



E. St. Julien Cox House • Fort Ridgely • Harkin Store
Traverse des Sioux • Treaty Site History Center

2016 Annual Report



photo by Jon Smithers

Our Mission



The mission of the Nicollet County Historical Society shall be the discovery, preservation, and dissemination of knowledge about the history of Nicollet County and the State of Minnesota.

34,311 Served in 2016*

A visit to the modern and well-planned center is an ideal portal into study of the Dakota uprising of 1862. From there, travelers can visit the Traverse des Sioux historic site in the back yard.

~ Minneapolis
StarTribune

This has been a big year for NCHS—one full of successes and changes. We said goodbye to former Executive Director of nearly three years, Alyssa Auten, hired a new Executive Director, and a new Research Coordinator as well. We opened a new exhibit at Fort Ridgely, finished building upgrades at the Treaty Site, hosted a membership outreach event for the Minnesota Historical Society, as well as a Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibit, and began a five-year prairie restoration at Traverse des Sioux. We did all of this on top of offering our usual programs, tours, and services.

We continued building on our new branding, increased our outreach and organizational awareness through our new website, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and the results were incredible! *The number at the top of the page seems a lot lower than you're used to seeing. This is because we're tracking our attendance differently now. We're tracking physical visitors to our sites, our online, radio, and also our traveling exhibit outreach separately to get a more accurate number of those we serve, and a better understanding of our audience. In 2016 NCHS served 34,311 visitors at our sites through exhibits, programs, tours, and more. Our online presence through our new website, social media impressions and reach, Explore Minnesota, and Minnesota Digital Library served over an astounding 340,000 people this year! Not to mention we reached over 260,000 listeners through our monthly spot with KNUJ and on St. Peter Day. And last but not least, our traveling exhibit "Commemorating Controversy" wrapped up its national tour at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. with over 1.2 million visitors! These are some truly staggering numbers for an organization our size. We're blown away by the support we receive from our members, visitors, followers, and listeners.

We're going to try topping all of this next year with more programs, new exhibits, and more outreach. The staff and volunteers with NCHS are proud of their work in 2016 and we hope you are too.

Photos from top:

MNHS Outreach. A capacity audience is welcomed to the TSHC by then Director Alyssa Auten for the MNHS Membership Showcase.

TdS Prairie Burn. Members of the Many Rivers Chapter of The Prairie Enthusiasts perform a controlled burn on Traverse des Sioux as part of the five-year restoration project.

New Ridgely Exhibit. Fort Ridgely opened its doors for the season with a new exhibit.



Director's Report

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I've been with NCHS a while now in various positions and I have to say 2016 was my favorite so far. I am also confident in saying it was also one of the best, most exciting years the Society has ever had.

Last winter the E. St. Julien Cox House was named the #1 Coolest House in Minnesota by Highway Highlights website, renewing interest in our historic house museum. Fort Ridgely opened its season with a brand new exhibit and had record attendance this year. Early in the year the Prairie Enthusiasts began a five-year restoration project on the prairie at Traverse des Sioux. We also saw many much needed projects completed this year at the Treaty Site, finishing out the building improvements that were started last year. We hosted the Minnesota Historical Society's membership outreach event where we welcomed nearly 200 visitors during a rainy evening in July. Over six weeks in August and September we successfully hosted a nationally touring Smithsonian Exhibition called *Water/Ways*. In September we played in the dirt at Traverse des Sioux and experienced what real archaeology was like while digging for artifacts. Finally, in November we welcomed over 800 visitors to the Treaty Site when it was the venue for the Art Center of Saint Peter's "Holiday Fare." We shared our local history with thousands of individuals this year both at each of our five sites as well as online and over the radio and we couldn't do it without help from our friends.

I would like to sincerely thank all of the individuals and organizations that supported us this year. You gave your

time, money, (and in some cases), your blood, sweat, and tears to this organization. It is extremely humbling to have so many good people believe in what the Society has done, what we can do, and how we do it. I'd also like to thank our Board of Directors who spent many hours in and outside of meetings to help guide NCHS this year. A truly heartfelt thank you to our NCHS staff and many volunteers. It is simply remarkable what this dedicated group of people can do with the little resources we are able to provide for them. The real magic and passion you find at our sites starts with them and for that we are grateful.

Thank you so much for a wonderful year. I'm proud of what we accomplished and I'm even more excited about the challenges and opportunities ahead in 2017 and beyond!



Jessica Becker
Executive Director
Nicollet County Historical Society



Jessica Becker
NCHS Executive Director

NCHS 2016 at a Glance



Left: Cox House.
"1. Julien Cox House – St. Peter, MN – Built in 1871 for St. Peter's first mayor Eugene St. Julien Cox, the most beautiful house in the state isn't especially large. But it's beautiful, a light yellow with red trim. Its unique, built in the Carpenter Gothic Style; and charming and exotic and the very reason lists like this exist. Kudos to you, St. Peter."
<http://highwayhighlights.com/2015/12/the-top-50-coolest-houses-in-minnesota/>

Right: NCHS Intern Bree Krumwiede working on the 3D collections inventory and improvement project.

President's Report



Joseph Urban
NCHS Board President

Hello and thank you for supporting NCHS in 2016!

Looking back at 2016, I cannot thank the staff and volunteers enough for the countless hours that they dedicate to NCHS, without them, none of this could be possible. Like any non-profit, being fiscally sound is at the forefront of the Board of Directors minds and how to meet the changing expectations of what people expect from their local historical society.

The archives continue to be a popular place. If you haven't heard, Bob Sandeen has retired from overseeing the NCHS Archives and Kris LeClerc has taken his place. We thank Bob for his dedication to the people of Nicollet County and preserving the stories of the people that have called Nicollet County home. Kris will be a familiar face to many of you as she used to be the Office Manager for NCHS. We continue to struggle with how to fully utilize the Cox House to its full potential, it is something that is always on the mind of the Board. If you haven't been to Fort Ridgely or the Harkin Store in recent years, I encourage you to visit and explore again, maybe you will see something that you missed last time you were there.

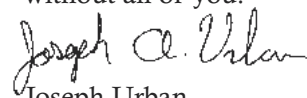
We were very excited to have programming from the Smithsonian, and their Museum on Main Street traveling exhibition, *Water/Ways*. I hope that you all had the opportunity to view and experience it, we were one of only six locations in Minnesota that was chosen for this honor.

2016 brought some big changes in that our Executive Director, Alyssa Auten, left us for other opportunities. We thank her for the nearly three years she was at

NCHS. We had approximately thirty applicants apply for the Executive Director position. We narrowed that list down to ten applicants that we felt were qualified. From that ten, we identified four we felt were the strongest candidates and interviewed them. We were ecstatic to offer the Executive Director position to Jessica Becker. She has been a long-time supporter, volunteer, and employee of NCHS. She has been doing an outstanding job and we feel fortunate to have her.

Please continue to support our events and programming, you can stay up to date by checking our Facebook page, website, or the quarterly newsletter *The Crossing*.

Again, thank you for your interest and support of keeping the mission of NCHS alive. We couldn't do it without all of you!


Joseph Urban
NCHS Board President

NCHS 2016 at a Glance



Above: New Ulm Battery. Members of the New Ulm Battery firing their 6-lb. cannon.

Left: Holiday Fare. The Treaty Site was the venue for this year's Art Center of Saint Peter's "Holiday Fare" with over 800 attendees.

2016 Board

A nonprofit's board of directors is responsible for developing, defining and reviewing the organization's mission and for providing overall leadership and strategic direction to the organization. NCHS is lucky to have a board of directors who, despite their varying backgrounds, work together to ensure this society is doing its job and serving the public well. We are grateful to our current and outgoing board members for your time and dedication.

Executive Board

Joe Urban, Saint Peter
President, (1st term ends 2016)

Scott Hermanson, Saint Peter
Vice President, (2nd term ends 2017)

Marie Dranttel, Saint Peter
Treasurer, (2nd term ends 2017)

Pam Morson, Lafayette
Secretary, (2nd term ends 2016)

Directors

Nita Aasen, Saint Peter
(2nd term ends 2018)

Tim Bartelt, Saint Peter
(1st term ends 2018)

Tom Brown, Saint George
(1st term ends 2017)

Abbi Carleton, Nicollet
(Resigned 2016, 2nd term ends 2018)

Rhonda Dass, North Mankato
(Resigned 2016, 1st term ends 2017)

Amanda Frie, Saint Peter
(1st term ends 2018)

JoAnn Gieseke, Brighton Township
(1st term ends 2016)

Eileen Holz, Saint Peter
(1st term ends 2016)

Maria Lokensgard, Norseland
(1st term ends 2016)

Bob Schabert, Courtland
(2nd term ends 2016)

Mark Ulman, North Mankato
(1st term ends 2017)

Alma Forst, West Newton Township
(Ex-officio President 2015)

2016 Staff

We owe every bit of our success to the talented staff members and dedicated volunteers who spend countless hours working to make NCHS the respected organization and industry leader it is. Whether it's giving a tour to a group of school children, shoveling sidewalks during the winter months or planning next month's program, our appreciation cannot be expressed enough.

Nita Aasen, *Research Assistant*

Rose Alsleben, *Harkin Store Site Guide*

Alyssa Auten, *Executive Director, to 11/22/2016*

Cory Becker, *Fort Ridgely Site Guide*

Jessica Becker, *Executive Director, 12/1/2016*
Treaty Site History Center Site Manager to 11/30/2016
director@nchsmn.org

Amber Bentler, *Fort Ridgely Site Manager,*
amber@nchsmn.org

Mike Bidelman, *Research Assistant*

Sydney Branom, *Fall 2016 Intern*

Jack Buser, *TSHC Museum Assistant*

Sarah Busse, *Summer 2016 Intern*

Sarah Cooper, *TSHC Museum Assistant*

Elaine Deschaine, *Office Manager,*
elaine@nchsmn.org

Opal Dewanz, *Fort Ridgely Site Guide*

Bri Dickel, *TSHC Museum Assistant*

Donna Dose, *Harkin Store Site Guide*

Annaliese Endorf, *Fort Ridgely Site Guide*

Colleen Flaherty, *TSHC Museum Assistant*

Cindy Freeman, *TSHC Museum Assistant & Docent*

Justin Grewe, *Harkin Store Site Guide*

Robin Grewe, *Harkin Store Site Guide*

Ruth Grewe, *Harkin Store Site Manager,*
harkin@nchsmn.org

Marsha Heinze, *TSHC Museum Assistant*

Steve Hogberg, *Docent*

Amanda Johnson, *TSHC Museum Assistant*
& Fort Ridgely Site Guide

Bree Krumwiede, *Summer 2016 Intern*

Kristina LeClerc, *Research Coordinator*
researchcoordinator@mcnsmn.org

Charlotte Nack, *Fort Ridgely Site Guide*

Wayne Passon, *Maintenance Coordinator to 5/31/2016*

Bob Sandeen, *Research Coordinator to 10/31/2016*
Research Assistant 11/1/2016

Graham Skinner, *TSHC Museum Assistant*

Teresa Saum, *TSHC Museum Assistant*

Glenn Stryker, *Harkin Store Site Guide*

Loren Sundboom, *TSHC Museum Assistant*

Robert Weber, *TSHC Janitor*

Nancy Zempel, *Fort Ridgely Site Guide*



“Interning at NCHS has been an incredibly rewarding experience. The opportunity to learn about the museum's collections and exhibits has given me valuable work experience and has allowed me to learn about Nicollet County's rich history. Because of this experience, I have a greater appreciation for local history and I plan to continue working with local history in the future!”

~ Bree Krumwiede,
NCHS Intern

2016 Activities & Programs

Providing guided tours for the Water/Ways exhibit was so much fun. Children and adults enjoyed interacting with the many exhibits because they appealed to so many senses from sight to sound to touch. We all learned a great deal about how we use water locally, nationally and world-wide as well as what we should be doing to preserve it. I wonder how many of our visitors now find themselves turning off water sooner than before? I know I do.

~ Cindy Freeman,
TSHC
Volunteer Docent

This past year was chock full of programs, tours, field trips, and other events at all our sites. NCHS collaborated and partnered with a large number of community organizations. Some of these included Bolton & Menk, Gustavus Adolphus College, Minnesota State University, Mankato; Seed to Site, Great River Greening, Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light, St. Peter Food Coop, Arts Center of St. Peter, The Prairie Enthusiasts, St. Peter Reads, the Minnesota DNR, and many more. Visitors and audience members took battlefield and trail tours, attended the documentary films, dug in the prairie dirt, listened to great music, and many other exciting events and programs.

Photos from top:

Fort Ridgely Site Guide Anna Endorf, giving a talk at the diorama.

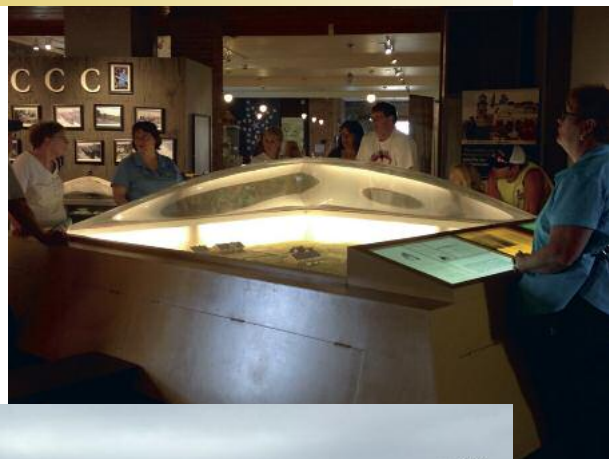
Archaeology Field Work Day. Participants doing real archaeology at the Traverse des Sioux historic site on Saturday, September 24th.

Carver Creek Bluegrass. Carver Creek Bluegrass playing during a program at the Harkin Store.

Rain garden. Genevieve Brand from Seed to Site getting ready to plant the new rain garden at the Treaty Site.

Documentary film screening of Farmlandshown in partnership with the Nicollet County Farm Bureau who will hosted a discussion after the film.

Left: Kids of all ages attended Snake Day at Harkin Store for some hands-on learning.



2016 *Water/Ways* Smithsonian Exhibit

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Photos from top:

Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibition *Water/Ways* was on display at the Treaty Site for six weeks in August and September.

Executive Director Alyssa Auten giving a tour of *Water/Ways* to the CASTLE group from New Ulm. This was one of many tours given during the six-week run of the exhibition.



Mural depicting a woman in water by Saint Peter student and resident Lauren Mayer. *Water/Ways* partner and donor Bolton & Menk sponsored the mural.

3rd graders from Saint Peter Public Schools North Intermediate Elementary visiting playing with "Fish Stories" during their field trip to visit *Water/Ways*.

The Nicollet County Historical Society developed and created *River Valley Reflections: Our Enduring Water* as a companion exhibit to *Water/Ways*. The exhibit was the result of a collaborative effort between NCHS and local water experts and enthusiasts.



2016 NCHS Financials & Balance Sheet

Friendly and knowledgeable staff. Wonderful, well-kept facility and exhibits. A variety of informative special programs offered throughout the season.

~ Naomi Rapp Evenson
about Fort Ridgely

Right: The CCC constructed Fort Ridgely State Park Water Tower and Garage Building, designed by architect, V.C. Martin, 1937–38
photo courtesy, MNHS

Below: John LaBatte giving a battlefield tour at Fort Ridgely

The Nicollet County Historical Society is happy to report we had a good year financially! The year was disaster and emergency free. The Society is most grateful for the monetary support it has received via gifts and grants from our supporters, members and benefactors. Exhibits, programming and educational outreach would not be possible without your generosity, please be assured your gifts are greatly appreciated.

Due to the early timing of this meeting – financial statements will be available at the meeting or upon request – this booklet had an early submission deadline for printing and it wasn't feasible (or prudent) to have complete and accurate year-end financial statements prepared by that date.

(Please see Financial Insert)



2016 Monetary Donors

The Society is most grateful for the monetary and non-monetary support we have received via gifts and grants from our supporters, members and benefactors. Exhibits, programming and educational outreach would not be possible without your generosity, please be assured your gifts are greatly appreciated.

John & Julianne Allerson
Mark & Frani Anderson
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Designated to Rain Garden Installation

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Designated to Water/Ways Exhibit

Lorraine Olson
Marlin Peterson

Designated to Harkin Store

Ilene Bussler
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Beth Russel

Non-Monetary

Nita Aasen
Eunice Amos
Bob Douglas
CP Engineering
Eileen Holz
Jon Smithers



This photo shows two St. Peter linemen working with the electrical connections on a power pole in front of the Strehlow Hotel at 216 and 218 Nassau Street in St. Peter. The neighboring Walter Cigar Factory was at 212 Nassau Street and was owned by John Walter, Jr.

2016 Support



2016 Memorials



Runners taking off at the second annual "Fun Fall Trail Run" at Fort Ridgely

In Memory of **Marie (Daun) & Donald Dawald**

Given by
Mary Klinkhammer

In Memory of **Cletus Franta**

Given by
Lorraine Olson

In Memory of **Lorraine Honken**

Given by
Owen & Evelyn Swenson

In Memory of **Edna Maidl**

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Robert & Leona Isenberg
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Judy Scholl
Ed & Beverly Wetherill

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Ronald & Doris Rollefson
Judith Scholl
Jonathan & Karen Smithers
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In Memory of **Lester "Bud" Peterson**

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Lorraine Olson

In Memory of **Marion Veith**

Given by
Eileen Holz
Eunice Holz

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\$200 Advocate Business Members:

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Arts Center of Saint Peter
The Nicollet House

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Marty & Carol Sterner
Sally Webster
Jerry Weldy

Sustaining Members

Ellis Jones
Ranae Peterson



Santa and Mrs. Claus stopped by "Christmas at the Cox House" to talk with all the good little children who visited.

Family Members

Paul & Nita Aasen
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Tim Bartelt & Emily Stark
Steve & Jen Baxa
Mike & Pam Bidelman
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Myrtle Gieseke
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Lisa Isenberg & Phillip Friedlund
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Kate Martens
Julie Pollard
Karen Robison
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Bonnie Thstenson-Sellner
David Wicklund
Sally Wilkins

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History Center of Olmstead County
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Owen Samuelson
Carolyn Spangler

Mary Compart
Elizabeth Russel, Harkin Store
Joan Davis

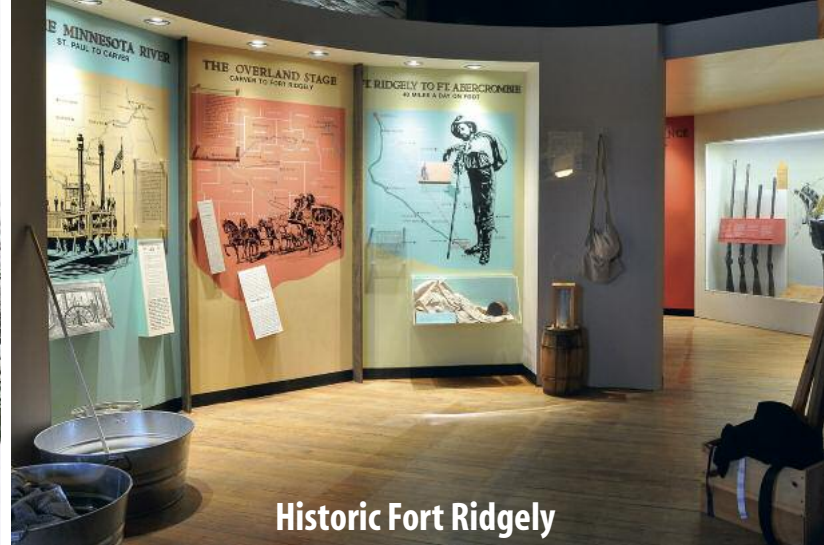
A listing of the items donated are detailed in our quarterly issues of *The Crossing*, the Society's newsletter. These donors are only those for collection donations since the October *Crossing*.

Commemorating Controversy, NCHS's travelling exhibit, on display at Fort Ridgely in 2016.





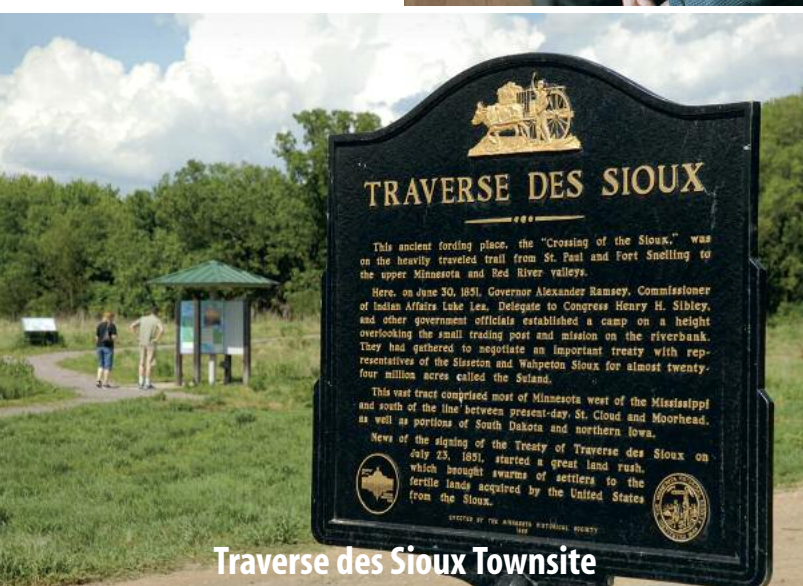
E. St. Julien Cox House



Historic Fort Ridgely



Alexander Harkin Store



Traverse des Sioux Townsite



Treaty Site History Center

1851 N. Minnesota Avenue • St. Peter, MN 56082

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Hours: Mon.–Sat. 10 a.m.–4 p.m. • Sunday 1–4 p.m.

Closed Sundays from Nov.–Feb.

Archives: Mon.–Fri. 10 a.m.–4 p.m.



General information: museum@nchsmn.org

Archives information: research@nchsmn.org

Website: www.nchsmn.org