

# Speaker Series Presents

## SCOTT BERG

Monday, August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012  
Turner Hall, New Ulm, MN

### Author of “38 Nooses”

Scott W. Berg is the author of *Grand Avenues: The Story of Pierre Charles L'Enfant, the French Visionary Who Designed Washington, D.C.* (Pantheon hardcover, 2007; Vintage paperback, 2008), and *Earth and Blood: Lincoln, Little Crow, and the Beginning of the Frontier's End*, an upcoming popular history about the events surrounding the “Christmas Executions” of 38 Dakota Indians in Minnesota in 1862 (Pantheon, 2012; Vintage, 2013). He holds a BA in Architecture from the University of Minnesota, an MA in English from Miami University of Ohio, and an MFA in Creative Writing from George Mason University, where he now teaches nonfiction writing and literature in GMU's undergraduate and graduate creative writing programs. Scott publishes regularly in the *Washington Post* and *Washington Post Magazine* and often speaks to local and national audiences about the origins and plan of Washington, DC.

### Book Description

Publication Date: **August 14, 2012**

#### **A riveting account of the little-known Dakota War of 1862, which culminated in the largest government-sanctioned execution in United States history.**

In August 1862, after decades of broken treaties, ever-increasing hardship, and relentless encroachment on their lands, Dakota Indian warriors began a series of devastating attacks on white soldiers and settlers on the Minnesota frontier. After six weeks of intense conflict that left hundreds dead, federal forces quashed the uprising and convened a hasty military court that found more than 300 Indians guilty of murder. President Lincoln, embroiled in the darkest period of the Civil War, personally intervened in order to spare the lives of 265 of the condemned men, but still the toll on the Dakota nation was staggering: a way of life destroyed, a tribe forcibly relocated to barren and unfamiliar territory, and 38 Dakota warriors hanged the morning after Christmas. Scott W. Berg places these events firmly within the larger context of the raging Civil War, the history of the Dakota people, subsequent U.S.-Indian wars, and the unending influx of white settlers into former Indian territories. He recounts the conflict through the stories of a remarkably rich cast of characters, including Little Crow, the Dakota leader who foresaw how ruinous the conflict would be for the tribe but determined nonetheless to die with his warriors; Sarah Wakefield, vilified as an “Indian lover” when she defended the Dakotas who had held her captive for six weeks; and Minnesota bishop Henry Benjamin Whipple, a tireless advocate for the Indians' cause. Written with uncommon immediacy and insight, *38 Nooses* is a revelation of a hidden but seminal moment in our history.

