

# PRESS RELEASE

## MUSCATINE ART CENTER

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[www.muscatineartcenter.org](http://www.muscatineartcenter.org)

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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#### ***The Scared Cause of Union: Iowa in the Civil War***

Local author Thomas R. Baker will present material from his book, *The Scared Cause of Union: Iowa in the Civil War*, published in November 2016 by the University of Iowa Press, at the Muscatine Art Center. Guests will learn about the unique place Iowa holds in Civil War history, meet Mr. Baker, and have the opportunity to purchase a signed copy of *The Sacred Cause of Union*. The program will be held on March 30, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. in the Art Center's Music Room. Admission is free and open to the public.

*The Sacred Cause of Union* highlights Iowans' important role in reuniting the nation. In this first ever survey of the state's Civil War history, Baker interweaves economics, politics, army recruitment, battlefield performance, and government administration. Scattered across more than a dozen states and territories, Iowa's fighting men marched long distances and won battles against larger rebel armies despite having little food or shelter and sometimes poor equipment. In the absence of a coordinated military supply system, women's volunteer organizations were instrumental in delivering food, clothing, medicines, and other supplies. All of these efforts contributed to the Union victory and catapulted Iowa into the top circle of the most influential states in the nation.

To shed light on how individual Iowans experienced the war, the book profiles six state residents. Three were well-known. Annie Wittenmyer led the state's efforts to ship clothing and food to the soldiers. Alexander Clark, a Muscatine businessman and the son of former slaves, eloquently championed the rights of African Americans. Cyrus Carpenter served in the army and then headed the state's Radical Republican faction after the war, ultimately being elected governor. Three never became famous. Ben Stevens fought in an Iowa regiment at Shiloh, and then transferred to a Louisiana African American regiment so that he could lead the former slaves into battle. Farm boy Abner Dunham defended the Sunken Road at the Battle of Shiloh, before spending seven grim months in Confederate prison camps. The young Charles Musser faced pressure from his neighbors to enlist and from his parents to remain at home to work on the farm.

Soon after he signed on to serve the Union, he discovered that his older brother had joined the Confederate Army. Through the letters and lives of these six lowans, Baker shows how the Civil War transformed the state.

Thomas R. Baker is the associate dean of students at the University of Iowa. A judicial administrator since 1988, he specializes in civil rights investigations. He lives in Muscatine with his partner, Neva Rettig Baker. *The Sacred Cause of Union* is available for sale at bookstores or directly from the University of Iowa Press at 800-621-2736 or online at [uipress.uiowa.edu](http://uipress.uiowa.edu).

The Muscatine Art Center is located at 1314 Mulberry Avenue in Muscatine, Iowa. Hours are Tuesday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Thursday evenings until 7:00 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Donations are appreciated. Visit [www.muscatineartcenter.org](http://www.muscatineartcenter.org) for more information about programs and events and to download a class brochure.