



the CROSSING

a publication of the Nicollet County Historical Society

SPECIAL COMPLIMENTARY EDITION

April 2006

Generous Donation Leaves Society Debt-Free



Theodore C. Moline

St. Peter resident and NCHS life member Ted Moline has been a special friend to the Society for many years. His passing last fall left us deeply saddened. Shortly after, we learned of Ted's most generous and heartfelt contribution to the Society. Ted's financial gift, established through his estate, represents one of the most significant donations in the Society's eighty-plus years in existence.

With it, we are able to take an important step forward – one twelve years in the

making. The remaining mortgage on the Treaty Site History Center was paid off in mid-February. The Society, for the first time in recent memory, has absolutely no debt. The \$10,000 previously paid toward the debt annually is now free to be spent elsewhere.

The lion-share of Moline's gift remains and much of it will be used to start a Society endowment. Many county historical societies across Minnesota use endowments as a reliable and sustainable source of revenue to supplement annual budgets. The amount of return, a conservative five percent, may seem small. However multiply that five percent every year for perpetuity — with none of the original principle ever lost — and you end up with a phenomenal legacy. Consider a \$5,000 endowment contribution and say the Society spends five percent interest income (but none of the original \$5,000) each year. NCHS would take twenty years to spend \$5,000, but in the next hundred years, the Society would be able to spend an

additional \$25,000 from that original contribution (and continue into the future). Those who contribute to an endowment ensure that their one-time gift keeps making a difference year after year. We are eternally grateful to Ted Moline for generously providing the funds to start the NCHS endowment - but this is only the beginning. I hope that in the years to come many others will take Ted's lead and consider the Society in their future charitable contributions. Please contact Ben at (507) 934-2160 or ben@nchsmn.org if you would like to take this opportunity and join with Ted Moline to support NCHS's future.

NCHS Open House and Mortgage Burning Party

Please join NCHS at the Treaty Site History Center on Sunday, April 23 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. for an open house. Come enjoy entertainment, refreshments, and a ceremonial mortgage burning in Ted's honor. We will also unveil our new introductory exhibit. If you currently are not a member, please take this opportunity to join and come see what the Treaty Site History Center and Nicollet County Historical Society are all about.

Welcome!

The Nicollet County Historical Society and *St. Peter Herald* have teamed up with area businesses to bring you this special edition of *the Crossing*, our organizational newsletter. The advertisements in the following pages made the printing of this publication free to the Society, and we appreciate it. We'd like to take this opportunity to especially thank Society members and supporters as well as those of you who have visited us at the Treaty Site, Cox House, Harkin Store, or Fort Ridgely before. For the rest of you, we hope that the following pages tell a little bit about us and convince you to check us out in person during 2006. We're here to serve you—so don't hesitate to call us at (507) 934-2160 or email: museum@nchsmn.org with any questions. You can also check us out online at www.nchsmn.org.

Ben Leonard
NCHS Director

Fort Ridgely Gets Trampled By Turtles

No it's not a headline out of *Weekly World News*. ... Fort Ridgely Historic Site, as part of Fort Ridgely State Park's June 4th open house, will play host to nationally renowned bluegrass sensation **Trampled by Turtles**. Many have probably seen these Duluth natives locally at the Rock Bend Folk Festival, or touring with bands like Cowboy Junkies, Nickel Creek, Violent Femmes, and Camper Van Beethoven. The group won "best bluegrass band and album" at the 2005 Minnesota Music Awards and has been described as, "a top draw in clubs around the state" by the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*. Local bluegrass heroes, the **Oxbow Boys**, will open in what's sure to be one of the best outdoor gigs of the summer. The event is free and, since it's the annual open house, state park vehicle permits are not required. Please call (507) 934-2160 for details.

TRAMPLED BY
TURTLES



Treaty Site Gets Cabin Fever

You may have noticed a new addition to the Treaty Site History Center grounds this winter. Last fall a log cabin in New Sweden Township escaped demolition by being moved to St. Peter. The cabin was likely built by pioneer Sander Syverson in the late 1860s. The Society plans to begin restoration of the cabin shortly. Upon completion, the cabin will serve as a free outdoor exhibit and unique meeting place for school groups. Please contact the Society if you would like to contribute sweat or financially to the project. Check out our progress this spring and summer each time you pass by.



A rare photo of the Nicollet County Poor Farm was recently brought to us by NCHS member Delores Gleason.

We continue to look for maps, plat books, rural directories, telephone books prior to 2000, church histories, family histories, and photographs. One area we wish to strengthen in the collection are photos showing farmers at work or of farm houses and farm yards.

Society Ends Up At Poor Farm

Join us at the Nicollet Conservation Club on Sunday, May 7th for a highly informative look at the Nicollet County Poor Farm. Before state and federal assistance programs, the county poor farm played an important role in providing for residents unable to financially care for themselves. Today the poor farm is gone and few of us remember its important role.

For Generations People Have Come Together Here

A new introductory exhibit at the Treaty Site History Center will soon greet visitors, reminding them that Nicollet County has been a gathering place for thousands of years. It was no accident that the Traverse des Sioux Treaty of 1851 and later settlement happened where they did. The Minnesota River, tall grass prairie, and big woods came together here—making our area a natural highway for all kinds of people living and traveling through what became Nicollet County. The exhibit sets the stage for future gallery renovations that will showcase these encounters, events, and endeavors over the last 150 years from the Treaty, to the tornado, to today.

You'll also see this idea reflected in our new official logo. The logo reflects our county-wide mission and presence while reminding us that geologic and geographic forces conspired to bring us all here.

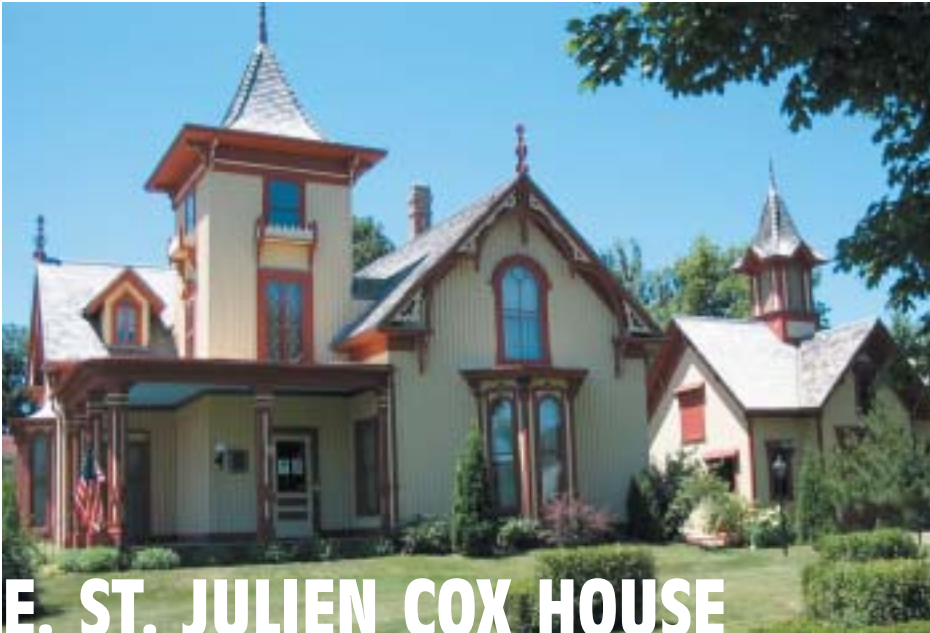


Gift Shops

Got History? The Nicollet County Historical Society gift shops at three wonderful venues to fill your needs. Visit us at the Treaty Site History Center in St. Peter, the Harkin Store, or Fort Ridgely. Each store has unique items that reflect its era.

At the Treaty Site History Center Museum Store there are items which pertain to the Dakota War, the Treaty signing, and Nicollet County. There also are items children will enjoy, such as our new collection of *American Girl* books. At the Harkin Store you'll find many local handmade crafts, books and other items that tell the tale about the Minnesota River or the 1870s. Fort Ridgely has a variety of books and items in the Commissary Building that emphasize mid-19th-century military life and events. A wide selection of books covers pre- and post-Civil War, telling stories of the lives led by pioneers and settlers.

All three stores have fun items for children of every age. We hope you think of us as another local shopping option, not just a nearby museum shop.



E. ST. JULIEN COX HOUSE

500 N. Washington Avenue • St. Peter, Minn. 56082
 (507) 934-4309 or (507) 934-2160
museum@nchsmn.org / www.nchsmn.org

Hours: June, July, and August
 Thursday, Friday, and Saturday: 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Admission: \$3 for Adults, \$.50 for 13–18 years old;
 free for children 12 and under and NCHS members

Directions: 500 North Washington Avenue at Skaro Street.
 7 blocks west of U.S. Highway 169.

The E. St. Julien Cox House is an architectural marvel, as well as the former home of one of St. Peter's most prominent residents. The home was built in 1871 for E. St. Julien Cox, a Civil War officer, attorney, St. Peter's first mayor, state senator, and eventually district court judge. Added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1970, it remains one of the best examples of neo-Gothic Italianate architecture in Minnesota.

- Tour the fully-restored home with costumed guides.
- Stroll through the beautiful garden.
- Learn more about the colorful E. St. Julien Cox family.



TREATY SITE HISTORY CENTER

1851 North Minnesota Avenue • St. Peter, Minn. 56082
 (507) 934-2160 • Fax (507) 934-0172
museum@nchsmn.org / www.nchsmn.org

Hours: Tuesday–Saturday: 10 a.m.–4 p.m.,
 Sunday: 1 p.m.–4 p.m.

Admission: \$3 for Adults, \$.50 for 13–18 years old;
 free for children 12 and under and NCHS members

Directions: One mile north of St. Peter on U.S. Hwy. 169.

The Treaty Site History Center is the headquarters for the Nicollet County Historical Society. The Center sits near “the crossing,” known as Ojjuwege by the Dakota and later Traverse des Sioux by French fur traders. For centuries, this fordable spot in the river was a natural gathering point for many different cultures. In 1851 The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux between the United States government and Dakota people was signed here. The History Center interprets the site's diverse past while intertwining all of Nicollet County's rich history.

- Stroll through restored prairie.
- View 10,000 square feet of exhibits.
- Learn how the 1851 Treaty shaped Minnesota.
- Enjoy the many programs all-year-round.

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HARKIN STORE

P.O. Box 112 • New Ulm, Minn. 56073
(507) 354-8666 or (507) 934-2160 • harkin@nchsmn.org

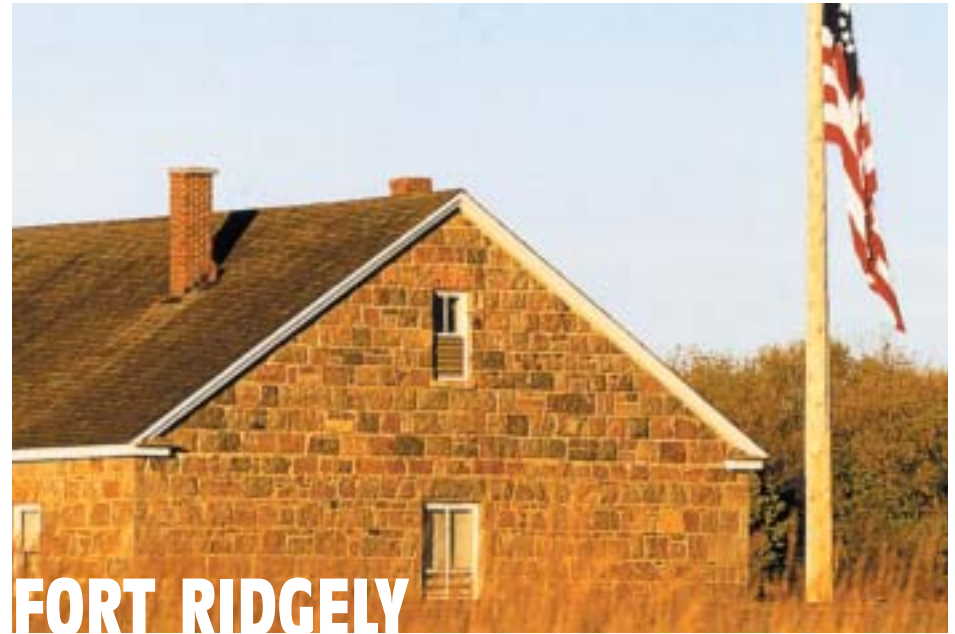
Hours: May and September through October 15:
Saturday and Sunday: 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
June through August:
Tuesday–Sunday: 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
Open Monday holidays and Independence Day.

Admission: \$2 for Adults; free for children 12 and under, MHS and Nicollet County Historical Society members

Directions: On County Hwy. 21 eight miles northwest of New Ulm.

The Harkin Store was the source of staples, clothing, impromptu discussions and mail for early settlers in the area. When the railroad bypassed West Newton in the 1870s, the Harkin Store was forced to close—with much of its inventory still on the shelves. Today, every shelf reveals a story from our past.

- Experience a real 19th-century general store, complete with clothes, medicine bottles and spectacles.
- Chat with costumed guides as you relax on the front porch.
- Sit by the stove and enjoy a game of checkers.



FORT RIDGELY

72404 County Road 30 • Fairfax, Minn. 55332
(507) 426-7888 or (507) 934-2160 • ridgely@nchsmn.org

Hours: Memorial Day through Labor Day
Friday–Sunday: 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
September through first two weekends in October
Saturday and Sunday: 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Admission: \$2 for exhibits; free for trails, for children 12 and under; and NCHS & MHS members. State Park vehicle permit required.

Directions: In Fort Ridgely State Park, off Minn. Hwy. 4, seven miles south of Fairfax.

Yielding to pressure from the U.S. government in 1851, the Eastern Dakota Indians sold 35 million acres of their land across southern and western Minnesota. In 1853, the U.S. military started construction on Fort Ridgely, which was to be a police station as settlers poured into the former Dakota lands. Fort Ridgely eventually played a prominent role in the 1862 U.S.-Dakota War—withstanding several attacks—and the Civil War, as a training ground for recruits.

- Discover the stories of people who lived and worked at this important outpost.
- Help load a musket or cannon.
- Visit exhibits in the restored commissary.
- Explore the reconstructed fort foundations—an archeological treasure.

Business Membership

NCHS would especially like to thank its business members for their generous support of the Society and our shared heritage. We'd also like to take this opportunity to encourage our members and readers to give these businesses your support as well. Shopping locally is important, and patronizing the businesses that believe in the Society helps all of us.

Special thanks to BENCO Electric, Culligan Mayer, First National Bank Minnesota, Gustavus Adolphus College, Hickory Tech, Kind Veterinary Clinic, Nelson Printing, Nicollet Chamber of Commerce, Norseland General Store, Red Men Club, Riverside Dental Care, St. Peter Chamber of Commerce, Taytronics, and Whiskey River for their business memberships.

If your business isn't listed and you would like it to be, we have wonderful benefits and several contribution levels. Use the form below or contact Ben Leonard at 507-934-2160 or ben@nchsmn.org for details.

\$200 Advocate: certificate of appreciation to hang in your place of business, acknowledgment in our newsletter, free half-day meeting room rental at the Treaty Site History Center or fifty percent full-day rental, 50 free passes (passes include ten-percent Museum Store discount) good at the TSHC, Cox House and Harkin Store, and two free passes to the annual meeting that include dinner.

\$500 Benefactor: certificate of appreciation, acknowledgment in our newsletter, free business card size ad in the first newsletter issue after you join, free full-day meeting room rental at the Treaty Site History Center or two half-day rentals, 250 free passes (passes include 10% Museum Store discount) good at the TSHC, Cox House, and Harkin Store, and up to four free passes to the annual meeting, including dinner.

\$1,000 Champion: certificate of appreciation, brief framed history of your St. Peter business, acknowledgment in our newsletter, free business card size ad in our newsletter for four issues, credit for an NCHS event sponsorship of your choosing, two free full-day meeting room rentals or four half-day rentals or combination, 500 free passes (passes include ten percent store discount) good at the TSHC, Cox House, and Harkin Store, and up to eight free passes to the annual meeting with dinners. Please consider joining and supporting the society as business members, and take advantage of great member benefits all at the same time.

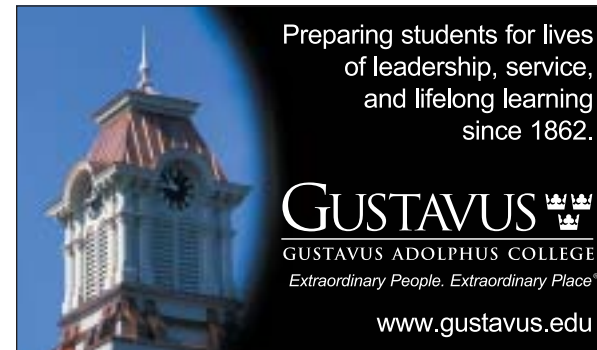
Members

We'd like to offer our sincere thanks to each of our 240 members. It sounds cliché, but we truly could not do it without them. They provide invaluable contributions of money, time, participation, and positive word of mouth that we need to survive. We hope to make everyone increasingly proud of their contributions, our Historical Society, and our heritage. We hope if you're not a member you consider it in 2006. Members receive special perks as well as the knowledge they are truly making a difference.


If you would like to support the Nicollet County Historical Society, we have the following levels of membership:

- Individual \$ 30
- Family \$ 45
- Sustaining \$ 75
- Patron \$ 100
- Supporter \$ 200
- Benefactor \$ 500
- Life Member \$ 1,000

Member benefits include free admission to all our sites and programs, ten-percent discount on all merchandise, free admission to the NCHS archives and discounts on research services, invitations to special events and programs, and a subscription to our newsletter, *the Crossing*.



Preparing students for lives of leadership, service, and lifelong learning since 1862.

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 GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE
 Extraordinary People. Extraordinary Place®
www.gustavus.edu

I see the Nicollet County Historical Society as providing a common ground, where citizens of all ages and all heritages, with ancient ties to this place and with ties as new as yesterday, can come to learn from and build the history that we share. This region, and Nicollet County in particular, are at the heart of a larger Minnesota and American historical story. Beginning here, we have the opportunity to honor the traditions of the past and prepare for the traditions of the future. We tell and hear stories that never end, creating a community of memory and vision. I am grateful and proud to be part of this process through the Nicollet County Historical Society.

Edi Thorstenson

Our ancestors and historical events explain who we are today. Nicollet County Historical Society helps to keep this connection alive.

Steve Briggs



The main activities will be held Thursday, June 22nd through Sunday, June 25th. A complete schedule of events can be found online at: http://www.nicollet.org/Anniversary_Products.htm

Commemorative items are available for purchase, at Schmidt's Meat Market, Village Flower and Gift Shoppe, Nicollet Mart, and Nicollet Hair Designers, all in downtown Nicollet; or download the order form from the website listed above.

City of Nicollet Set to Celebrate Birthday Milestone

This year the City of Nicollet celebrates its 150th birthday. NCHS would like to extend congratulations to them on this marvelous achievement. The Nicollet Sesquicentennial Committee has been hard at work for two years and has a fantastic slate of events, capped by an All-School Reunion, planned for Friendship Days 2006, June 22–25th. A beautiful commemorative print by Marian Anderson and other commemorative items are on sale now and a hardcover history book will be available soon. Get involved or receive event information by calling the Nicollet Chamber of Commerce at (507) 232-3438.

Cox House Plant Sale: A Harbinger of Spring

The hugely popular annual Cox House Heritage Plant Sale will be held Saturday, May 20th from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Find a wide selection of old fashioned perennials, herbs, rhubarb and other plants for sale. They are sure to remind you of your grandmother's garden!

Money raised will go to support the E. St. Julien Cox House operated by the Society. Donations of potted plants are always welcome, and may be brought to the E. St. Julien Cox House, at 500 North Washington Avenue in St. Peter, on Thursday, May 18th or Friday, May 19th. For more information, contact Marilyn Robertz at 934-3883.



You too can have a heritage garden by picking up some old fashioned perennials at the Cox House Plant Sale. Then come visit through the season to see the gardens in bloom.

County History Goes Digital ... Again!

The Society is busy submitting collections for the second round of the Minnesota Digital Library's Minnesota Reflections project. Minnesota Reflections is an ambitious Minnesota-wide federally funded effort to provide access to historic images on the Web. Thousands have already been contributed by over fifty institutions, including hundreds of photos from the Nicollet and Blue Earth County Historical Societies. They can be found at <http://reflections.mndigital.org/>. By the end of the second round Web surfers will find postcards, studio prints, snapshots, and even artworks from the 1850s to the 1920s. Search NCHS's contributions and see an image you like? We can send you a 300 or 600 dpi digital file of that image in no time for just ten dollars.



Mike Bidelman, a dedicated researcher, pours over a document on the microfilm reader/prINTER in the Society's archives.

NCHS Research Library Unlocks Local Secrets

Ever wonder about family history, what happened in your house 100 years ago, or where Timber Lake used to be? The Society's archives, with thousands of photographs, documents, and newspaper pages, just might hold the answer. Rare and unique treasures await family historians, students, academic researchers, or just casual inquirers. Collections Manager Bob Sandeen will give you all the personal attention you need whether it's your first trip to an archives or your hundredth. The archives, located at the Treaty Site History Center, are open Tuesday through Friday and we strongly encourage calling ahead so we can offer the best possible service.

Calendar of Events:

NCHS Site Events through June 2006

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- continuing **End of the Line Train Exhibit**
- April 14 **Bookfair benefiting NCHS**
- April 23 **Come Together Here Intro Exhibit Opens**
- April 23 **NCHS Open House and Mortgage Burning Party**
Enjoy entertainment, refreshments, and a ceremonial mortgage burning in Ted Moline's honor. We will also unveil our new introductory exhibit. 1 p.m. \$4 for adults; \$2 students 6-16; family fee \$10 maximum; NCHS members and children admitted free.
- May 6 **Harkin Store Opens for the season**
Savor the smells and sights of an 1870s general store as you sample the wares or try a game of checkers. Chat with the costumed staff, or sit on the porch and envision a steamboat plying the river below. 1-4 p.m. NCHS, MHS members, and children under age 12 admitted free, \$2 for adults.
- May 7 **Society Ends Up at the Poor Farm**
A Sunday afternoon program about the historic Nicollet County Poor Farm. 2 p.m. \$4 for adults; \$2 students 6-16; family fee \$10 maximum; NCHS members and children admitted free.
- May 7 **Old Time Music with Rollie Meyer**
Rollie Meyer treats visitors to old time concertina music. 1-4 p.m. NCHS, MHS members, and children under age 12 admitted free, \$2 for adults.
- May 14 **Mother's Day - Heirloom Vegetable Gardener**
Treat mom to a relaxing day of old time vegetable gardening with Heirloom Gardener Brian Vasser. 1-4 p.m. NCHS, MHS members, and children under age 12 admitted free, \$2 for adults.
- May 20 **Cox House Heritage Plant Sale**
A large variety of heritage plants for sale on the porch and lawn. 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
- May 21 **River Program with Ron Bouldau**
Join Ron Bouldau, photographer and adventurer on a photographic tour of the Minnesota River and river valley. Visitors can also view a display of the river boats that brought the pioneers and supplies to West Newton. 1-4 p.m. NCHS, MHS members, and children under age 12 admitted free, \$2 for adults.
- May 28 **Memorial Day with Bill Cagley**
Musician Bill Cagley, will perform "Music for All Ages for All Ages". Bring a blanket or grab a spot on the store's front porch for this relaxing afternoon of music. 1-4 p.m. NCHS, MHS members, and children under age 12 admitted free, \$2 for adults.
- June 4 **Day in the Life of a Pioneer Woman**
Find out what life was like for a pioneer woman in Minnesota—what she did, what she wore and how she had fun. 1-4 p.m. NCHS, MHS members, and children under age 12 admitted free, \$2 for adults.
- June 4 **Fort Ridgely State Park Open House**
Oxbow Boys and Trampled By Turtles will be at the Amphitheater at 12:30 p.m. No fee to park or to the music events.
- June 10 **Minnesota Kite Society**
Kite flying demonstration ending with 30 kites aloft. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. \$2 for exhibits; free for trails; children under age 12; and NCHS & MHS members. State Park vehicle permit required.
- June 11 **Dairy Day & 4-H**
Learn about the dairy industry, watch butter being churned and sample homemade ice cream. 1-4 p.m. NCHS, MHS members, and children under age 12 admitted free, \$2 for adults.
- June 18 **Quilting Bee**
Watch quilting demonstrations and learn about the skills necessary to make quilts in hands-on activities. 1-4 p.m. NCHS, MHS members, and children under age 12 admitted free, \$2 for adults.
- June 25 **Folk Music with the Oxbow Boys**
Visitors can enjoy folk music in the setting of an 1870s general store. Brings chairs and blankets and find a place on the lawn or cozy up to a corner on the Harkin Store's porch. 1-4 p.m. NCHS, MHS members, and children under age 12 admitted free, \$2 for adults.
- June 25 **Minnesota Zoomobile**
Naturalists use live animals, biological artifacts, theater techniques, story telling, and audience participation to create a dynamic program for all ages. Two programs: 11-11:45 a.m. and 1-1:45 p.m.; \$2 for exhibits; free for trails; children under age 12; and NCHS & MHS members. State Park vehicle permit required.

TSHC Exhibit Room
 Mankato Barnes & Noble
 TSHC Intro Room
 TSHC

Harkin Store

Nicollet
 Conservation Club

Harkin Store

Harkin Store

Cox House

Harkin Store

Harkin Store

Harkin Store

Fort Ridgely

Fort Ridgely

Harkin Store

Harkin Store

Harkin Store

Fort Ridgely

Detailed programming
 information and updates
 may be found online at:

www.nchsmn.org

harkin@nchsmn.org

ridgely@nchsmn.org



TREATY SITE HISTORY CENTER



FORT RIDGELY HISTORIC SITE



HARKIN STORE



E. ST. JULIEN COX HOUSE

*Indulge in
a new book
and donate
painlessly
to your
Nicollet
County
Historical
Society.*

Shop at Barnes & Noble April 14th to Benefit NCHS

Stock up on books and help the Historical Society at the same time! The Nicollet County Historical Society will be holding a fundraiser at the Mankato Barnes & Noble. Present the Bookfair voucher below when making a purchase on Friday, April 14th and your Society will get a percentage of the sale—at absolutely no extra cost to you. Vouchers *must* accompany purchases in order to be credited to the Society. If you forget to clip this one, NCHS staff will be at the store handing out more. The more purchases rung up, the more we earn. We get a 15% donation with sales under \$2,000, 20% donation with sales \$2,000–\$10,000, and 25% donation with sales above \$10,000.

BARNES & NOBLE
BOOKSELLERS

BOOKFAIR VOUCHER

***BENEFITING:
Nicollet County
Historical Society***

April 14th, 2006

Barnes & Noble
1859 Adams St., Mankato
507-386-0200

Present this voucher at the cash registers at the time of purchase. A percent of the net sale will be donated to the organization.

For Office Use Only:

Register #: _____ Transaction #: _____

Amount of sale before tax less purchase of Gift Cards, Membership Cards and Café consumables:
\$ _____

The following transactions are not included in Bookfair totals: The purchase of Gift Cards, Membership Cards and Café consumables.

NCHS Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (_____) _____

E-mail _____

My check is enclosed Please debit my credit card

Acct. Number _____

Expiration Date _____

Authorized Signature _____

Yes! I would like to support my Nicollet County Historical Society in 2006 at the following level (please check one).

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$ 30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$ 45 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining | \$ 75 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron | \$ 100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporter | \$ 200 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor | \$ 500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life Member | \$ 1,000 |

Business Memberships

call or
e-mail
for info

Please make checks payable to:

Nicollet County Historical Society

Membership applications should be mailed to:

Nicollet County Historical Society
1851 North Minnesota Avenue
St. Peter, MN 56082

Rewards of Membership in NCHS

- Free admission to ALL our sites and programs.
- 10% discount on all merchandise
- Free admission to the NCHS archives and discounts on research services.
- Invitations to special events and programs.
- Subscription to our newsletter *the Crossing*.
- All contributions are tax deductible.
- Assisting directly with the preservation of Nicollet County's unique history.