Treaty Site Goes Blue This Summer to Support Military Families

This summer, the Treaty Site History Center is proud to participate in the Blue Star Museums program, offering admission to all active-duty military personnel and their families Memorial Day through Labor Day.

What is Blue Star Museums? It’s a collaboration among the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense, and more than 2,000 museums to offer free admission to the nation’s active duty military personnel and their families from Memorial Day through Labor Day. The program provides families an opportunity to enjoy the nation's cultural heritage and learn more about their community, especially after a military move.

By showing a valid military ID or associated documentation, active-duty military and their families are welcome to visit the Treaty Site History Center free of charge through September 4, 2017. The free admission program is available to any bearer of a Geneva Convention Common Access card, a DD Form 1173 or a DD Form 1173-1, which includes active-duty military and five immediate family members. The program includes those serving in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, National Guard and Reserve.

In addition to offering free admission to active service members through the Blue Star Museum Program Memorial Day–Labor Day, Fort Ridgely, Harkin Store, and the Treaty Site all offer year-round discounts for all veterans and active military personnel. In partnership with the Minnesota Historical Society we offer $2 off our regular admission rate for active-duty personnel and veterans (with ID) every day. Unfortunately at this time family members do not receive this particular discount. Veterans and active military personnel receive free (with ID) at all locations on Veterans Day.

Thank you to all who serve!

SoMN History
So Many Stories. So Minnesota.

Every person and every region have a story. Unique stories that we as historical and cultural entities want to share with everyone. The problem is, people aren’t visiting brick and mortar sites like they used to. We’re seeing fewer families through our doors on the weekends, not as many tours being booked, and dwindling numbers of field trips. This transition away from visiting museums and historic sites poses challenges for us because, in most instances, we depend on revenue from admission to create new and educational programs, exhibits, and sometimes just to keep the lights on.

A group of six local historical organizations realized small museums like us can’t do it alone anymore—so we’ve banded together to pool our collective resources. These six organizations are Goodhue County, Nicollet County, Northfield, Rice County, Steele County, and Waseca County Historical Societies.

SoMN continued on page 3
Members

Thank you to the following renewing and new members of NCHS from the April Crossing through June 30, 2017.

Business Members:
Renewed Advocate:
Artis Center of Saint Peter
Brighton Township

Renewed Patron Members:
Elizabeth Peters

Renewed Sustaining Members:
Richard & Janet Wettergren
Dean & Jane Wahlund

Renewed Family Members:
Jeff Wettergren &
Melanie Lynard
Jon & Karen Smathers,
complimentary
Rolf & Jean Annexstad
Mike & Maryetta McCarty
John & Carol Meyer
Myrtle Gieseke

Renewed

Individual Members:
Eric Annexstad
Lois Weber

Renewed Senior Members:
Helen Christianson
Alma Forst
Dale Himmelman
Charles Johnson
Marolyn Kleinert
Ruth Klossner
Sylvia Nesheim
Bob Schabert

New Business Members:
New Advocate Business:
Nicollet County Farm Bureau
Town of New Sweden

New Individual Member:
Maria Erling
New Senior Member:
Nancy Zins

Now you can purchase or renew memberships online! Visit nchsmn.org/membership for details.

Directors:
Nita Aasen, St. Peter
Tim Bartelt, St. Peter
Tom Brown, St. George
Tom Hagen, North Mankato
Scott Hermanson, St. Peter
Eileen Holz, St. Peter
Ruth Klossner, Bernadotte
Marcy Muchow, Lafayette
Mark Ulman, North Mankato

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Research Assistants: Nita Aasen, Mike Bidelman,
Marcy Muchow, Bob Sandeen
TSHC Museum Assistants: Cindy Freeman,
Amanda Johnson, Warren Sandeen,
Graham Skinner, Loren Sundboom
TSHC Interns: Sarah Busse
TSHC Janitor: Robert Weber
Harkin Store Manager: Ruth Grewe
Harkin Store Site Guides: Donna Dose,
Justin Grewe, Robin Grewe, Glenn Stryker
Ft. Ridgely Manager: Amber Bentler
Ft. Ridgely Asst. Manager: Cory Becker
Ft. Ridgely Guides: Opal Dewanz,
Annaliese Endorf

Treaty Site History Center
1851 N Minnesota Ave., St. Peter, MN 56082
Phone: 507-934-2160, Fax: 507-934-0172
Hours: Mon.–Sat. 10 a.m.–4 p.m.;
Sun. 1–4 p.m. (Mar.–Oct.);
CLOSED: Three weeks around Christmas,
dates TBD
Archives: Tues.–Thur., 10 a.m.–4 p.m., and by appt.
General info via e-mail: museum@nchsmn.org
or research@nchsmn.org

E. St. Julien Cox House
500 N. Washington Ave., St. Peter MN 56082
Phone: 507-934-2160
For tour and rental information call 507-934-2160.

Harkin Store
P.O. Box 112, New Ulm MN 56073
Eight miles east of New Ulm on Co. Hwy. 21
Phone: 507-354-8666, harkinstore@mnhs.org
Hours:
- May–Sept. and first three weekends in Oct.:
Sat. and Sun. 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
- Memorial Day–Labor Day:
Tues.–Sun. 10 a.m.–5 p.m. and
Mon. holidays 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Fort Ridgely
72404 County Road 30, Fairfax MN 55332
Phone: 507-508-2848, ridgely@mnhs.org
Hours:
- Easter–Sept.
- May–Sept. and first three weekends in Oct.:
Sat.–Sun. 10 a.m.–5 p.m. and
Mon. holidays 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
- Memorial Day weekend–Labor Day:
Fri.–Sun. 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Open Mon. holidays

I love museums. And not just because I work at one. There are so many wonderful things we can learn at museums and historic sites—especially in Nicollet County!

As historians, we are by nature storytellers. Individually our sites tell very different and unique stories, but collectively we paint a wonderfully diverse picture of Nicollet County’s history. This summer especially I think our sites are showcasing the best they have to offer visitors.

Our summer is in full swing at the sites and we’re seeing visitors from all over enjoying our historic sites—from record-breaking attendance at Company B Reenactment Weekend at Fort Ridgely, to exploring the Other Side of Traverse des Sioux at the Treaty Site, or the Independence Day celebration at Harkin Store. Our sites and the events and exhibits we plan for them help us understand where we came from and what our future might hold.

Our shared history shapes us, as communities and as individuals, whether it’s from 10,000 years ago or from yesterday. If you haven’t visited our sites yet this summer, there’s still plenty of time to get out and explore YOUR history.

Jessica Becker, Executive Director
Since its inception in 2014, SoMN History has grown into a collaborative of southern Minnesota historical societies and museums formed for the purpose of promoting interest in the participating organizations as well as providing opportunities for collaboration and sharing resources.

Rooted in common themes, the partnering organizations reflect the unique features of their communities through their collection, interpretation, and preservation of local history. By combining resources, SoMN History has the unique ability to not only preserve and chronicle a collective history of the region but to distinguish the area as one that is rich and overflowing with history.

SoMN History is about making connections. It connects the people of Minnesota through the stories that have shaped our lives. We are committed to telling those stories with clarity, energy, and authenticity. And, because we are connected with one another, the participating organizations are dedicated to creating a historic trail with checkpoints at each of the history centers in the region.

For more information visit somnhistory.org.

Please make a point of visiting our museums this summer. We’d love to see you!

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**NCHS Archives**

My first several months in the NCHS Archives have been really enjoyable. What stands out for me is the number of archive donations that we have received. I appreciate that so many people keep us in mind when they’re looking for a home for their treasured items. We’ve received photos, maps, books, scrapbooks, family histories, plat books and atlases, school memorabilia, Polk directories—and the list goes on! If you would like to see what materials have arrived in the library, take a look at the list of donated items in the NCHS quarterly newsletters. We are continually in the process of cataloging these donations so they will be available to researchers.

Recently, we received a monetary donation from a very generous anonymous donor, to be used for the purchase of a second digital microfilm reader. Because of this donation, we were able to install a ScanPro 2200 Plus in the Archives on June 1st. This digital microfilm reader replaces a reader that served us well over the years but requires a bulky, dedicated printer and doesn’t have the ability to digitize images. With this new reader we can e-mail images, send them to our printer, or send them to a removable flash drive, direct from the microfilm reader.

Please take some time to stop by the Archive library to chat and see what we have available for your research needs. Admission to the library is free for NCHS members and $5.00 for non-members. We are currently open Monday–Friday from 10–4, although it’s a good idea to call ahead to make sure we will be available when you arrive.

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Still Seeking

We are still seeking additional photographs from all parts of the county. If you are willing to share your images with us, please contact us or stop at the museum. While we always welcome donated photographs, we are also very happy to be able to borrow them and return them after they have been scanned and saved as digital images.
New Face:

Warren Michels, TSHC Museum Assistant

I was raised on a dairy farm in Belgrade township, Nicollet county. I was employed at Kato engineering for 35 years, also retired from the military completing 21 years. I currently live in Saint Peter, Minn.

I have been a volunteer for Saint Peter on housing and development, planning commission and zoning and adjustment. Currently on the supervisory board at Minnesota Valley credit union and bison ambassador at Minnesota State Park. Being retired I find myself very busy, I also work part time for St. Peter mortuary and chairman of Calvary Cemetery.

Welcome Back, Sarah!

We met Sarah Busse last summer when she was our summer intern in the archives. She has returned for another exciting summer in the archives where she’s working on several projects with Kris and Bob.

Passing of a Friend

The staff and volunteers at the Treaty Site were saddened to hear of the passing of a dear friend and volunteer, Marsha Heinze. Marsha passed away on April 17. She was an avid reader and genealogist. Marsha worked as a Museum Assistant at the Treaty Site and also volunteered her time in the research library. Her lovely personality and spirit will be greatly missed.

Comment from an NCHS Volunteer…

I met Marsha at the Nicollet County Historical Society. Marsha spent countless hours creating a surname data base which I, and others, use every day. Your dedicated work will benefit countless others trying to learn more about their family roots. Your passion for genealogy has been transformed into a lasting contribution for the Nicollet County Historical Society.

• Nita Aasen, April 27, 2017

Last Chance to See “Electrifying Minnesota” Before It’s Gone!

Our newest traveling exhibit “Electrifying Minnesota” is on display now in the Schmidt Gallery at the Treaty Site History Center! This exhibit illuminates the powerful ways electricity has transformed lives in Minnesota for well over 100 years.

Imagine what it was like, for the first time, to have electricity available at the flick of a switch. Discover what makes the miracle of generating electricity possible. Learn what people thought about electricity in the late-19th and early-20th centuries and how we will generate it in years to come. Period silent films, photography and an interactive electromagnetic generator all reveal the power of electricity and how it shapes our lives as Minnesotans. Artifacts from the NCHS collection are also on display as part of this unique traveling exhibit.

“Electrifying Minnesota” will be on display through Sunday, August 27.

This exhibit was created by The Baaken Museum in partnership with the Minnesota History Center. It is on temporary loan from the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul. The Minnesota Historical Society Traveling Exhibits Program has been made possible by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the vote of Minnesotans on November 4, 2008. The Traveling Exhibits program has created seven exhibits that have been enjoyed by visitors at venues around the state.
Historical Society Events...

Introducing a new program!

Forgotten History Lecture Series

Join NCHS Research Assistant Bob Sandeen and guest presenters on a journey through topics of Nicollet County’s lost or forgotten history. Each month we’ll explore little-known or forgotten people, places, and events in Nicollet County’s varied and fascinating history.

Lectures will take place on the last Thursday of each month at 2:00 p.m. at the Nicollet County Historical Society. Cost is $3 for the general public and free for Nicollet County Historical Society members and Gustavus students, faculty, and staff with IDs.

2017 Schedule:
- July 27: The Grasshopper Plague in Nicollet County
- August 31: Founder’s Dilemma: Who Really Founded Saint Peter
- September 28: Lost Post Offices of Nicollet County
- October 26: Ghost Towns
- November 30: Benjamin Franklin in Nicollet County, presented by Marlin Peterson
- December: No program

Last Chance to Join Us for the Summer Matinee Film Series: Power and the Land
Thur., August 3 | 2:00 p.m. | Treaty Site History Center | FREE

Nicollet County Historical Society and Community & Family Education invite you to a summer afternoon documentary series. Due to the great interest in these previously shown films in our Thursday evening timeslot, we’ve decided to offer them again as summer matinees at 2 p.m. on Thursday afternoons, in air conditioned comfort. As always, the films are free and open to the public and take place at the Treaty Site History Center. The last film of the summer matinee season will be:

Power and the Land: A 1940 documentary produced by the Department of Agriculture and the Rural Electrification Administration showing the struggle to bring electricity to rural areas of the United States. The film’s main purpose was to convince American farmers of the necessity for rural electrification through farm cooperatives. Filmmakers sought to overcome farmers’ conservatism not by direct appeal but by gentle dramatization using a family on an Ohio farm and a poetic commentary by Stephen Vincent Benet in a simple before-and-after structure.

Film runtime is 38 minutes.

Dakota 38 Film Screening
Sat., August 5 | 1–3 p.m. | Fort Ridgely

The documentary film Dakota 38 follows Jim Miller and a group of riders as they retrace the 330-mile route from Lower Brule, South Dakota to Mankato to arrive at the site where their ancestors were hung as part of the largest mass execution in U.S. history. This is a story of their journey, the blizzards they endured, the Native and non-Native communities that housed and fed them along the way, and the dark history they are beginning to wipe away.

Cost for the program is included with site admission of $6 adults, $5 seniors and college students, $4 veterans/active military and ages 5-17, free age 4 and under and NCHS and MNHS members. Questions? Contact Fort Ridgely at 507-508-2848 or amber@nchsmn.org
Afternoon of Leisure  
Sun., August 12 | 1–4 p.m. | Harkin Store  

German immigrants to the Minnesota River Valley contributed a new cultural concept on the frontier: taking Sunday afternoon for quieter work and socializing. Women would come together to knit, tat, crochet, and do other handiwork. Men would gather to work with wood or play music. Take a break, bring a picnic, and enjoy a relaxing afternoon as you learn about these frontier hobbies and what a Sunday afternoon was like in the 1870s. Refreshments will be served. 

Admission to the program is included with your site admission of $6 adults, $5 seniors and college students, $4 veterans/active military and ages 5–17, free ages 4 and under and MNHS members. Questions? Contact the Harkin Store at 507-354-8666 or harkinstore@mnhs.org.

Minnesota River Paddle  
Thur., August 17 | 5:30 p.m. | FREE | Registration required.  

Join the Minneopa Area Naturalist Scott Kudelka for a paddle down the Minnesota River from Seven Mile Creek to St. Peter. 

Here is a perfect chance to learn how to paddle a canoe and learn about some of the history, culture, and natural world of the Minnesota River. We provide a limit of 6 canoes (up to 3 people can fit in a canoe), along with paddles, life jackets, and an experienced guide. This is an ideal program for students who want to learn about water quality and the natural resources of the river. 

* Register for the paddle by emailing scott.kudelka@state.mn.us to participate, space is limited*

Paul Lundborg Author Event  
Sat., August 19 | 1 p.m. | Fort Ridgely  

Join Paul Lundborg, author of Death of a Dream, as he retells the story of his ancestors, a large family of Swedish immigrants who settled in west central Minnesota in 1861 and who were attacked by Dakota during the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862. Thirteen family members died, while eight others fled for safety. 

Cost for the program is included with site admission of $6 adults, $5 seniors and college students, $4 veterans/active military and ages 5-17, free age 4 and under and NCHS and MNHS members. Questions? Contact Fort Ridgely at 507-508-2848 or amber@nchsmn.org

Forgotten History Lecture Series:  
The Founder’s Dilemma: Who REALLY Founded Saint Peter?  
Thurs., August 31 | 2:00 p.m. | Treaty Site History Center  

Who do YOU think is the real founder of Saint Peter? Undoubtedly you’ve heard the tale of William Dodd, but was it him? What do the history books tell us? 

Join NCHS Research Assistant Bob Sandeen on August 31 at 2:00 p.m. for a fascinating look at the men who could be Saint Peter’s founder. 

Cost is $3 for the General Public. FREE for Nicollet County Historical Society members and Gustavus students, faculty, and staff with IDs. 

Where: Treaty Site History Center, 1851 N. Minnesota Avenue, Saint Peter, MN 56082
Digital Nature Photography  
Thur., September 7 | 7:00 p.m. | FREE | Registration required. | Limit 20 people  
Join Minneopa Area Naturalist Scott Kudelka for a hands-on digital nature photography class on the beautiful Traverse des Sioux Historic Site prairie.

Photography is a great way to take some memories home with you after a visit. You will get a chance to learn how to use a digital camera and receive ten tips on how to shoot better photos. To practice these new skills, you will have a chance to shoot images of what you find interesting. Digital cameras will be provided and each person will be able to print one photo to take home!

Registration is required and is limited to 20 people for this event. To register call the Nicollet County Historical Society at (507) 934-2160 or email director@nchsmn.org by September 4, 2017.

Geology of the Minnesota River  
Thur., September 28 | 6:30 p.m. | FREE  
Join Minneopa Area Naturalist Scott Kudelka on a hike along the Minnesota River!

How was the Minnesota River Valley formed? This interesting story features glaciers, the formation of a glacial lake and a wall of water pushing across what is now southern Minnesota. During this hike Scott will present a better view of what happened here thousands of years ago and you will see some of the different rock formations along the Minnesota River.

Please remember to dress for the activity and the weather.

Greetings, County Historical Society Members!  
I hope this finds you all well. We are more than halfway into 2017, a year that has been full of big transitions and changes. As we all know, change can be hard for people, but I think we’ve got a great team in place and am looking forward to an exciting and productive second half of 2017!

In terms of personnel changes, we had a few folks move on from the Board of Directors, and a few new faces joined us. Alyssa Auten (and her new husband!) moved to Osceola, Wisconsin, and we hired the Treaty Site History Center Site Manager, Jessica Becker as our new Executive Director. In April, we installed a new Exhibit, “Electrifying Minnesota” (which closes on August 27 so be sure to stop by, if you haven’t already!) and have had a very busy spring and summer with increased number of visitors.

Another change you may have noticed over the past several months is our increased online presence. If you haven’t had a chance, please check out our revamped website at http://www.nchsmn.org/. A lot of work went into this and I think you’ll like what you see! We are in the process of building a robust Facebook page, Twitter, and Instagram accounts for most of our sites. Be sure to “Like” us on Facebook by searching for Nicollet County Historical Society, Treaty Site History Center, E. St. Julien Cox House, and Fort Ridgely. Follow us on Twitter at: @NCHSMN, @TreatySite, @ESJulienCoxHouse, and @FortRidgely. You can follow along with happenings from all of the sites on Instagram at nchsmn.

Finally, I mentioned her at the beginning of this newsletter but I would like to send a huge thank you to Jess and her staff at all of the sites for the work they are doing. They work tirelessly and are fully committed to building and growing NCHS into a great organization. It’s amazing work to witness and I am beyond appreciative for all of you. Thank you.

Thank you all for your membership and support. We look forward to seeing you at our Annual Meeting, which will happen at the end of January 2018.

Take Care,

Amanda L. Frie, President
The Nicollet County Historical Society will once again partner with St. Peter Community and Family Education to present our ninth season of documentary films! They’re shown every month from September through May at the Treaty Site History Center. Admission to the film series is free for all! The Treaty Site History Center is located one mile north of downtown Saint Peter at Highways 169 and 22, across from the Mankato Clinic.

**Before the Flood**
Thur., September 7 | 7:00 p.m. | Treaty Site History Center | FREE

If you could know the truth about the threat of climate change — would you want to know? Before the Flood, presented by National Geographic, features Leonardo DiCaprio on a journey as a United Nations Messenger of Peace, traveling to five continents and the Arctic to witness climate change firsthand.

From Academy Award®-winning filmmaker Fisher Stevens and Academy Award®-winning actor, environmental activist and U.N. Messenger of Peace Leonardo DiCaprio, Before the Flood presents a riveting account of the dramatic changes now occurring around the world due to climate change, as well as the actions we as individuals and as a society can take to prevent the disruption of life on our planet.

The film and a short discussion afterwards will highlight actions you can take whether you are near, far, or wherever you are to save our planet. **Sponsored by Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light.**

Film runtime is 96 minutes.

**Most Likely to Succeed**
Thur., October 5 | 7:00 p.m. / Doors open at 6:40 p.m. | Saint Peter High School | FREE

*Note the location change! The NEW Saint Peter High School*

This documentary examines the history of education in the United States, revealing the growing shortcomings of conventional education methods in today’s innovative world. The film explores compelling new approaches that aim to transform learning as we know it. After seeing this film, the way you think about “school” will never be the same. The film follows students into the classrooms of High Tech High, an innovative new school in San Diego. There, over the course of a school year, two groups of ninth graders take on ambitious, project-based challenges that promote critical skills rather than rote memorization.

**Most Likely to Succeed** points to a transformation in learning that may hold the key to success for millions of our youth as they grapple with the ramifications of rapid advances in technology, automation and growing levels of income inequality.

Following the film, Superintendent Paul Peterson will share how the Saint Peter Public School District is committed to meeting the needs of 21st Century Learners.

Film runtime is 89 minutes.
**Stranded**  
**Thur., November 2 | 7:00 p.m. | Treaty Site History Center | FREE**
Rural Minnesota school teacher, Miss Enter (Bette Davis) becomes a courageous survivor during an unexpected blizzard that leaves her stranded with several students in a one-room school house nine miles from the nearest shelter. With a snow plow plodding a course through a snow-packed dirt road that circles the school, at less than one mile-per-hour, Miss Enter cleverly plans an escape route that could lead to their rescue.

*Stranded* is a suspenseful episode of the anthology TV series “Telephone Time” that was broadcast on May 9th, 1957.  

**Film runtime is 30 minutes.**

**Remember Pearl Harbor**  
**Thur., December 7 | 7:00 p.m. | Treaty Site History Center | FREE**
Sunday, December 7, 1941 was a beautiful morning on the Hawaiian island of Oahu. A few sailors and soldiers were already up and playing a game of football near Pearl Harbor. Others were sleeping in their barracks or aboard ships after a late night of partying in Honolulu.

An unlucky few were wiping the sleep from their eyes and reporting for duty aboard their ship anchored off Ford Island in Pearl Harbor. Still others headed for adjacent Hickam Field or up north to Wheeler Field.

Ship decks were being washed, planes wiped down and hangars swept. It was just another day in paradise.

At 7:48 a.m. all that changed as the first Japanese planes dropped their bombs and started firing their guns at stunned American soldiers and sailors. The United States had been violently thrown into World War II.

Every sailor, airman, soldier and civilian who was in or near Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 has their own individual story of courage, fear, heroics, or tragedy. No two stories from that day of infamy are the same.

From sailors on the U.S.S. Arizona and West Virginia on Battleship Row to pilots at Hickam and Wheeler Fields, to young children who were waved at by Japanese pilots flying over their homes, the memories remain vivid to this day. These are some of their stories from December 7, 1941. They will always Remember Pearl Harbor.

**Film runtime is 84 minutes.**

**The Ivy League Farmer**  
**Thur., January 11 | 7:00 p.m. | Treaty Site History Center | FREE**
*The Ivy League Farmer* offers a first-hand glimpse into the lives of a dairy farm family on the cusp of generational and technological change. It’s also a love story that explores a small town’s concern about local kids not getting enough to eat.

After graduating from Harvard and landing his dream job on Wall Street, 23 year-old Joel Gilbert returns to the heartland to spend one final summer at home on his family’s dairy farm. While there, he quickly learns that the three-generation family farm is in trouble. Using the skills he gained with his Ivy League degree, Joel is now faced with the difficult task of confronting his strong-willed father and convincing the proud man to take the ultimate risk to save the farm. Joel also has another unexpected problem—he’s falling in love with the girl of his dreams in the small town in which he grew up. This film is being shown in partnership with the Nicollet County Farm Bureau.

Following the film join Nicollet County Farm Bureau and local dairy farming families for a short Q&A and discussion about the economics of the local dairy business.

**This film sponsored by Nicollet County Farm Bureau.**

**Film runtime is 98 minutes.**
Rural electrical cooperatives are a success story of Nicollet County and rural America. By 1892, St. Peter had a power station, yet it was 60 years before electricity was established in rural Nicollet County.

To understand this rural/city divide, it is important to look at the history and progression of electricity.

1831: Michael Faraday discovered the principle of electric induction, the basis for electrical generators in use today.

1862: This was a big year in history in the United States as we were in the middle of the Civil War and the outcome was in doubt. It was at this time the first farm organization came to be, the National Grange, with the purpose of advancing agriculture methods along with the needs of the farmers. In addition, through the Morrill Land Grant Act, each state with state representatives was granted large tracks of land for education in agriculture and mechanics. The University of Minnesota was one of the colleges. Also the U.S. Department of Agriculture was formed. These groups played a major role in rural electrification.

1914: Farmers in Yellow Medicine County formed the Stony Run Light and Power Company, one of the first electric cooperatives in the country. By December 1914, 26 farms had power obtained from the Granite Falls central power station. Also in 1914, Congress passed the Smith Lever Act, providing funding for the extension services at the county level.

1915: The Nicollet County Extension Office and Nicollet County Farm Bureau were formed, and their first task was the hiring of a county agent. This was a key factor in the development of electric cooperatives.

1925: At this time, it was almost impossible to put electricity on farms due to the cost and lack of infrastructure for the wires. Eastern Minnesota was a private power company in Henderson. They built power lines for creameries in Rush River, Norseland and New Sweden. Local farmers along the roads could have electricity if they wanted it; however, some didn’t want it.

1935–1936: American Farm Bureau and the National Grange put pressure on President Roosevelt to take some action. This drive for action was from the farmers, not from the top down. President Roosevelt, through executive order, established the National Rural Electric Administration and developed a lending structure within the Department of Agriculture.

1937: In Nicollet County and other counties, the Farm Bureau and extension service formed a committee to go out and sign members to form the electric cooperative. In June 1937, Blue Earth-Nicollet Cooperative Association was formed. BENCO is a distribution cooperative for delivering power from substations to farmers.

1938: First pole for BENCO was put up in June at Traverse in Nicollet County.

1939: Electricity came to the Eckberg family farm in Nicollet County.

Electricity continued on page 11
1944: Cooperatives averaged 4 to 5 meters per mile and cities averaged close to 50 meters per mile. Electric cooperatives are private business under IRS nonprofit status. Low density presented risks for cooperatives wanting to borrow money. After the Pace Act passed, the interest rate became 2 percent on 35-year loans.

The Flood Control Act also was passed in 1944. This established dams on the Missouri River. Electricity generators were put in the dams as a source to repay the cost. These dams produce power for the whole Midwest. Many rural electric cooperatives receive an allocation of this power.

1950s: Large transmission lines became visible on the landscape. Cooperatives were meeting monthly to conduct business and lines were put in all over the county.

1970s: Cooperatives purchased all their power until the 1970s, when they built a generating plant in North Dakota and formed a generation and transmission cooperative in Minnesota.

Along with the project—which turned out to be very successful—was a controversial transmission line.

The present-day electric grid is considered the most successful engineering project in the last 100 years.

Meters are now read automatically, an example of how technology is still a factor in the development of rural electric service.

Cyber-security is becoming a big issue for electrical cooperatives.

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Wishlist for Items

The Nicollet County Historical Society needs some things to help its operations! Here are several items which would be put to good use at the Society. We would take them new or gently used. A cash donation works, too. Just let us know for what the cash is intended. Please contact Jessica at director@nchsmn.org or at 507-934-2160 if you have questions. Thank you!

- Wet/dry vacuum (3 gallons or larger)
- 2 watering cans
- Gardening gloves
- Desktop computer with Windows 7 or higher
- Computer monitor, 21” or larger
- External hard drives and flash drives
- Monetary donations for technology upgrades
- Fiberglass ladder, between 6’ and 12’ tall
- Paper cutter
- Supplies:
  - Paper towels, hand soap, dusting cloths
  - 8 ½” x 11” white or cream cardstock

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Spruce Up the Cabin!

Our little 12x12 cabin at the Treaty Site needs a little TLC. It’s open seasonally and the daily exposure to the elements means occasionally items need replacing.

Here’s a list of items we need if you’re able to help us spruce up the cabin.

2 - White/cream pillowcases
1 - Full-size quilt
1 - Lantern
1 - Cookstove kettle
1 - Braided rug
1 - small checkered or gingham pattern table-cloth or fabric remnant
Several white taper candles
Wash basin and stand
Parking Lot

You may have noticed over the last month our parking lot was dotted with orange hazard cones. The City of Saint Peter is undertaking several maintenance projects around the site this summer. They’ve removed the two remaining parking lot islands that were around the light poles, and also a portion of our sidewalk leading to our overhead door. This will make it easier for the City workers to perform snow removal in the winter, and as an added bonus we’ll gain a couple parking spaces. Once the holes are finally filled the City will also be crack sealing and repainting the lines. It’ll be like a brand new parking lot by the end of the summer!

Wanted: Front Desk Volunteers

Do you have a little extra time on your hands? Do you like meeting new people? Enjoy learning new things?

The Nicollet County Historical Society is seeking volunteers to staff our front desk several days per week. Your day might include greeting museum visitors, taking admission, answering phone calls, ringing up gift shop sales, and assisting with other small projects when they arise.

We need volunteers during the our open hours on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays between 10am to 4pm and on Sundays seasonally between 1pm and 4pm. Ideally we’d like volunteers to plan to be at at NCHS for 3 hours but we are flexible.

Perks of volunteering include a free family membership and a great gift shop discount! Not to mention the satisfaction of helping the Society grow and succeed!

NCHS staff provides training for all volunteers. All positions are unpaid. If you’re interested volunteer applications are available on our website. If you have questions email us at museum@nchsmn.org, or call (507) 934-2160.
**Ridgely Report…**

**Introducing our new Assistant Site Manager!**

My name is Cory Becker, I am 17 years old and currently live in Gibbon, Minn. I will be starting my Senior year next September at GFW High School in Winthrop where I am active with the student council, school board representative, class president and the track team. I am also an active member of my church’s Youth Group and enjoy volunteering as time allows at the Sibley County Historical Society.

I have had a deep love for history since I was in 2nd grade. With my love of history, I have written three books on my families genealogy, traveled to many historic sites, and read about many historical events. My past year has been a busy one! In January, I was able to attend the Inauguration in Washington D.C., in February, I was able to serve as a Page for the Minnesota House of Representatives, and in June I attended Minnesota Boys State through the American Legion.

Aside from chasing my love of history, I am also busy working three “part-time” jobs including, Fort Ridgely Historic Site. As I begin my second year at the Fort, I am both excited and honored to start my first year as the Assistant Site Manager. I thoroughly enjoy working at the Fort being able to share my love of history and take on exciting new challenges with tough questions. Job privileges even allowed me to shoot off an 1863 cannon during Company B weekend!

During my free time I enjoy dancing, reading, traveling, swimming, and spending time with friends and family.

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**Harkin Happenings…**

**Greetings from Harkin Store**

by Ruth Grewe

We’ve been busy showing off the 1870’s general store with 40% original merchandise on the shelves to visitors from 26 states and 3 countries! Our programs have been well visited and our gift shop has been busy as well.

Our last July program, Old Games Day, will have you running with a hoop or playing graces in the yard, there will also be dominoes, pick-up sticks, tic-tac-toe, and checkers on July 27th. Then August 6th is the 38th Annual West Newton Day when we have an open invitation to past ancestors and people who might have had past ancestors and have connections to the West Newton area.

We hope to see you at one of our Sunday afternoon programs. If you can’t make it to one of our programs, we are open Tuesday-Sundays through Labor Day and weekends through mid-October. A full listing of our programs will be on the last page of the newsletter, on our Facebook page, and the NCHS website.

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**Old Games Day at the Harkin Store.**

Cory firing the cannon during Company B weekend.
The plant sale has been sponsored by the local Minnehaha Chapter of Questers International for over 30 years. Questers is dedicated to the preservation and restoration of historical buildings and artifacts. The purpose of the plant sale is to raise money to support projects for the E. St. Julien Cox House.

The sale started out small with a few donated plants from local gardeners that were sold from the porch of the Cox House. Weather is always unpredictable and seriously impacted one of our first sales.

Over the years the sale has grown in size and popularity. It has moved from the porch to the yard and fills a large tent with hundreds of plants of many varieties donated by a growing number of contributors. On the day of the sale people line up early to purchase plants.

Many hands work together to make the sale possible. The City of St. Peter loans us tables to display plants. Sentence to Serve provides invaluable help setting up and tearing down. Master Gardeners offer their expertise in labeling, pricing plants, and answering customer questions at the sale. Thrivent Financial recently began awarding Questers a grant to cover costs connected with the sale. NCHS has opened the Cox House for tours the last two years.

The plant sale has been successful in raising money for needs at the Cox House. Purchased plants have also enhanced the beauty of local gardens.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Fee Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 3</td>
<td>Thursday Matinee Documentaries:</td>
<td>2 p.m.</td>
<td>Treaty Site</td>
<td>Free for age 4 and under, MNHS and NCHS members. See individual event details.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 5</td>
<td><em>Dakota 38 Film Screening</em>, 1 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fort Ridgely</td>
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<td>Aug. 6</td>
<td>38th Annual West Newton Day, 1 p.m.</td>
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<td>Harkin Store</td>
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<td>Aug. 13</td>
<td>Afternoon of Leisure, 1 p.m.</td>
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<td>Harkin Store</td>
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<td>Aug. 17</td>
<td><em>Minnesota River Paddle</em>, 5:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Seven Mile Creek Park</td>
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<td>Aug. 19</td>
<td>Paul Lundborg Author Event, 1 p.m.</td>
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<td>Fort Ridgely</td>
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<td>Aug. 20</td>
<td>Bees and Honey, 1 p.m.</td>
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<td>Harkin Store</td>
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<td>Aug. 27</td>
<td>Old Schools Day, 1 p.m.</td>
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<td>Harkin Store</td>
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<td>Aug. 31</td>
<td>Forgotten History Lecture Series:</td>
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<td>Treaty Site</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Founder's Dilemma: Who Really Founded Saint Peter</em>, 2 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Treaty Site</td>
<td>Free for NCHS members, $3 for general public. See individual event details.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 3</td>
<td>The West Arrives in West Newton, 1 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Harkin Store</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 7</td>
<td>Digital Nature Photography, 7 p.m.</td>
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<td>Traverse des Sioux</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 7</td>
<td>Documentary Film Series</td>
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<td>Treaty Site</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Before the Flood</em>, 7 p.m.</td>
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<td>Treaty Site</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 10</td>
<td>Grandparent’s Day, 1 p.m.</td>
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<td>Harkin Store</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 17</td>
<td>Snakes of the Minnesota River, 1 p.m.</td>
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<td>Harkin Store</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 24</td>
<td>Horses, Horseshoes, Leather, and Ropes, 1 p.m.</td>
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<td>Harkin Store</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 28</td>
<td>Forgotten History Lecture Series:</td>
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<td>Treaty Site</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Lost Post Offices of Nicollet County</em>, 2 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Treaty Site</td>
<td>Free for NCHS members, $3 for general public. See individual event details.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 28</td>
<td>Geology of the Minnesota River, 6:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Treaty Site</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 1</td>
<td>Sheep, Wool, and Quilts, 1 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Harkin Store</td>
<td>NOTE: St. Peter High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 5</td>
<td>Documentary Film Series</td>
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<td>Treaty Site</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Most Likely to Succeed</em>, 7 p.m.</td>
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<td>Treaty Site</td>
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<td>Oct. 8</td>
<td>Preparing for Winter, 1 p.m.</td>
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<td>Harkin Store</td>
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<td>Oct. 15</td>
<td>West Newton Post Office, 1 p.m.</td>
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<td>Harkin Store</td>
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<td>Oct. 19</td>
<td>Swan Lake Presentation, 6:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Treaty Site</td>
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<td>Oct. 22</td>
<td>Lonesome Ron’s Round-up, 1 p.m.</td>
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<td>Harkin Store</td>
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<td>Oct. 26</td>
<td>Forgotten History Lecture Series:</td>
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<td>Treaty Site</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Ghost Towns</em>, 2 p.m.</td>
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<td>Treaty Site</td>
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<td>Nov. 2</td>
<td>Documentary Film Series</td>
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<td>Treaty Site</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Stranded</em>, 7 p.m.</td>
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<td>Treaty Site</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 30</td>
<td>Forgotten History Lecture Series:</td>
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<td>Treaty Site</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Benjamin Franklin in Nicollet County</em>, 2 p.m., Free for NCHS members, $3 for general public</td>
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<td>Treaty Site</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 7</td>
<td>Documentary Film Series</td>
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<td>Treaty Site</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Remember Pearl Harbor</em>, 7 p.m.</td>
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<td>Treaty Site</td>
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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 ___________
3 4s on rev-VISA, MC, Disc, 4 4s on rev-AE

Authorized Signature _______________________________________________________

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

Yes! I would like to support my Nicollet County Historical Society in 2017 at the following level (please check one).

☐ Senior (65+) $ 30
☐ Individual $ 40
☐ Family $ 50
☐ 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

PAPERLESS?? Now you can purchase or renew your membership online! Visit nchsmn.org/membership for details.