the original image that includes the trader's shop in the foreground, go to page 1. Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.

Company I, Twenty-Fifth US Infantry Regiment at Fort Snelling in front of the Commandant's Quarters (1883). Courtesy of National Archives, photo no. 111-SC-83638.

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Message from the Editorial Board

We are used to addressing history as a set of immutable facts. But in reality, our view of the historical record changes and shifts, depending on who is telling the story and what new information comes to light. Sometimes it takes a fresh perspective and some old-fashioned sleuthing to uncover what really happened and where it occurred. In this issue, Matt Flueger examines the history of the "lost barracks" of Fort Snelling, where the men of the segregated Twenty-Fifth US Infantry Regiment lived in the late 1800s. He presents some of their stories, and through careful research and comparison of plans and photos, he was able to identify a long-forgotten building, which was destroyed after about ten years of use. Jeremy Nienow shares the meticulous process that he and his team of archaeologists used to uncover the barracks, as well as other buildings and discoveries at the old fort. And Matt Goff has unearthed new information that dispels portions of the enduring myth that Pierre "Pig's Eye" Parrant was the first settler in St. Paul.

The Ramsey County Historical Society Editorial Board has some changes, too. On a personal note, this will be my last message as editorial board chair. Over the last fifteen years, I have thoroughly enjoyed working with two great editors and a wonderful editorial team. Their creative ideas and diligent work have done justice to the legacy of our founding editor, Virginia Brainard Kunz, and have helped extend our reach to perspectives that fully address our amazing heritage.

Anne Cowie
Chair, Editorial Board

The Ramsey County Historical Society thanks Board Member James A. Stolpestad and affiliate AHS Legacy Fund for supporting the updated design of this magazine. Publication of Ramsey County History is also supported in part by a gift from Clara M. Claussen and Frieda H. Claussen in memory of Henry H. Cowie Jr., and by a contribution from the late Reuel D. Harmon.

The Lost Barracks and the Twenty-Fifth US Infantry Regiment

MATT FLUEGER

Many histories have been written of the early days at Fort Snelling, and no doubt more will follow, with recountings of the state's early leaders, conflicts, politics, or power grabs. This story, however, is about a simple building at the military complex and a few of the men of the segregated African American Twenty-Fifth US Infantry Regiment who resided there. This is the story of Fort Snelling's "lost barracks."

Following the aftermath of the US-Dakota War of 1862 and the American Civil War, life at the fifty-year-old fort slowed. With the conclusion of the post-war Reconstruction era in 1877, the United States Army took advantage of the break to modernize and consolidate its permanent posts for minimal cost and maximum efficiency. At this time, a two-story wood-frame barracks was hastily constructed on the bluff overlooking the Mississippi River. It stood less than a decade and was soon lost to memory. Administrative records captured the details of these years and the construction work at the fort but didn't offer a compelling story—until this information was aligned with period maps, historic photographs, archaeological excavations, *and* the discovery of a powerful and mislabeled image—a photograph of the Twenty-Fifth Regiment standing in front of a long-forgotten building.¹

This is the story of research and rethinking what we knew about Fort Snelling. Through this work, a mystery was solved, additional information about some of the soldiers who lived there came to light, and a new chapter in the fort's two-hundred-year history can now be written.

The Quiet Years

In the summer of 1878, the US Army Department of Dakota, which had operated out of St. Paul from a building on the corner of Wabasha and Fourth Streets and administered



military activity in Minnesota and the Dakota and Montana Territories since 1866, was ordered to move its headquarters to Fort Snelling. The law required all military headquarters to be at military posts.² As such, the army scrambled to construct new quarters to adequately house the garrison after the arrival of the officers from St. Paul.

The order directing the removal of the departmental military headquarters from St. Paul to Fort Snelling, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, 'cannot be altered.' All the efforts for a postponement of the removal have proved unavailing, and the work of transporting the safes, records and office furniture to the fort was commenced last evening, continuing until far into the night and occupying many men and teams . . . by sun down tomorrow, the place that has known the headquarters so long will be entirely vacated . . . Meanwhile, the officers and clerks will continue to reside in St. Paul, going to and from their duties each day, as there is nothing in the order which prevents such an arrangement.³

Post trader's shop with the lost barracks in the background (ca. 1885). The shop was built in the early 1880s and stood between the barracks and the round tower. This was only one of two known photographs of the ephemeral barracks on file in Minnesota prior to additional research over the last few years. *Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.*

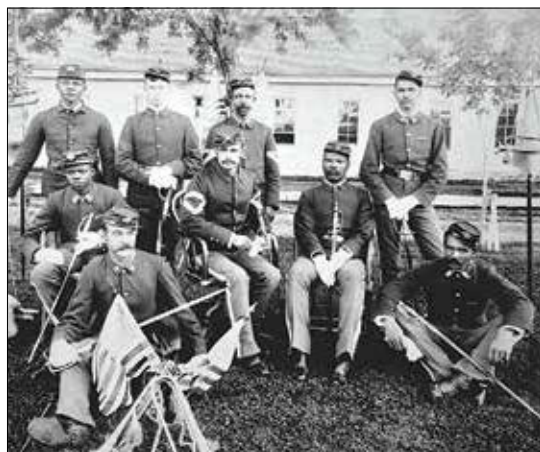


A map of Fort Snelling drawn in the offices of First Lieutenant John Biddle, chief engineer officer of the Department of Dakota (1885). The lost barracks (e) are located on the bluff overlooking the Mississippi River. Courtesy of National Archives, no. 92-225-1054-1061.



This upheaval became the impetus for the construction of new brick homes and an administration building on Taylor Avenue, which would eventually be known as the Upper Post. In the meantime, quick and cheap construction of barracks and other quarters was the solution of the day. These twenty-six buildings were planned in the summer of 1878 and completed

Musicians of the Twenty-Fifth US Infantry Band at Fort Snelling (ca. 1885). A visitor to the fort joined the company musicians on the lawn. A notation on the back of this photograph indicates that the visitor (back row, second from left) was named Schimmelpennig. Courtesy of Hennepin History Museum.



by year's end.⁴ They were built of wood, unlike the more permanent stone dwellings before them. Within twenty-five years, nearly all of these structures passed into memory—mostly forgotten—until recently.

So, who resided in these quickly constructed barracks? Initially, the troops of the Seventh US Infantry, but the Twenty-Fifth Infantry, stationed at Fort Snelling from November 1882 until May 1888, resided there the longest. Upon arrival, just under two hundred men moved into the barracks. This regiment was one of two segregated infantry regiments of soldiers under the command of white officers in the United States. There also were two segregated cavalry regiments.⁵

These troops became known as America's legendary "buffalo soldier" regiments, comprised of African American men. The Twenty-Fifth was stationed at posts throughout Texas and New Mexico from 1870 to 1880, skirmishing with Native Americans across the region. The regiment transferred to the Department of Dakota in 1880. Headquarters Company, Regimental Band, and Companies B, F, and I were stationed at Fort Randall, Dakota Territory, before their arrival at Fort Snelling. Company C was stationed at Fort Hale, Dakota Territory. The first group arrived at Fort Snelling on November 20, 1882, followed by Company F on the twenty-first and Company C on the twenty-third.⁶

Searching for the Lost Barracks

In recent years, the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) initiated a revitalization plan at what is today called Historic Fort Snelling. One of the "newer" buildings, a 1904 yellow brick cavalry barracks, is being rehabilitated as a visitor center. In preparation, utility trenches had to be dug, and new water, electric, gas, and sewer connections were installed to breathe life back into the structure.

Renovation required excavation in an effort to mitigate potential damage to cultural resources. MNHS contracted Nienow Cultural Consultants to research structures that could be impacted. It was common knowledge that older wooden barracks had existed, and the remains likely were close enough to the renovation to be affected. Therefore, it was important to learn

Sergeant James Cooper

One soldier who commanded the residents of the Fort Snelling lost barracks was Sergeant James D. Cooper, born in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1845. A barber first, he enlisted in 1864 with the United States Colored Troops and later served with Company I of the Fortieth Regiment, US Colored Infantry. He was discharged, possibly from another unit, at Jackson Barracks in New Orleans in 1869.^a

Cooper married and settled in the Louisiana city. He was employed briefly as a policeman, but the army lured him back in 1875. He reenlisted at the Presidio of San Francisco with the US Twenty-Fifth Infantry Regiment and worked in Texas, Oklahoma, and at Fort Randall in Dakota Territory.^b

Sergeant Cooper was about thirty-seven years old when he arrived at Fort Snelling on November 20, 1882. Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Marsh Blunt appointed Cooper to daily duty as assistant librarian in an old 1820s stone building, home also to miscellaneous offices, a soldiers' school, and the officers' club.^c

According to government reports, we know what some of his duties entailed: In May 1883, Blunt ordered Cooper to escort Private Thomas Baker of the Eighteenth Infantry to the Government Hospital for the Insane in Washington, DC. Private John F. Coquire of Company I accompanied the pair as a guard. The following spring, Colonel George Lippitt Andrews appointed Cooper overseer of school. The schoolhouse overlooked the Minnesota River just south of the lost barracks between a set of officers' quarters and the post hospital. Cooper instructed the children of the enlisted men.^d

When not at work, Cooper kept busy with social activities: In 1887, he established a lodge of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows.^e He and his wife also often entertained friends from the fort, the Odd Fellows, and the community at large, as noted in local papers:

... they were escorted to Sergt. J. D. Cooper's quarters and were welcomed by the Sergt. and his generous wife ... visitors reviewed the interior of the soldiers' barracks ... and while we were doing justice to Mrs. Cooper's well-prepared repast, the clouds grew more dark and ... rain fell in torrents.^f

Another time, the Coopers celebrated their daughter, Christina's, thirteenth birthday. That same summer of '87, Cooper invited friends for a lunch prepared by his wife and the wives of two other noncommissioned officers. Later, the women watched the men perform for their dress parade.^g

Sergeant Cooper continued teaching at the fort for the next several months, but then a bout of illness set in, and a notice was sent to the local military community: "Sick in quarters since December 18th, 1887. Disease: Congestion of Brain and Tonsillitis, contracted in the line of duty."^h James D. Cooper, husband to Christina and father to his daughter with the same name, died in his quarters at 1:45 p.m. on January 11, 1888. He was just forty-two years old.ⁱ

Clearly, Cooper was respected among his peers. His membership in the Odd Fellows must have been an important part of his life, as symbols of the organization adorned his original headstone. The inscription read, "He served his country faithfully for 24 years. ERECTED BY HIS COMRADES [sic]."^j This monument was perhaps the largest in the old post cemetery, a likely indication of the high regard to which his colleagues held him.



James Cooper's original headstone from the old post cemetery. Courtesy of National Archives, no. 92-NAI 6923484.



Sergeant Cooper received orders to accompany a soldier to a hospital in Washington, DC, with the help of a guard from the Twenty-Fifth Regiment. Courtesy of National Archives, no. 393-Fort Snelling-15.

First Sergeant Zachariah Pope

Zachariah Pope lived for a time in the lost barracks at Fort Snelling. A farmer from Jackson County, Mississippi, he enlisted in the US Army's Tenth US Cavalry Regiment on January 22, 1867, when he was just sixteen.^a After a decade in the cavalry in Oklahoma and Texas, Pope returned to civilian life, but then life took an unfortunate turn:

There is no record of Zachariah Pope's motive for joining the 10th Cavalry in 1867, but when he came home to East Carondelet, Illinois, after his discharge ten years later, he knifed a man, crossed the river to St. Louis, and enlisted again.^b

On April 15, 1878, the twenty-seven-year-old enlisted at St. Louis and started over in Company B of the Twenty-Fifth US Infantry Regiment. Pope and his new colleague Sergeant James Cooper, with the rest of Company B, participated in an expedition across the Rio Grande into Mexico that year under the command of Colonel Ranald Mackenzie. This short, punitive expedition stopped raids by Indians and Mexicans that had plagued southern Texas for several years. In the summer of 1880, the men headed north to Dakota Territory and their new station at Fort Randall. Pope arrived at Fort Snelling as a sergeant of Company B on November 20, 1882.^c

The following April, he bought a parcel of land in Minneapolis for \$300. He married Laura Hamilton in 1885 but was widowed shortly thereafter. Pope remarried in 1887 and grew old with Mary Young of Minneapolis.^d

The Twenty-Fifth departed Fort Snelling in May 1888, but Pope didn't forget Minnesota, even as Company B traveled 1,102 miles by rail, then marched another eighteen miles to their new post at Fort Shaw, Montana Territory. He occasionally returned to his adopted home state for work and bought more land in Minneapolis. He also earned the rank of first sergeant by the end of his fifth enlistment in 1893.^e

Five years later, as he was preparing to retire in June 1898, the US and Spain declared war on each other in April. The Twenty-Fifth sailed to Cuba, where the old first sergeant and the young boys of Company C fought at the Siege of Santiago.^f

Finally, Pope returned to Minnesota, retired from the military, found work as a steward of the Fort Snelling Officers' Club, and engaged in the community. He joined the Executive Committee of the American Law Enforcement League of Minnesota through which he helped organize a reception for Booker T. Washington when he visited the Commercial Club in 1900. Pope also supported J. Frank Wheaton's successful bid to become the first African American elected to the Minnesota State Legislature.^g

Around then, the Popes moved into a home at 216 W. 31st Street South in Minneapolis. There, they hosted



Zachariah and Mary Pope. *In The Appeal*, January 27, 1912, 2.

countless community and social events: everything from funerals, church groups, friendly card games, (the Popes were skilled Whist players), going away parties, wedding receptions, birthday parties, and their legendary twenty-fifth wedding anniversary celebration on January 19, 1912. Announcements described them "among the best known families in the state."^h The party was attended by over 300, and a list of gifts they received was published in *The Appeal*.ⁱ

In 1900, Pope helped found an African American Business Men's Club to encourage "moral, social and intellectual advancement of its members,"^j and like James Cooper, he belonged to the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows. He helped open a lodge in St. Paul in 1908. In 1913, he joined the local chapter of the NAACP as a founding member.^k

The veteran took his last military adventure in December 1917 at age sixty-six. He delivered Christmas packages to the African American troops of the 366th Infantry at Camp Dodge, Iowa, as the US prepared to enter World War I.^l

Over the last years of his life, Pope struggled with health issues but stayed involved with activities when and where he could. In March 1922, the home that had been the scene of so many happy occasions burned. The following month, the ailing veteran returned to the hospital at Fort Snelling to treat his many maladies. On October 13, 1924, Pope passed away at 5:50 p.m. He left behind his wife Mary and a grieving community.^m

Zachariah Pope arrived by train to Fort Snelling as a young sergeant—a "buffalo soldier"—in 1882, where he lived briefly as a resident of the lost barracks, and left an indelible mark on the community he built and shaped at the post, in Minneapolis, and in St. Paul over more than forty years.

more about the history of the barracks before moving forward with construction work.

The lost barracks was included on several maps, but very little photographic evidence of its existence could be found. The key to the 1882 E. B. Summers map was lost to time, and the available copy of the 1878 Maguire map was so poorly duplicated that the key was illegible. In addition, the barracks and its accompanying kitchens were built on nearly the same spot as a previous set of barracks and kitchens. For years, historians had assumed that they were the same structures, not two distinct sets of buildings constructed at different times.⁷

The lost barracks appear prominently in the background of just two photos on file at the Gale Family Library at MNHS.⁸ Planners needed to determine the historic footprint of the building to avoid any preserved archaeological features. Historic maps were overlayed with satellite imagery to place the 1878 barracks in the modern landscape, but accurate dimensions were still required to pinpoint the limits of the footprint.

During an August 2018 visit to the National Archives in Washington, DC, a letter was discovered from General Alfred Terry to Secretary of War Robert Todd Lincoln just four years after construction of the barracks. The general painted a bleak assessment of the conditions there:

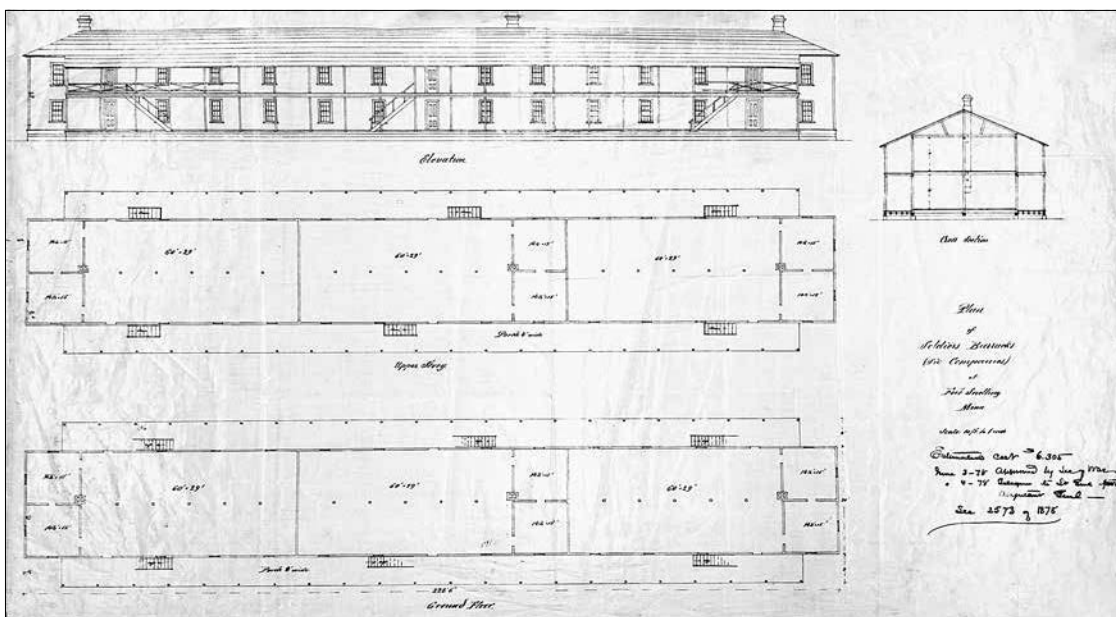


with the scarcity of funds which has already been spoken of. Through no fault of the officers charged with construction, but as a result of the circumstances existing when it was constructed, it is not in any respect a suitable building for the purposes of a post designed to be permanent. It was a make-shift. I have sought to devise some plan by which it could be transformed into a suitable barrack, but I have failed to discover any means of accomplishing that end. I have come to the conclusion that it would be best and in the end cheapest, to pull it down and use the material in the construction of other buildings.⁹

View of the back of the lost barracks from the Mississippi River Bridge (ca. 1885). The distinct roofline of the structure with the three chimneys can be seen on the left along with the company dining halls, which stood behind the barracks. Each of the four infantry companies had its own dining hall, as did the band and Light Battery F of the Fourth US Artillery. *Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.*

The wooden building put up in 1878 was erected under the pressure for shelter and

Despite the recommended demolition of the barracks, they remained in use for at least five



Plan of makeshift soldier barracks at Fort Snelling (1878). These building plans are the only evidence of the interior layout. Projected cost for the construction was \$6,305. *Courtesy of National Archives, no. 77-Fort Snelling-45-15.*

and a half more years as the quarters for the Twenty-Fifth Regiment and others.

In addition to the textual reference, a series of maps completed in 1885 from the office of First Lieutenant John Biddle provided more clues. One of the maps labeled “Post of Fort Snelling” gives a detailed view of the old fort, including all of the buildings constructed in the summer of 1878. The two-story, wood-frame barracks is clearly evident.¹⁰

An April 2019 trip to the National Archives led to the discovery of the original plans for the barracks, complete with porches and upper and lower levels. The 1878 “Plan of Soldiers Barracks (Six Companies) at Fort Snelling, Minn” was consistent with the scant photographic evidence at the Gale Family Library.¹¹

According to the plan, the barracks measured 228½ feet by 30⅓ feet. Each floor included three large dormitories; each dormitory provided two small rooms to give the noncommissioned officers of the company some measure of privacy. Porches ran nearly the full length of both the first and second stories on the front and back of the building. In front, the porches faced the 1878 wood-frame officers’ duplexes with “Clerk’s Row” in the distance. To the rear, they faced the company dining halls, with the bluff edge and Mississippi River Valley beyond. Three exterior stairways on each of the porches led to the second floor. The dining halls, built separately behind the barracks to limit potential

damage in the event of fire, each measured 56¼ feet by 18¼ feet.¹²

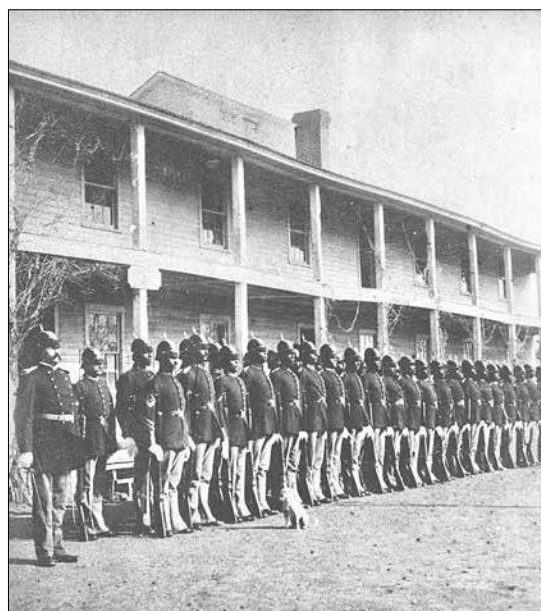
The plans and list of construction materials provided a wealth of information, including inventories of lumber, door and sash, hardware, and nails. The once mysterious soldiers’ abode was now coming into focus.¹³

Mystery Photo

On a subsequent trip to the National Archives in 2019, research revealed the most exciting visual breakthrough yet. A simple query about the Twenty-Fifth Regiment led to the discovery of a beautiful photographic depiction of the elusive barracks structure. A search through the Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer uncovered a folder of pictures of the regiment from the 1870s to ’90s. In the midst of a mass of photos, one image attracted attention: “BATTALION 25th U.S. INF. FT. RANDALL, S.D. 1880.”¹⁴

The design of the barracks building in the background looked familiar. It matched the floor plans found in April. The title appeared to indicate that the army had duplicated the floor plan for the Fort Snelling barracks and applied it to a structure at Fort Randall. Regardless of location, it was the best image of the design to date. However, further examination raised doubts about the accuracy of the labeling. Several factors indicated that the date was incorrect and called into question the location, as well.

Left: Fort Randall barracks (ca. 1882). Captain Charles Bentzoni and Company B stand at attention in front. Note the windowed bump out on the roof and lack of cross bracing on the second-floor porches. Courtesy of National Archives, no. 111-SC-83738.



Right: Fort Randall barracks (ca. 1882). Note the porches run the full length of the barracks. Courtesy of National Archives, no. 111-SC-83741.



The photograph depicted soldiers wearing spiked helmets. However, this helmet style was not introduced until 1881.

By 1881 the Quartermaster Department set about to fulfill General Sherman's new directives for both a blue field shirt and a dress helmet. In the latter instance, a helmet at last was permitted for all troops and regimental officers. This brought about the eventual discontinuance of the less than popular 1872-pattern mounted dress helmet, and also swept aside the old dress cap with cock feathers for foot officers and pompons for enlisted men. Nonetheless, the helmet established in 1881 was in a different form than conceived of by the 1879 board.¹⁵

Disbursement of the new head gear also was not immediate. A target date of July 1, 1881, was set, but supplies were initially limited.¹⁶

The fact that the earliest implementation of these helmets likely occurred in the summer of 1881 means that the stated date of 1880 in the photo caption is inaccurate. Given this error, researchers studied the photographs more closely, suspecting the location also was mistaken. Additional images of the barracks at both Fort Randall and Fort Snelling show three notable architectural differences between the barracks in the mystery photo and the barracks that appear in other photos of Fort Randall at this time.

The Twenty-Fifth arrived at Fort Randall in August 1880 and departed in November 1882.¹⁷ There are two US Army Signal Corps photos from Fort Randall while the Twenty-Fifth was stationed there. Both prominently feature their two-story barracks. Photo 83738 shows the men



Company B stands at attention in front of their barracks at Fort Randall (ca. 1881). They are wearing the older, 1872-pattern caps. Again, note the bump out on the roof and the lack of cross bracing on the second-floor porches. *Courtesy of Hennepin History Museum.*

of Captain Charles Bentzoni's Company B standing at attention in front of their barracks. Photo 83741 shows a man sitting on the ground by a mattress with the barracks in the background.¹⁸ A third period image of the Fort Randall barracks from the Hennepin History Museum appears as a stereograph (ca. 1880) and depicts the company standing at attention in front of their structure. In this image, the men are wearing the earlier 1872-pattern caps.¹⁹

Comparison Time

The first clear difference between the Fort Randall barracks and the Fort Snelling barracks is porch design. At Fort Randall, the porches extended across the length of the building, running flush to the ends. All three of the images clearly show the porches running from one end of the building to the other. On the other hand, both the floor plans of the 1878 Fort Snelling barracks and the two photos of these barracks at the Gale Family Library depict porches that stop short of the ends of the building—which corresponds to the mystery photo.

Thanks, in part, to this photo, the lost barracks was "found." The image shows the barracks and the Twenty-Fifth US Infantry at Fort Snelling (ca. 1885) *not* at Fort Randall (1880). The men are wearing the newer M1881 infantry dress helmet. *Courtesy of National Archives, no. 111-SC-83642.*



For more information on the archaeological work related to this barracks and other sites at Fort Snelling, see, "Historical Sleuthing: Solving the Mysteries of Fort Snelling through Archaeology" by Jeremy L. Nienow on page 12.

The second difference between the Fort Randall and Fort Snelling barracks again involves the porches, specifically the second-story porches. In the three Fort Randall photos, the upper porches are fully open with no guardrail. In the Fort Snelling barracks, floor plans, and photos, viewers see guard rails with X-shaped cross braces. The photo again corresponds to the Fort Snelling design—complete with guardrails and cross braces.

The third difference between the barracks involves the roofline. The Fort Randall photos show windowed bump outs on the roof. The plans and photos of the Fort Snelling barracks show a clean, flat roofline with three chimneys at an irregular interval and no windowed bump outs. With this new evidence, it appears the mystery photo was mislabeled. It should have been labeled Fort Snelling, not Fort Randall.

This photograph, lost in plain sight all these years, is the best-known visual representation of the barracks that was home to the men of the Twenty-Fifth US Infantry Regiment at Fort Snelling.

Take a closer look: Here, the men of Companies B, C, F, and I, with the Twenty-Fifth US Infantry stand in battalion formation on the parade grounds in front of the barracks with the Regimental Band on the left. The orientation of buildings, roads, and telegraph poles

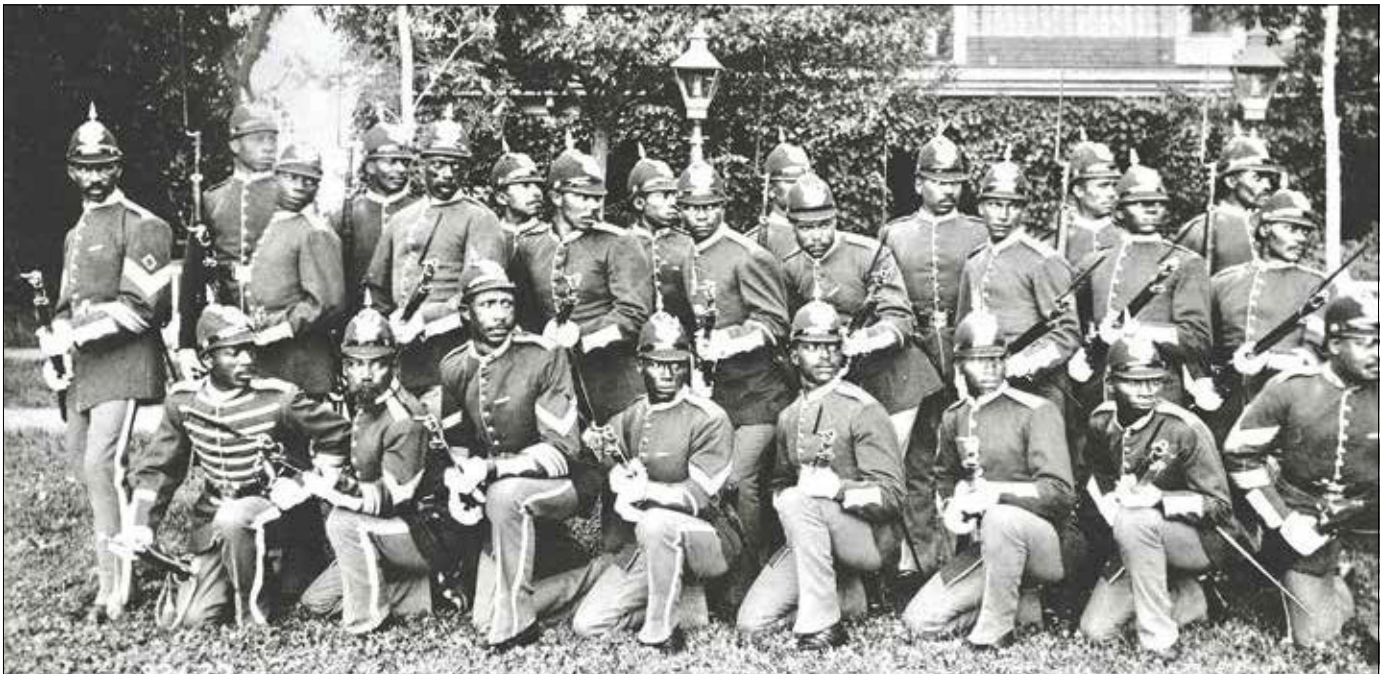
correspond with both period maps and one of the MNHS photos.²⁰

Lost Barracks Are Found, and More History Is Revealed

This once-forgotten structure has now been documented, and archaeological work in 2018 and 2019 by Nienow Cultural Consultants confirmed portions of its historical footprint. Excavations uncovered the rear foundation and areas beneath both the front and back porches, yielding many diagnostic artifacts illustrating daily life at the fort. Buttons, bullets, pipe fragments, broken liquor bottles, and food scraps tell the story of the men who called this barracks home.

As mentioned earlier, life at the fort was quiet during the years the Twenty-Fifth was stationed in Minnesota and lived at the barracks. In fact, one of the regiment's captains, John Nankivell, stated in his 1928 book *History of the Twenty-Fifth Regiment*, "The next five years, 1883-1887, were destined to be the least eventful in the regiment's history, and the regimental returns for this period contain, month after month, under the 'Record of Events,' but one monotonous entry—'No Change.'"²¹ There might have been a little excitement, however. Archaeological evidence suggests a possible porch fire at the barracks likely within the first year of the Twenty-Fifth's residency.

Company B, Twenty-Fifth US Infantry at Fort Snelling in front of the Commandant's Quarters (1883). Notice Sergeant James D. Cooper (front row, second from left) and Sergeant Zachariah Pope (front row, far right). Courtesy of National Archives, no. 111-SC-83637.



By 1884, Companies B & I moved into the long stone barracks, and the Regimental Band moved into the short stone barracks, part of which was used as a dining room for convicted men housed in the adjacent military prison. Companies C and F remained quartered in the 1878 barracks with Light Battery F of the Fourth US Artillery and the recruit detachment.²²

The regiment departed Fort Snelling in May 1888, bound for Montana Territory.²³ By 1889, the first yellow brick barracks on Taylor Avenue were completed, and the once quickly constructed decade-old barracks overlooking the Mississippi River and the bridge to St. Paul met a quiet and unceremonious demise.

A Noteworthy Addition to the Fort's Historical Record

This narrative of discovery adds new details about the lost barracks, its occupants, and its place at Fort Snelling. In addition, the walls of the barracks were witness to a significant time in the history of the African American soldiers in our state.

Some of these soldiers' stories are uplifting and inspirational, while others bring to light the struggles and racism faced institutionally in late nineteenth-century America. Men like Mingo Sanders, the Spanish American War hero embroiled in the 1906 Brownsville Affair whose honors were stripped from him months before retirement, were amongst their number. George H. Woodson went on from his service at Fort Snelling to become a lawyer, politician, and civil rights activist in Iowa. Several made Minnesota home after their terms of service expired. Zachariah Pope, mentioned above, married a local woman and retired to Minneapolis in 1898. He became a fixture in the vibrant African American community of the early twentieth century as a proponent of civil rights and black-owned businesses. Sergeant Elihu Foster settled on

Sibley Street in St. Paul and worked for the Pullman Porter Company. One unfortunate resident was Private Lewis Carter, who was incarcerated at Stillwater State Prison from 1885 to 1890 after being falsely accused of raping a German woman. The intervention of African American lawyer Fredrick McGhee ultimately secured a presidential pardon and gained his release.²⁴

It took research, sleuthing, rummaging through boxes of dusty records, and archaeology work to bring the lost barracks back to life. To what end? Construction and utility crews were largely able to avoid damaging the remaining structure. When an electrical crew did hit part of the old foundation, they quickly realized what they had discovered and relocated a transformer well away from the remains of the barracks.

If all goes according to schedule, in 2022, guests at Historic Fort Snelling will stop by the new visitor center to learn more about the site's military history but also the Dakota people who lived there before the arrival of the US Army and the hundreds confined there in the wake of the US-Dakota War of 1862; enslaved people in the early years at the site; and Japanese American soldiers from World War II. They'll also learn about the lost barracks and its noteworthy residents—the members of the Twenty-Fifth Infantry who briefly called this historic setting home.

Matt Flueger is an avocational research historian and classically trained fine arts photographer. He has been studying and documenting Fort Snelling since 2008. Flueger is the owner of Fort Snelling in Photographs, a business devoted to this pursuit, and shares his work on a Facebook page of the same name. Recently, he has acted as an advisor to Nienow Cultural Consultants and the program department at Fort Snelling. He is writing a book on the Twenty-Fifth Infantry and their time at the fort.

NOTES

1. Eric Foner, "Why Reconstruction Matters," *The New York Times*, accessed January 21, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/29/opinion/sunday/why-reconstruction-matters.html>; John Biddle, Booklet accompanying map titled "Fort Snelling, MN, 1885, US Army Department of Dakota," Record Group (RG) 92, Entry #225 Consolidated Correspondence Files (CCF),

Fort Snelling (boxes 1054-1061), 2, National Archives Building (NAB), Washington, DC.

2. "News of the Week: Removal of Army Headquarters," *Worthington Advance*, July 4, 1878, 1.

3. "The Military Headquarters Removal," *Saint Paul Globe*, July 1, 1878, 3.

4. Miscellaneous Forts file, RG 77, Fort Snelling,

Drawer 45, Sheet 11. National Archives at College Park (NACP), College Park, Maryland. The new structures included one barracks, six company kitchens/dining halls, eight duplexes for officers' quarters, and eleven outhouses/prives for officers.

5. John Nankivell, *History of the Twenty-Fifth Regiment, United States Infantry, 1869-1926*, (New York, NY: Negro Universities Press, 1927), 37, 42.

6. Nankivell, 36-37. Both Fort Hale and Fort Randall were located on the west bank of the Missouri in Dakota Territory. Fort Hale (1870-1884) was located near present-day Reliance, South Dakota. Fort Randall was built downstream, not far from the small village of Pickstown.

7. Charlene Roise and Penny Petersen, *Fort Snelling's Buildings 17, 18, 22, and 30: Their Evolution and Context*, report prepared for Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS), (Minneapolis, MN: Hess Roise and Company 2008), 8, accessed January 1, 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/miss/learn/management/upload/Feb%2028%202008%20History%20Report.pdf>.

8. "Barrack buildings between the fort and the old cemetery (MH5.9 F1.3 p61)," online collections, MNHS, accessed February 23, 2021, <http://collections.mnhs.org/cms/display?irn=10749448&return=brand%3Dcms%26imagesonly%3Dyes%26q%3Dfort%2520snelling%2520barracks>.

9. Alfred Terry, General, letter to Robert Todd Lincoln, Secretary of War, January 2, 1882, RG 92, Entry #225 CCF, Fort Snelling (boxes 1054-1061), NAB.

10. Biddle, 2.

11. Map, "Plan of Soldiers Barracks (Six Companies) at Fort Snelling, Minn," 1878, RG 77, Miscellaneous Forts file, Fort Snelling, Drawer 45, Sheet 15, NACP; Post Adjutant's Orders Ledger, January 6, 1884, RG 393, Installation #438, Fort Snelling, NAB.

12. Map, 1878; Biddle, 2.

13. Map, 1878.

14. Photograph no. 111-SC-83642, "Battalion 25th U.S. Inf. Ft. Randall, SD," 1880; Records of the Chief Signal Officer; RG 111; WW1/Old West file, NACP.

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17. Nankivell, 36-37.

18. Photograph no. 83738, "Co. B. 25th Inf. Ft. Randall, D.T. Capt. Bentzoni," 1882, RG 111, NAB; Photograph no. 83741, Signal Corp," RG 391, Scrapbooks 1866-1926, NAB; "Loyal Legion Will Attend," *Los Angeles Express*, October 9, 1907, in Find A Grave, accessed February 23, 2021, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/7909269/charles-bentzoni>; "Charles Bentzoni," *US Army, Register of Enlistments, 1798-1914* [database on-line], <https://www.fold3.com/image/78990494?terms=bentzoni,military,non,charles> and <https://www.fold3.com/image/28162605?terms=57,bentzoni,charles>. Colonel Charles Bentzoni was born in Prussia in 1830 and emigrated to the United States in 1857. He served in both the German and Prussian Armies before he enlisted in the US Army.

He fought with the New York Volunteer Infantry during the Civil War. He served with multiple infantries, including the Twenty-Fifth. He retired in 1894 to Los Angeles where he lived until his death in 1907.

19. Photograph no. FOR2.1S p17, "Segregated Fort Snelling U.S. Infantry—B. Co. 25th Infantry, Capt. Bentzoni," 1881; Hennepin History Museum.

20. "Barrack buildings between the fort and the old cemetery (MH5.9 F1.3 p61)," 1885, MNHS.

21. Terry, letter; Nankivell, 38.

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24. Harry Lembeck, "Mingo Sanders (1857-1929)," Black Past, accessed January 21, 2021, <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/mingo-sanders-1857-1929/>. The 166 soldiers who were unfairly and dishonorably discharged were finally recognized in 1972 and posthumously received honorable discharges by President Richard Nixon; Hal S. Chase, "Henry George Woodson," in the Biographical Dictionary of Iowa, accessed January 21, 2021, <http://uiopress.lib.uiowa.edu/bdi/DetailsPage.aspx?id=417>; "Elihu Foster," *US Army, Register of Enlistments, 1798-1914* [database on-line], accessed at <https://www.fold3.com/image/244378091?terms=eliuhu,foster>; "Big Victory for Lawyer McGhee," *The Appeal*, March 22, 1890, 2.

Notes to Sidebar on p. 3

a. "James D. Cooper," US Army, Register of Enlistments, 1798-1914 [database on-line], accessed information for 1885 at <https://www.fold3.com/image/310839420?rec=299867606&terms=james,891,cooper,d> and 1866 at <https://www.fold3.com/image/310841901?rec=299920547&terms=james,891,cooper,d>.

b. 1870 United States Census, Ward 11, New Orleans, Louisiana; digital image s.v. "James D. Cooper," <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M876-7WB>; "James D. Cooper," US Army, Register of Enlistments, 1798-1914 [database on-line], accessed information for 1875 at <https://www.fold3.com/image/310877414?rec=300318258&terms=james,891,cooper,d>.

c. "Captain Matthew Marsh Blunt," Antietam on the Web, accessed January 21, 2021, http://antietam.aotw.org/officers.php?officer_id=448. Blunt (1830-1907) was a mathematician. He attended West Point and served in the Civil War and as a lieutenant colonel in the Twenty-Fifth Infantry (1874-1883); US Army Adjutant General (USAAG) Post Adjutant's Orders Ledger, November 21, 1883, Record Group (RG) 94, Entry #53, National Archives Building (NAB), Washington, DC; John Biddle, Booklet accompanying map titled "Fort Snelling, MN, 1885, US Army Department of Dakota," RG 92, Entry #225 CCF, Fort Snelling (boxes 1054-1061), 2, NAB.

d. USAAG, Post Adjutant's Orders Ledger, May 13, 1883; "St. Elizabeths Hospital, National Park Service, accessed February 17, 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/places/st-elizabeths-hospital.htm>. Today known as St. Elizabeths Hospital, the Government Hospital for the

Insane opened in 1852 with the help of Dorothea Dix, a mental health advocate and social reformer; "John F. Coquire," US Army, Register of Enlistments, 1798-1914 [database on-line], accessed at <https://www.fold3.com/image/318188925?terms=coquire,john,f> and <https://www.fold3.com/image/310884539?rec=300436748&terms=coquire,john>. Coquire (1857-1941) served in the Twenty-Fifth Infantry and retired to Minnesota. He died in 1941 and is buried at Oakland Cemetery in St. Paul; "George Lippitt Andrews Papers, special collections, University of Arizona Libraries, accessed February 17, 2021, <http://speccoll.library.arizona.edu/collections/george-lippitt-andrews-papers>. Andrews (1828-1920) commanded the Twenty-Fifth Infantry for twenty years (1871-1892); USAAG, Post Adjutant's Orders Ledger, April 5, 1884 and March 27, 1885.

e. "Minneapolis," *Western Appeal*, July 2, 1887, 1; Michael Barga, "Grand United Order of Odd Fellows in America," Virginia Commonwealth University Social Welfare History Project, accessed January 21, 2021, <https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/eras/grand-united-order-of-odd-fellows-in-america/>. Black lodges started forming in 1843 when they secured incorporation into the European fraternal organization through a lodge in England.

f. "Fort Snelling," *Western Appeal*, July 16, 1887, 4.

g. "St. Paul," *Western Appeal*, August 20, 1887, 4.

h. USAAG, Muster Rolls, December 31, 1887, NAB.

i. USAAG, Muster Rolls, February 29, 1888, NAB.

j. Records Regarding Internments and Disinternments at Cemeteries Located at Abandoned Military Installations, 692384; RG 92, Fort Snelling, Minnesota, Post Cemetery, National Archives College Park (NACP), College Park, MD; <https://gravelocator.cem.va.gov>. With the completion of the Fort Snelling National Cemetery in the late 1930s, all graves from the old cemetery were transferred, and the unique, civilian-made headstones were left behind. Every man, including Sergeant Cooper, was issued standard federal monuments. Cooper now rests in section A-3, site 355.

Notes to Sidebar on p. 4

a. "Zachariah Pope," US Army, Register of Enlistments, 1798-1914 [database on-line], accessed information for 1867 at <https://www.fold3.com/image/310854243?rec=300203255&terms=891,zachariah,pope>.

b. William A. Dobak and Thomas D. Phillips, *The Black Regulars, 1866-1898* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 47. Nothing more is known of this incident; "Pope," US Army, Register of Enlistments, accessed information for 1867 and 1872 at <https://www.fold3.com/image/310873451?rec=300230075&terms=891,zachariah,pope>.

c. "Pope," US Army, Register of Enlistments, accessed information for 1878 at <https://www.fold3.com/image/310828750?rec=299693440&terms=891,zachariah,pope>; John Nankivell, *History of the Twenty-Fifth Regiment, United States Infantry, 1869-1926* (New York, NY: Negro Universities Press, 1927), 31, 36-37.

d. "Real Estate; The Official Record," *Saint Paul Daily Globe*, April 29, 1883, 2; "Briefs," *Minneapolis Daily Tribune*, March 31, 1885; Marriage license filed in Hennepin County, Fourth Judicial District, January 19, 1887, accessed December 2020, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:VKNP-3D1>.

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h. "Minneapolis," *The Twin City Star*, January 13, 1912, 1.

i. See various articles in "Minneapolis: Doings In and About the Great Flour City" column in *The Appeal*, 1889-1905 and *The Twin City Star*, 1911-12.

j. "The Business Men's Club," *The Appeal*, July 14, 1900, 3. The organization held monthly meetings at The Guaranty Loan Restaurant in Minneapolis at the corner of Third Street and Second Avenue South. They included a meal and guest speakers.

k. "St. Paul: A Week's Record in Minnesota's Capital," *The Appeal*, June 14, 1902, 3; "City News," *The Minneapolis Tribune*, April 3, 1908, 9; "A New Organization," *The Twin City Star*, September 26, 1913, 3.

l. "Sergt. Pope Takes Red Cross Packages to Camp Dodge," *The Twin City Star*, December 22, 1917, 5. David L. Snook, "World War I: The History of the Iowa National Guard," Iowa National Guard, accessed February 18, 2021, <https://www.iowanationalguard.com/History/History/Pages/World-War-I.aspx>. Camp Dodge in Johnston, Iowa, was used as a regional training center for troops prior to and during WWI.

m. "Minneapolis: The Doings In and About the Great Flour City," *The Appeal*, March 18, 1922, 4; "Local News," *Minnesota Messenger*, April 22, 1921, 1.

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RAMSEY COUNTY History

A PUBLICATION OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Preserving our past, informing our present, inspiring our future.

The Ramsey County Historical Society's vision is to innovate, lead, and partner in preserving the knowledge of our community, delivering inspiring history programming, and incorporating local history in education. Our mission of *preserving our past, informing our present, inspiring our future* guides this vision.

The Society began in 1949 when a group of citizens preserved the Jane and Heman Gibbs Farm in Falcon Heights, which the family acquired in 1849. The original programs at Gibbs Farm (listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974) focused on telling the story of the Gibbs family. In 2000, with the assistance of a Dakota Advisory Council, the site also began interpreting Dakota culture and lifeways. RCHS built additional structures and dedicated outdoor spaces to tell the stories of the remarkable relationship between Jane Gibbs and the Dakota people of *Héyáta Othúnwe* (Cloud Man's Village).

In 1964, the Society began publishing its award-winning magazine, *Ramsey County History*. In 1978, the organization moved its library, archives, and administrative offices to St. Paul's Landmark Center, a restored Federal Courts building on the National Register of Historic Places. An expansion of the Research Center was completed in 2010 to allow greater access to the Society's collection of historical archives and artifacts. In 2016, the Research Center was rededicated as the Mary Livingston Griggs & Mary Griggs Burke Research Center.

RCHS offers a variety of public programming for youth and adults. Visit www.rchs.com for details of upcoming History Revealed programs, summer camps, courthouse and depot tours, and more. RCHS serves 15,000 students annually on field trips or through outreach programs in schools that introduce the Gibbs family and the Dakota people of *Héyáta Othúnwe*. These programs are made possible by donors, members, corporations, and foundations, all of whom we appreciate deeply. If you are not yet a member of RCHS, please join today and help bring history to life for more than 50,000 people every year.

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History informs us, inspires new choices, brings people together, and builds community. Likewise, it can be misused to inspire fear, create division, and perpetuate racism and other injustices. We resolve to present history in accordance with our values of Authenticity, Innovation, Inspiration, Integrity, and Respect. We believe that by doing so, our community will be more informed, more engaged, and will become stronger.

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Acknowledging This Sacred Dakota Land

Mnisóta Makhóche, the land where the waters are so clear they reflect the clouds, extends beyond the modern borders of Minnesota and is the ancestral and contemporary homeland of the Dakhóta (Dakota) people. It is also home to the Anishinaabe and other Indigenous peoples, all who make up a vibrant community in Mnisóta Makhóche. The Ramsey County Historical Society acknowledges that its sites are located on and benefit from these sacred Dakota lands.

Dakota people are the first people of Mnisóta Makhóche and have lived here for thousands of years. In the nineteenth century, Dakota lands were greatly diminished by a series of one-sided treaties that continue to benefit the United States government and the descendants of those who immigrated to Minnesota. These treaties were knowingly mistranslated, and land and annuities promised to the Dakota were stolen and never received. In 1862, war broke out between some Dakota and the Governments of the United States and Minnesota. As a result of that war, Governor Alexander Ramsey (namesake of Ramsey County) called for all Dakota people in Minnesota to “be exterminated or driven forever beyond the borders of Minnesota,” their homeland. This codification of genocidal State policy resulted in the violent and forced removal of Dakota people from their homeland, including offering bounties for killing Dakota men, women, and children and years of exterminatory military campaigns.

Yet the Dakota people have survived this attempted genocide and the ongoing attempts to erase their histories and culture through assimilation practices, including sending Dakota children to boarding schools and erasure by omission of Dakota history in curriculum in educational institutions.

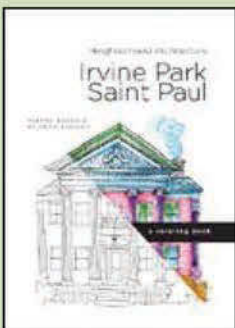
Ramsey County Historical Society is committed to preserving our past, informing our present, and inspiring our future. Part of doing so is acknowledging the painful history and current challenges facing the Dakota people just as we celebrate the contributions of Dakota and other Indigenous peoples.

We pledge to honor the Dakota and other Indigenous peoples of Mnisóta Makhóche by:

- Continuing to share an accurate historical curriculum at Gibbs Farm that covers the seasonal life of the Dakota of Ĥeyáta Othúnwe (Cloud Man’s Village) at Bdé Makhá Ska;
- Developing improved language for signage and curriculum that more accurately describes colonization;
- Providing a platform for Dakota and other Indigenous partners to showcase their work at our physical sites through virtual programming, exhibits, and publications;
- Maintaining relationships with Dakota community members, and organizations;
- Supporting Dakota and other Indigenous-owned businesses;
- Providing space for traditional and contemporary Dakota cultural activities and events;
- And by advocating for the respectful and equitable treatment of Dakota people, culture, and history.

The staff and board of the Ramsey County Historical Society extend their heartfelt thanks to Teresa Peterson, Dakota & Upper Sioux Community citizen; Chris Pexa, PhD, Spirit Lake Dakota Nation; and Šišóka Dúta (Joe Bendickson), Sisseton Wahpeton Oyáte, University of Minnesota—for their support of RCHS and advice regarding this statement.

For references for this statement, please see
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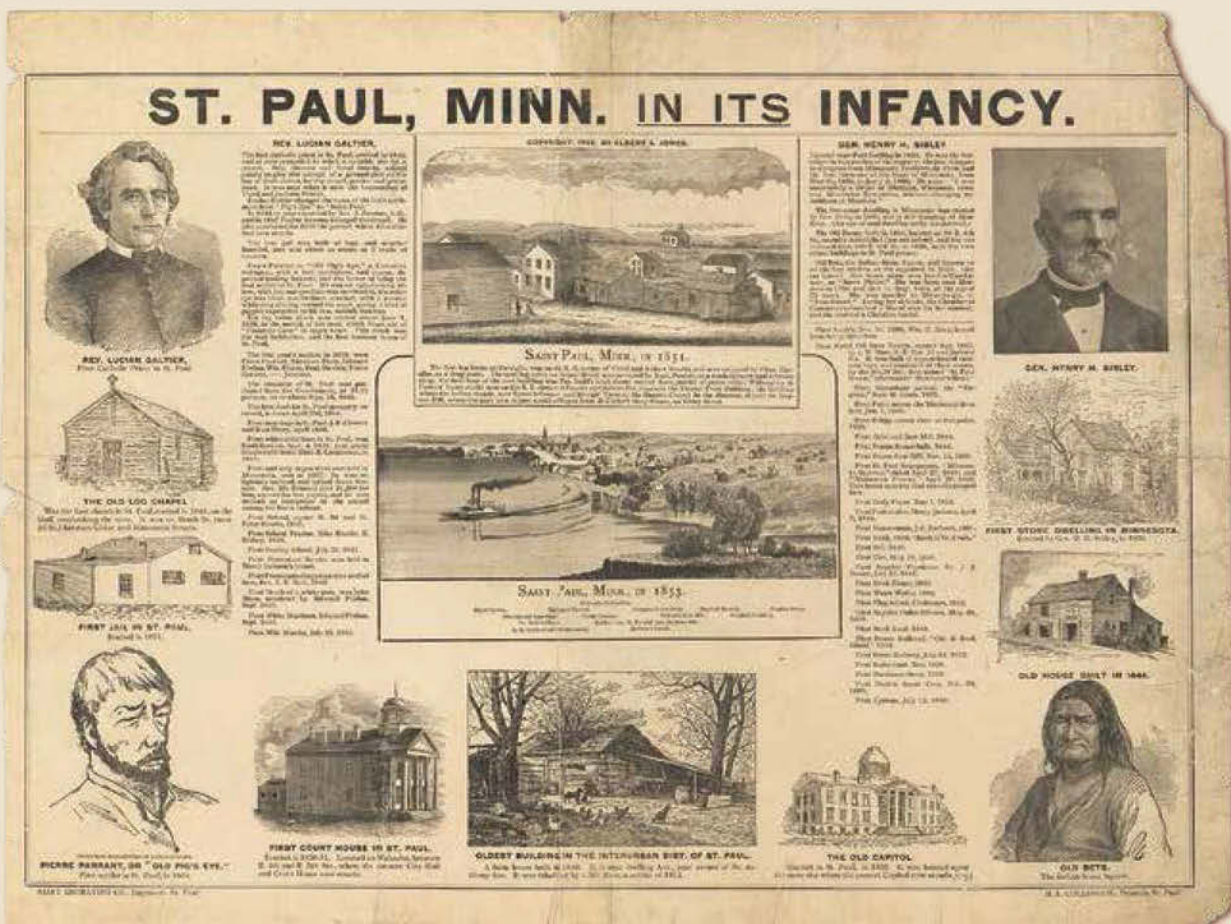
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Correcting Mystery and Myth

Not Everything You've Heard about Pig's Eye Parrant is True

MATTHEW GOFF, PAGE 20



This 1892 broadside, copyrighted by Albert A. Jones and printed by H. L. Collins Co., celebrates St. Paul's many "firsts," including the first governor, school teacher, Protestant church, and even the first murderer. Many facts are true. Others have been questioned, including those related to a man named Pierre Parrant, whose image is illustrated in the bottom left-hand corner. Parrant's narrative has shaped this city's history, but author Matt Goff argues that some of these oft-repeated stories are just that—stories—that should be reconsidered and corrected. *Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.*