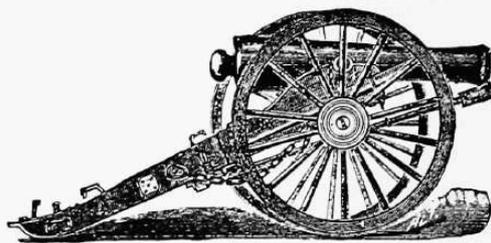

ONE MAN'S CIVIL WAR



JOHN W. GRABER

John George Bauer, lately come from Germany to Minnesota, enlisted in the United States Cavalry on September 10, 1861. He served in Company B of Henning von Minden's brigade, which was attached to the Fifth Iowa Cavalry, much to the chagrin of the Minnesota troops. He was assigned to the western theater doing patrol duty, guarding bridges, and eventually fighting on the fringes of Shiloh.

His tour of duty was marked by no remarkable incident until he was involved in the skirmish at Lockridge Mill, Tennessee. A small force of Union cavalry was detached and sent on patrol through northwest Tennessee, where it was overtaken and routed by a superior number of Confederate cavalry. In the grand scheme of things, the clash came to very little. Union casualties numbered seven killed and 17 wounded. The Confederates suffered no losses.¹

John George Bauer was one of the casualties recorded that day. He was wounded in the right shoulder so severely that Civil War surgical procedure pronounced amputation as the only solution for saving his life. Bauer would not allow it and was left on the southern battlefield, presumably the victim of his German stubbornness.

John Graber, the great-grandson of John Bauer, is a media-librarian in Richfield, Minnesota.

A "gracious southern lady" (as the story was later related to wide-eyed grandchildren) was alerted to the situation and, professing a Christian duty to act, took the wounded Union cavalryman into her home. After some weeks of healing and convalescence, Cavalryman Bauer was declared fit to travel even though he was still weak. The lady gave him a quilt to cover his uniform and sent him through the lines. He made contact with Union forces somewhere around Paducah, Kentucky. He then traveled to Fort Snelling, where he was duly discharged from the army on September 16, 1862, serving just one year.

JOHN BAUER became a missionary circuit rider for the German Methodist church on the Minnesota frontier, serving for most of his life in the Minnesota River valley and the St. Paul–Woodbury area. He always

¹ For accounts of the encounter at Lockridge Mill (also called Lockridges Mills and Lockridge's Mill), see Minnesota Board of Commissioners on Publication of History of Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars, *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars* (St. Paul: Pioneer Press, 1893), 2:97–98; [Iowa Adjutant General's Office], *Roster and Record of Iowa Soldiers in the War of the Rebellion* (Des Moines, 1908), 4:848–850; *Weakley County Press* (Martin, Tenn.), Mar. 17, 1983, p. 4–5.



John George Bauer, 1860s



Bauer's quilt, pictured in color on the inside back cover of this issue

said that he had been saved by the “Christian lady” so that he might do the Lord’s work. He continued to be a conspicuous member of the clergy until his death in 1918 in St. Paul.

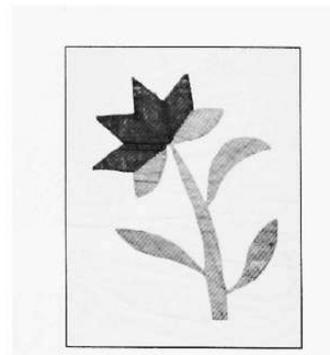
To the family of John George Bauer, the story of his almost miraculous recovery on the battlefield had always been sketchy, at best. He would not talk about his army life, preferring to discuss church-related matters. As a result, no one knew the name of the “gracious southern lady” or the real circumstances of the incident until the 1980s.

Using the quilt, which is still in the family, and the book *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars* as starting points, family members visited the site of the skirmish at Lockridge Mill. Local historians there knew about the encounter but had no information about a wounded Union cavalryman. It seemed that the family tradition might start and end with the old handmade quilt, and no verification would be possible. That is, until June, 1983. Because of a newspaper story about the battle, which contained a capsule account of the quilt episode, the family made contact with Betty Gris-

som of South Fulton, Tennessee, who wrote: “my great-grandmother gave that quilt to your great-grandfather.” It took 122 years, but we now have the name of the gracious southern lady: Mary Benson Lockridge of Weakley County, Tennessee, a southern sympathizer. The story of one man’s Civil War has come full circle and now has a suitable ending.²

The quilt remains as a prized possession that validates an interesting Civil War incident otherwise based on family tradition and “at the knee” history. Bauer’s great-great-grandchildren cherish the relic.

The snapshot of Bauer is courtesy of the author; quilt photograph by Phillip Hutchens.



² *Weakley County Press*, Mar. 17, 1983, p. 4–5.



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