

6TH ILLINOIS CAVALRY REGIMENT

The 6th Illinois Cavalry was organized at Camp Butler on 19 November 1861, Colonel Thomas H Cavanaugh, commanding.

Colonel Cavanaugh resigned his commission and Lt Colonel Benjamin H Grierson, of Jacksonville, Illinois, was promoted to Colonel and took command of the Regiment on 13 April 1862.

On 17 April 1863, the 6th Illinois Cavalry was Brigaded with the 7th Illinois Cavalry and the 2nd Iowa Cavalry, Colonel Grierson, commanding.

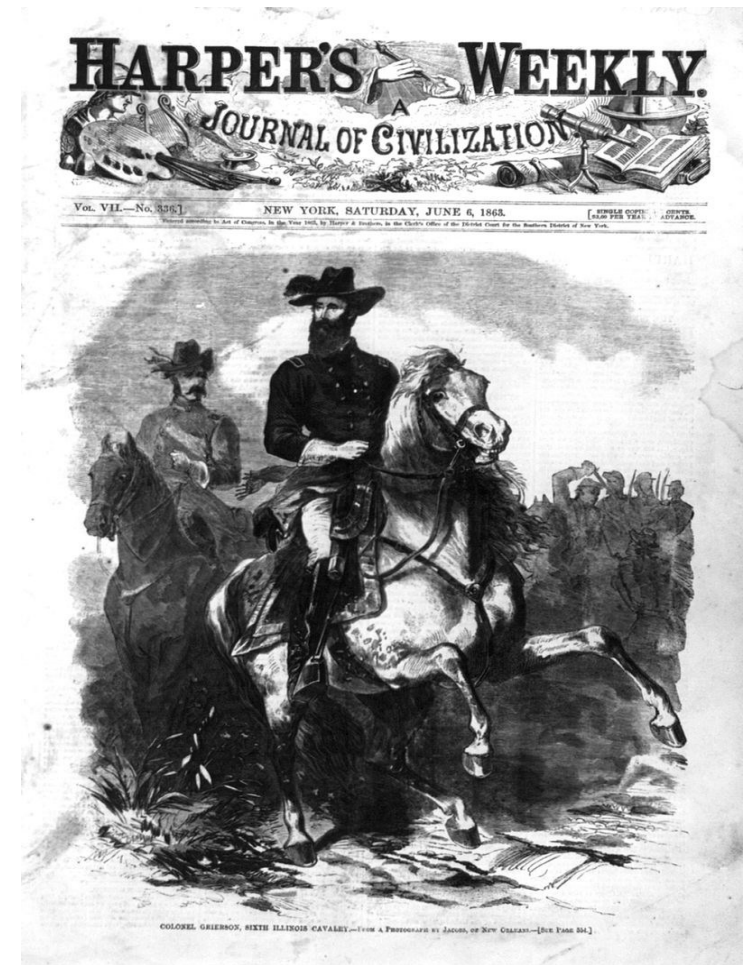
The brigade became known as Grierson's Brigade. The Brigade left LaGrange, Tennessee on 17 April 1863 and over 17 days, Grierson's Brigade travelled 800 miles, repeatedly engaged Confederate units, tore up railroads, burned crossties, destroyed locomotives, ripped up bridges and trestles, and destroyed vast amounts of confederate stores in addition to taking many prisoners, fighting their way to Baton Rouge, Louisiana.



Benjamin H Grierson

What became known as Grierson's Raid was the inspiration for the 1956 novel, *The Horse Soldiers*, by Harold Sinclair and the epic John Wayne movie of the same name. Harold Sinclair was from Bloomington, Illinois.

Grierson's exploits were also featured as the cover story of the Harper's Weekly edition of 6 June 1863.



In May of 1864, the 6th Illinois Cavalry was one of the many units that was granted 30 days furlough in Mattoon at Camp Grant. It is likely that Grierson was in Mattoon with his men. Fourteen men from Mattoon served in the 6th Cavalry, all but 3 in Company G.

In addition to Grierson's Raid, the 6th Cavalry was engaged at the battles of Franklin and Nashville, as well as many skirmishes as they provided scouting and screening for infantry units.

The Regiment was mustered out on 20 November 1865.

Losses for the Regiment were: 5 officers and 60 enlisted men killed or mortally wounded and 8 officers and 328 enlisted men by disease.