

Courageous best friends join the First Minnesota Regiment and fight their way to Gettysburg. They are followed by two strong, lovely women who rebel against existing norms by working in the Military Telegraph Office and the War Department.

It Ended At Gettysburg

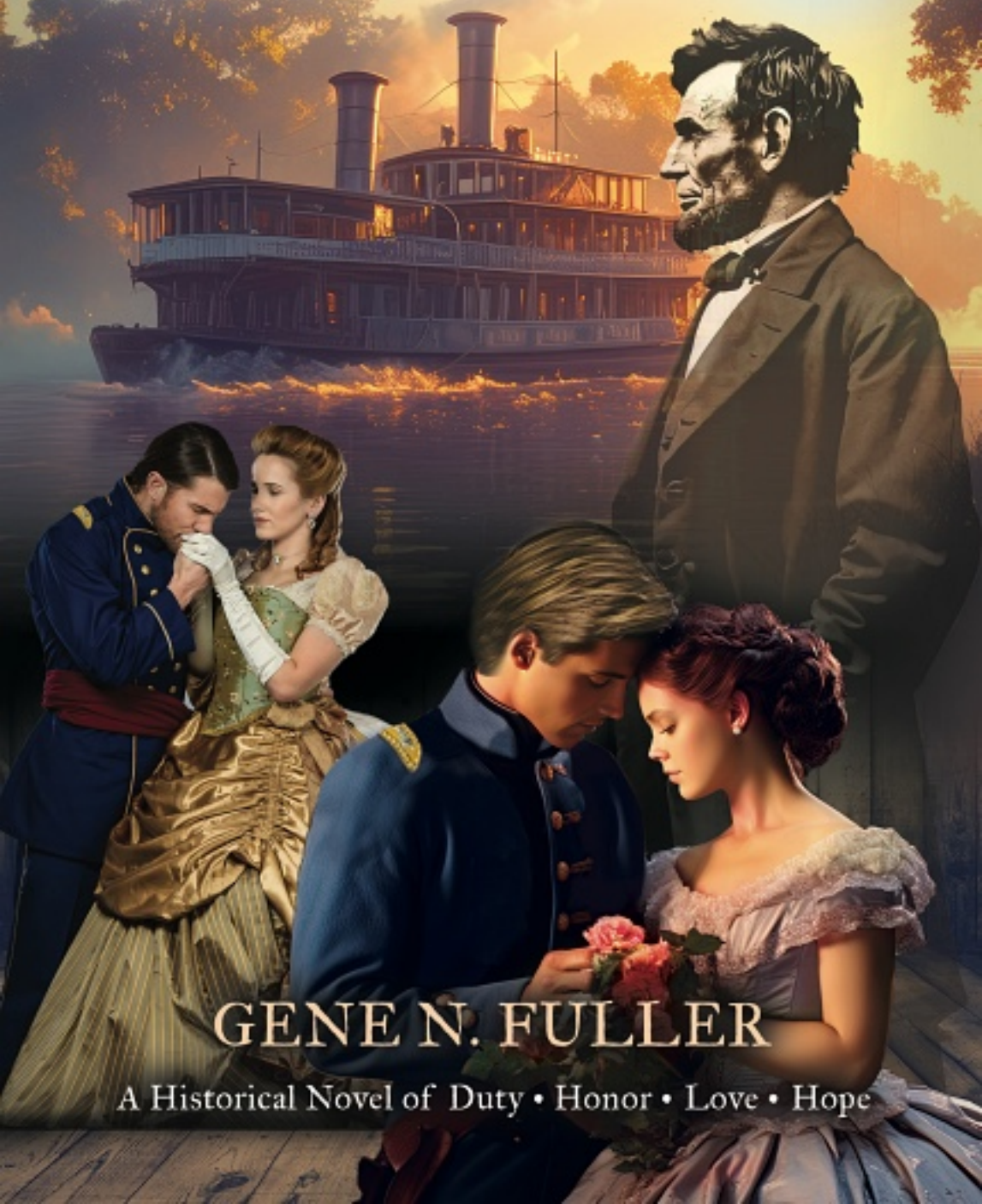
By Gene N. Fuller

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IT ENDED AT GETTYSBURG



GENE N. FULLER

A Historical Novel of Duty • Honor • Love • Hope

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The principal four characters in this book are fictitious. The author employed literary license to interpose fictional characters into the novel which interact with authentic soldiers of the First Minnesota Infantry Regiment as well as other contemporary leaders and personalities who were born prior to 1865. Such interactions are fictional and are intended to enhance the story.

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Chapter 1

Prelude to War

It was a bitterly cold March day in 1861 in St. Paul, the type of day when one would naturally wish for an inside warm fire away from the frigid wind blowing out of the northwest. Stephen Dawson forced his large black stallion, Thunder, on through the deep snow and slush-filled streets. He reached the Dawson Shipping Warehouse in time for his morning appointment with Sam Elkins, the warehouse manager. The two-story brick building located on Front Street was purchased by the Dawson Shipping Company eighteen months earlier.

“Cold enough for you?” joked Sam Elkins, as Stephen entered the large office space of the warehouse.

Stephen laughed. “Yes, Sam. It’s plenty cold!” Stephen gratefully held his hands over the radiating warmth of the large pot belly stove near the center of the office. The office was busy as usual, smelling of fresh ink, dry paper, and pungent tobacco smoke emanating from the half dozen clerks scurrying in and out.

Stephen H. Dawson was the only child of Henry Dawson, a successful entrepreneur of St. Paul who had assembled a small line of steamboats to transship goods and passengers between downriver towns and St. Paul. The business had prospered and now Henry sought to involve Stephen in the management and growth of the family business. Although Stephen had received a college degree nine months earlier from Hamline University in Red Wing, he was uncertain as to his future, including his desire to work in the family business. However, he had great respect for his father, an affable, ambitious, and ruggedly handsome transplant from Chicago.

Stephen shared his father’s traits and features—though not always his strong opinions. Standing six foot two with a fair complexion, dark

hair, and blue eyes, he would attract the gaze of women as he walked by. He was handsome and clean-shaven. He also shared his mother's delightful sense of humor and keen intelligence. Stephen had achieved high marks at Hamline while forging many close friendships. His best friend from college was Roger Phillips, whom he expected to meet for lunch at Henrietta's Café at half past noon.

Standing next to Sam was James Hill, whom Stephen had first met in the St. Paul Pioneer Guard, a local militia company formed in 1856 to provide protection against possible Indian uprisings. Stephen served as a second lieutenant in the Pioneer Guard and had done so since his graduation from Hamline. James was the same age as Stephen, although shorter and stockier, with a light complexion, dark hair, and a well-groomed mustache and goatee. He served in the enlisted ranks of the Pioneer Guard and was an excellent shot despite the fact he had only one good eye.

"Good to see you, James," Stephen said. "How are you, my friend?"

"I'm fine, Lieutenant. I've been working with Sam trying to coordinate the timely delivery of your dry goods and beef orders from La Crosse and Red Wing. This weather has been terrible. It's so much easier to deal with the railroads and the steamboat lines than with the cantankerous wagon and ice sled teamsters during the winter months."

"Well, James, please call me Stephen when we're among civilians. Sam has told me how helpful you have been, and we appreciate you sharing your business contacts downriver. God willing, the ice will be breaking on the river very soon."

James nodded his head in agreement. "And I greatly look forward to the railroads coming to Minnesota. That will make things much easier. It's just a matter of time."

"I agree," said Stephen, while wondering how the introduction of railroads to the state might affect his father's steamboat shipping. "By the way, I believe that you spent some time in Kentucky. How do the people of Kentucky feel about Lincoln and the secession of South Carolina and the other Southern states?"

“Well, it’s been a while since I spent much time in Kentucky,” James responded, “but I understand that Lincoln didn’t get a lot of votes down there. I hear that half of the state supports the North and the other half supports the South. As for me, I fear the secession of South Carolina and the other Southern states will come to no good. Do the Southerners really believe that Lincoln will simply allow them to leave the Union? This secession must be opposed, and I believe that President Lincoln will be up to the challenge. I will help in any way that I can, and if the Guard becomes a part of the military opposition, then I will also.” With that, James excused himself, explaining he had another engagement in downtown St. Paul.

Sam and Stephen spent the next couple of hours inspecting the various storage areas and assessing inventory levels within the warehouse. Approaching the cold storage rooms, Sam greeted John Paul, a hard-working former slave from western Tennessee.

“How is it going with you, John Paul?” Sam asked, shaking the man’s hand.

“Oh, going real fine, Mr. Sam,” responded John Paul with a big smile. “Sure cold here compared to Tennessee but not complaining none. I just loaded up the wagon for that meat shipment to St. Anthony.”

John Paul was a large, muscular man who had been working for the company for five months. Although he had been a slave in Tennessee, he insisted that he had obtained his freedom from his former slave master. He had shown Sam a Certificate of Manumission prior to being hired. Sam had hired John Paul with the full approval of Henry Dawson and his wife, Katherine Dawson. Katherine, in particular, had taken quite a shine to John Paul, helping him out with spare clothing and extra rations.

As Sam and Stephen returned to the office, Sam said, “You should know that earlier this week, two never-do-well Southern types stopped by the office asking if we had knowledge of any vagrant black men from the South looking for work. They mumbled something about our duty under the Fugitive Slave Laws and finally left. I thought you should know.” He gave Stephen a worried look.

Sam was an old family friend and very aware of the poorly kept secret that Katherine was an active abolitionist. Stephen suspected his mother participated in the Underground Railroad, but he was not sure. Katherine had tried to insist that John Paul move on to a safer area, but he was a deeply loyal man who felt great regard for his “Miss Katherine.” He said he would not leave unless staying put placed the Dawson family in great danger.

“Thank you kindly, Sam,” Stephen replied. “I’ll tell father and mother about our two unwelcome visitors. Meanwhile, keep John Paul out of sight for a while. This secession business may well resolve any issue involving John Paul’s welfare. I’ll see you later.”

* * *

Entering the dining room of Henrietta’s Café, Stephen was greeted by the wonderful aroma of the daily special of buttermilk biscuits, roasted chicken stuffed with chestnuts, and creamy gravy. Together with the lattice-crust apple pie that Henrietta Simpson added to the daily special, Stephen could not think of any better place to have lunch with his best friend, Roger Phillips. Roger and Stephen had been close friends since their days at Hamline University, and Roger also served as a second lieutenant in the Stillwater Guard.

Roger waved at Stephen through the crowded press of bodies from a coveted corner table. Roger was athletic with light hair, slightly shorter in height than Stephen, with a whimsical attitude which contrasted with Stephen’s calm and polite demeanor. Roger’s manner was warmly disarming and his dark blue eyes were striking. He was dressed for the weather in a plaid wool shirt, dark wool trousers, and fur-lined riding boots.

“A fine day to you, Roger,” Stephen greeted him enthusiastically. Roger was pouring a steaming cup of coffee from the full pot set in the middle of the table.

“Indeed! I just beat you here. How are you doing?”

“Great, Roger. How are things at the lumber company?” Roger had taken a manager’s position with the St. Croix Lumber Company in Stillwater following graduation from Hamline.

“Business is not as robust during these harsh winter months, but we are still milling and selling lumber.” Roger grinned. He had the same light-hearted and cheery air that Stephen recalled from their college days.

“How is your family?” Stephen asked, taking a seat and pouring coffee.

“Oh, pretty much the same. Father still believes I should be working for him at the *Dispatch* and Mother continues to put on her social events. My older, obstinate sister, Liz, is now working for father at the newspaper. Just imagine!” He shook his head. “Where are you living now?”

“I’m still living at home for now, Roger. There are advantages and disadvantages. I don’t have to cook meals or do my own laundry.” He shrugged. “It’s just until I figure some things out and certainly is not permanent.” Stephen pushed his hair off his forehead. “Your sister, hmm, so really, what is she like?” Stephen gazed at his friend’s handsome face and thought, *She could be quite pretty.*

Roger shrugged. “She’s not your type, not anyone’s type. Believe me, way too headstrong for a woman!” He sighed. “Are you still working in the family business?”

“Yes, at least for now,” Stephen responded. “I’m trying to learn all that I can about the business. Father has been involving me in the daily activities. Between the transportation of goods and people and the warehousing and distribution out of St. Paul and the other downriver locations, there’s plenty to learn.”

After ordering the daily special and more coffee, the old friends discussed their past experiences in Red Wing. “So tell me, ‘Choir Boy,’ are you still singing?” Roger knew Stephen had sung with the Hamline choir. Thanks to his mother, Stephen had received voice lessons during his youth.

“Oh, I sing once in a while at our church.” Stephen shrugged dismissively. “Not all that important. Do you remember all those

fishing and hunting forays out of Red Wing?” Stephen asked, quickly changing the subject.

“Sure, I remember.” Roger smiled suggestively. “And I remember all those saucy young ladies that we wine and dined, mostly on your money.”

Stephen laughed and slapped the table. “Actually, that was my folks’ money and I am quite glad to have been of service. So long as I kept up my studies, they were quite generous. Father told me often to have a good time while I could.”

After additional reminiscing, Roger suddenly turned serious. “What do you make of this mess between the North and the South? Do you think there will be a fight? Will there be a shooting war over slavery? Poor old George Washington would turn over in his grave if that happens.”

“It’s looking bad,” Stephen replied, shaking his head in disgust. “All those Southern states seceding and Jefferson Davis being elected as their president. What choice will President Lincoln have? For that matter, what choice will Minnesota have? We achieved statehood in 1858 and face this in 1861.”

Stephen leaned across the table closer to Roger. “Lincoln will be inaugurated in Washington in three days and Governor Ramsey is hosting a Minnesota Inauguration Celebration at the Winslow House Hotel. He invited my family, and I bet your family, too. I wouldn’t normally go to such a fancy shindig, but we might learn something of importance from the governor if we were to attend. Do you think your folks are going?”

“Oh yes,” Roger responded emphatically. “My father will attend. As editor and majority owner of the *St. Paul Dispatch*, he will most certainly be there. And my mother has our house already in an uproar over my sister attending and being dressed properly. However, my friend, we should go. I bet we might meet some attractive young ladies there hoping for a fun evening with dashing young men.”

“Well then, we shall go.” Stephen laughed while ignoring Roger’s implication and his well-known proclivity to seek out the company of lovely young ladies whenever possible.

“Should we wear our military uniforms?” Roger asked.

Stephen thoughtfully considered Roger’s question and shook his head.

“No, not to the Inauguration Celebration. I don’t think our folks are ready for that yet.”

* * *

“Mum, is Roger really planning to attend the Inauguration Celebration next Monday?” Elizabeth asked her mother, Sarah, who was carefully searching through Elizabeth’s closet for a dress that was formal enough to suit the occasion.

“That’s what he said, Sweetheart. He and his friend from Hamline, Stephen Dawson, thought it might be educational to meet Governor Ramsey and hear any additional news concerning the secession of South Carolina and the other Southern states. Everyone is worried about the terrible situation facing our new President. I must say, your father is encouraged by Roger’s interest in current affairs. Anything that might divert his attention away from Stillwater and the lumber milling business and back to your father’s newspaper.”

“Well, Papa had better be careful what he wishes for,” Elizabeth warned. “There may be a war coming and Roger is a member of the Stillwater Guard.” Elizabeth knew that her father wanted her brother to follow him into the newspaper business. Personally, she felt Roger should be free to pursue his own life in any trade or business that he desired. She also harbored some resentment that her father believed the proper outcome of her attending the North Western Female College in Evanston, Illinois, was for her to become a teacher. Elizabeth believed teaching was a noble profession but it held no attraction for her.

Elizabeth Phillips was a twenty-three year old beautiful young lady with long golden blonde hair, exquisite features, an hourglass figure, an easy laugh and a quick mind. She was patient and kind but had no tolerance for any type of dismissive behavior based on her sex. She was

also highly competitive and quite resolute in her opinions. This was considered unnatural and unfeminine by some detractors. She laughed them off, however, since she was naturally charming and blessed with many friends and admirers.

“You know, Mum, for a newspaper editor, Father’s beliefs and opinions are old-fashioned and out of step with the times. He’s right to insist that the Union be preserved, but he is slow to speak out clearly about the inherent evil of slavery. And his opinions on women’s rights including the right to vote are positively prehistoric!”

“Oh Liz,” her mother sighed. “We cannot expect your father to change his views overnight. One step at a time. Now, I think this ocean blue satin and ecru lace gown will go beautifully with your blonde hair and blue eyes. And of course, you’ll wear your new silk shawl, too. This dress will have all the young men waiting in line to dance with you. By the way, did I mention that your father and I met Stephen Dawson and his parents at the graduation ceremony last spring and that Stephen is in fact quite bright and very handsome?”

Elizabeth blushed. “Oh Mother! As if I cared about that.”

Sara frowned. “Well, Liz, you’re not getting any younger.”

* * *

The Dawson residence was a massive Victorian home located on Fort Street in the prestigious Upper Bank area of St. Paul. Their home was built in 1859 and was considered large even by current standards with two floors, a parlor, a combination study-library, and a formal dining room. The huge kitchen was set up to host large formal affairs with gigantic kettles set over fires with large spits for roasting, two stoves, an impressive pantry, and large cold storage in the basement for fresh vegetables, meat, and wine. There were four bedrooms on the second floor, each with its own sitting room. The carriage house and stable were connected to the main house by a covered walkway.

Henry Dawson reached across the lunch table for a second slice of roast beef. “Stephen, I understand you are driving our carriage tonight to the

Inauguration Celebration. I asked John Paul to drive, but he said that you insisted on driving us yourself.”

“Yes, Father. I thought it would be best for John Paul to stay out of sight until those two Southern bounty hunters that I told you about are gone.”

Henry nodded at this bit of wisdom. “Well, I suppose you are right, son, although John Paul could have used the extra money I planned to pay him for his driving service tonight. Perhaps he could help with packing up extra shipping boxes instead. No one would see him in the warehouse.”

Katherine turned to her husband. “That is an excellent idea, dear. Out of sight is perhaps better, for now.”

“Speaking of Southern bounty hunters,” Stephen said while buttering a biscuit, “I hope that you two are taking great care in dealing with this Underground Railroad business. It worries me greatly, Mother. I don’t want to have to visit you in jail.”

“Stephen,” Katherine defiantly responded, while sending the biscuit platter around the table again, “I have no idea of what you are referring to. Why, any participation in such business would be extremely illegal and quite risky!”

“Exactly my point, Mother,” Stephen replied, eyeing his father who was trying hard to suppress a smile. “Any participation could involve very serious consequences.” Stephen tried catching his mother’s eye as well, but she blithely ignored him, calmly spooning mint jelly onto her julienned carrots. They ate in momentary silence.

“I understand that Roger and his family will be at the Inauguration Celebration tonight,” Katherine said, obviously seeking to change the subject. “It will be simply wonderful to see them again. We haven’t seen them since the graduation in Red Wing.”

“Well, I for one am glad that Lincoln won the election,” Henry interjected while also looking to change the subject. “But the celebration tonight may be somewhat muted given the secession of those seven Southern states and the naming of that traitor, Jefferson

Davis, as the president of the Confederate States. If there is to be war between the North and South, there will be hell to pay. And, Stephen, we will need you here more than ever to help with the business.”

Stephen remained silent, finishing his last few bites. He folded his napkin and placed it beside his plate. “I had better check on the carriage and horses.”

After Stephen left, Katherine looked at Henry with relief. “Well, that was more than a little uncomfortable. I cannot morally allow those people to be treated so inhumanely. I hope he will understand my motivations some day for placing our family in some danger. And I have to admit to being more than a little worried that Stephen will not stay out of the coming conflict. I can see it in his eyes.”

* * *

The renowned Winslow House Hotel was built by James Winslow in 1856. The six-story, two-hundred-room hotel was built of locally available limestone from the riverbed and bluffs near St. Anthony Falls. The hotel was located at Main Street and Central Avenue in the Upper Landing area of St. Paul and was extremely popular. Southerners packed up and moved to the hotel in late spring. They enjoyed staying at the luxury hotel during the warm season, thereby avoiding the extreme downriver sweltering summer heat. The hotel was also a favorite for Eastern tourists and businessmen.

Even though it was a freezing winter night, the Republican Party faithful had turned out in large numbers and they were dressed in their finest attire. The hotel’s entry way was brightly lit and packed with guests draped in silks and pearls, beaver stoles, white gloves for the ladies and fine-handled canes for the men. The guests were eager to make their way into the hotel and bask in the warmth of the lobby under the glittering chandeliers.

Stephen drove the family carriage as close to the hotel entrance as possible to mitigate the snow and the cold. Henry helped Katherine climb down from the carriage and they joined the line of guests making their way into the hotel lobby. After checking their hats and coats with

the hotel, Henry and Katherine encountered the Phillips family near the back of the reception line.

“Hello James and Sarah,” Henry said. “You remember my wife, Katherine?”

“Yes, of course. It is lovely to see you both again,” James responded as he shook hands with Henry and greeted Katherine. “You know our son, Roger, but I don’t think you have met Elizabeth, our daughter. She was not with us at the June graduation.”

“No, we have not yet had the pleasure of meeting your lovely daughter,” Henry said as he extended his hand to Elizabeth. Henry thought Elizabeth was quite striking with her long golden blonde hair and blue satin and lace gown.

Elizabeth responded with a nod and a smile. “Hello Mr. and Mrs. Dawson. It is certainly a pleasure to meet you.”

Glancing about, Roger asked, “Where is Stephen. He did come, didn’t he?”

“Oh yes, he came,” Katherine responded. “He insisted on driving us this evening, and he wanted to personally deliver the horses to the livery.”

“Excellent!” Roger laughed with great relief in his voice, knowing that his friend would be there.

The two families continued to move slowly towards Governor and Mrs. Ramsey in the reception line. The line extended all the way around the room and out into the lobby.

“Oh, here comes Stephen now.” Roger greeted his old friend. Elizabeth turned toward her brother and she was immediately struck by the tall and handsome young man whom Roger happily greeted.

“It’s about time you got here,” Roger said lightly punching Stephen in the shoulder. “We didn’t want the party to start without you.”

“Hello Roger. Hello Mr. and Mrs. Phillips,” Stephen said, nodding politely. “Good to see you again.”

“Hello Stephen,” James responded as he firmly shook Stephen’s hand. “I don’t think you have met Roger’s sister, Elizabeth.”

Stephen turned to meet Elizabeth. He was at once surprised and secretly delighted. He thought to himself, *This beautiful lady is Roger’s sister?* She was quite tall for a woman with beautiful golden blonde hair and a very nice figure set to great advantage by a blue silk dress the exact same shade as her eyes. She had an ingratiating smile.

Elizabeth awkwardly extended her hand to Stephen while attempting to appear nonchalant, even though her pulse was suddenly racing. “Hello Stephen. I understand that you were a close friend of my rascal brother at college.”

“Guilty as charged,” Stephen said with a chuckle. “Actually, we were roommates.”

“Oh, come on,” Roger responded with an air of indignity. “You were certainly not perfect!”

Everyone laughed and James turned back toward the reception line where he was about to greet the Governor and Mrs. Ramsey. They all watched with rising excitement as those before them turned to go.

“Hello James,” said the Governor while enthusiastically shaking James’s hand. “You remember my wife, Anna? How is everything at the newspaper?”

“Well, right now, Governor, everything is a little tense as we await news from Washington and the South. May I present my wife, Sarah, and my children, Roger and Elizabeth.”

“It’s so good to meet you, Sarah,” the Governor responded. “And I am pleased to meet you both, Roger and Elizabeth.” Roger and Elizabeth politely shook hands with the Governor and Mrs. Ramsey.

Mrs. Ramsey turned to James and his family. “I would like to introduce you to our Lieutenant Governor, Ignatius Donnelly, and his wife, Katherine.”

The Governor then shook hands with Henry Dawson. “How are things in the shipping and distribution business, Henry? It’s been a pretty tough winter.”

“Yes, it has been, Governor, and we really miss our steamboats in the winter. The distribution of our goods certainly becomes more complicated. You have met my wife Katherine before, but I don’t believe that you have met my son, Stephen, who graduated from Hamline University last spring and is assisting me with our business. Stephen is also a lieutenant with the St. Paul Guard.”

“Pleased to meet you, Governor.” Stephen stepped forward and firmly shook the Governor’s hand. “We are all eager to learn about any additional developments in the East.”

“Well, Stephen, I can understand everyone’s anxiety about events in the East, especially in the case of our young men such as yourself who might be asked to answer the nation’s call to protect the Union. We shall have more to say about such matters later this evening.”

The hotel’s large dining room was tastefully decorated with red, white, and blue banners and signs heralding the election of President Lincoln and Vice President Hamlin. The white cloth-covered dining room tables were arranged to allow for a raised stage located in the middle of the large room with ample space for dancing. The stage was sufficiently large to accommodate a six-piece orchestra and a grand piano. Each table was decorated with a candle center piece and the dining room was well lit by the latest in gas chandeliers.

The women were all elegantly dressed in their long ball gowns fashionably draped over hoops to create a tiny waist—colorful yet conservative. The men were dressed in formal attire with dark tailcoats, dark creased trousers, white shirts with elaborately tied silk cravats or formal ties, and dark or brightly striking silk waistcoats. A few of the younger men, including Stephen and Roger, wore blue coats with white waistcoats, and their trousers were trimmed with dark stripes down the sides in a faux military fashion.

As Henry and his family left the reception line, James approached Henry. "Henry, we have a nice table with a good view of the orchestral stage. We would be most pleased if you would join us."

"Oh, gladly, James." Henry escorted Katherine, followed by Stephen, to join James at his table. Stephen took his place between Roger and Henry while Elizabeth sat between her mother and Katherine, and James sat between Roger and Sarah.

After they had been served the first course of fish chowder, Katherine was curious. "Do I understand correctly that you are working with your father as a reporter for the newspaper?"

"Yes, that is correct," Elizabeth answered. "I enjoy writing as well as pursuing the story line."

"You know, my sister always enjoys working in a man's world," Roger chimed in. Realizing that his comment did not go over well with his sister, however, he added, "But I admire her gumption." Roger's comment brought a cool stare from Elizabeth.

"Well, I was somewhat surprised over Elizabeth's early choice of a profession," James added. "But she has done well and has pursued her stories with real determination. She is even spending extra time at the telegraph office learning how to use Morse code."

Stephen was impressed. "How did you convince the powers in charge of the telegraph office to teach you how to use Morse code?"

"I argued that I would be spending a lot of time around the office obtaining stories off the telegraph and that I might prove to be useful in a time of emergency. By the way, I am not yet totally proficient with the code," Elizabeth confided.

"That is most impressive, Elizabeth," Henry added. "Have you been able to pick up any stories for your father and the paper? Especially about the political storm brewing in the East?"

"Well, we will have something to report on that score in tomorrow's edition," James injected. "And we may hear something from the Governor this evening concerning the Inauguration."

The serving of the main course of chicken breast, cheese potatoes and sautéed mixed vegetables arrived and the orchestra began to play. An attractive solo soprano, Faith Richards, added her melodious voice to the excellent musical background.

After dessert of chocolate layer cake, Roger and Stephen excused themselves to seek drinks from the bar. Stephen was not eager to leave the table discussion and Elizabeth's fair company, but he honored Roger's request to do so.

"Roger, why didn't you tell me about your sister?" Roger was ordering a bourbon whiskey. "She is a lovely young lady and quite accomplished."

"Lady hell!" Roger countered. "She is no lady. She is my older, opinionated sister and very likely to end up as a spinster. You, my good friend, would do well to stay far away from her. She is trouble spelled with a capital T." He rolled his eyes and grinned. "But speaking of young ladies, there are several such lovely creatures here, and we should take advantage of the situation and ask them to dance."

"No, you go ahead," Stephen replied as he secretly gazed at Elizabeth. "I'll see you back at our table." As the dancing commenced, Stephen returned to the table and decided to take the plunge. He approached Elizabeth and asked if she would care to dance. Elizabeth thought to herself that it was about time and said she would love to dance. Their parents were enjoying their wine and conversation. They all smiled and nodded as they witnessed Stephen's request and Elizabeth's warm acceptance.

Stephen led Elizabeth to the dance floor and assumed a proper waltz position with one hand around her back and the other holding her hand delicately as if she was a fragile bird. He took a quick glance down to judge his steps so he would not accidentally tread on the hem of her lovely gown. Elizabeth smiled at Stephen's awkwardness.

"You know, Stephen, I am not going to break, and despite what my brother probably told you, I won't bite you."

Embarrassed, Stephen pulled her as close as her hoop skirt would allow and was soon gliding her across the dance floor with great aplomb while thinking how fortunate he was to have such a lovely young woman in his arms. She was so different from the other young ladies he had met.

“So Stephen, where did Roger go?” Elizabeth asked with a twinkle in her eye.

“Oh, he said that he wanted to make some new friends.”

“Yes, that would be Roger.” Elizabeth smiled knowingly. “And what about you? What did you say?”

“I told him that I, too, wanted to make a new friend.” Stephen was grinning from ear to ear.

“Well, Stephen, my smooth and gallant new friend, I am pleased to make your acquaintance.” And with that they drew even closer to each other as they continued to smoothly waltz across the dance floor.

As they danced, Stephen remarked, “I don’t remember seeing you last spring at our graduation in Red Wing.”

“No, I was in Chicago at the Republican Convention. Father initially disapproved of my being there, but he did seem to like my background stories about the convention and the famous Wigwam building where the convention was held.”

Stephen was tempted to ask about the Wigwam building but instead cautiously said, “I understand that Chicago can be a rough place for men, not to mention young ladies. I mean, you could not be a convention delegate, and it had to be a rowdy setting.”

“It is true that women cannot be delegates or vote, but that will change in time. Why, don’t you think that I can take care of myself?” Her eyes were clear and sharp as she watched him.

Stephen sensed he was suddenly skating on very thin ice. “Oh, I believe that you can quite ably take care of yourself in most situations. But if it is you against a couple of male thugs, you might have some difficulty.” Stephen could not help but be impressed with the charming and

independent lady that he held in his arms. Her touch, her smile, her softly scented hair, and her blue eyes clearly made her special.

“So, did you see Candidate Lincoln at the convention? What is he like in person?”

Elizabeth smiled at Stephen. “No, I didn’t see him at the convention. Actually, he was not there. He remained in Springfield but was reportedly in touch with high operatives of the Republican Party by telegraph. However, I did previously see Mr. Lincoln in Ottawa, Illinois, in August of 1858 at the first of the Lincoln-Douglas debates.”

Stephen was fascinated. “What did you think of the debate and what were your first impressions of our now new president?”

“The debate was held outside on a clear, warm day. There must have been over ten thousand people in attendance. I did my best to get as close to the speaker’s platform as possible. I might have ruffled the feathers of some important attendees as I made my way towards the front. However, I did hear most of the debate clearly.”

The music then stopped. After Stephen escorted Elizabeth back to the table and helped seat her, he eagerly asked her, “And what did you think?”

“Well, first of all, Mr. Lincoln is quite tall as you know and towered over Mr. Douglas. He is six foot four inches tall, I believe. At that time he did not have his now famous beard. Although he at first strikes you as rather awkward in appearance, he is a wonderful debater and he delivered his message with clarity of thought and nuanced humor. He is humble but yet quite resolute. After a while his voice became somewhat high-pitched. However, it was not so much how he spoke but rather what he said. He spoke eloquently against the institution of slavery and for the freedom of man but yet he clearly did not want slavery to split the nation apart. As you might tell, I was greatly impressed by Lincoln.”

It then became clear that Governor Ramsey was making his way to the platform. Given the historical context, everyone was anxious to hear the Governor’s remarks.

The Governor first thanked those who had organized the Inauguration Celebration. He congratulated the Republican Party and the voters of Minnesota for loyally supporting President Lincoln. The election of 1860 was the first presidential election following statehood in 1858. Only Vermont exceeded Minnesota in terms of the percentage of the popular vote for President Lincoln.

The Governor then reviewed the extreme circumstances facing the new administration, including the secession of seven Southern states and the selection of Jefferson Davis as the new president of the Confederacy. Governor Ramsey continued. "Word has reached me through the telegraph that on this very day President Lincoln displayed a firm but conciliatory tone with the South. Here, in part, my fellow citizens are his words as directed to those that would abandon the Union:

'My countrymen, one and all, think calmly and well upon this whole subject. Nothing valuable can be lost by taking time... In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the Government, while I shall have the most solemn one 'to preserve, protect, and defend it.'"

Ramsey then stated that he would be personally traveling to Washington in the next few weeks "to do the State's business." He added that if the Union were to find itself in future peril, he had no doubt but the people of Minnesota would vigorously and immediately rally to the Union's defense. With that, Governor Ramsey asked everyone to raise their glasses to President Lincoln's election, thanked everyone for coming, and encouraged everyone to enjoy the rest of the evening.

Following the Governor's remarks, the music and dancing resumed. However, the mood of the attendees was definitely more somber. Roger, trying to brighten spirits at the table, said, "It's time for you parents to spice things up and get out there on the dance floor!"

Sensing that Roger made a good point, James offered his arm to his wife. "Sarah, let's show these young people how to do it! Are you coming, Henry and Katherine?"

"We are right behind you," Henry responded while escorting Katherine to the dance floor. Roger, Elizabeth, and Stephen were all pleasantly surprised not only to see their parents dancing, but to see them do so with alacrity and skill. They performed three dances in succession, including a form of round dance, a waltz, and lastly a vigorous polka. Returning to the table following the polka, James and Henry pretended to have joint heart attacks and everyone laughed.

As the evening was winding down, Faith Richards, the soprano singer, asked if there was a man in the audience willing to assist her with a rendition of the popular love song, "Lorena." Sensing an opportunity, Roger raised his hand. "Miss Richards, my good friend here, Stephen Dawson, has a wonderful voice which he often displayed in the choir at Hamline University."

Upon hearing Rogers's pronouncement, Stephen quickly protested. "Miss Richards, please ignore him. He is a troublemaker." Stephen's face had turned somewhat red with embarrassment.

However, those around Stephen's table had quickly picked up on Roger's words and began clapping and urging Stephen to work with the singer. It did not help Stephen's case when Katherine also joined in. "Oh, go ahead Stephen. You have an excellent voice."

Not shocked by her brother's antics, but totally surprised by Stephen's alleged singing skills, Elizabeth could only watch in anticipation. Stephen reluctantly made his way to the orchestral platform brushing by Roger and saying under his breath, "I *will* get you for this!"

Roger grinned. "Ha! You will thank me one day for this opportunity. Now, go sing, Choir Boy! Help the lady out."

Faith Richards held out her hand from the stage. "Here is a copy of the lyrics for you. Just follow my lead." Stephen's face was still red. Faith smiled. "Are you ready?" Sensing his reluctance, she patted his hand. "You'll do fine."

Stephen nodded and the orchestra began. “Lorena” was first written in 1856 by Reverend Henry Webster as a poem concerning a broken engagement. In 1857, Joseph Webster wrote the melody to accompany it.

Faith Richards began with her sweet, soaring soprano voice. Stephen joined in, adding his strong baritone to the duet. Elizabeth was deeply impressed with the richness of Stephen’s voice. The song of unrequited love filled the ballroom. The audience was captivated and showed its approval with enthusiastic applause.

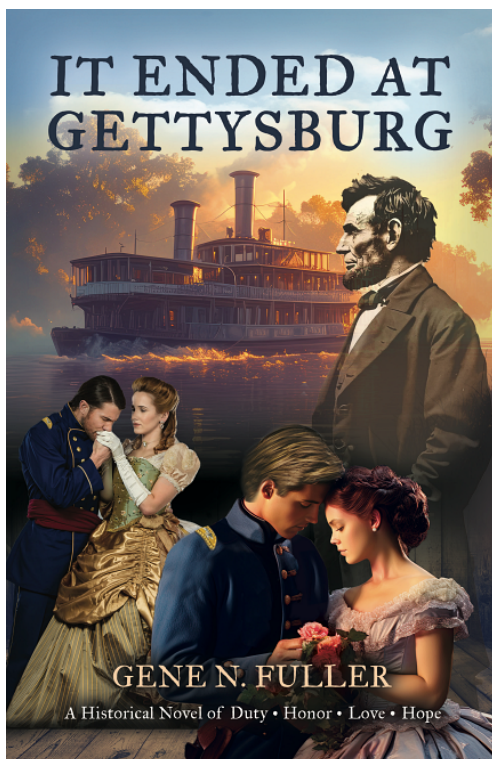
Faith Richards was also impressed. “Wonderful, Stephen. You have a great voice.” She congratulated him as he quickly and gratefully left the stage.

He took his seat at the table next to an astonished Elizabeth and a beaming Roger. Elizabeth was truly impressed. “Stephen, you really are full of surprises.” Stephen shrugged and returned her smile.

All in all, the night was enjoyable for the Dawson and Phillips families. But what would follow President Lincoln’s election? The divided nation did not have to wait long to find out.

*It matters little now, Lorena,
The past is in the eternal past;
Our heads will soon lie low,
Lorena, Life’s tide is ebbing out so fast.*

*There is a future, oh, thank God!
Of life this is so small a part,
‘Tis dust to dust beneath the sod,
But there, up there, ‘tis heart to heart.*
From “Lorena”



Courageous best friends join the First Minnesota Regiment and fight their way to Gettysburg. They are followed by two strong, lovely women who rebel against existing norms by working in the Military Telegraph Office and the War Department.

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