

## Jacob Henry Stewart Minnesota Ancestor

U.S. Congressman, Minnesota State Senator, four times elected St. Paul Mayor, Surgeon General of Minnesota, member and surgeon of the First Minnesota Regiment in the Civil War, Surveyor General of Minnesota, Postmaster of St. Paul, and founder of what was to eventually become Regions Hospital - Jacob Henry Stewart is an early Minnesota settler and ancestor who should not be forgotten.

Jacob Henry Stewart was born in Clermont, Columbia County, New York, on January 15, 1829. He moved with his parents to Peekskill, New York, where he attended the Common Schools and graduated from Phillips Academy. He then attended Yale College to study medicine and graduated from the University Medical College of New York City in 1851, returning to his hometown of Peekskill to practice medicine.

In 1855, Dr. Stewart moved to St. Paul, Minnesota, becoming the Medical Officer of Ramsey County in 1856. He married Catharine (also spelled in documents as Katharine or Kate) Sweeny, formerly of Philadelphia. Their marriage certificate was signed as witnessed by Mrs. Alexander Ramsey, also formerly of Philadelphia, on October 1, 1857. Mrs. Ramsey was the mother of one of NSCDA-MN's founders, Mrs. Marion Ramsey Furness, who also had lived in Philadelphia. The Stewarts had three children, Ursula, Jacob Henry (Jr.), and Robert.

### Civil War Service

During the American Civil War, Dr. Stewart served as a surgeon in the Union Army as a member of the First Minnesota Infantry Regiment. The First Minnesota was the very first group of volunteers that the Union accepted in response to the assault of Fort Sumter at the beginning of the war. Minnesota's Governor Alexander Ramsey happened to be in Washington when the Fort news broke, and he offered President Lincoln 1000 men immediately upon learning of the attack.

During its first engagement, the Battle of Bull Run, on July 21, 1861, the regiment suffered the highest casualty rate of any Union regiment involved. Although he could have escaped, Dr. Stewart stayed on the battlefield caring for the wounded of the First Minnesota and the Confederacy, and he was taken prisoner.



Figure 1 Dr. Jacob Henry Stewart, 1880s. Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society



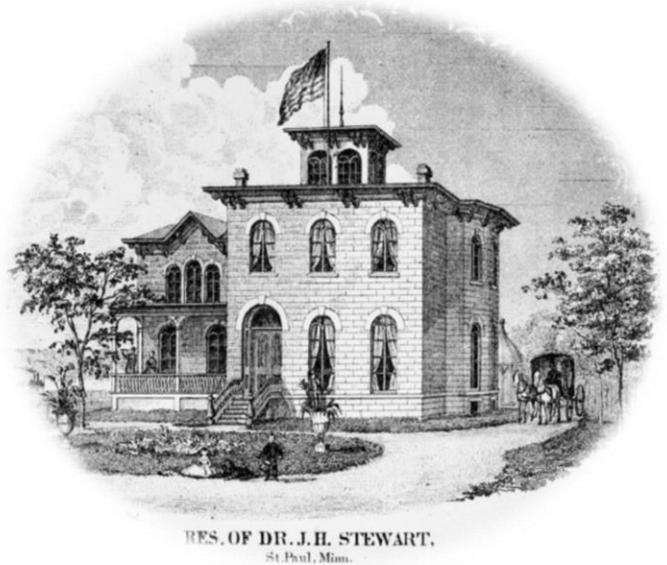
Figure 2 Officers of the First Minnesota in front of Commandant's Quarters, Fort Snelling, 1861. Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

This fact, when brought to the attention of General P. T. Beauregard, the Confederate commander, moved him to return Dr. Stewart's sword, which had been surrendered at the time of his capture. General Beauregard stated, "Such an act denotes not only bravery but is most unusual at this time. I, therefore, on acknowledgment of this act, return to you your sword."

William Lochren, a member of the First Minnesota, spoke of the service rendered by Drs. Stewart and LeBoutillier at the Battle of Bull Run. Of them, he said, "They remained in attendance upon the wounded on the field when they might have escaped with the retreating troops and were detained as prisoners. Their skillful care of our wounded doubtless saved many lives and alleviated in many ways the condition of their wounded comrades."

Dr. Stewart was held prisoner in Libby Prison in Richmond, Virginia. Not knowing the status of the surgeons, Gov. Ramsey filled the void in the regiment by appointing Dr. Daniel Hand to the post of official regiment surgeon.

After receiving a conditional parole, Dr. Stewart arrived in Washington D.C. in mid-August, and from there was brought back to Minnesota, where he became Post Surgeon at Ft. Snelling. The men of the First Minnesota began holding reunions shortly after the war's end, and Dr. Stewart was elected the group's president in 1867. On July 12, 1870, he became a member of the Union veteran fraternal organization of Grand Army of the Republic, or GAR, William Acker Post #21 in St. Paul.



*Figure 3 Home of Dr. Stewart in 1867, Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society*

### **Civilian Accomplishments**

After he served the Union, Dr. Stewart became:

- Surgeon General of the State of Minnesota from 1857 to 1863
- A member of the Minnesota State Senate in 1858 and 1859
- Postmaster in St. Paul from 1869 to 1872
- Though a staunch Republican, the (four times elected) Mayor of the heavily Democratic city of St. Paul in 1864, 1868, and from 1872-1874
- Minnesota's 3rd Congressional District elected U.S. House of Representatives Congressman in Washington, D.C., from 1877-79
- Surveyor General for Minnesota from 1879-1882.

Continuing to practice medicine, Dr. Stewart formed a partnership with Dr. Charles A. Wheaton, another Minnesota ancestor, who had graduated in 1877 from Harvard Medical University. In 1872, the Ramsey County Board of Control authorized the purchase of Dr. Stewart's mansion to serve as a hospital, and in 1873 it was established as City and County Hospital. We know it in its current state today as Regions Hospital.

The Stewarts then moved to 50 Irvine Park near the Alexander Ramsey family. The house, known as the Horn House, is still standing today. A fire in 1980 destroyed some of the original house but the structure does retain some of its historic character.

Dr. Stewart died in St. Paul on August 24, 1884, at just 55 years of age. He is buried in Oakland Cemetery in St. Paul. He was a man considered remarkable for his professional abilities, which added to his genial nature and made him greatly beloved.

### Legacy

Jacob's business partner Dr. Wheaton had a son, also Charles A. Wheaton, who married Dr. Stewart's daughter Ursula. It is from Ursula and Charles that our current Minnesota Dames are descended.

In 1928, upon the construction of the Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel, Ursula and Charles donated the three stained glass windows above the alter as a memorial to Dr. Stewart. The first (left) panel is St. Luke, the physician, and the lower medallion shows surgeons caring for the wounded. The center panel is the Virgin Mary and the medallion depicts two nurses assisting a wounded soldier. The panel on the right represents Jesus and the lower medallion represents the dead. The windows were created by Andreas Larson of Minneapolis.



Figure 5 Ursula Stewart Wheaton, courtesy of Nina Winston

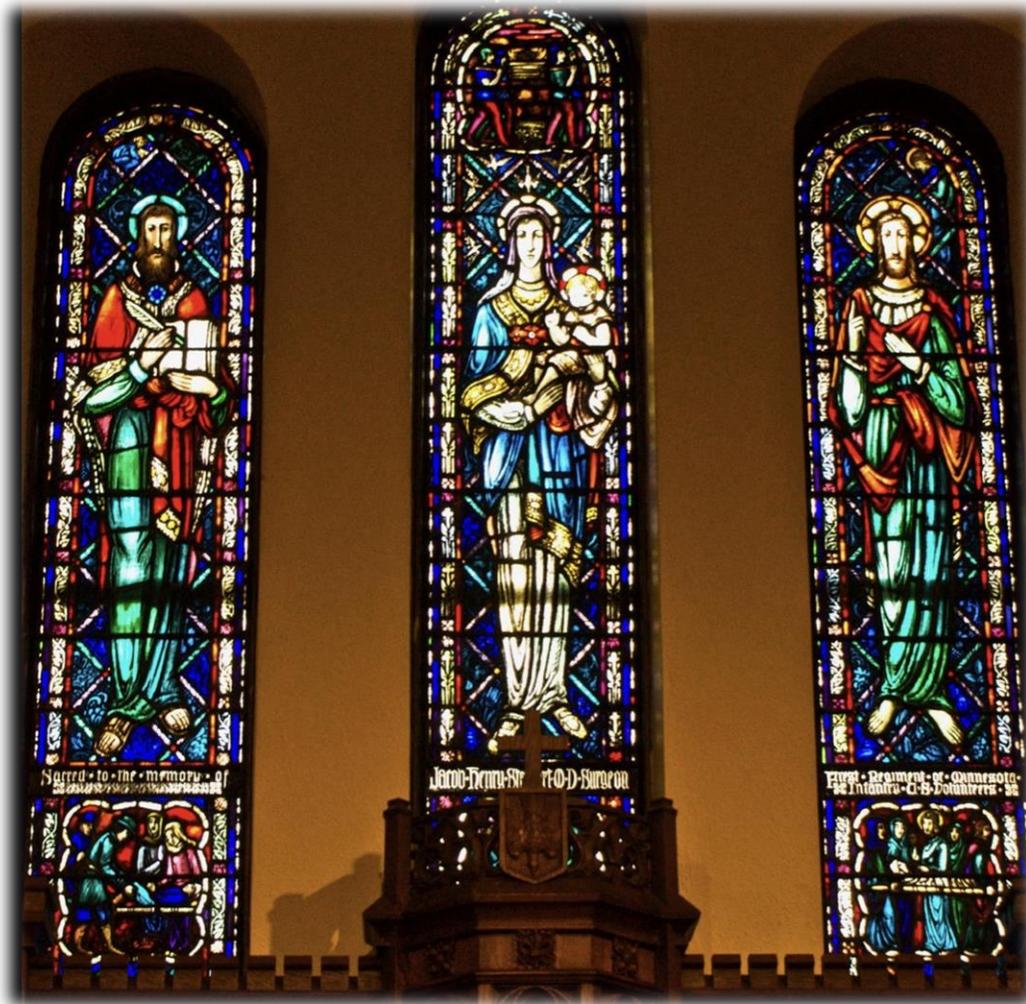


Figure 4 Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel windows in memory of Jacob Henry Stewart, courtesy of Fort Snelling in Photographs (Facebook).

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