

Go South, Young Man: Minnesota's Wartime Sacrifices Recorded In Images And Text

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Review

GO SOUTH, YOUNG MAN

Minnesota's wartime sacrifices recorded in images and text

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Carley, Kenneth, Moe, Richard, and Horrigan, Brian. *Minnesota in the Civil War: An Illustrated History*. Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2000-10-01. ISBN 873513878

With this book, the Minnesota Historical Society Press announces its return to Civil War publishing. That is good news. As Richard Moe points out in his introduction, although the state sent fewer than 20 regiments to the war, they fought everywhere. As a result, the Society has a wealth of material to share.

The original version of **Minnesota in the Civil War** was published in 1961 as a collection of newspaper articles written by Kenneth Carley, the editor of *Minnesota History*. It briefly described the action seen by Minnesota regiments during the war. Although long out-of-print, it is regularly available in catalogues.

I once mentioned to Ken that his book was again available from Morningside.

"What do they want for it?" he asked.

"Twelve dollars."

"Too much."

What, then, would he have thought of a \$50.00 edition? He would probably have liked it, despite its price, for this is so much more than a reprint of his book.

Rather than merely making Carley's work more widely available, the Society has elected to use this book to showcase its impressive collection of Civil War material. The edition is delightfully illustrated with pictures of items in the Society's holdings, from flags and swords to sewing kits and surgical

instruments. It is filled with photographs and drawings of the soldiers and the places where they fought.

The most important additions are the letters and diaries, which complement the original text by introducing more battles and units. This primary source material, from civilians and soldiers, is used to acquaint the reader with the common soldier's experience. The Sanitary Commission, black soldiers, prisons, disease, chaplains, musicians, and much more are also touched upon.

As with Carley's text, this supplemental material does not go into much depth. What was once a primer on Minnesota regiments has become a primer on the war. The sections are short and very readable. Students of the war may not find much new information here, but there is much of interest. The editors have selected and edited well.

A drummer boy's description of the reaction of the Second Minnesota the first time it heard the long roll-"Some of the men were so excited they did not pull on their shoes. They fought in their stocking feet all day."-is paired nicely with a private's description of his attempts to get his boots on when the drum beat began. Descriptions of hardtack are commonplace in the literature, but a recipe for hardtack pudding may be unique. The frustration and outrage of members of the Third Minnesota at being surrendered at the First Battle of Murfreesboro comes through clearly.

Though not a "must have," this handsome volume is an excellent introduction to the war, especially for Minnesotans, but also for others.

Steven Thompson is a past president of the Twin Cities Civil War Round Table and a former editor of its newsletter. He may be reached at Steve_RT@email.com.