Among artifacts of history, likely some of the most fragile are paper items, which even with the best of care can become quite degraded with the passage of time. I recently acquired in superb condition an extraordinary firsthand battle account of the action at Birch Coulee written in the hand of the soldier who squeezed the trigger against the Dakota warriors there. The soldier, Thomas Van Etten Jr. later served through the end of the Civil War, mustering out with the rank of captain. The ‘story’ here is the letter itself however a short bio on the writer is definitely in order, which will seemingly correct or confuse some history at the same time.

Thomas Van Etten Jr. was born in Port Jarvis, New York on September 20, 1836 and received his education in that state prior to moving to St. Paul, Minnesota to study law with his brother Isaac. Around 1858 he became a member of the St. Paul Pioneer Guards. With President Lincoln’s first call for soldiers to serve for 90 days, Van Etten was among a group to volunteer and was mustered into Company A, 1st Regiment of Volunteers on April 29, 1861. However when the call was changed to three years he declined to continue service and was discharged four weeks later on May 27, 1861. The following month he returned to New York and over the next year tried without success to obtain a commission in the Regular Army subsequently returning to Minnesota in April 1862. On August 11, 1862 he enlisted in Company A, 6th Regiment of Volunteers. One source states he was with Company A of 6th Regiment for only a week however his participation at Birch Coulee on September 2nd and 3rd would suggest otherwise as the majority of the 6th Minnesota soldiers engaged were Company A with just a few from other companies. 

Letter continued on page 3
Members
Thanks to the following new and renewing members of NCHS since our last newsletter and through June 15.

Renewed Supporting Members:
Barbara & Don Olmanson
Renewed Family Members:
Traverse des Sioux Genealogy Society
Stan & Marie Benson, Roger & Barbara Nelson
Peter & Phyllis Disher
Kyle & Andrea Krenz
Karen Humphrey
Ray & Liz Jacobson

Renewed Individual Members:
Ruth Brandel
Catherine Neitge
Janet Prehn
Gayla Luck Mattson
Dolores Sandquist Luck
Joanne Cochran
Jackie Feldman
Lona Kalkowski
New Family Members:
Wayne & Betty Sandeen
Maurine & Walter Johnson
New Individual Members:
Roger Breckenridge

Monetary Donations
received since the last newsletter:
Al & Cathy Annexstad
Steven & Becky Briggs
Michael Callahan
Cox House Plant Sale

Memorials
received since the last newsletter:
In Memory of
Robert Olsen, Olive Peterson,
& Eda Swenson John
Given by
Kathy Ericson
In Memory of
Esther Stolt
Given by
Gary & Geri Schmidt

In Memory of
Agnes Kettner
Given by
Gary & Geri Schmidt
In Memory of
Robert Peterson
Given by
Owen & Evie Swenson

Executive Board
President, Gary Schmidt, North Mankato
Vice President, Jeremy Freeman, St. Peter
Secretary, Tami Skinner, St. Peter
Treasurer, Marie Dranttel, St. Peter
Historian, Steve Baxa, St. Peter

Directors
Steve Baxa, St. Peter
Dr. Chris Corley, North Mankato
Alma Forst, St. George
Patti Kelly, Norseland
Emilie Lokensgard, Norseland
Pam Morden, Lafayette
Scott Hermanson, St. Peter
Bob Schabert, Courtland
Sally Webster, Bernardotte

Contact Information
Executive Director, Ben Leonard
ben@nchs.org
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bob@nchs.org
Office Assistant, Kristina LeClerc
kristina@nchs.org
Museum Store Manager, Ruth Grewe
Cox House Manager, Richard Tostenson
TSHC Museum Assistants, Jessica Becker,
Victoria Clark, Joan Jordan,
Allen McBride, Loren Sundboom
TSHC Maintenance, Wayne Passon
Harkin Store Site Manager, Ruth Grewe
Harkin Store Site Guides, Rose Asleben,
Victoria Clark, Glenn Stryker
Pt. Ridgely Site Manager, Nancy Zempel
Pt. Ridgely Site Guides, Victoria Clark,
Annaliese Endorf, Charlotte Nack,
Dorothy Polesky, Mindy Sommer

Treaty Site History Center
1851 N. Minnesota Avenue
St. Peter, MN 56082
TSHC Phone: (507) 934-2160
TSHC Fax: (507) 934-0172
Hours: Mo.–Sa. 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
Sunday 1–4 p.m.
Archives: Tu.–Sa. 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
General Information via e-mail:
museum@nchs.org or
research@nchs.org
Website: www.nchs.org

E. St. Julien Cox House
500 N. Washington Avenue
St. Peter, MN 56082
Cox House Phone: (507) 934-4309
The Cox House is available year-round
for a variety of special programs,
facilities, rentals, and tours by appointment.
Please contact 507-934-2160 for details.

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 25–Sep. 3 Tu.–Su. 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
May 28–Sep. 3 Tu.–Su. 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
Sep.–Oct. 14: Sa.–Su. 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Fort Ridgely
72404 County Road 30
Fairfax, MN 55332
Phone: (507) 426-7888 or (507) 934-2160
Website: ridgely@nchs.org
Hours: May 25–Sep. 3
Th. & Su.: 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Director's Column
We're about half way through the year, and I think it's easy to see that people are very, very interested in Minnesota River Valley history this year. Our programs and sites have been bursting at the seams, and our busy season has only just begun.

We expected heightened interest during the sesquicentennial of the Dakota-U.S. War, but I don’t think any of us expected this much attention and visitation. It’s been crazy. But we love crazy. These last six months have been among the most meaningful and engaging of my career. I hope that never stops.

I hope those of you reading this are engaged too. There are so many places to visit this summer. Please make it a point to get out,

enjoy our beautiful weather, and visit some great sites this summer. The Brown County Historical Society has something happening nearly every day in August. Lower Sioux State Historic Site is a must stop for everyone this year. Blue Earth County Historical Society has a great Dakota History series going.
The Wood Lake Battlefield Preservation Association’s September Symposium will be an event to remember. Don’t feel like driving? There are bus tours aplenty traversing the valley and its history this summer.

We can’t thank you enough for continuing to care about our shared heritage, and for your support of NCHS. We’re going to serve more people than ever this year—a lot more. I think all those extra folks will discover what you already know—that our history is important, fascinating, and relevant; and that our sites, staff, volunteers, and supporters are passionate, engaging sources of information and interpretation.

Ben Leonard, Director
Military records show him to have been promoted to 2nd Lieutenant on August 19, in Company I of the 9th Regiment. Most puzzling of all, from a list of 157 men who were combatants at Birch Coulee, which appears to be a complete roster of the 6th Minnesota soldiers engaged as well as Captain Anderson’s company and the civilians, his name does not appear.

The letter is written to William H. Seward in Chester, New Jersey. The man is an old schoolmate and not the Secretary of State in the Lincoln cabinet, however according to the seller of the letter whose father had purchased hundreds of letters from the estate he was a relative, a nephew of the Secretary of State. Another letter I also acquired, written February 11, 1863 and postmarked ‘Feb 12 Saint Peter, Min’ mentions a few more interesting details. Van Etten was appointed Quartermaster at Fort Ridgely, was responsible for paying $180,000 for goods received at the fort, and makes mention of the Battle of Wood Lake but he does not claim to have participated. He also reveals his desire to go on the upcoming Dakota Territory expedition so that he may see the Rocky Mountains, and also reveals his regrets at the absence of young women in the area.

Thomas Van Etten did not get his wish to see the Rocky Mountains. He saw service in the south with the 9th Minnesota Infantry and was promoted to 1st Lieutenant on September 26, 1864 and to captain on January 16, 1865. After returning to St. Paul he completed his law studies and graduated and was married at Sauk Rapids, Minnesota in 1868. After moving to Bismark Dakota Territory for several years he returned and spent the remainder of his life in Benton County, Minnesota. He died at age 77 on November 27, 1913 and is buried at Benton County Cemetery near Sauk Rapids.

Letter transcript:

Fort Ridgely Minnesota
Sunday Oct. 5th, 1862

Friend Billy

Some two or three months ago I received a letter from you, but whether I have answered it or not, I am unable to state, but nevertheless to make sure I will now write to you, hoping that if

Letter continued on page 4
dreaming of the terrific volley of bullets that would awaken some of us to death in the morning. At the first fire they killed all our horses eighty in number, which saved our lives as being encamped on the prairie within rifle shot of a ravine from which the Indians fired at us while we had no shot at them. We immediately threw ourselves upon the ground behind the carcasses of the horses and in this manner fired at the savages. Whenever one of our men would raise his head in sight of an Indian a bullet would either hit it or whistle very near it. I laid upon my bellie [sic] upon the ground all day and in this manner fired whenever I could get sight of an Indian. The Indians are all good shots, fight naked, and are very skilful with the rifle. I never was under fire before, and I tell you a peculiar sensation comes over me while one hears the bullets whistling around ones ears, and sees his comrades lying dead and wounded around him, some groaning, others cursing the hour they had enlisted while others upon whom the hand of death was about to fall would call to his side a comrade and give him some trinket or memento to give to his friends or relatives. I tell you it was a trying time. When the fight was over fourteen of my comrades were dead and forty-five wounded five of whom have since died. Our company only numbered seventy men in the fight. The cavalry lost several.

After the fight was over we buried our dead in one grave side by side. One of them was a young man who had left a situation in Saint Paul where he was getting a thousand dollars a year. He was a private and was engaged to a young lady east, and we took her likeness in a small gold locket from over his heart. She may well mourn for him for by losing him she lost a brave fellow and a manly heart. Our company has been stationed here since for garrison duty. Our Maj. Gen. comdg [sic] in this Department is Gen. Pope. His Headquarters are at Saint Paul. This post is situated on the east bank of the Minnesota River, and one hundred and fifty miles from Saint Paul. It was erected in 1852 and is named after an officer of the U.S. Army.

Garrison duty is dull as all we do now is drill and stand guard, I like active service in the field better. We will go south in some four or five weeks as there are eight thousand paroled soldiers on their way here to relieve us. They cannot fight the rebels until exchanged but they can fight Indians while we can go south and take their place against the rebels. There are some five thousand or rather five Regiments of Minnesota Volunteers here in Indian country who are needed south. These five Regiments have been raised since the 1st of August. Minnesota has raised Eleven Regiments of Infantry since the war with the rebels began, beside three companies of cavalry, two batteries of artillery and two companies of Sharpshooters. They are all in for the war that tells pretty well for the patriotism of a state that only ten years ago did not have a population of five thousand.

The Indian troubles have been a severe blow to the state. They murdered men, women and children without mercy, and have rendered desolate many a happy home. The frontier is all deserted and the farmers have lost all their grain as they were in the middle of harvest and had to flee for their lives leaving everything to be destroyed by the ruthless savages who burned their dwellings and grain.

Please write to me soon as we know not how long we will be here. Soldiers have to go where they are ordered you know. Give my regards to all my acquaintances and to Miss Harvey when you see her, when the war is over, if I get through alive I may see you and talk over old times, for I mean to visit home then.

Please direct me as below. If you ever see L[illegible] Hegeman give her “Didymus” regards

your old schoolmate
Lieut. Thomas Van Etten
Fort Ridgely
Minnesota

Thomas H. Van Etten,
writer of the letter.

courtesy of
Minnesota State Historical Society
Photographer: Joel Emmons Whitney (1822–1886)
Photograph Collection ca. 1865
Artifact & Archival Donations
accepted into our collections since the September 2011 Crossing:
Jane Tarjeson: Trinity Lutheran Church directory, Church of St. Peter History booklet, 1922 Gustavus Adolphus College yearbook
Karen Smithers: Standard Brewing Company tray and other items
Phyllis Maxwell: St. Peter Implement Co. sewing kit.
Kathy Erlandsen: 1927 Nicollet County atlas, First Ev. Lutheran Church (First Lutheran Church) in St. Peter 80th Anniversary booklet from 1857 to 1937, Erickson family documents, Plat Book and Farmers Directory from between 1953 and 1956
Janet Albrecht: Alexander Harkin documents
Rick Tuomala: digital photos
Covenant Church in North Mankato: digital images, other items
David Waldo: hay hook
Al Annestad: book about Federated Insurance
Keith Kreykes: Traverse des Sioux Encampment cap and jacket
Alma Forst: St. George Catholic Church, 1858-2008
**District 6 Schoolhouse**

The restoration of the District 6 schoolhouse in New Sweden Township is moving forward. Rodning Construction recently put a new roof on the school. The Friends of District 6 have received a grant from the Carl and Verna Schmidt Foundation to cover a third of the estimated $30,000 needed to repair the building’s foundation. Other generous donors have stepped forward to make the school’s preservation possible. Friends President Garfield Eckberg especially thanks everyone for their support.

Eckberg recently returned from the Country School Association of America conference outside Des Moines, Iowa. Find out more about them at www.countryschoolassociation.org.

If you’d like to make a contribution to the Schoolhouse, checks may be made out to “The Friends of District 6” and mailed to NCHS as their fiscal agent. For more information contact Garfield Eckberg at 507-246-5025. Please know that donations to the Friends are tax deductible, and completely separate from NCHS.

**Norseland Harvest Festival**

The Annual Norseland Harvest Festival will take place Sunday, September 19th. Sweet corn and pork chops will be served at 12:30 p.m. and live music will follow. Funds will benefit the Norseland Preservation Association. Norseland is located west of St. Peter off State Hwy. 22.
Treaty Site History Center Central Gallery Named

The Society is very pleased to announce that the Treaty Site's central gallery will be officially named for the Al and Cathy Annexstad Family. “We are incredibly honored to have the gallery permanently named after two local success stories who have helped so many people through their thoughtfulness and generosity,” says NCHS Director Ben Leonard. The Annexstad family has been incredibly wonderful to the Society and we sincerely appreciate all their support.

Al and Cathy recently received honorary doctorates from Minnesota State University, Mankato. Al will retire as Chair of Owatonna-based Federated Mutual Insurance in November, but will remain on the company’s board of directors. Al started with Federated in 1965.

We encourage everyone to visit the Al and Cathy Annexstad Central Gallery soon.

Summer Parades

Summer brings community celebrations, and we love good parades. If you missed us at Nicollet Friendship Days on June 24th, come watch us in the St. Peter 4th of July Parade (http://www.stpeterchamber.com/4th-of-july). Look for us in the fully restored 1880’s St. Peter Cornet Bandwagon that’s been our signature parade institution for years. Special thanks go to past NCHS board member and volunteer Herb Poncin for lining up the parade logistics each summer.

Cox House Plant Sale Recap

The Annual Cox House Plant sale was another success. Wind and rain couldn’t dampen the day as an early spring motivated area gardeners. The sale raised over $1,200 for the ongoing preservation and interpretation of the 1871 home. We sincerely appreciate everyone who helped with the sale and donated plants. Extra special thanks to the Cox House Committee, Questers, Girl Scouts, Master Gardeners, and Tostenson family. They all made sure the day would be wonderful—regardless of the weather.

The Cox House plant sale grew out of the beautiful gardens on the Cox House grounds. For years, volunteers have lovingly maintained them in the summers. We’re looking for others who may be willing to adopt a section of garden and help us keep this St. Peter treasure looking great. If you’re interested, please contact Ben at ben@nchsmn.org or 507-934-2160.
The corn is already over knee high, and the County fair isn’t that far away. We’re excited to again exhibit in the Wetherill Building. Nicollet County has generously offered some of their booth space, so we’ll have enough room for a traveling exhibit this year. Please stop by, see the exhibit, and chat with staff and volunteers on hand.

If you’re interested in volunteering for us at the Fair, please let us know. We need folks to staff the booth during open hours. We really appreciate all the friends and members who have helped us in the past. Contact Ben for more information: ben@nchsmn.org, 507-934-2160.

Matt Michels of St. Peter entered his Farmall Super MTA54 in the 5,500 pound pull at the county Fair.

Photo courtesy of Ruth Klossner, 2010 Nicollet County Fair.

WANTED
your help with two St. Peter history projects

Do you have: photos, stories, or memorabilia about St. Peter Shirt Factory & Johnson Uniform Co. (including but not limited to: C.A. Johnson, Miles B. Johnson, & Floyd B. Johnson) and St. Peter Cigar Makers (including but not limited to: Behnke, Burns, Danby, Holz, Koenig, Malmo, Miller, Knopp, Langguth, Peterson, Sheerz, Sherry, Silverberg, Sprang, Volk, & Walter)

Please contact: Eileen Holz / hazelart@hickorytech.net
The Society recently created two traveling exhibits. *Commemorating Controversy: The Dakota-U.S. War of 1862,* is currently touring across Minnesota. Gustavus’s Dr. Elizabeth Baer, students, and the Society’s Ben Leonard will travel to Flandreau, South Dakota in August to display and discuss the exhibit at the Flandreau Santee Sioux Nation event, “Legacy of Survival: Commemorating 150 Years of Dakota Exile from Minnesota.” Learn more at http://1862legacy.weebly.com/index.html.

“We are incredibly honored to be able to attend and participate in the event. To be invited by Dakota Elders from the Flandreau, Santee, and Sisseton Reservations is overwhelming,” says NCHS Director Ben Leonard.

The group will fly Nicollet County’s own Sun Country Airlines to Washington D.C. this October. The panels will be publicly unveiled and exhibited at President Lincoln’s Cottage Historic Site (http://www.lincolncottage.org). It’s exciting to think that our history will be displayed in our Nation’s capital!

In April NCHS again partnered with Gustavus to create an exhibit on St. Peter’s Sister City, Petatlán, Mexico. *Thinking About Community* was displayed at Saint Peter Evangelical Lutheran Church and School in May, and the Nicollet County Government Center in June. NCHS is currently seeking out more places to host the 12-panel exhibit. If your organization is interested contact Ben at the Society.

Text from the Culture of Display panel of *Thinking About Community,* St. Peter sister city–Petatlán exhibit.

**El Mireado is a place where relics of the past mingle with tokens of the present.**

History manifests itself in the cultural heritage of a community. The survival of customs and traditions depends on residents’ willingness to carry them from the past, to the present, and preserve for the future.

In Petatlán, the market (El Mireado) is a long-lived tradition that los Petatlecos annually renew. On days surrounding major celebrations, the sidewalks and even streets are taken over by hundreds of vendors. Shoppers can find virtually anything for sale around the city center. Everyday items like clothes, foods, and electronics can be found side-by-side with religious murals of la virgin, and even baby parrots.

Petatlán is known for its silver and gold, and jewelers cluster in sidewalk booths. Modern earrings and necklaces conserve memories of the precious metals’ cultural significance over the last several thousand years. What would be limited to sale in high-end retail stores in Minnesota is casually displayed along the avenues of Petatlán.

[Image of a house and a cottage]

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**Exhibits Reach Far Beyond Nicollet County**

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Text from the Way of Being panel of *Commemorating Controversy: The Dakota-U.S. War of 1862.*

After the treaties were signed in 1851, the Dakota Indians were expected to move to reservations. Not only were the Dakota mandated to move, but they were also told to conform to Christianity and become farmers. Some Dakota indeed decided to farm on land allotments. As for these few hundred Dakota who did adhere to white society, they were given better goods and more money by the government.

The many Dakota who did not submit to the attempted extermination of their culture were left to survive by their own means. After being asked to completely give up their way of life and live like the newcomers, the Dakota society was perpetually shattered. By 1862, the annuity system, assimilation, and reservation life left the Dakota starving, economically desperate, fractured, and angry.

“If the Indians had tried to make the whites live like them, the whites would have resisted, and it was the same way with the Indians.”

~ Wamdi-tanka
New Books Coming Soon

The revitalized book store at the Treaty Site has been a revelation. Inventory has been flying off the shelves. Every purchase helps fund the Society’s mission, diversify income sources, and make us stronger. Not to mention we have a great selection of books that you can’t always find everywhere else. More sales mean we can stock an even wider array of titles. It’s fun to see customers come in and walk away with a great new read.

Writing of great new reads, the Minnesota Historical Society Press has some great ones on the way. MHS is releasing several new Dakota history books you’ll want to definitely get your hands on.

*Mni Sota Makoce (The Land of the Dakota)*
Gwen Westerman and Bruce White
Forward by Glenn Wasicuna
Available in September 2012. Much of the focus on Dakota history centers around 1862. The history of the Dakota people is much, much more than that. This book explores that rich history and culture, and the Dakota peoples’ connection to the land that became the state of Minnesota.

*The Dakota Prisoner of War Letters*
Dakota Kaskapi Okicize Wowapi
Clifford Canku and Michael Simon
Introduction by John Peacock
Available November 2012. These never-before-translated letters were written in 1863 by Dakota men imprisoned at Camp McClellan in Davenport, Iowa. This groundbreaking book offers a completely new set of primary sources that adds volumes to our understanding of a dark and tumultuous period in history.

*Lincoln and the Indians: Civil War Policy and Politics*
David A. Nichols
Reprint, with a new preface by the author
Available June 2012. First published by the University of Missouri in 1978, the book remains one of the best books on the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862. Readers will get new insights on Lincoln’s involvement in the war and subsequent punishment, and the political processes that surrounded it.
New Faces

There are lots of new faces at Nicollet County Historical Society sites this summer. Stop in soon and get to know them!

Glenn Stryker is a new guide at Harkin Store. Glenn has great experience—most recently as a guide at the Hubbard House in Mankato. Annaliese Endorf joins us at Fort Ridgely. She was born in El Paso, grew up in Alaska, and graduated from Martin Luther College in New Ulm. She teaches grades 5–8 at Prairie Lutheran School in Fairfax.

Victoria Clark is our all-around utility player. You’ll find her busy at Harkin, Ridgely, and the Treaty Site. During the school year Tory attends Gustavus Adolphus College and is Editor in Chief of the Gustavian Weekly.

Our new Office Assistant, Kristina LeClerc, spends two days a week at the Treaty Site History Center. She’s doing a wonderful job with our accounting, membership, and lots of other work that seems to crop up. Museum Assistant Joan Jordan comes to us via the MVAC Senior Employment Program. You’ll find Joan at the Treaty Site front desk two to three days per week.

NCHS also has three college interns this summer working on a variety of interesting projects.

Hi, I’m Sarah Cochrane and I am interning in the archives at NCHS this summer. I recently finished my second year at Whitworth University in Spokane, Washington, but am from Vadnais Heights, a little north of St. Paul. I am a history and Spanish major. I am looking into becoming an archivist and am using this opportunity to see what that would be like.

So far I have been working a lot on an obituary project, which involves looking through microfilm of the St. Peter Herald and digitizing all of the obituaries that I come across. Another project that I have worked on was creating an index for the maps that are here. I look forward to everything else that I will get to do this summer.

The ancient Chinese philosopher Laozi once said “the journey of a thousand miles begins beneath one’s feet”—in order words my life begins to form once I, Sherick Francois, decide to embark on that first step. That first step begins with the Nicollet County Historical Society. As an intern this summer, I will be assisting in injecting more racial diversity into the Minnesota Historical Society Mnopedia. My position consists of writing articles and conducting research on persons of the African-American background—who seemed to have been forgotten or left out of history and helping rise public awareness about the ways in which they have contributed to society—in addition to aiding in the development of cross cultural understating between races.

Yes, I am one those people. Who every year keeps up with the latest musical talents but yet is still daunted by the way in which politics and religion tend to govern the lives of us humans. Every year I begin to realize the extent of manipulation by the society we live in, and how much the government (politics) and religion has affected the ability of man to formulate arguments against the injustices of this world. Being a native of the island of St. Lucia, I have grown to witness the hardships and poverty that exist in this world, and how much people have suffered due to the lack of education. As a future historian I hope to one day open the eyes of the public to the atrocities of this world, and help to form a country where people are aware of the issues that exist and begin to question the actions of the government. While my interest in politics and governmental issues of this system are profound, I also enjoy spending time listening to the wonders of Jazz, Hip-Hop and reggae music. Every year, some friends and I discuss the way in which music has evolved, and how much people tend to take music for granted—not noticing that music is actually a way of criticize the government and questioning the way things seem to exist.
New Mobile Tour Brings the Rich History of the Minnesota River Valley to Life

Call 888-601-3010 to enjoy the tour on the road, from home or any location a new mobile tour created by the Minnesota Historical Society offers intriguing stories and reflections about historic sites along the Minnesota River Valley. Callers to the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway Mobile Tour will learn about the people who lived there and the lasting impact of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862.

The tour can be accessed by calling 888-601-3010 from any location. Visit www.usdakotawar.org/mobiletour to download a travel guide that includes a map of the mobile tour. More stops will be added in 2013.

Stop #1 Introduction
Hear about the Dakota origins, the settlers who moved to Minnesota, reflections about the war from Dakota today and a poem by Gabrielle Tategoyskanskan.

Stop #2 Traverse des Sioux
Listen to perspectives on the treaty signings of 1851 and 1858 and their lasting impact.

Stop #3 New Ulm, Minnesota
Hear descriptions of European immigrant life on the prairie and the legacy 1862 left with the people of New Ulm.

Stop #4 Lower Sioux Agency
Gain insights into the notion of land and home along the Minnesota River Valley and how the war changed this.

Stop #5 Birch Coulee Battlefield
Hear reflections on the spiritual connection Dakota people have with the land and their fight for survival.

Stop #6 Upper Sioux Agency
Hear reflections on the values and enduring strength of the Dakota.

Stop #7 Camp Release
Hear the story of Mazasa and learn about the mounting tensions among the Dakota leading up to the war.

This year marks 150 years since the U.S.-Dakota War, fought in southwestern Minnesota in the late summer of 1862. The war lasted just six weeks, but its causes began decades earlier and the profound loss and consequences of the war are still felt today. The war ended with hundreds dead, the Dakota people exiled from their homeland and the largest mass execution in U.S. history: the hangings of 38 Dakota men in Mankato on Dec. 26, 1862.

Throughout this year, the Minnesota Historical Society is offering many new ways to learn about the war, how it shaped our state and how its bitter consequences are still felt today. "The U.S.-Dakota War of 1862," an exhibit at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul, opens June 30. Visit www.usdakotawar.org for a list of all initiatives, events and resources for commemorating and learning about the war.

The Minnesota River Valley Mobile Tour is funded by a grant from the National Scenic Byways Discretionary Grants Program administered by the Federal Highway Administration.

The Minnesota Historical Society is a non-profit educational and cultural institution established in . The Society collects, preserves and tells the story of Minnesota’s past through museum exhibits, libraries and collections, historic sites, educational programs and book publishing. Using the power of history to transform lives, the Society preserves our past, shares our state’s stories and connects people with history.

The Minnesota Historical Society is supported in part by its Premier Partners: Xcel Energy and ExploreMinnesota Tourism.
Sites Busy

NCHS Sites are a busy place this summer. It’s still early, but our numbers are up. In fact, the Society saw over 1,500 visitors at our sites in May alone. Pretty impressive—especially when you think Harkin and Ridgely seasons were only 40 hours old by the end of the month.

It seems like we’re in for a great season this year. School tours in April and May have given way to the tour busses of June. Lots of couples and families are traveling as well. It seems many people are recognizing the sesquicentennial of the Dakota-U.S. War and taking this opportunity to explore the Minnesota River Valley’s sites and museums. Who can blame them? Driving the valley is one of Minnesota’s best weekend adventures. Even though many are taking advantage, the trip still comes without the traffic frustrations of a visit to Lake Country.

If you’re looking for something to do over the weekend, stop in and see us. Better yet, hop in your car, take the Minnesota Historical Society cell phone tour while you drive up to the Wood Lake Battlefield. Don’t forget to stop everywhere in between.

Traverse des Sioux Townsite

Keeley Landscape Supplies just down the road from the Treaty Site is working with the State to refurbish the Traverse des Sioux walking trails. The path has been trimmed and re-graded. Soon quartzite gravel will cover half the trail, with the other half likely to receive gravel later in the summer. What has been a pretty rough walk the past few months is now back to a great 20-minute loop again.

Harken Store

The Harkin Store has been busy with visitors from about 20 states. Most are glad to see that we are doing a good job at preserving it and are surprised at the amount that is from the 1870s. We have two new employees and are glad that they are learning so fast about the store and town.

We have been having good weather for our programs on Sunday afternoons. I hope that will continue since our programs are outside on the drive. Our music group on June 24 is a return family of five from Carver. They perform on several instruments and they range from 5 to 19.

Our biggest weekend is July 1 with the New Ulm Battery firing their 1860’s cannon over the river. We serve watermelon and lemonade also.

We do have programs that range from music to displays to demonstrations. Some people bring their own lawn chair or blanket, especially for the music because they stay awhile. Look for our list in the calendar in this newsletter.

We hope that you can come to visit us at the store, anytime from Tuesdays to Sundays from 10 to 5 p.m. with programs usually from 1 to 4 p.m.
As we begin the summer season at the site, thoughts of 150 years ago come to mind. It is the sesquicentennial of the U.S./Dakota War of 1862. Many emotions can be imagined for soldiers here at the fort, families in southern Minnesota and the Dakota Indians of the area.

Programming for the 2012 season will focus on the 1862 War with different perspectives being shared about the U.S. Military and life among the Dakota Indians.

Join us each Saturday from May to Sept 1 to learn or refresh your understanding of Minnesota history during the mid 19th century.

Continue to check the Nicollet County Historical Society website events calendar for updates on programs during the 2012 season.

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The Fort Ridgely Monument was scheduled for some quick restoration work for the Spring of 2012. However, contractors quickly realized that there were substantial structural issues with the foundation. Stare at the monument carefully, and you can actually see it leans a bit.

So work that was supposed to finish in the spring has continued into the summer, and will likely last for a while. We really apologize for the inconvenience. This is a tough summer to deal with a project like this. But, we are very lucky that the State has made the long-term preservation of the monument a priority. While it may bug us this month, we will reap the benefits for decades to come.
7th Annual

2012

Wood Lake Battlefield Symposium

September 22, 2012
Granite Falls, Minnesota

PROGRAM

Friday Night Social -
   Bootleggers Supper Club .......... 7:30-9:30 PM
   1940 11th Avenue, Granite Falls
   Complimentary snacks and cash bar

Saturday Morning Registration .... 9:30-10:00 AM

Welcome ........................................ 10:00

The Story of Lorenzo Lawrence .... 10:10
   Dr. Eldon Lawrence – Skocirton Wapitot Oyate

The Rescue of Madeline DuMarze .. 11:00
   Laurie Othmer – Madeline’s great great granddaughter

Buffet Lunch ................................. 12:00
   WLBPA Update

To Wood Lake Battle Site by bus .. 1:00

Dedication of Battle Site .......... 1:30
   A celebration with the Coulter

Interpretation of the Site .......... 1:50
   With small groups rotate to 4 locations
   Will be walking on mowed path approx. 5/8 mile

Ceremony at the Monument Site ... 4:10

Arrive at Kilowatt Center .......... 4:50

Registration Fee: $35
   $20 (Student Rate)

Scholarship Available:  A scholarship, which
   will cover the registration fee, is available for a history teacher and for
   a history student. Candidates may send a letter stating why they
   would like to attend the WLBPA Symposium to:

   WLBPA
   4210 57th Street NW
   Rochester, MN 55901
   Application deadline is
   September 10, 2012.
   Successful candidates will
   be notified by September 18.

Location: Kilowatt Community Center
   600 Kilowatt Drive
   Granite Falls, Minnesota

Questions: Contact: Tom Hosler
   507-280-9970
   woodlakebattlefield@yahoo.com

OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS:
   Granite Falls Super Motel. 320-564-4075 Prairie’s Edge Casino. 866-203-2121

WOOD LAKE SYMPOSIUM REGISTRATION FORM - 2012

Name(s): ____________________________ E-Mail: ____________________________

Address: ______________________________

City: __________________ Zip: ______ Phone: __________

Registration Fee: $35.00 per person
   $20.00 per student

Mail to: WLBPA - Symposium
        4210 57th Street NW
        Rochester, MN 55901

Make Checks payable to WLBPA

DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION: September 17, 2012

www.woodlakebattlefield.com

Find Us on Facebook
Woodlake Battlefield

National Register of
Historic Places
June 30  
**Inkp aduta and Spirit Lake**  
Independent historian and publisher Mary Bakeman recounts the 1857 attack near Spirit Lake, and how those events contributed to the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862. 2 p.m.  
Location: Harkin Store

July 1  
**Independence Day with the New Ulm Battery**  
Refreshments. 1–4 p.m.  
Location: Harkin Store

July 4  
**St. Peter Old Fashioned 4th of July Parade**  
St. Peter Old Fashioned 4th of July Celebration  
Minnesota Square Park, St. Peter

July 8  
**Day in the Life of a Pioneer Woman.** Display of items. 1–4 p.m.  
Location: Harkin Store

July 14  
**Causes of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862**  
Independent historian John LaBatte covers the causes of war in 1862 and conducts a tour of the Fort Ridgely battlefield. 1 & 2:30 p.m.  
Location: Fort Ridgely

July 15  
**Afternoon of Leisure.** Displays, lemonade and cookies. 1–4 p.m.  
Location: Harkin Store

July 21  
**Why Treaties Matter**  
Tom Ross will share the history of treaty making with the Dakota and Ojibwe nations and how treaties are exercised today. Commissary Building, 2 p.m.  
Location: Fort Ridgely

July 22  
**“Best of the Wurst Band.”** Old-time music. 1–4 p.m.  
Location: Harkin Store

July 29  
**Christmas in July.** Store decorated and Scottish samplings. 1–4 p.m.  
Location: Harkin Store

July 31  
**Grill / Film / Discussion: American Meat**  
Treaty Site History Center  
Join the St. Peter Food Co-op and NCHS for an evening of learning about American meat.  
6 p.m. - **Grill Out** in the Parking Lot (featuring our local meat producers and their goodies)  
7 p.m. - **Documentary film showing of American Meat**  
The documentary film American Meat explores the American meat industry through the eyes of one of its chief antagonists, Joel Salatin, leader of an ever-growing community of chefs, farmers and consumers who are opting for animals raised outside and without the use of antibiotics. Then hear from those in the conventional meat system who argue that small-scale farming can’t feed America. Salatin signs a deal with fast-food chain Chipotle in a surprising move with widespread implications for the industry. ([www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com))  
9 p.m. - **Panel** with filmmaker, Tom (St. Peter co-op meat guru), and a few different meat producers from Minn.  
All above events FREE and open to the public.

Aug. 4  
**The Christian Dakota**  
Independent historian John LaBatte talks about missionaries among the Dakota, their influence, and the experiences of Christian Dakota in 1862. 1 & 2:30 p.m.  
Location: Fort Ridgely

Aug. 5  
**33rd Annual West Newton Day**  
Pictures of old buildings. Pioneer’s descendants invited for information gathering. 1–4 p.m.  
Location: Harkin Store

Aug. 8–12  
**Nicollet County Fair**  
Nicollet County Fair Grounds

Aug. 10  
**Old Time Music with Arnie and Marilyn Anderson.** 1–4 p.m.  
Location: Harkin Store

Aug. 18  
**Causes of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862.**  
Independent historian John LaBatte covers the causes of war in 1862 and conducts a tour of the Fort Ridgely battlefield. 1 & 2:30 p.m.  
Location: Fort Ridgely

Aug. 19  
**Bees and Honey.** Display by Crystal Bock. 1–4 p.m.  
Location: Harkin Store

Aug. 26  
**Old Schools Day.** Old Nicollet County schools. 1–4 p.m.  
Location: Harkin Store

Sept. 2  
**Labor Day.** Author John Koblas and musician Lonesome Ron. 1–4 p.m.  
Location: Harkin Store

Sept. 6  
**Documentary Film Series begins: (Film TBA)** 7 p.m., FREE  
Treaty Site History Center

Sept. 9  
**Grandparent’s Day.** Old-style activities for children and parents. 1–4 p.m.  
Location: Harkin Store

Sept. 16  
**Women’s Most Important Tools.** Display of items. 1–4 p.m.  
Location: Harkin Store

Sept. 22  
**Wood Lake Battlefield Symposium** (see details on page 14)  
Granite Falls, Minn.

Sept. 23  
**Snakes of Minnesota River by Tom Jessen.** 1–4 p.m.  
Location: Harkin Store

Sept. 30  
**Preparing for Winter.** What they did to ready themselves. 1–4 p.m.  
Location: Harkin Store

Please watch the NCHS website and MHS 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 ________________________________

Expiration Date _______________________________

Authorized Signature ____________________________

Yes! I would like to support my Nicollet County Historical Society in 2012 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

Membership applications should be mailed to: Nicollet County Historical Society

1851 North Minnesota Avenue

St. Peter, MN 56082