

How Does Your Garden Grow?

With silver bells and cockleshells? Or some other beauties?

If so, perhaps you could spare a few seedlings, posies, rhubarb, small shrubs or perennials for the annual Cox House plant sale that is fast approaching.

If not, you won't want to miss this great opportunity to stock up on a wonderful variety of plants at reasonable prices. The sale this year will be Saturday, May 14, from 8:30 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Whichever, donating or buying, you will benefit the Cox House programs and Mariah's Garden, the wonderful Victorian cottage garden that brightens the Cox House grounds all summer long. Last year's sale proceeds set a record, bringing in more than \$1200. Let's see if we can top that this year.



Drop off your plant donations on Thursday, May 12, or Friday, May 13, at the Cox House, 500 N. Washington Ave., St. Peter, for the Saturday sale. If no one is there, leave your plants on the porch. Be sure they are identified and also leave your name, address and phone number. If you need containers, there is a supply of pots of all sizes near the potting shed behind the house.

If you want assistance with your plants, or if you can help with pricing and setting up, please call the History Center, 934-2160. We will be most grateful for assistance.

And speaking of all summer long, there is always a need for more volunteers to work in Mariah's Garden. If you enjoy being outdoors surrounded by beauty, join the faithful bunch that brings the garden to life every year. No experience necessary. It's good exercise, too.

The crowd was lined up at the gate in 2004, green thumbs a-twitching! So get there early on May 14.

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Memorials

received since the last newsletter:

In memory of
Margaret "Mickey" Giefer
Given By
Eunice Holz
Ed & Bev Wetherill
Harold & Lorraine Olson
Duwayne Geifer

In memory of
Clarence "Poopsie"
Monahan
Given By
Bernice & David Breitung

In memory of
Maurice Norell
Given By
Lorraine & Harold Olson

In memory of
Isabelle Parsons
Given By
Arlyce Bussman
Cora Sjoström

In memory of
Betty Seitzer
Given By
Bill & Marilyn Robertz

In memory of
Ray Stark
Given By
Delores Stark
Arlyce Bussman
Judy Scholl
Cora Sjoström

In memory of
Violet Vogt
Given By
Bernice & David Breitung
Telshaw Family
Rick Vogt and Family
Kathy Barke and Family

the CROSSING
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the Nicollet County
Historical Society.
Subscription is
free with a Society
membership.

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Jessica Hollerich
Eunice Holz
Ben Leonard
Bob Sandeen

Executive Board

President, Marie Dranttel, St. Peter
Vice President, Garfield Eckberg, Nicollet
Secretary, Evie Swenson, Nicollet
Treasurer, Chuck Eggert, St. Peter
Historian, LaVonne Craig, North Mankato

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Bruce Davis, St. Peter
Brenda DeBlicke, St. Peter
Nancy Meyer, St. Peter
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Harkin Store Site Manager, Ruth Grewe

Harkin Store Asst. Site Mgr., Ross Gersten

Harkin Store Site Guide, Scott Hosier

TSHC Museum Assistant, Brian McDonald

Maintenance, Ron Meyer

Treaty Site History Center

1851 N. Minnesota Avenue
St. Peter, MN 56082
TSHC Phone: (507) 934-2160
TSHC Fax: (507) 934-0172
Hours: Tues.–Sat. 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
Sunday 1–4 p.m.

Archives: Tues.–Sat. 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
General information via e-mail:
museum@nchsmn.org or
research@nchsmn.org
Website: www.nchsmn.org

E. St. Julien Cox House

500 N. Washington Avenue
St. Peter, MN 56082
Cox House Phone: (507) 934-4309
Hours: June, July, August
Thurs.–Sat. 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Harkin Store

P.O. Box 112, New Ulm, MN 56082
Eight miles northwest of New Ulm,
on County Highway 21
Harkin Store Phone: (507) 354-8666
Hours: May and September
Sat. & Sun. 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
June, July, August
Tues.–Sun. 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Director's Column

I've been looking forward to all the benefits of spring: warm weather, green grass, and the start of our busy season. We're coming off a successful winter, and I hope we can build on that in the months ahead.

Our annual meeting in January drew 180 people, a huge increase over past years.

St. Peter's first annual Winterfest in February kept us hopping. About 250 people attended our Super Snow Sunday event and 150 more took wagon rides through Traverse des Sioux park.

You'll read in this newsletter about the great array of programs the Program Committee has scheduled. In addition, the Minnesota Historical Society is planning a routine burn of the Treaty Site prairie this spring. After the burn will be a perfect time to walk the trails and see the regeneration and growth firsthand.

A new display commemorating the 40th anniversary of the 1965 flood is now in the Nicollet County Government Center lobby. We hope to have a permanent presence there and feature county history through changing exhibits.

When you have summer visitors, remember that the History Center, Cox House and Harkin Store are the perfect places to introduce your guests to our area. Our museum stores have great souvenirs and gifts for them to take home. Your attendance helps the Society carry out our mission, and that revenue helps us ensure that our sites, activities and exhibits will be available in the future.

This is the perfect time to invest in a NCHS membership. Become personally involved, keep up to date on Society plans and happenings, visit our sites and programs for free and receive discounts on NCHS merchandise. Call or e-mail us for more details!



Ben Leonard

Meet Your Executive Committee

Serving on your Nicollet County Historical Society board of directors is both an honor and a responsibility. Of the 15 board members, five voluntarily take on additional obligations. They are your executive committee. It's a labor of love, they'll tell you, and all NCHS members are indebted to them for their hard work and dedication.

Next time you run into one of these five, give a word of gratitude.



President Marie Dranttel, St. Peter: Serving her second time on the board after a hiatus of several years, Marie said, "It was the Encampment that got me involved in the first place and that grew into other things. I grew up in that [the Treaty Site] neighborhood. It was our backyard playground. My family has farmed in the

area for 101 years and I still share in the truck farming now. The Historical Society is a labor of love. Good, enthusiastic people make the job easier. We've got good members, good volunteers and good staff."

.....

"My Great-grandfather settled in this township in 1857, before the uprising. When I was asked to serve on the board I thought I should be willing to help out. It's important to have a strong Society for the county."

~ Garfield Eckberg

.....



Vice President Garfield Eckberg, New Sweden Twp.: "I've always been a student of history. It was my favorite subject in school. My Dad was interested in history so I grew up with it. Nicollet County is the second most historical site in Minnesota [Ft. Snelling is first]. My Great-grandfather settled in this town-

ship in 1857, before the uprising. When I was asked to serve on the board I thought I should be willing to help out. It's important to have a strong Society for the county."

Secretary Evie Swenson, New Sweden Twp.: "I enjoy genealogy and historical things. I'm always trying to dig up facts about something that happened years ago and searching cemeteries for information. I get so much information from the historical society I thought I should give a little back. Now that I'm retired from nursing I have a little more time and I want the Society to prosper."



Treasurer Chuck Eggert, St. Peter: "My interest grew out of working on our church [United Presbyterian] history for its 150th anniversary. The whole thing became very fascinating and fun to pursue. When we finished the project, [fellow parishioner] Herb Poncin asked if I'd be willing to be on the board. I've always enjoyed touring museums and historic houses. There's so much of interest. I think preserving history is important."



Historian LaVonne Craig, Belgrade Township: "I was always interested in the historical society while I was a county commissioner and before that. The Society is a great asset to the county. We need to do everything we can to maintain it and increase membership. It's a very historical area right outside North Mankato and the Minnesota River. Now Ben is giving us really good leadership. I'd like to see increased membership in North Mankato and the Belgrade Township area."



Society Welcomes New Employees

The society would like to introduce and welcome several new employees. We recently conducted searches for four new positions. We were extremely happy with the very qualified pool of applicants. We are pleased to have all on board and expect them to fit in perfectly.



Gareth John

Gustavus geography professor **Gareth John** has accepted the position of site manager at the Cox House in addition to his duties at Gustavus.

A Welshman by birth, Gareth has a real interest in the Cox House and early settlement of Nicollet County, according to director Ben Leonard. In addition to giving tours and maintaining the site, Gareth will be charged with developing a Cox House manual, expanding and promoting programming, and exploring grant opportunities.



Ross Gerstetn

“We are excited about having him because he will research the families that lived in the house and also research Victorian homes in general,” Leonard said. “This will lead to the manual that will help interpret the house and its contents and that can be used for training staff and volunteers.”

The Cox House opens for the season on June 2. It will be open Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in June, July and August, and will be open to tours at other times by appointment.

Goals for the site this year are to increase attendance through more programs, facility rentals and community awareness.

Well known St. Peter habitué **Ross Gersten** is the new assistant site manager at the Harkin Store. Ross’s wealth of past experiences includes stints as journalist, curator, archivist, and musician. He is a co-founder of the Rock Bend Folk Festival in St. Peter and one-time editor of the St. Peter Herald.



Scott Hosier

Ross had the temerity to move from Minnesota to try his hand working at the Library of Congress American Folk Life Center in Washington, D.C., and then as director of the Ocracoke Preservation Society in North Carolina. After several years away, the old stomping grounds pulled him back and we’re pleased to welcome someone of his experience to the Harkin Store.

Another new staffer is **Scott Hosier**, the new Harkin Store site guide. Scott is a high school teacher in New Ulm. He has spent his summers working at Ft. Snelling for the last nine years. Scott enjoys Civil War re-enacting and collects military artifacts.



Brian McDonald

Brian McDonald has already started as our museum assistant at the Treaty Site History Center. Brian lives in Cleveland and manages a hog operation during the week. Brian enjoys Minnesota and American Indian history. He’ll be happy to tell you more about himself or the Treaty Site, Sundays from 1–4 p.m.

Alexander Is Celebrating!

Happy 177th birthday, Alexander Harkin! We’ll have a celebration in Harkin’s honor to kick off the Harkin Store season on Sunday, May 1. It’s going to be a fun summer, according to site manager Ruth Grewe, with lots of programs and many new items for sale in the store, including replicas of old time household utensils, stick candy and local history books.

Sunday, May 29, Bill Cagley will bring musical variety to the site with his mandolin, guitar, banjo and harmonica. Bill plays favorites for all ages.

On Dairy Day, Sunday, June 12, the Dairy Princess will be serving ice cream at the site. Jack King will give demonstrations of butter making and ice cream churning.

The Ox Bow Boys, a folk music band, will entertain on Sunday, June 26.

Celebrating Independence Day, on Sunday, July 3, the New Ulm Battery will demonstrate their firepower.

Elbow on the bag, fingers at the chanter and shoulder to the drones, bagpiper Bill Dobbs will strut his stuff on Sunday, July 17. Bagpipe lovers, don’t miss this.

All entertainment at the Harkin Store historic site is from 1 to 4 p.m. on Sundays.

TSHC and Gustavus Team Up

Recently the Society has benefited from great work done by several Gustavus Adolphus College interns.

Miranda Mensink, a senior psychology major, spent her J-term this past January planning and presenting Super Snow Sunday, NCHS's St. Peter Winterfest event. She did a fantastic job organizing many details and coordinating lots of different groups. About 250 people attended.

"Interning for the Nicollet County Historical Society for Winterfest was an overall wonderful and fulfilling experience for me and provided me with valuable knowledge and skills towards my future career goals. ... It was so rewarding for me to see so many families and friends come together and enjoy all the winter activities that I helped coordinate and plan, and have them already looking forward to the event next year. ... I am also excited to see that this event has benefited the Nicollet County Historical Society as well and added another aspect of its services to the St. Peter community."

"I would like to thank NCHS for hosting the Super Snow Sunday event and allowing me the opportunity to work within such a great organization and with such wonderful staff and volunteers. I have just recently accepted a position as a Recreational Therapist at Family Networks in New Hope, and know that my internship with NCHS provided me with numerous skills and experience that will be of great value to me in this position and continuing on into my future."

- Miranda Mensink

Andy Timmer, a junior history major, spent January developing a hands-on archaeology lesson for kids. Based on the history of Traverse des Sioux, the activity has young students recreate archaeological excavations done by the state in 1995. They then use primary sources to learn more about what they have found. Andy is planning to intern again with NCHS next January.

The history of baseball in Nicollet County was the focus of **Mike Holman's** recent independent study. He's a senior history major. We will be exhibiting his work at the St. Peter Community Center in the near future.

"When I began my independent study I wasn't sure what I'd find on baseball in Nicollet County or even how I was going to find it. But with the help of Ben Leonard and others at NCHS I eventually settled on three examples—The Fats vs. The Leans, a charity baseball game in 1894 to raise money for the Hinckley Fire relief effort; the baseball teams in Nicollet County during the Depression; and the first black player in the Minnesota Amateur Baseball Tournament, hosted by North Mankato in 1947."

I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and learned a lot from it. I have a newfound respect for 'what it takes to be an historian,' as my history professors say. I hope to use the research skills I learned from this project and my classes at Gustavus to some day do intelligence analysis for the NSA, CIA, or other such government body."

- Mike Holman

Two Gustavus students will be working with us this summer. **Carrie Mauer**, a junior anthropology and art history major, will develop programming for the Cox House, aiding new site manager Gareth John, a Gustavus faculty member.

Jacky Watson, a junior anthropology major, will conduct children and family activities at the Treaty Site History Center over the summer.

We look forward to working with Carrie and Jacky and are excited by the new opportunities we'll be able to offer our visitors.

Special thanks goes out to Gustavus Internship Director Brian Koeneman. Brian has been extremely helpful, and the recent influx of interns at NCHS is definitely a testament to his dedication and enthusiasm.



Miranda Mensink

New Members

since December 2004

Individual Membership

Eric Carlson
William D. Harvey
Stanley Lindquist
Alva Wellington

Family Membership

H. Stuart &
Marlys C. Johnson
Buster & Nina West

\$200 Business Advocate

Whiskey River
BENCO Electric

Life Membership

Lisa Gault

A very wet year ... the Flood of 1965



Fueled by sixty inches of melting snow and untimely spring rains, the Minnesota River (top left photo) crested at 29.07 feet at midnight on April 10, 1965. Three feet higher than the devastating flood of 1951, the communities of St. Peter and Courtland were inundated, and North Mankato residents were forced to abandon their homes, raise their dikes, and wait.

Melted snow was unable to penetrate the frozen ground, and it soon inundated 1,000 acres of farmland west of St. Peter. Hundreds of volunteers, many of whom worked through the night, rushed to build a dike along Sunrise Drive. At the same time the river swelled on the city's east side, making St. Peter a virtual island. Engineers were forced to divert the overland flooding east, through the city, along Madison Avenue (bottom left photo). The sheer force of the water carved through the pavement and gouged a channel ten feet deep in places.

In the end the flood caused millions of dollars in damage and temporarily forced about 8,000 people from their homes. 2005 marks the 40th anniversary of the 1965 flood, ranked by the University of Minnesota as the state's fifth worst weather-related disaster of the twentieth century.

Kids' Korner ... 1965 Flood Trivia

- In 1965, North Mankato had a dike named "The Great Wall" that was 3,000 feet long and six feet tall. How many sandbags did it take to build this dike?
 - 10,000
 - 100,000
 - 500,000
 - 1,000,000
- Is Mankato upstream or downstream from St. Peter?
- True or False: Over 75 percent of volunteers during the 1965 flood were under twenty years old.
- Which of these was not a factor in the 1965 floods?
 - heavy winter snows
 - El Niño
 - spring rains
- How many north Mankato residents were evacuated during the flood?
 - 7,500
 - 5,000
 - 20,000
 - 1,000

Crossword solution for last issue's Kids' Korner.

	F	I	S	H		
I			K			G
C	A	P	I	T	A	L
E			S	O		A
				B		C
P	I	A	N	O		I
				G		E
	M	A	N	G	E	R
	U			A		
	K		S	N	O	W
O	L	E	O			O
	U		W			O
	K	I	S	S		L

Members:
We are looking for young historians who would enjoy the challenge of our **Kids' Korner**. Share the puzzle with your children and grandchildren, then bring them to the Museum to see our new exhibits. Have them drop off their entries for a drawing for a Gift Certificate to be used in the Museum Store.

Answers to the quiz will appear in the next issue of the *Crossing*.

Discover the Expanded Museum Store

by Jessica Hollerich

Through better use of space, we now have more room for more inventory. The store now has themed areas relating to current exhibits, different events and programs, and seasonal activities.

In March, Harkin Store manager Ruth Grewe and I attended the Minneapolis Gift Mart to order inventory for both sites. It was a worthwhile and exciting experience. Our purchases include plush animals, arrowheads, beaded necklaces and bracelets, animal pelts, old-fashioned toys, candy and, of course, books.

We are very grateful to Herb Poncin for constructing a new bookshelf to handle the larger numbers of both new and familiar titles.

Making of Minnesota Territory 1849–1858 is a lively collection of essays by historians reassessing the events and meaning of the Minnesota Territory 150 years after its creation. They describe how its birth in 1849 during the growing national conflict over slavery forever changed the lives of Minnesota's native and mixed-blood residents. Reinterpreting the rush to statehood in 1858, these writers offer fresh insights into the roles played by wildly optimistic territorial promoters and the no-holds-barred newspapers of the time.

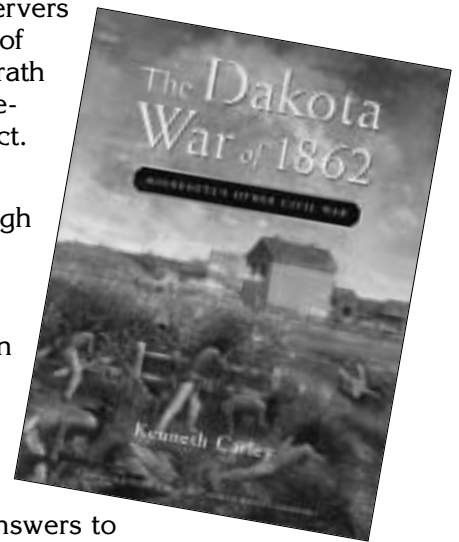
The Dakota War of 1862 draws on a wealth of written and visual materials by white and Indian

participants and observers showing the sources of the Dakotas' bitter wrath and the terrible consequences of the conflict.

Author Ed Fischer describes how, through numerous experiments, he came up with the ingenious, diabolical schemes in *101 Things to do With a Mosquito*.

Exploring the endless uses of one of America's favorite answers to everyday problems is *The WD-40 Book*, an in-depth look at the perfect partner to that ever-present roll of duct tape in your toolbox.

Remember that all members receive a ten percent discount on gift shop purchases. If you are not a member, perhaps this would be a good time to consider joining the Society. Make the Museum Store a regular place to shop.



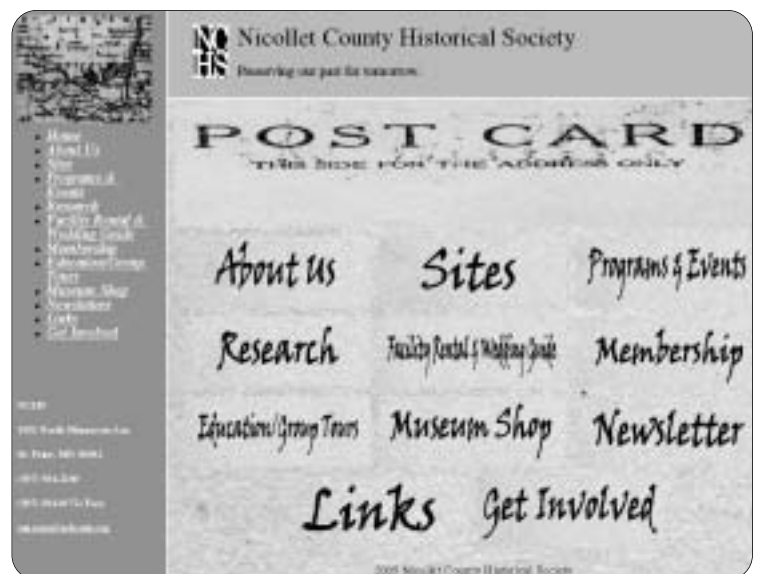
Spinning Our Web at www.nchsmn.org

Since the last newsletter, museum receptionist Jessica Hollerich has been very busy keeping the website up-to-date. Jessica has been drawing on every bit of her patience because, like most of us who work in cyberspace, she's finding that things don't always work out as desired the first time.

Nevertheless, recent additions to the website are upcoming NCHS events at the History Center, Cox House and Harkin Store, a newsletter link, and an employment link.

You may also shop in the on-line Museum Store for many of the interesting and historically based adult and children's books, gifts, prints and cards.

Members are encouraged to keep an eye on <http://www.nchsmn.org> for up-to-date information.



Artifact Donors & Donations:

- Michael Frederick: mugs and pencils from Nicollet County businesses; copies of postcard views of the First National Bank in St. Peter
- Fred Danner: postcard "The Minnesota at High Water Mark, St. Peter, Minn."
- LuVern and Marion Giefer: images and documents concerning Swan Lake Church of the Visitation in Brighton Twp.
- Duane Rasdall: Ernst Fricke citizenship papers; letters to Anna Fricke from Germany; postcard of Starke farm in Nicollet Twp.; postcard of Fricke home on Park Ave. in No. Mankato; photo of Rasdall Restaurant on Belgrade Avenue in No. Mankato; photo of Whistle Beverage Warehouse; photo of 1950 car
- Donald H. Peterson: printer's type and type tray
- Steve Alinder: issues of the *Peter Patter* St. Peter High School newspaper; two papers about *St. Peter Herald* free cooking school
- Stuart Hanson: March 1958 Soil Survey, Nicollet County, Minn.
- Robert J. Sandeen: color copy of photo of I.O.O.F. building in the Burg building at 216 and 218 S. Minnesota Ave. in St. Peter, about 1890
- McCleod Co. Historical Society: photo of the St. Peter Feed Mill
- Robert Bruns: architectural drawings of 1870 St. Peter High School and 1897 Washington School in St. Peter
- Pell Johnson: map of City of St. Peter, revised Feb. 1966; photocopies of images from "The Great Western Ditcher G.H. Jorgenson, Proprietor Fairmont, Minn."
- Herb Poncin: typed transcripts of original survey notes of Nicollet Co. from the 1850s; Herb's story of Armistice Day blizzard on Nov. 11, 1940; notes about the Poncin family farm in 1985 and 2004; *Some Poncin Family History* and *Barnes Family History* manuscripts; copies of photos of the Poncin farm house and farm yard; copies of photos of Poncin farm equipment

continued on page 9
in sidebar

Oh, the Joy of Computers!

by Bob Sandeen, Collections Manager

Thanks to volunteer Dick Muesing, who has been an absolutely invaluable workhorse at the computer, we can now access more than 3,000 photographs from the museum's collection that are in our database. Dick enters information into a museum program that allows us to search for specifics. For example, we only need to type in the keyword 'flood' to bring up a multitude of local flood scenes.

With well over 5,000 additional photos to describe, Dick has his work cut out for him. He'll keep on plugging for several more months.

I have also used a different section of the same computer program to enter descriptions of a small number of manuscripts from the museum's collection. Up until now, we have had only a rudimentary description of the manuscript collection. The computer software we are now using permits us to enter very detailed descriptions of each manuscript. We can then use the computer to search the collection in order to find specific items from among the hundreds in the collection.

We have recently provided copies of some of our photographs to several individuals, area newspapers, and KEYC-TV. Representatives from the media often need to know quickly if we can fulfill requests for specific types of images. Doing a search on the computer makes it much easier and faster for us to respond.

Another volunteer, Mike Bidelman (right), has been working on a special Law Day project that will appear in a future issue of the *St. Peter Herald*. He has spent many hours doing the necessary research. Jessica Hollerich, our Museum Store manager, has superbly organized the information to make it suitable for presentation in the newspaper.



Work on our portion of the Minnesota Digital Library database, described in the December issue of the newsletter, is nearing completion. Each submitted photograph requires data to be entered into as many as 13 distinct sections of the database. Having pledged to submit 500 of our photographs to the project, this means that up to 6,500 entries need to be made. When the project is finished, it

will be possible to view all 500 of the photos on the Internet.

As we've mentioned before, the city of Nicollet will be observing its 150th anniversary next year. We are still seeking appropriate photographs to illustrate the history book being prepared by a town committee. Each photo provided is scanned and the image is transferred to a DVD for permanent storage. The actual photos are returned to the owners.

Our collection had only a small number of photos from Nicollet prior to undertaking this project. We now have more Nicollet images scanned and stored with additional photos still waiting to be processed. In this way our collection continues to grow.

I always ask visitors to the archives for additional items to add to our collection.

Compared to the number of items from St. Peter, the rest of the county is poorly represented. We especially need items from Norseland, Bernadotte, Klossner, St. George, and North Mankato, and all the townships. Maps, plat books, rural directories, telephone books prior to 2000, church histories, family histories, and additional photographs are especially needed. We have very few photographs showing farmers at work or of farm houses and farm yards.

Please feel free to stop at the museum to see me or to call and speak with me about donating items. Also, please remember, we need items from ALL time periods, right up to the present!

You Won't Want to Miss Any of These

Our annual – and may we say, wildly popular – “Walk on the Wild[flower] Side” will be on Wednesday, July 13, this year. If you haven't experienced the sea of color at the Traverse des Sioux Treaty Site that blooms forth by mid-summer, you've missed a treat.

Two naturalists will be on hand to give half-hour talks in the museum about the prairie flowers and then will lead tours on the trails winding through the almost unbelievable array of blossoms. The first talk will be at 7 p.m. followed by a second talk at 7:30 p.m.



◆ Captain William Dodd, colorful founder of St. Peter, will return to us bigger than life in the personage of Gustavus geography professor Bob Douglas, who will conduct a walking tour of sites that Dodd knew during his lifetime. This courteous gentleman soldier will offer coffee and cookies and a brief talk

at the Treaty Site History Center at 9:30 a.m. Saturday, May 7, before beginning the tour around his old haunts in St. Peter. This program

We Lose a Friend... Remembering Mickey



The Society was saddened recently to learn of the death of Margaret “Mickey” Giefer. Mickey died 2 April 2005 in New Ulm, Minnesota.

Mickey was very generous with her time as a Society volunteer for many years. She began her service on the Board of Directors in 1987, completing one year of a board member's unfinished term; then was elected, and served, for two terms 1988–1990 and 1991–1993. Her NCHS committee service included Membership Committee Chair 1988 and 1989, Refreshments Committee 1988 through 1991, Refreshments and Annual Meeting Committee 1992 through 1998. Additionally, Mickey was an enthusiastic and active Traverse des Sioux Commemorative Encampment Committee member from 1991 through 1998, and also served as Treasurer for the event.

commemorates Minnesota History Week.

History fans of all ages are invited to learn more about St. Peter in the 1850s and 1860s by visiting sites that would have been familiar to Dodd, as well as his family burial place at Minnesota and Broadway Avenues. Dodd died in the battle of New Ulm, 1862.

Nicollet County Historical Society members and children five and under may participate free. Admission for non-member adults is \$4; students aged six to 16 will pay \$2. Maximum fee for a family is \$10.

◆ The Nicollet County Poor Farm history will be featured through stories and video at a Sept. 10 program at the History Center. If you have photos, tales or memories of the Poor Farm, please let us know.

◆ “Shadows at the Crossing,” the annual tableau of Nicollet County spirits of the past, is scheduled for the evening of October 8. Seven historical characters will return to tell us their stories about the county's early years.

You won't want to miss any of these fascinating events. Many are suitable for young people. Mark your calendars now. All NCHS programs are free for members. A small fee is charged for non-members.

Electronic Notification of NCHS events

NCHS members with e-mail connections will receive electronic notification of NCHS and Harkin Store events provided your e-mail address is currently on file with the Society.

Please contact Jessica at jessica@nchsmn.org to be placed on the list if you have not been receiving notices.



Artifact Donations continued from page 8

- Roger Schoeb: photocopies of *A Preliminary Archaeological Study of Timber Lake Nicollet County Minnesota* by Clifford A. Stemper
- St. Peter Tourism Bureau: “First Annual Winterfest” medallion “St. Peter '05 February 4–12”
- Melanie Kuehn: assorted United States Army women's uniforms and equipment
- Clair B. and Esther Pearl Olson: *Ever the Letters*, a book of 850 letters sent to each other by the couple during World War II
- Robin Bauer: DVD of movies from the 1930s, 1940s, and 2003 of downtown St. Peter

Monetary Donors given since last Crossing

Sophia, JohnHenry,
Melissa, and Ed Lee
First National Bank
Herbert Poncin

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 2005 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**

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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**

Calendar of Events:

- | | | |
|--------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| continues | Military History of Nicollet County, 1861–1991 | TSHC Exhibit Room |
| | \$3 for adults; \$.50 students 13–18; NCHS members and children 12 and under admitted free. | |
| Sunday, May 1 | Alexander Harkin's 177th Birthday Party | Harkin Store |
| | <i>The site opens for the season with a celebration of what would have been Alexander Harkin's 177th birthday. Special activities will be held and refreshments will be served. 1–4 p.m. NCHS, MHS members, and children under age 12 admitted free, \$2 for adults.</i> | |
| Saturday, May 7 | Captain Dodd Leads Architectural Walking Tour | start at TSHC |
| | <i>Bob Douglas costumed as Captain William Dodd leads the tour through downtown St. Peter. 9:30 a.m. \$4 for adults; \$2 students 6–16; family fee \$10 max.; NCHS members and children admitted free.</i> | |
| Saturday, May 14 | Annual Cox House Heritage Plant Sale | E. St. Julien Cox House |
| | <i>Plants may be donated on Thursday, May 12, or Friday, May 13, at the Cox House. 8:30 a.m.–2 p.m.</i> | |
| Sunday, May 29 | Bluegrass and Folk Music | Harkin Store |
| | <i>Visitors can enjoy folk music by local performers in the setting of an 1870s general store, chat with the musicians and the site's staff, and learn the history of the tunes and the traditional instruments used to play them. 1–4 p.m. NCHS, MHS members, and children under age 12 admitted free, \$2 for adults.</i> | |
| Sunday, June 12 | Dairy Day at the Harkin Store | Harkin Store |
| | <i>Learn about the dairy industry, watch butter being churned and sample homemade ice cream as the Harkin Store celebrates June Dairy Month. 1–4 p.m. NCHS, MHS members, and children under age 12 admitted free, \$2 for adults.</i> | |
| Sunday, June 19 | Quilting Bee at the Harkin Store | Harkin Store |
| | <i>Quilting bees were common events in the 1870s when the Harkin Store thrived. They not only resulted in very useful and beautiful items, they provided a rare social activity for hardworking prairie women. Visitors can watch quilting demonstrations and learn about the skills necessary to make them in hands-on activities. 1–4 p.m. NCHS, MHS members, and children under age 12 admitted free, \$2 for adults.</i> | |
| Sunday, July 3 | Patriotic Celebration | Harkin Store |
| | <i>Celebrate Independence Day at the historic general store with a cannon salute, music, speeches and refreshments. 1–4 p.m. NCHS, MHS members, and children under age 12 admitted free, \$2 for adults.</i> | |
| Wednesday, July 13 | Walk on the Wild[flower] Side | TSHC & Townsite |
| | <i>Celebrate Independence Day at the historic general store with a cannon salute, music, speeches and refreshments. First Lecture: 7 p.m., Second Lecture: 7:30 p.m. \$4 for adults; \$2 students 6–16; family fee \$10 max.; NCHS members and children admitted free.</i> | |
| Sunday, August 7 | 25th Annual West Newton Day | Harkin Store |
| | <i>The historic Harkin Store once was a center of activity at West Newton, a community that vanished after the railroads bypassed it and steamboat traffic declined in the 1870s. Visitors can step back to a time when the town thrived with music and crafts, including weaving, lace making and treadle woodwork-ing. Refreshments will be served. 1–4 p.m. NCHS, MHS members, and children under age 12 admitted free, \$2 for adults.</i> | |
| Sunday, August 14 | Horse Shoeing at the Harkin Store | Harkin Store |
| | <i>Professional farrier R.J Durska will be on hand to make horse shoes, discuss his craft and put the finished product on horses. 1–4 p.m. NCHS, MHS members, and children under age 12 admitted free, \$2 for adults.</i> | |
| Sunday, August 21 | Old Time Folk Music | Harkin Store |
| | <i>Visitors can enjoy folk music by the 3 Flats and a Spare, playing fiddle, button accordion, guitar and banjo, in the setting of an 1870s general store. 1–4 p.m. NCHS, MHS members, and children under age 12 admitted free, \$2 for adults.</i> | |



**Nicollet County
Historical Society**

1851 N. Minnesota Avenue

St. Peter, MN 56082



photos taken by Molly M. Fifield-Murray and provided courtesy of Arboretum at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

Why Burn the Prairie?

As mentioned in the Director's Column (see page 2), the State of Minnesota plans to do a prairie burn on the Townsite this spring. Joel Asp, Native Landscapes Manager for Prairie Restorations, Inc. and the consultant for the prairie landscaping surrounding the History Center, provided the following about the value of a prairie burn.

"The controlled burn is probably the most effective tool for establishing and maintaining the quality of a prairie. ... The burning of native grasslands stimulates the growth and flowering of individual plants increasing the vigor of native species. Controlled burns also convert dead, dried plant material into useable micro-nutrients in the form of ash. Lastly, burns will stunt and kill woody vegetation and cool season exotics that can invade the prairie and shade out the grass land species."

"Historically, fires, started by both man and nature, occurred on the vast dry grasslands quite commonly. Dry lightening storms ignited hundreds of squares miles across the rolling terrain, often driven by strong winds, high heat and low humidity. Often these fires would not stop until they reached major waterways."

It is necessary for prairie burns to be timed for maximum effectiveness. Early spring burns expose the soil and increase growth, flowering and seed production of native flowers and grasses. This timing also sets back the emergence of non-native "cool season" plants such as Quackgrass, Bluegrass, Brome Grass, and Clovers.

Joel continues: "If we are to maintain the few precious pieces of restored and untouched prairies that do remain, it is necessary that periodic controlled burns be conducted by professionals who understand the value of fire and have the knowledge to control it."