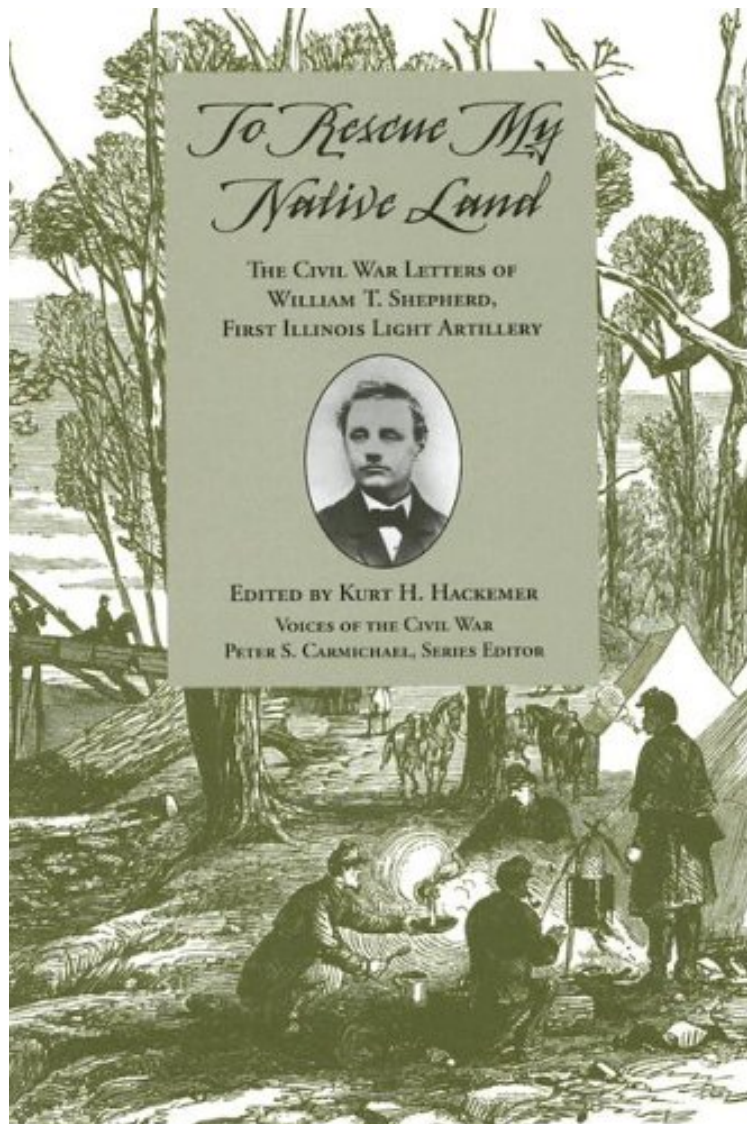


(Download pdf ebook) To Rescue My Native Land: The Civil War Letters of William T. Shepherd (Voices Of The Civil War)

## To Rescue My Native Land: The Civil War Letters of William T. Shepherd (Voices Of The Civil War)

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**From Brand: Univ Tennessee Press : To Rescue My Native Land: The Civil War Letters of William T. Shepherd (Voices Of The Civil War)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised To Rescue My Native Land: The Civil War Letters of William T. Shepherd (Voices Of The Civil War):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Very Unusual Set of Letters By John Matlock William T. Shepherd was a soldier in the First Illinois Light Artillery during the Civil War. He fought in most of the early battles in the Western Theater including Fort Henry, Fort Donelson and Shiloh. Although no mention is made of college, he was quite well educated for the time and in the fall of 1862 he was made a clerk. He remained a rear area soldier for the rest of his service and survived the war. During his time of service he wrote some 150 letters home, mostly to his mother and father, but also to other relatives. These have been carefully preserved and form the basis of this book. His letters are unique in several ways: First, as mentioned, he was quite well educated for the time. Second, he served in the west. Education was much better in the eastern states, making him more unusual. Third, he served as an enlisted man. The correspondence or memoirs of officers is much more common. But as an enlisted man he experienced the war at an entirely different level than an officer. Finally he was a rear area soldier, especially concerned with logistics. Here is a view of supplying the army from one at a low level that again is quite rare in the literature of any war.

The salary of a private in the army is \$12, monthly and fed uniformed. I know it is a hard life, but anything for my Native Land, wrote William T. Shepherd, a Wisconsin native enlisted in Battery B of the First Illinois Light Artillery. During his three years in the Western theater, Shepherd served as both an artilleryman and a clerk in several ordnance offices, all the while carefully recording his experiences and observations in letters to his family. A keen chronicler of camp life and the vicissitudes of soldiering, Shepherd wrote extremely detailed and enlightening battle accounts. He saw significant action at Fredericktown, Belmont, Forts Henry and Donelson, and Shiloh, with his battery playing a critical role in several of these engagements. In the fall of 1862, he became an ordnance clerk. From a unique vantage point rarely known by historians, he described the logistical apparatus supporting the Union advance against Vicksburg and later across Tennessee. In his new capacity as a rear-area soldier, Shepherd had the opportunity to interact with local civilians. He regularly attended civilian churches, had black servants and housekeepers and witnessed colored balls, met Southerners on the street on a daily basis, and boarded in a Southern home. Because of these experiences, Shepherd came to view the South's citizens as more than battlefield abstractions, and his understanding of the occupied South grew increasingly nuanced. Highly educated compared with many other soldiers of his rank, Shepherd expresses the life of the common combatant in an unusually articulate way. *To Rescue My Native Land* traces the evolution of a young recruit to veteran artilleryman and administrative operative and provides a unique look at the behind-the-scenes operations of several of the Civil War's most important engagements."

About the Author Kurt H. Hackemer is associate professor of history at the University of South Dakota. He is the author of *The U.S. Navy and the Origins of the Military-Industrial Complex, 1847-1883*, and his articles have appeared in such publications as *Military History of the West*, *Naval War College*, and *Civil War History*."