Fisk Expedition

The Fisk Expedition passed through Griggs County in both 1863 and 1864. The official purpose was to escort gold miners to the newly discovered gold fields in Idaho and Montana, but the Minnesota politicians also wanted to use it for lobbying congress to change the first transcontinental railroad to the Northern Route.

James Liberty Fisk had a lot of peculiarities. He was flamboyant and tended to dramatize himself and he was a very undisciplined solder.

He joined the Union Army in 1861 as a 26 year old private. His only significant experience up until then had been as an apprentice on a newspaper in Lafayette, Indiana, but he gave his occupation as editor.

Fisk had moved to Minnesota in the 1850's and had some limited involvement with the South Pass wagon road expedition of William H. Nobles. Probably because of this experience, he was summoned to Washington in 1862. He did not bother to tell his commanders that he was leaving, forced the guard, and arrived in Washington one step ahead of disciplinary action.

He was commissioned a Captain and also was appointed superintendent of emigration for a route between Fort Abercrombie and Fort Walla Walla, Washington.