

Revisiting Civil War history

Last living Otter Tail County veteran of war, died in Battle Lake in 1938, to be honored

James Allison "Cap" Colehour, the last Civil War veteran buried in Otter Tail County, will be honored in a ceremony Saturday, October 9, at Lakewood Cemetery in Battle Lake.

The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) is conducting the ceremony with the assistance of Jay Johnson, the great-grandson of James Colehour, the Prospect House and Civil War Museum of Battle Lake, members of the Battle Lake American Legion Post 289, and Civil War reenactors from the First Minnesota Volunteer Infantry.

James "Cap" Colehour was born in Chester County, Pennsylvania on January 28, 1842.

His family relocated to Mount Carroll, Illinois, where Colehour enlisted in Company I of the 92nd Regiment of Illinois Volunteer Infantry on September 4, 1862. The unit became a special forces unit of mounted infantry under Colonel John Wilder, and after helping to secure the Union victory by an aggressive and surprise advance at the Battle of Hoover's Gap in Tennessee (June 24, 1863), earned the name Wilder's Lightning Brigade. The unit also had the distinction of carrying the new Spencer repeating rifle. Colehour was wounded in the right shoulder at Chickamauga on September 19, 1863.

After rejoining his company in January 1864 he was wounded in the left shoulder at Muscle Shoals,

Alabama. After four months of recovery he rejoined his regiment again and served until his honorable discharge on June 21, 1865.

After 14 years working for the Postal Service in Chicago, Colehour moved to Battle Lake, Otter Tail County, in 1882. Colehour purchased the land and built and operated The Prospect Inn, a hotel in Battle Lake that today is the Prospect House & Civil War Museum.

Colehour was active in the Everts G.A.R. Post #138.

He was the last surviving Civil War veteran in Otter Tail County and the last survivor of his regiment. He died on December 25, 1938 in Battle Lake.

The Last Soldier ceremony will begin at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, October 9, at Colehour's grave at Lakewood Cemetery, Battle Lake. The ceremony is open to the public and any of Colehour's descendants in the Battle Lake or Otter Tail County area are invited to attend.

William Colvill Camp #56, Department of Wisconsin, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) will be presiding over the ceremony. The Battle Lake American Legion will be firing a three-volley salute over Colehour's grave. Cannon firing is also planned. The ceremony will feature the Last Soldier dedication ritual of the SUVCW and includes the placing of a Last Soldier Marker on the veter-

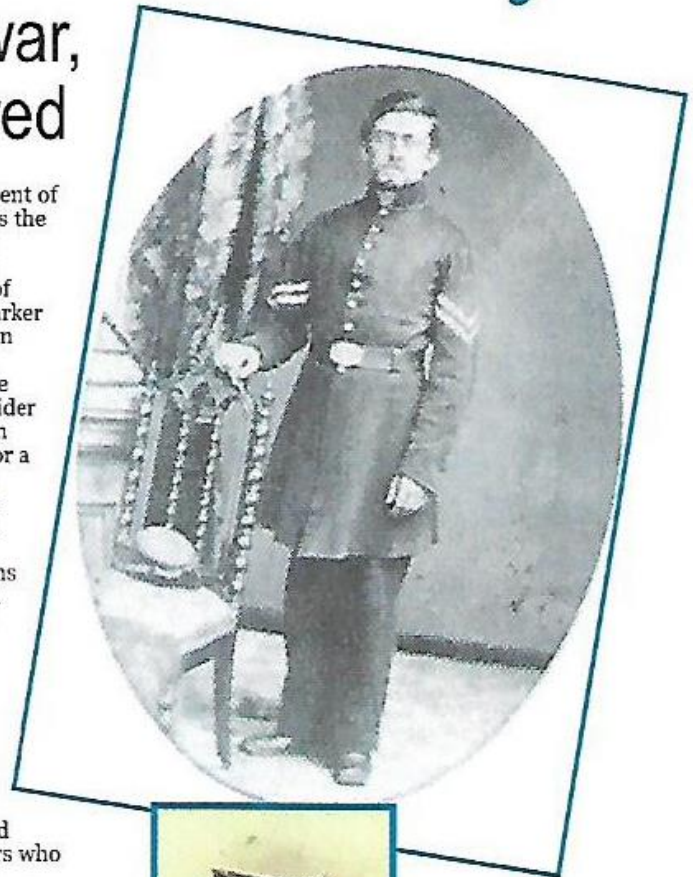
an's grave.

Camp #56 of the Department of Wisconsin, whose territory is the entire state of Minnesota, is engaged in the Last Soldier Project, which has the goal of identifying and placing a marker on the grave of the last Union veteran buried in each of Minnesota's 87 counties. The members of Camp #56 consider the Last Soldier ceremony an honor and a fitting tribute for a Union soldier whose service helped preserve the liberties Americans enjoy as a nation today.

The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War is a national veterans organization made up of the descendants of Union soldiers who fought in the Civil War. The SUVCW has more than 6,000 members across the country and is the successor to the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R), the veterans organization formed after the Civil War by soldiers who served in the Union Army.

The last member of the G.A.R. died in 1956.

For ceremony information contact: Doug Urbanski, Camp Commander Camp #56, Department of Wisconsin Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War urbanski-da@protonmail.com 612-940-4662



Images of Otter Tail County's last surviving Union Civil War veteran, James Allison "Cap" Colehour, who died in Battle Lake in 1938.