The Grapes of Wrath Day

On August 28, a first-of-its-kind “Big Read” event was hosted by Saint Peter High School at the Treaty Site History Center, focusing on the timeless literary classic *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck. It was the first-ever Big Read event for the high school. Inspired by Gustavus Adolphus College’s practice of assigning all freshmen to read the same book for orientation, the high school teachers decided to do something similar. All high school juniors were given a copy of *The Grapes of Wrath* to read over the summer. Since 11th grade is the year when all students enroll in both American history and American literature, the book was chosen for its ability to connect those subjects.

Teachers Wendy Severns and John Byrnes began planning the event in the spring. Without any special funding, they managed to pull the event together on “a shoestring budget.” All SPHS juniors attended the event, which included guest speakers, breakout sessions, and a viewing of the classic movie of the same name.

Speakers included SPHS/MS Principal Paul Preimesberger and Nicollet County Historical Society Executive Director Alyssa Auten, who spoke to the students about local history and its connection with *The Grapes of Wrath*. One highlight for many students was the series of photographs of Saint Peter during the depression.

James Dimock, communication studies professor at Minnesota State University Mankato, was the keynote speaker at the Big Read event. In his speech, he emphasized that the events which transpired in *The Grapes of Wrath*, especially the family’s arduous journey to escape poverty, remain relevant in modern times.

In breakout sessions, teachers and community volunteers combined music, history, art, literature, and agricultural presentations to give the kids a multi-disciplinary event. Special guests for the day included *The Grapes of Wrath* protagonists Ma and Pa Joad and singer Woody Guthrie.

The weather cooperated by providing a beautiful blue-sky day, so the students ate a picnic lunch outside. When they returned, they watched the classic 1940 film adaptation of *The Grapes of Wrath* featuring Henry Fonda. In all, 129 SPHS students plus ten teachers and community members visited the Treaty Site to make *The Grapes of Wrath* Day a fun and successful program.

**CONTENTS**

- Director’s Column 2
- Sites & Members 2
- Films on Thursdays 3
- New Faces 4 & 5
- Donations 4 & 5
- Construction Update 6 & 7
- Prairie Restoration 7
- Sites Reports 8 & 9
- Collections 10
- Memorials 11
- County Fair Report 11
- Trail Projects 12
- Swan Lake Program 13
- District 6 Event 15
- Herkelraths at TdS 14
- NCHS Calendar 15

Above top: Ma and Pa Joad (SPHS teachers Wendy Severns and John Byrnes) relate their troubles at *The Grapes of Wrath* Day festivities as local musician RonArsenault keeps the spirit by leading the juniors in singing some Woody Guthrie songs.

Photo by Kurt Hildebrandt

Above bottom: Students watch a film that describes life in the 1930s.

Photo by Alyssa Auten

Left: A team of students participates in an activity designed to show the steps that led to the development of the NRCS (National Resource Conservation Services) during one of the breakout sessions.
Members
Thank you to the following renewing and new members of NCHS since the July 2014 Crossing.

Renewed Advocate
Business Members:
Nicollet County Bank

Life Member Donations:
Beatrice Martinson
Marylin Rodning

Renewed
Sustaining Members:
Robert & Leona Isenberg

Renewed Family Members:
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Dwight & Geni DeBoer
Stuart & Mary Ann Hanson
Ray & Liz Jacobson
Walter & Maurine Johnson
David K. Nelson
Douglas & Re Vae Ngard
Anna Schuster

Renewed
Individual Members:
Marie Benson
Ruth Brandel
Jackie Feldman
Willie Lindquist

New Family Members:
Sarah Cooper
Bob & Judy Douglas
Amanda Johnson
Carolyne & Neil Miller
Rachel Montpetit
Rebecca Schueler
Anna Schuster

New Individual Members:
Roy Bennett
Joe Metzen
Beverly Sohm

Executive Board
Officers:
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Scott Hermanson, Vice President, St. Peter
Marie Dranttel, Treasurer, St. Peter
Pam Morson, Secretary, Lafayette
Alma Forst, Historian, West Newton Twp.

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Michael Callahan, Oshawa Township
Abbi Carleton, Nicollet
JoAnn Gieseke, Nicollet County
Elleen Holt, Saint Peter
Lori Lahlum, North Mankato
Marja Lokensgard, Norseland
Bob Schabert, Courtland
Tami Skinner, Saint Peter
Joe Urban, Saint Peter

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bob@nchsmn.org

TSHC Site Manager, Susie Carlin
susie@nchsmn.org

Office Manager, Kris LeClerc,
Jeremy Freeman
kris@nchsmn.org, jeremy@nchsmn.org

TSHC Museum Assistants, Jessica Becker,
Jack Buser, Marian Determan,
Maia Haggerty, Mitch Lawson,
Loren Sundboom

TSHC Maintenance, Wayne Passon

Cox House Manager, Richard Tostenson
Harkin Store Manager, Ruth Crewe

Harkin Store Site Guides, Rose Alsleben,
Robin Crewe, Karen Rogotzke,
Glenn Stryker

Pt. Ridgely Manager, Amber Bentler

Pt. Ridgely Guides, Anniellese Enford,
Rachel Montpetit, Charlotte Nack,
Karen Rogotzke, Becky Schueler,
Nancy Zempel

Mayo House Manager, Becky Pollack

Mayo House Guide, Sadie Fraudendienst,
Amanda Johnson

Treaty Site History Center
1851 N Minnesota Ave., St. Peter, MN 56082
Phone: 507-934-2160; Fax: 507-934-0172
Hours: M.–Sat. 10 a.m.–4 p.m.;
Sun. 1–4 p.m.;
Archives: M.–Sat 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
General info via email: museum@nchsmn.org
or research@nchsmn.org

E. St. Julien Cox House
500 N Washington Ave., St. Peter MN 56082
Phone: 507-934-2160

Tours of 10+ available by appointment. The
tours are by reservation only for a variety
definition and capacity rentals. Please
call for more information.

Harkin Store
PO Box 112, New Ulm MN 56073
Eight miles east of New Ulm on Co. Hwy. 21
Phone: 507-354-8666
Hours: Sat. & Sun. 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
Closed for the Season:
after October 19th

Fort Ridgely
72404 County Road 30, Fairfax MN 55332
Phone: 507-934-2160 / 507-508-2848
Hours: Sat. & Sun. 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
Closed for the Season:
after October 19th

W.W. Mayo House
118 N Main St., Le Sueur MN 56058
Phone: 507-665-3250 or 507-934-2160
Hours: Fri. & Sat. 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
Sun. 12–4 p.m.
Closed for the Season:
after October 26th

A Season of Surprises

This summer was one of many unexpected hiccups
for the Nicollet County Historical Society: flooding
in late June that closed the Treaty Site History
Center’s doors for almost a week, the leaking of the
skylights at the Treaty Site that required extensive
repair, the immense construction project on
Highway 169, and the need for a new roof at the
E. St. Julien Cox House. Despite these challenges,
the talented and dedicated staff at the Nicollet County
Historical Society persevered and accomplished one
of the busiest and successful summer seasons we’ve
ever had. Over 70 programs at our six historic sites
kept visitors engaged and excited about history.

Many of these 70 programs were scheduled for this
fall season. We partnered with the St. Peter School District and hosted the entire 11th grade class at the
Treaty Site for “The Grapes of Wrath” Day.” The
Documentary Film Series is also back at the Treaty Site; 99 people attended the September 4 film,
America’s Lost Landscape: The Tallgrass Prairie. Fort
Ridgely hosted a showing of the movie Dakota 38
and a question and answer session by Jim Miller,
the reconciliation ride’s creator, on September 20.
The Treaty Site will be hosting Scott Kudelka on
October 16 for his program on Swan Lake and the
Harkin Store is still doing special programs every
Sunday through October 19.

These are just a few of the programs our historic sites host, but the Nicollet County Historical Society
is more than just programs. We facilitate research;
work with interns and students; manage our
archives and 3-D collections; and aim to create
excitement about the county’s history.

Part of the excitement of running a county historical
society is the unexpected surprises that occur. We
received a call about a donation of an historic St. Peter
Post Office sorting desk that still has labels of
addresses in St. Peter (you can see it in the Treaty Site lobby!) and an email from a man in Washington
State reminiscing about his ancestors’ lives in the
old settlement of Traverse des Sioux (see a special
article written by him on page 14). Despite the chal-
enges and ‘hiccups’ for the Society this summer,
there are pleasant surprises that remind us why
we love history and why we do the work that we do.

Alyssa Auten, Director
The Nicollet County Historical Society, along with Saint Peter Community and Family Education and other special community partners, are happy to have started another successful documentary film series. Admission to the film series is free for everyone! The Treaty Site History Center is located one mile north of downtown Saint Peter at Highways 169 and 22, across from the Mankato Clinic.

Thurs., Oct. 9, 7 p.m.: **Connected by Coffee**
*please note the corrected date*
70 min., not rated. Connected by Coffee follows two North American coffee roasters on a 1,000-mile journey across Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua to listen to the stories of the people who grow their coffee. On the way they meet with soldiers who have become growers, powerful women who are controlling their own destinies, and countless farmers joining together to form cooperatives. We’ll witness how coffee is changing from a tool of oppression into a tool for empowerment, and how it is transforming small-scale growing communities across the world. And we’ll see the indomitable spirit of people who are determined to live joyfully in the face of economic, social, and environmental challenges. As ethical consumer practices like fair trade grow, questions arise about how fair they really are amidst the historical injustices of global politics and international trade. Connected by Coffee confronts these questions and motivates consumers to make a difference. Throughout the journey we learn how every cup of coffee we drink connects us in a very real way to the people who produce it.

*Connected by Coffee* will be shown as a partnership between NCHS, Saint Peter Community Education, Saint Peter Reads, the St. Peter Food Co-op, and River Rock Coffee.

Thur., Nov. 6, 7 p.m.: **Superior Dream**
49 min, Not Rated. An expedition around Lake Superior. Circumnavigating the world’s largest freshwater lake by sea kayak. And they filmed it! Lucas Will and Greg Petry (Saint Peter native) paddled over 1,200 miles in 97 days. Their journey officially started on June 26, 2010 in Duluth and finished on the very same beach on October 3, 2010. As an added bonus, Greg Petry will be on hand to discuss the experience.

Thurs., Dec. 4, 7 p.m., **The Past is Alive Within Us: The U.S.-Dakota Conflict**
117 min, Not Rated: This film examines one of the most difficult chapters of Minnesota’s history: the state’s involvement in the Dakota War as the Civil War was simultaneously raging. It’s a mix of historical information and contemporary stories. Designed to build a better understanding of historical interpretation and encourage critical thinking, the film will look at the subject through the lens of public memory.

Thur., Jan. 8, 7 p.m.: **Passage**
108 min, PG-13: A brilliantly innovative telling of the story of Dr. John Rae who discovered the awful truth about the fate of the Franklin Expedition’s attempt to find the Northwest Passage. It was news that shook the English-speaking world: celebrated explorer Sir John Franklin and his crew of 128 men had perished in the Arctic ice during an ill-fated attempt to discover the Northwest Passage. More shocking, they had descended into madness and cannibalism. Passage is the story of incredible sacrifice, stunning distortion of the truth and single-minded obsession. It challenges the way we look at history.
Join us in welcoming...

**Susie Carlin:** I’m excited about my new role as Site Manager of the Treaty Site History Center. This community and its history are important to me. I’ve lived in Saint Peter since 2007 and I have served as a City Council member (Ward I) since 2010. I’m originally from Florida, where I graduated with a B.S. in Environmental Science at the University of Florida. My first job was as a collections assistant at the Florida Museum of Natural History and it feels wonderful to work in a museum again! I’ve always gravitated towards roles in which I can help people connect academic research to daily life, and that’s what excites me about the Treaty Site History Center. I believe that there’s something special about visiting a historic site filled with actual artifacts—getting to see, touch, and experience the real thing.

I have been married to my husband, Joel, for 11 years and we have a 2-year-old son. Recently, my family had the opportunity to live and travel in China for six months. Stop by and I’ll tell you some stories of our adventures.

**Jeremy Freeman:** I grew up in Le Sueur, Minn. and moved to St. Peter in 1993. My hobbies which at times have been professional include, photography, cartooning, graphic design, and drumming for his band, Depot Creek. I am currently pursuing another college degree in a yet unnamed major. I enjoy spending time with his wife Michel, dog Nigel, family and friends. When I have any time off I likes to read books, watch movies, dream about writing the greatest screenplay ever, and research history, especially his family’s.

**Loren Files:** I grew up in the small town of Surrey, North Dakota. When I was 17, I joined the Army National Guard. After high school, a few friends and I started a band. We started playing shows around North Dakota, then moved to Minneapolis. Over the course of 12 years, we recorded four full-length albums and numerous demo CDs. We played hundreds of shows around the midwest in places like Chicago and Indianapolis. In 2008, I chose to return to college. I attended Minot State University in North Dakota, where I earned a B.A. in History and Sociology. It was there that I met my wife Kynn. She has a B.A. in Theatre Arts and we met in a production of “Execution of Justice.” We moved to the Mankato area in 2013 so I could attend graduate school at Minnesota State University Mankato. I am currently pursuing a Masters degree in History and will graduate in spring 2015.
Rachel Montpetit: Hi, my name is Rachel Montpetit and I am very happy and excited to be working for NCHS at the Fort Ridgely location. I am a native of New Ulm where I live on a family farm with my husband Rick and daughter Hannah. This farm has been in my family for over 100 years.

I have a great interest and love of reading and history. I can’t think of a more interesting subject to study! When we travel we always soak up the local history and historical sites of the area. I am also employed as a Para-Professional for District 88 in New Ulm. Thanks so much and hope to see you at Fort Ridgely!

Rebecca Schueler: Hi. My name is Rebecca Schueler. I grew up on a farm north of Sleepy Eye. I love Fort Ridgely and the history that surrounds it.

NCHS goodbyes...

Good-Bye, Kris!

We are sad to report that Kris LeClerc, our Office Manager since 2012, is moving on to a new position. Kris is now working as the Cataloguer for the Traverse des Sioux Library System. Kris took on many important roles as our Office Manager and she will be very missed. Thank you, Kris, for all your hard work these last two years and good luck in your future endeavors!

and Matthew

Society board member Matthew Horak has resigned his position on the board due to new employment responsibilities. The Society thanks him for his service. The vacant position will be filled with elections at the NCHS Annual Meeting.
Construction Season Updates

Treaty Site Landscape Renovation

Last year, NCHS received a very generous, anonymous donation to fund a renovation of the Treaty Site History Center’s front entryway. On September 15, the work crews from began work on the project site. Within a few weeks, we hope to have a beautiful, welcoming new entryway! Key design elements include native landscaping and a place for tour busses to drop off guests. The memorial bricks currently in front of the building’s entry will be re-installed to complement the new design.

For now, please pardon our dust (and mud). Please note that WE ARE OPEN! while the construction is ongoing, but access to some of our doors may be limited. And in no time at all, we’ll have an eye-catching new exterior that will attract visitors—new and old—to our exhibits.

New Sign!

Thank you to Schmidt Foundation for the funds for a new sign. (picture at right)

Want to help us complete this project?

Buy a brick, tree or shrub!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brick</td>
<td>from $125–$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree</td>
<td>$250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrub</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To make your donation, call Alyssa or Susie at 507-934-2160.
Highway 169 Construction

It’s been a long summer of construction, but the end is in sight for the Highway 169 flood mitigation project. Since June, traffic has been reduced to a single lane in each direction. For a period of three weeks in August, no through traffic even passed by the Treaty Site, as most vehicles were diverted along a detour. In October, traffic will switch to one lane each way on the outside lane of both north and southbound Hwy. 169. Through all of these challenges, people have still managed to find us, visit our exhibits, and enjoy our prairie. We’re sure that you will, too!

Please note that there will be a permanent traffic revision for the Treaty Site as a result of this project. Visitors will no longer be permitted to make a left turn as they exit the facility and will instead use the “Reduced Conflict Intersection.”

Reduced Conflict Intersections
from http://www.dot.state.mn.us/roadwork/rci.html

What are they?
Reduced Conflict Intersections, or RCIs, are intersections that decrease fatalities and injuries caused by broadside crashes on four-lane divided highways.

Why do they work?
A typical four-lane divided highway intersection has 42 possible vehicle conflict points. RCIs reduce conflict points to as few as 18.

With an RCI, drivers from the side street only have to be concerned with one direction of traffic on the highway at a time. You don’t need to wait for a gap in both directions to cross a major road. Traditional four-lane divided highway intersections have an elevated risk of severe right-angle crashes (commonly called “T-bone” crashes), especially for drivers attempting to cross all four lanes of traffic or turn left. At a traditional intersection, motorists from the side street need to look in both directions to cross a four-lane divided highway. Left turns require the same level of attention.

How do they work?
In an RCI, drivers always make a right turn, followed by a U-turn. Motorists approaching divided highways from a side street are not allowed to make left turns or cross traffic; instead, they are required to turn right onto the highway and then make a U-turn at a designated median opening. This reduces potential conflict points and increases safety.

Prairie Restoration Project at Traverse des Sioux

The restored prairie on the Traverse des Sioux Historic Site, north of the Treaty Site History Center, has a large amount of invasive species growing amongst the native prairie plants. A restoration project has been proposed by the Many Rivers Chapter of the Prairie Enthusiasts to bring the prairie back to its original state. This project will take about three years to complete and will cost around $2,500. Randy Schindle, DNR employee and member of the Prairie Enthusiasts, has put together a staged plan of prairie burns, mowing, herbicide treatments, and haying to restore the prairie. He’s also found sources that will donate all the seed to us for no cost! The remaining project costs will be split between the Nicollet County Historical Society and the Minnesota Historical Society (owners of the site). If you know a farmer who would be willing to supply and distribute hay over parts of the prairie next summer; OR, if you are interested in prairie restoration and would like to make a donation towards this upcoming project, please call the Treaty Site at 507-934-2160.
Sprucing up for Christmas

This summer has been a busy one at the E. St. Julien Cox House! Not only did we host guided tours, two weddings and a baby shower, we also had to have a new roof put on the house. It was leaking in many places due to ice dams and failing cedar shingles. The back shed also had a new roof installed and the carriage house had major repairs to its roof. The House looks beautiful and is gearing up for the winter season; which means Christmas at the Cox House is just a few months away! Make sure to put us on your calendar for December 13 and 14 from 1 to 4 p.m. to walk through the Victorian-decorated house.

Fort Ridgely

by Amber Bentler

This season at Fort Ridgely has been an adventure. We started out with big changes such as a new credit card capability through the “Square” system and a couple of new exhibits. By adding the Square and the ability to accept credit cards it made it easier for visitors to come through the museum as well as make purchases in the gift shop. We had many pleasantly surprised visitors when they saw the system.

We also had many positive remarks about the exhibits. One exhibit being the twelve panel display “Commemorating Controversy”, which was put together by students at Gustavus and received a national award last year. The other exhibit was the nine American Flags we put up through the museum. We were able to educate many people on some flag facts and maybe even inspired some people to find more facts on their own.

The end of our season is drawing near, the last day will be October 19th. There is one more program this season on October 11 with naturalist Scott Kudelka. Scott will be talking about the Minnesota River and all of the things we use it for. Please join us for this educational program at 1 p.m. We plan on working on some new programing over the winter for next year so watch for some new things next Spring!

Thank you to all who visited us this season as well as those that helped to make this year a great one. Hopefully we will see you yet this fall and again next year.

Need a Gathering Place?

by Susie Carlin

Did you know that the Treaty Site History Center is available for rent?

The Melva Lind Gallery on the south side of the facility seats approximately 100 people. It includes an overhead projector, screen, and microphone. For an additional fee, stadium seating can be set up to improve the visibility of all guests in the room. It’s the perfect space for a wedding reception, annual meeting, or educational seminar. Rental rates start at just $175.

The Josie Stone Conference Room features a large conference table that was originally used by the North Mankato City Council. It seats up to 15. The conference room is an excellent space for board meetings. Rental rates start at $75.
**Harkin Happenings ...**

**Take a Fall Trip to Harkin** by Ruth Grewe

As the 1870s Harkin Store draws to a close for the season, we still have some great programs coming. As you are traveling, take Nicollet County Road 21—the road to the Harkin Store—and enjoy all the pretty colors of the trees. The store has 40% original merchandise on the shelves and you hear a very interesting store about the family that ran the store in the 1870s. We are open in October on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, with programs on Sunday afternoons. Our first program is on October 5th with Preparing for Winter, a display of the equipment and things they used and did. October 12th is Horses-Horseshoes-Leather-Transportation, pictures and displays, leather working, and rope making demonstrations. October 19th is Lonesome Ron’s Round-up, Lonesome Ron and friends saying good-bye to the 2014 season and fall colors with music. The colder weather also will be here so enjoy the stove or the porch for a great relaxing time at the store. We are open for MEA week on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Our hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. any day we are open. Our season has been a great one, so if you and your family have not been to the store please come. See you next year on Saturday, May 2nd.

**W.W. Mayo House ...**

**Several Programs Remain** by Becky Pollack

The Mayo House season is winding down for 2014, but a few great events remain on our calendar. Sunday, October 5th from Noon to 4 p.m., as the leaves change to their beautiful autumn hues showing off the the Minnesota River Valley in its full glory, visit the Mayo House for a tour showcasing the artwork on display in and relating to the W.W. Mayo House. This collection includes portraits of Dr. Mayo and Louisa Mayo, Green Giant Marketing Art, the Mothers Statue and folk art from the mid-1800s.

Also not to be missed this year are the Mayo House Christmas tours. This year we offer two formats of our Christmas tours, an afternoon and evening option. View the Mayo Home decorated for a turn of the century Christmas. Enjoy special Christmas music in the parlor performed by local musician(s). Children will enjoy a craft table that allows them to make a small gift and ornament from the past. Cookies and cider will be served. Tours will include interpretation of holiday traditions from the 1850s to the turn of the century, incorporating traditions both the Mayo and Cosgrove Families would have celebrated while living in the Mayo Home. If you are interested in helping decorate, interpret Christmas traditions, and/or act as a docent for the Mayo House during the Christmas events, we would love to have you. Contact Becky at mayohouse.bp@gmail.com or 612-756-1870.

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“*The gal who gave the tour was very knowledgeable and was very interesting. Nice place to stop while you’re traveling through.”*

• googlereview 2014
The Society accepts an historic sorting desk into its collections!

St. Peter Post Office Sorting Desk

A few months ago the Nicollet County Historical Society received a phone call about a potential donation of an old St. Peter Post Office sorting desk. The desk is estimated to be from the early 1900s. The sorting shelves have labels for various addresses in St. Peter that probably correspond to the 1940s or 1950s. We visited the Post Office and talked to them about their history and to see if they knew anything about the desk, or maybe even had a similar one still in use? While there is not a similar desk, staff at the Post Office loaned NCHS some really wonderful historic documents about the history of St. Peter's Post Office. We were even allowed to take a picture of a currently-used sorting desk; notice the similarities--both desks have a drawer, hooks for postal bags, and even the open slot for the route binders! The desk is currently being used in the Treaty Site History Center's lobby as a display for our book store. We are planning on creating a small display about the history of St. Peter's postal service. Thank you to Liz Zurek Beaudry for donating the desk to the Society!

Collections Spotlight

The Society accepts an historic sorting desk into its collections!

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Original sorting desk from the St. Peter Post Office from early 1900s, repurposed as a fixture in the Book Store.

Present-day sorting desk in the back room at the St. Peter Post Office.

The CROSSING
The Nicollet County Historical Society would like to humbly thank Harold Audley Nelson for bequeathing a generous sum of money to the institution upon his passing on August 22, 2014. Harold was born on December 11, 1924 in New Ulm to Oscar and Cora (Hendricks) Nelson. He served in the U.S. Army during WWII in the Pacific Theater from 1944–1946 with the 41st Infantry Division. After the service he attended the Minneapolis Bible Institute. He returned to farming and worked in manufacturing in the Minneapolis and St. Paul area. Harold enjoyed building, working with his hands and traveling around the world. He was a member of Swan Lake Lutheran Church in Brighton Township. The Society is so grateful for his generosity.

LaVonne Craig

The Nicollet County Historical Society would like to honor and remember past-president, member and supporter, LaVonne Craig, who passed away on August 18. Our thoughts go to LaVonne’s family and our gratitude for her involvement with the Nicollet County Historical Society cannot be expressed enough; she will be missed dearly.

Country Fair Report

The Nicollet County Historical Society had a great showing at the Nicollet County Fair on August 6–10. We displayed the Fair Board’s exhibit about the history of the Nicollet County Fair, as well as the exhibit about Gustavus student’s 2012 trip to Petatlan, Mexico (St. Peter’s Sister City). We also sold books and shirts and saw over 970 visitors stop at our booth. NCHS would like to thank the many volunteers who gave their time to sit at our booth and talk with visitors. We’ll see you all next summer at the Fair!
Eagle Scout Completes Project at TdS Trails

The Nicollet County Historical Society would like to thank Kasota resident, Jacob Gurrola, for choosing to complete his Eagle Scout project on our Traverse des Sioux trail system! Jacob and other members of his troop built bat and bluebird houses, cleaned the interpretive signs, and helped improve the trails over a week in late July. Great job, Jacob!

Traverse des Sioux Park Land Trails Update

Trail volunteers have been working hard in the past few months to restore the new trails following the summer flooding. Approximately 8 miles of trails are available, now that they have been cleared of debris left behind by the flood. On September 7, nearly 30 volunteers, many of them Gustavus Adolphus College students, spent a couple hours removing sticks, logs, and flood debris along the trail that was marked out earlier this spring. On other weekends, the dedicated core volunteers have been out on the trails to improve this wonderful community resource. Each week, they manage to get a few more directional stickers applied to signposts, a little more bridge work installed, and a few downed trees removed. They encourage you to get out there and enjoy the nice fall weather on the trails, but be careful, of course, until the trail volunteers can address a few more tricky spots on the routes.

We would also like to say thanks to these business members:

- Culligan Mayer
- Community Insurance Agency
- Dave’s Place
- First National Bank

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11 a.m.-6 p.m.
Sat. & Sun.
1-5 p.m.

www.artscentersp.org
Treaty Site Event...

Thursday, October 16, 2014, 7 p.m.

Swan Lake
A Special Prairie Pothole Lake

Join Scott Kudemla, Minneopa Area Naturalist, as he teaches us about Swan Lake. North America’s largest wetland complex is located north of the Mississippi River near Nicollet and considered one of the most important breeding and migratory stopovers for a diverse selection of birds. In this presentation we will talk about the rich history of Swan Lake and the struggle to save this valuable resource. Free and open to the public.

New Sweden
150th celebration a success!

attended the New Sweden 150th event and class reunion to celebrate the schoolhouse’s history and future. Visitors had a chance to look around the schoolhouse, learn about the history of the school and the township through a display of historic records, items, and photographs, then celebrate at the Norseland Area Preservation Association’s “Harvest Fest” at the Scandian Grove Church. Congratulations are in order to the members of the Friends of District 6 for their hard work in preserving the history of this wonderful schoolhouse. If you are interested in learning about volunteer opportunities or want to donate to future preservation projects, contact the Friends of District 6 President Garfield Eckberg at 507-327-3237 or gre37@wildbluecoop.com.
The Herkelrath Family,
Early Settlers in Traverse des Sioux

written and submitted by Jim Herkelrath

Johannes Herkelrath and his family were among the early immigrants settling in Traverse des Sioux, building a wooden house on their land in about 1854. But before the family had settled in Minnesota, they had undergone quite an adventure just getting to America. From first-person accounts passed down three generations:

The decision to immigrate to America was made during one of the routine “roundups” of young men for conscription into the Bavarian army. There existed a German Kaiser then, who was constantly fighting wars (there was continued unrest during that period in Germany, as there was an overall attempt to unite the Federations).

Typical of the day, troops would ride across the countryside, stopping at each farm—looking for young men of eligible age to conscript into the army. According to family stories, the four eldest male children of Johannes Herkelrath hid in the barn hayloft when the Kaiser stopped in their town to change horses for his coach.

The family left their farm under cover of darkness in March 1847 and travelled to Antwerp, Belgium, where they waited to board a ship headed to America. After a prolonged wait, they were able to sail on the Black Ball Line’s packet ship Desdemona to New Orleans, where they arrived August 16, 1848. On the waterfront (in clear view of the family), was a slave auction being held. Upon seeing this, Anna Barbara turned to her husband Johannes and said: “My God, and we left Bavaria for this?”

Apparentally, the family quickly sailed up the Mississippi River from New Orleans, to Belleville, Illinois, where there was a large German population. The family stayed in Bellevue for five years before moving to Minnesota. Travelling with the Herkelrath family were other German families, many from the same small Bavarian town of Heuchelheim. These families also travelled to Traverse des Sioux with the Herkelraths in 1854.

Names often referenced in our family bible include Schreiber, Rasch, Reisel, Diebold, Sabel, and Heilman.

At Traverse des Sioux, the Herkelrath family bought land and began farming. They also built one of the first wooden houses at that time, which stood until about 1927. My Grandfather was raised in that house, and until his death had pleasant memories of the big barn and “the barrel of cabbage always kept at the side of the house for sauerkraut.” The family Bible records family member births and deaths, and even the brand used on the animals for identification!

Johannes Herkelrath died in Traverse des Sioux in a farming accident in 1866. All of the children eventually moved west to California, where the families grew and enjoyed each other’s company over the generations. Anna Barbara stayed at the old Herkelrath house in Traverse des Sioux, taking care of her youngest son’s children until she died in 1892, and was buried next to Johannes. While lives were fully lived on the plains in those early days, the Herkelrath tradition of passing the stories from Grandparent to Grandson was kept sacred, which is why they exist today and hopefully, for generations to come.
### 2014–2015 Calendar of Events:

#### Event/Program information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event/Program</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oct. 5</strong></td>
<td>Preparing for Winter, 1 p.m.</td>
<td>Harkin Store</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Oct. 5</strong></td>
<td>Mayo House Artwork Tour, 12 p.m.</td>
<td>W.W. Mayo House</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Oct. 9</strong></td>
<td>Documentary Film Series: <strong>Connected by Coffee</strong>, 7 p.m. (see description on page 3)</td>
<td>TSHC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oct. 11</strong></td>
<td>River program with Naturalist Scott Kudelka, 1 p.m.</td>
<td>Fort Ridgely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oct. 12</strong></td>
<td>Horses-Horseshoes-Leather-Transportation, 1 p.m.</td>
<td>Harkin Store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oct. 16</strong></td>
<td>Swan Lake, A Special Prairie Pothole Lake, by Scott Kudelka, 7 p.m. (see description on page 13)</td>
<td>TSHC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oct. 19</strong></td>
<td>Music with Lonesome Ron’s Round-up, 1 p.m.</td>
<td>Harkin Store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nov. 6</strong></td>
<td>Documentary Film Series: <strong>Superior Dream</strong>, 7 p.m. (see description on page 3)</td>
<td>TSHC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nov. 29</strong></td>
<td>Afternoon Christmas Tours, 12 p.m.</td>
<td>W.W. Mayo House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dec. 4</strong></td>
<td>Documentary Film Series: <strong>The Past is Alive Within Us: The U.S.-Dakota Conflict</strong>, 7 p.m. (see description on page 3)</td>
<td>TSHC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dec. 6</strong></td>
<td>Afternoon Christmas Tours, 12 p.m.</td>
<td>W.W. Mayo House</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dec. 12</strong></td>
<td>Christmas Candlelight Tours (evening), TBA</td>
<td>W.W. Mayo House</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dec. 13</strong></td>
<td>Christmas Candlelight Tours (evening), TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dec. 13</strong></td>
<td>Christmas at the Cox House, 1–4 p.m.</td>
<td>E. St. Julien Cox House</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dec. 14</strong></td>
<td>Christmas at the Cox House, 1–4 p.m.</td>
<td>E. St. Julien Cox House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jan. 8, 2015</strong></td>
<td>Documentary Film Series: <strong>Passage</strong>, 7 p.m. (see description on page 3)</td>
<td>TSHC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jan. 18</strong></td>
<td>NCHS Annual Meeting, 1 p.m.</td>
<td>Gustavus Adolphus College</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please watch the NCHS website, Facebook & Twitter and MNHS website for further events and details for additional programming.
Your membership dollars at work...

NCHS Membership Application

Name ____________________________________________
Address __________________________________________
________________________________________________
Phone ( _______ ) _________________________________
E-mail ____________________________________________
My check is enclosed □ Please debit my credit card □
Acct. Number________________________________________
CVV Code __________________ Expiration Date ____________

□ Please save mailing costs, I will read my newsletter online.

Yes! I would like to support my Nicollet County Historical Society in 2014 & 2015 at the following level (please check one).

□ Individual $ 30
□ Family $ 45
□ Sustaining $ 75
□ Patron $ 100
□ Supporter $ 200
□ Benefactor $ 500
□ Life Member $ 1,000
□ Business Memberships call or e-mail for info

Please make checks payable to:  
Nicollet County Historical Society

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Nicollet County Historical Society  
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St. Peter, MN 56082