



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

## 2017 Annual Report



New Ulm Battery at Harkin Store. Photo credit Ruth Klossner



## 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.*

*A great place  
to get to your  
local history.  
I highly  
recommend  
going!*

~ Jay Freeman  
about the Treaty Site  
History Center

We strive to make history accessible to learners of all ages by providing information and opportunities to connect our past to our present. As an organization that cares for five historic sites, we certainly encourage our members and the public to visit these sites and attend programs and special events to form a deeper connection to our shared history. We hope the 21,920 people who visited our sites in 2017 enjoyed their experience.

But we're not just about our sites and our mission isn't either. By definition, NCHS is a community organization. You don't have to come to one of our buildings to be served by the Society because chances are we'll reach you through outreach, publications, and even digitally.

We work with local governments and state agencies like MNDOT, Southern Minnesota Tourism Association, the Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway, and other municipalities to advocate not just for history, but for all of us.

The Society served over 350,000 people online in 2017. Our website was visited by over 28,000 people this year with over 13,000 unique users. We have over 1,500 photographs, maps, and more available anywhere in the world for free through the Minnesota Digital Library and Digital Public Library of America that were seen by over 3,500 users, and our page on Explore Minnesota's website had over 7,000 hits.

Our mission is to discover, preserve and disseminate the history of Nicollet County. The Society has shown that one doesn't just have to visit our historic sites to be affected by the work we are doing, but we sure hope you do.

Visitors enjoy spending a Saturday afternoon touring Fort Ridgely with Site Manager Amber Bentler.

Left: Guests from the Shakopee Mdewakantan Sioux Community toured the Treaty Site History Center and Traverse des Sioux historic site to study how we design our exhibits.

Right: NCHS participated in the Nicollet Friendship Days parade on June 18, 2017! As always, we were honored to carry the Grand Marshal in our historic St. Peter Cornet Band wagon.



Executive Director Jessica Becker was interviewed by KNUJ's Brian Filzen for "St. Peter Day" on January 24, 2017.



## Director's Report

Organizations are like organisms. They are a living thing that is always changing and growing. They must adapt to survive and thrive and they operate more efficiently when their needs are met. Our organization is no different.

In 2017, the staff, Board of Directors, and I spent a lot of time taking a close look at how and why we do things with a mind to sustainability and growth. We looked at how our money is being spent, studied and tracked attendance, and questioned where our time and talents are best allocated in order to be more effective with our resources. Now we have a tighter grasp on the overall health of the organization, and a plan to accomplish our short and long-term goals. It's exciting for me to say at the end of 2017 we're in a more stable and better financial position than we've been in many years.

We also thought long and hard about how we fulfill our mission. As you will see in the following pages, we have put your membership dollars and donations to good work. Your support provided our patrons with opportunities to explore Nicollet County history through new programs, traveling exhibits, additional research tools, and much more. We also continue to work with community partners who help the Society by offering

speakers for programs, planning or sponsoring events, or by becoming business members.

As we end our eighty-ninth year, I want to thank everyone who supported NCHS this year—our members, donors, friends, volunteers, board members, and staff for their continued commitment to our mission. Your support through financial assistance and gifts of time, talents and treasures directly contribute to our success now and always. I'm pleased to be leading NCHS into 2018 and cannot wait to see what the next year will bring. For an organization whose mission is rooted in the past, I'm very excited about our future.

Onward and forward!



Jessica Becker  
Executive Director



Jessica Becker  
NCHS Executive Director

## President's Report

Happy 2018!

I hope this finds you all well.

I am really proud of the work everyone did to make 2017 successful. Our staff, board of directors, committee members and volunteers did an outstanding job of planning and executing a variety of events and activities as well as performing the routine every day work of managing and operating NCHS's five sites.

Last we talked, NCHS was in the process of changes. We have successfully navigated our way through a lot of these changes. Among them: staffing, site contracts with the Minnesota Historical Society, and new hours for the Treaty Site.

Looking ahead to this year, we as an organization need to seriously address our never-ending challenge of properly funding our operations—both short and long-term. To get this process started, we will work with a very reasonably priced outside organization to help us do assessments of the following three areas: Organizational, Community Engagement, and Collections. Once the assessment is

complete, we will be able to plan for our future and really focus on improving our financial health.

In closing, I would like to first thank Jess and her staff at all of the sites for the tireless work they are doing. Your contributions are recognized and truly appreciated. Thank you all, so much.

And finally, thank you all for your membership and support. We appreciate your support and look forward to seeing you throughout 2018!

Cheers!



Amanda Frie  
NCHS Board President

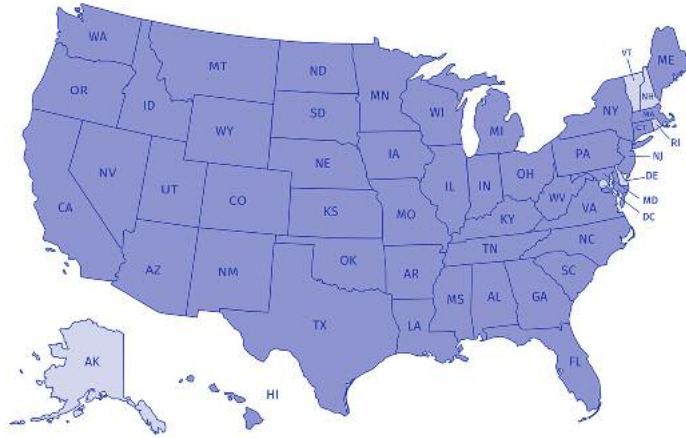


Amanda Frie  
NCHS Board President



# NCHS 2017 at a Glance

NCHS welcomed visitors from around the world in 2017. They came from 45 states and 15 countries! Do you know how to say "thanks for visiting" in Chinese?



Right: The Treaty Site hosted two traveling exhibits from the Minnesota Historical Society Traveling Exhibits Program including Electrifying Minnesota from April to August.



Right: It's never too early to introduce a "potential green-thumb" to the Cox House Plant Sale!



Left: Tent full of donated plants for the 2017 Cox House Plant Sale.

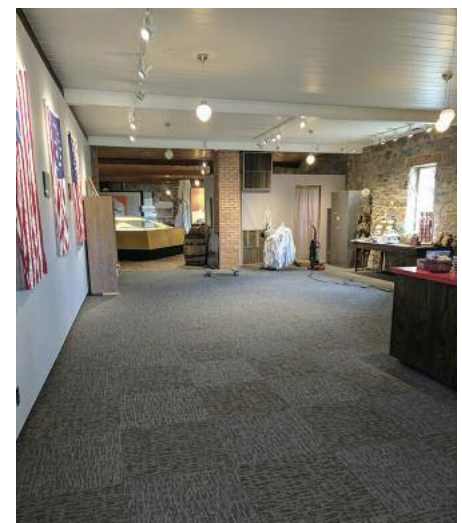
21,920 onsite visitors at the five sites  
28,211 website page views with 13,360 unique visitors  
3,526 Minnesota Reflections collection views  
Over 260,000 radio listeners for monthly radio slot  
2,018 combined Facebook page likes & 306,702 people reached  
10,731 Twitter impressions  
30 new NCHS memberships  
Over 12,000 volunteer hours



Left: Site Manager Amber Bentler is seen here moving fixtures off the old carpet before installation.



Right: New carpet was installed at Fort Ridgely this summer.



## 2017 Board

It's been said that a board of directors can make or break an organization. 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 work together to ensure this society is doing its job and serving the public well. A huge thank you is in order for the board members who are finishing their terms, those who are just joining us, and those who are continuing to dedicate their time to NCHS.

### Executive Board

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

JoAnn Gieseke, Brighton Township  
Vice President, (2nd term ends 2019)

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

Maria Lokensgard, Norseland  
Secretary, (2nd term ends 2019)

### Directors

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

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

Tom Brown, Saint George  
(2nd term ends 2020)

Tom Hagen, North Mankato  
(1st term ends 2019)

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

Eileen Holz, Saint Peter  
(2nd term ends 2019)

Ruth Klossner, Bernadotte  
(1st term ends 2019)

Marcy Muchow, Lafayette  
(1st term ends 2017)

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

Joe Urban, Saint Peter  
(Resigned, 2017)

## 2017 Staff

We know exactly how lucky we are to have the staff that we do. Spread out across Nicollet County and beyond, and worth their weight in gold, they consistently give so much effort, expertise, and excitement. Through their hard work and some dedicated volunteers NCHS answered thousands of phone calls and e-mails, talked to audiences all over creation, helped genealogists find lost relatives, preserved historical treasures, and cleaned toilets more times than we care to think about. Any thank you is inadequate, but we'll say it anyway.

<i>Executive Director:</i>	Jessica Becker
<i>Research Coordinator:</i>	Kristina LeClerc
<i>Office Manager:</i>	Elaine Deschaine
<i>TSHC Museum Assistants:</i>	Amanda Johnson
	Graham Skinner
	Erica Smith
<i>TSHC Janitor:</i>	Robert Weber
<i>Harkin Store Site Manager:</i>	Ruth Grewe
<i>Harkin Store Site Guides:</i>	Donna Dose
	Justin Grewe
	Robin Grewe
	Glenn Stryker
<i>Fort Ridgely Site Manager:</i>	Amber Bentler
<i>Fort Ridgely Asst. Site Manager:</i>	Cory Becker
<i>Fort Ridgely Site Guide:</i>	Opal Dewanz
	Annaliese Endorf
	Charlotte Nack

*This is another of those out of the way places that you're glad you visited.*

~ Stephanie Groton  
Connecticut,  
NCHS TripAdvisor  
Review



New Fort Ridgely  
Assistant Site Manager  
Cory Becker poses  
in front of their  
flag display.



## 2017 Volunteers



Volunteer Museum Assistants Warren Michels (above) and Bill Pedersen (below) are often the staff who will greet you on Tuesday when you visit the Treaty Site History Center, whether it's for research, exploring the exhibits, or to browse the gift shop.



Each year many volunteers contribute time, expertise, and energies to NCHS. In 2017 volunteers donated over 12,000 hours to the Historical Society! They researched, greeted visitors, gave dozens of tours, pulled weeds or maintained trails, built things, and so much more. All these tasks and more translate into literally hundreds of things we couldn't have done without them. Thank you!

### Research

Nita Aasen  
Mike Bidelman  
Marcy Muchow  
Marlin Peterson  
Bob Sandeen

### Building & Grounds

Tim Bartelt  
Brad Becker  
Genevieve Brand  
Steven Guse  
John Mayer  
Todd Melcher  
Brian Oviatt  
Herb Poncin  
Robert Weber  
The Prairie Enthusiasts—  
Many Rivers Chapter

### Cox House

Dan Deschaine  
Elaine Deschaine  
Minnehaha Questers  
Richard Tostenson

*We hope we listed everyone but please let us know if we missed someone!*

### Tours Guides & Docents

John Chamberlain  
Cindy Freeman  
Tom Freeman  
Steve Hogberg

### Front Desk

Marsha Heinze  
Warren Michels  
Bill Pedersen  
Loren Sundboom

### Interns & Student Workers

Jack Atkins, Student Worker  
Sarah Busse, Summer Intern  
Michael Collins, Intern



Right: Volunteer crew assembling our new utility shed at the Treaty Site. Volunteers from left to right: Tim Bartelt, Brad Becker, Brian Oviatt, Todd Melcher, and Steve Guse.

## 2017 Activities & Programs

This past year NCHS collaborated and partnered with a large number of community organizations. Some of these included Gustavus Adolphus College, the Arts Center of Saint Peter, St. Peter Reads, Second Minnesota Battery of Light Artillery Reenactors, the New Ulm Battery, and many others. Visitors and audiences went back in time to experience the thrill of artillery fire at Fort Ridgely, learned about our forgotten history in a new lecture series, experienced the beauty of a night hike on Traverse des Sioux, celebrated Christmas in July at Harkin store, and many other exciting events and programs.

Volunteers took part in National Park Day on April 1, 2017 at Fort Ridgely. The event is sponsored by the Civil War Trust and is a great opportunity volunteers that want to help preserve our Civil War battlefields.





# 2017 Activities & Programs continued

7

Clockwise from top:

Minneopa Area Naturalist Scott Kudelka leads a group on a night hike of Traverse des Sioux on May 18th.

Local historian Bob Douglas took attendees back in time for a visit to the Traverse des Sioux townsite.

We had a wonderful time talking about NCHS with people from across our region at the Nicollet County Fair.

Visitors to Harkin Store celebrated Independence Day with the New Ulm Battery demonstrating artillery fire with their 1862 cannon.

Trick-or-treaters of all ages were greeted at the E. St. Julien Cox House by Dan and Elaine Deschaine at the new Halloween event.

Last winter visitors to the Treaty Site History Center explored the people and places of Minnesota's first global business in a new traveling exhibit from the Minnesota History Center "Fur Trade in Minnesota."



*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





## 2017 NCHS Financials & Balance Sheet

The Society has received very generous support in 2017 from Nicollet County, individuals, and organizations. Monetary support comes in many forms—monetary donations, in-kind donations, allocations and appropriations, grants, and memberships. NCHS would like to thank Nicollet County for its unflagging financial support of our mission. We continue to diversify our funding overall, but the taxpayers of Nicollet County provide an important and stable base. And of course our relationship with the Minnesota Historical Society and their historic sites we operate is also important to us. To all of you who supported us this year, we offer our deepest thanks.

(Please see the meeting packet for financial statements.)



*A visit to a museum is a search for beauty, truth, and meaning in our lives. Go to museums as often as you can.*

~ Maira Kalman



The Carl & Verna Schmidt Foundation awarded NCHS a \$35,435 grant in July 2016 for many needed building updates at the Treaty Site History Center. These projects were completed Fall 2017. The grant funds paid for new computers for staff, museum software upgrade, new archives shelving, exterior security cameras and new security system, building sound system, roof repairs and installation of snow guards, a new drinking fountain with a bottle filling station, and a new exterior utility shed.





## 2017 Monetary Donors

The Society is exceedingly grateful for the support we receive from our members, patrons, and supporters. We would not be able to operate our buildings, create exhibits or offer programming without it. We cannot express our gratitude enough.

Mark & Frani Anderson  
Lois Annexstad  
Anonymous  
Alyssa Auten  
Roberta Bartholdi  
Peg Bindner  
Steve & Becky Briggs  
Matthew & Betsy Byers  
Melvin Craig  
Crown Underground LLC  
Stanley Davis  
Duane & Brenda DeBlieck  
Dr. Mark Dehen  
Elaine Deschaine  
Marie Dranttel

Lorraine Gatchell  
Samuel & Julie Gault  
Joann Gieseke  
Sue & Bruce Gray  
Fred Hanson  
Eileen Holz  
Eunice Holz  
John Iverson  
Carol Jackson  
Emilie Lokensgard  
Eugene Lund  
Mark & Mary Davis  
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Cindy & Larry Mohr  
Robert & Kay Moline  
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Herbert Poncin  
Janet Prehn  
Marie Renneke  
Harold & Louise Rodning  
Ken & Patsy Rossow  
Elizabeth Russell  
Arlene Sandeen  
Judy Scholl  
Douglas & Judy Schultz  
Jon & Karen Smithers

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Chamber of Commerce  
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Roland & Edi Thorstensson  
Heather Vonbank  
West Newton Township  
Mary Vinqvist  
Richard & Janet Wettergren

### Non-Monetary

Gary Gottschalk  
Gretchen Koehler  
Marilyn Robertz

## 2017 Support



CARL AND VERNA  
SCHMIDT FOUNDATION





## 2017 Memorials

In Memory of  
**Willard Bjorklund**

Given by  
Owen & Evi Swenson

In Memory of  
**Bert Bode**

Given by  
Owen & Evelyn Swenson

In Memory of  
**Roger Currier**

Given by  
Thorild & Ardith Nelson  
Lorraine Olson

In Memory of  
**LaVern C. (Buddy) Giefer**

Given by  
Thorild & Ardith Nelson  
Owen & Evelyn Swenson

In Memory of  
**W. M. "Bill" Gustafson**

Given by  
Marshall Anthony  
Richard & Janet Wettergren

In Memory of  
**Harold Luepke**

Given by  
Lorraine Olson

In Memory of  
**Stanley Lindquist**

Given by  
Donna Chommie  
Donald & Beverly Gustafson  
Willis Lindquist  
R.D. Weisgerber  
Ed & Beverly Wetherill

In Memory of  
**Darlene Martens**

Given by  
Thorild & Ardith Nelson  
Owen & Evelyn Swenson

In Memory of  
**Arden Olson**

Given by  
Thorild & Ardith Nelson

In Memory of  
**Lorraine Struck**

Given by  
Eileen Holz  
Eunice Holz

In Memory of  
**Nancy Weinberger**

Given by  
Janet Hoffmann

*Great staff!  
Beautiful  
grounds!  
Programming  
is family  
friendly and  
fun for all ages!*

~ Cheyanne St. John  
about Fort Ridgely

## Memberships

### \$1000 Crossing Circle

#### Life Members:

Marian Anderson  
Roberta Bartholdi  
Steven & Becky Briggs  
Verlin Carlson  
Mel Craig  
Mark & Mary Davis  
Marie Dranttel  
Garfield & Marjorie Eckberg  
Julie & Sam Gault  
Lisa Gault  
Delores Holteen  
Emilie Lokensgard  
James & Patricia McPherson  
Arlene Sandeen  
Mr. & Mrs. Gary Schmidt  
Loren & Roxane Sundboom  
David and Linda Witte

### \$1000 Champion

#### Business Members:

Crown Underground LLC  
Gustavus Adolphus College

### \$500 Benefactor

#### Business Member:

Patrick's on Third

### \$200 Advocate

#### Business Members:

Arts Center of Saint Peter  
Brighton Township  
First National Bank Minnesota  
Nelson Printing  
New Sweden Mutual Insurance Co.  
Nicollet County Farm Bureau  
The Nicollet House  
Town of New Sweden

### Life Members:

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Lois Annexstad  
Phyllis Annexstad  
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Eunice Holz  
Carl & Susan Johnson  
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Mrs. William Lager  
Ben Leonard  
Elgene Lund  
Eugene Majerowicz  
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Robert & Kay Moline  
Mrs. Herbert Monke  
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Dr. & Mrs. Vern Olmanson  
Lorraine Olson  
Dennis Paschke  
Carol Peterson  
Marian Peterson  
Dean & Peggy Pettis  
Herbert & Louise Poncin  
Bill & Marilyn Robertz  
Marilyn Rodning  
Wayne Schmidt  
Judy Scholl  
Robert Swedberg

Linda Swenson

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Marlin Peterson  
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Bob Sandeen  
Dave Solheim  
Marty & Carol Sterner  
Roland & Edi Thorstensson  
Sally Webster

### Sustaining Members:

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Chris & Julie Gilbert  
Eileen Holz  
Gayla & Carl Lueck Mattson  
Dean & Jane Wahlund  
Buster & Nina West  
Dave & Faith Wicklund  
Richard & Janet Wettergren

### Family Members:

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Rolf & Jean Annexstad  
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Amber Bentler  
Marilyn & Bill Bessler  
Mike & Pam Bidelman  
Claude & Sandy Brew  
Tom & Carol Brown  
Jack Buser  
Elsa Cornell  
Andrew & Sarah Davis  
Duane & Brenda DeBlick  
Arden & Marilyn DeBoer  
Dwight & Geni DeBoer  
Elaine Deschaine  
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Myrtle Gieseke  
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Lisa Isenberg & Philip Friedlund  
Ray & Liz Jacobson  
Barbara Jerabek  
Amanda Johnson  
Bradford & Linda Johnson  
Dave Johnson  
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Sally Lambert  
Kristina LeClerc  
Tim Lokensgard & Family  
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Mike & Maryetta McCarty  
Joe Metzen & Kay Cordelia  
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Warren Michels  
Tuff & Ginny Miller  
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Dale & Kay Mowbray  
Elizabeth Mulvehill  
David Nelson  
Thorild & Ardith Nelson  
Janet & Byron Nordstrom  
Douglas & ReVae Nygard  
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Trudi Olmanson & Eli Hoehn  
Steve Ream & Elaine Hewitt  
Marjorie & Earl Renneke  
Harold & Louise Rodning  
Mark & Gabriela Roemhildt  
Ken & Patsy Rossow  
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Erica Smith  
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Emily Stark

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Tamara Stoffel  
Glenn Stryker  
Erling Sven  
Owen & Evie Swenson  
Jim Vavreck  
Jeff Wettergren & Melanie Lynard  
Barbara Wilkinson  
Larry & Joan Zambino

## Individual Members:

Joni Anderson  
Eric Annexstad  
James Bartels  
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Jacquelyn Feldman  
Julie Ferrell  
Carol Forbes  
Michael Frederick  
Amanda Frie  
George Green III  
Scott Hermanson  
Julie Johnson  
Gretchen Koehler  
Maria Lokensgard  
Kate Martens  
Barbro Martensson  
Linda Miller  
Brian Oviatt  
Ranae Peterson  
Janet Prehn  
Karen Robison  
Sara Samuelson

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Marcia Sexton  
Jerod Spilman  
Patrick Tanis  
Mark Ulman  
Lois Weber  
Robert Weber

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Ruth Brandel  
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Herbert Brunner  
Joseph Brunner  
Nannette Chambers  
Helen Christianson  
Lois Currier  
Eleanor Depuydt  
Opal Dewanz  
William Dixon  
Gail Dummer  
Alma Forst  
JoAnn Gieseke  
Jane Haala  
Tom Hagen  
Pat Halter  
Barbara Hanson  
Ronald Haugen  
Kay Herbst Helms  
Thomas Hergert  
Elaine Hermanson

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Bob Schabert  
Helen Schauer  
Gary Schuft  
Agnes Stensby  
Judy Teigen  
Bernadine Thompson  
Jerry Wolfe  
Nancy Zins

# 2017 Collection Donors

As your county historical society, NCHS cares for tens of thousands of artifacts—objects, manuscripts, photographs, and more. We would like to thank the following organizations and individuals for their donations to the NCHS object and archive collections.

Millicent Adams Dosh  
Steven C. Anderson  
Willis & Rachel Anthony  
Lovona Bengtson  
Becky Briggs  
Stephen Bruender  
Dean Busse  
Karen Chouanard  
Cokato Historical Society  
Curtis R. Dahlin  
Gail Dummer  
Duane & Melva Eckberg  
Judie Engelhart  
James Erickson  
Harry Foster  
Jerry & Nora Goodburn  
David Grabitske  
Ann Gregory Bruggeman  
Charles Griebel  
Marcia Gustafson  
Jane Haala  
Margaret Hacker Muchow  
Tom Hagen  
Wendy Herder

Kurt Hildebrandt, representing SPHS  
Marti Jancoski  
Ruth Johnson  
Kandiyohi County Historical Society  
Steve Kley  
Mary Klinkhammer  
Ruth Klossner  
Michael Koob  
Robert Lambert  
Judy Loewe  
Elgene Lund  
Marleen Maas  
John Mayer  
Warren Michels  
Minnesota Department  
of Transportation  
Minnesota Masonic Heritage Center  
Corrine L. Monjeau-Marz  
Monroe Elementary School  
Wendy Nelson  
Barb Olmanson  
Gary Olson  
Rebecca Otterness  
Brian Oviatt

Marlin Peterson  
Dean Pettis  
Ruth Pettis Collins  
Marilyn Roberts  
Betty Scheider  
Pam Seaser  
Lawrence Sommer  
SPHS Class of 1967  
William Stallkamp  
Susan Stolt  
Roxanne Sundboom  
Owen Swenson  
Lucy Tanner  
Mary Lou Thieman  
Ruth Thompson Klabunde  
Lois Weber  
Sally Webster  
Edwin Wetherill  
Sheila Wingate  
Tom Wolfe

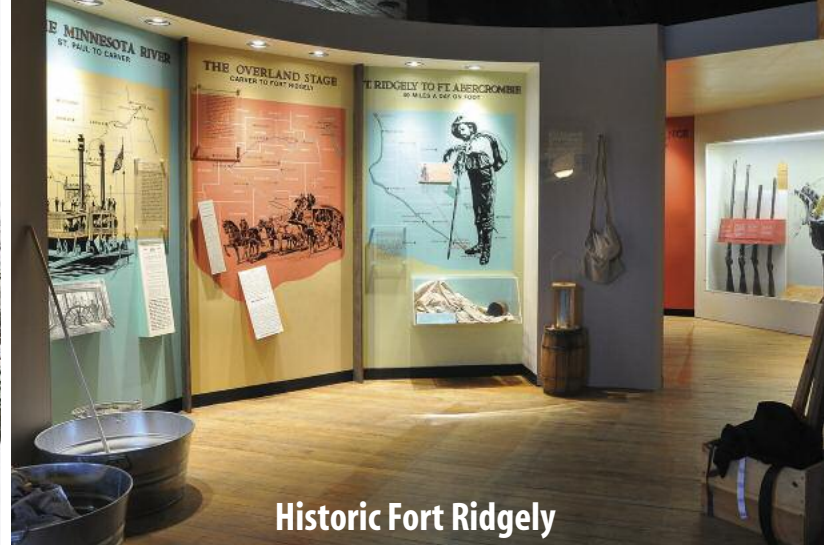
The Minnesota Department of Transportation rescued several pieces of the Broadway Bridge during its recent restoration work and donated them to the Nicollet County Historical Society. They donated light poles, fixtures, a pedestrian railing, and historic construction plans.



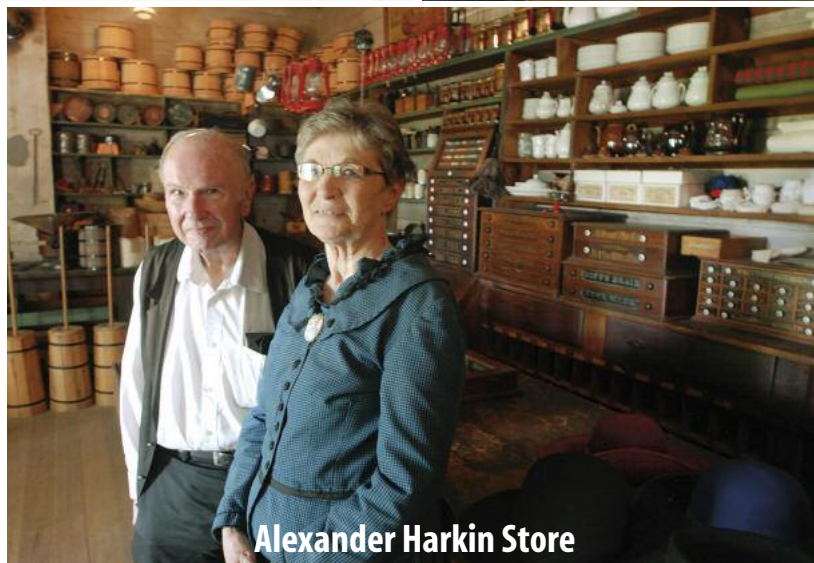




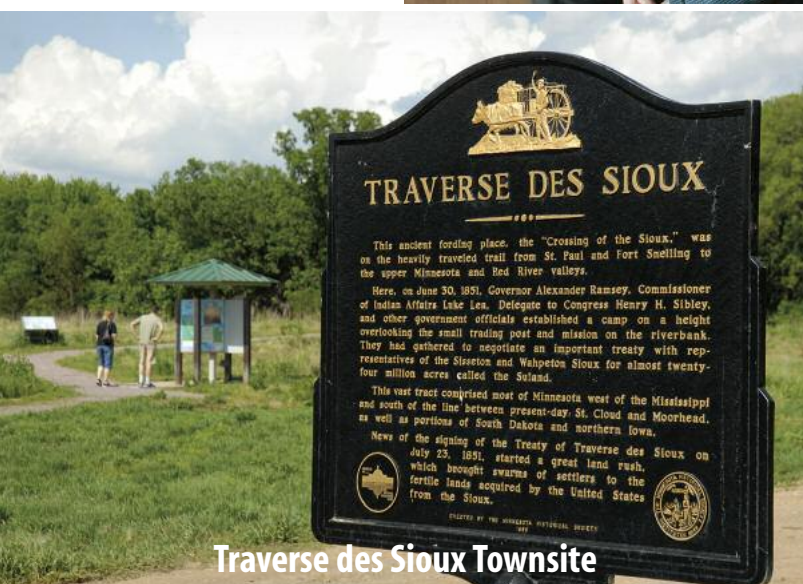
**E. St. Julien Cox House**



**Historic Fort Ridgely**



**Alexander Harkin Store**



**Traverse des Sioux Townsite**



**Treaty Site History Center**

1851 N. Minnesota Avenue • St. Peter, MN 56082  
 Phone: (507) 934-2160 • Fax: (507) 934-0172  
 Hours: Exhibits: Tue.–Sat. 10 a.m.–4 p.m.  
 Archives: Tue.–Fri. 10 a.m.–4 p.m.



General information: [museum@nchsmn.org](mailto:museum@nchsmn.org)  
 Archives information: [research@nchsmn.org](mailto:research@nchsmn.org)  
 Website: [www.nchsmn.org](http://www.nchsmn.org)