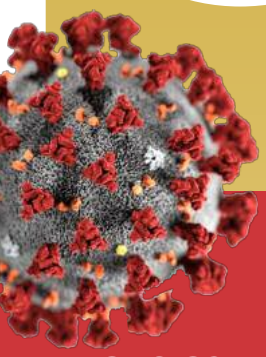
NICOLLET COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY EST. 1928

the CROSSING

a publication of the Nicollet County Historical Society

March 2020 • Volume 25 / Issue 1



NCHS COVID-19 Information & Updates pages: 2, 4 & 10

CONTENTS

Harkin/West Newton **1 & 3**
Director's Column **2**
Sites Info **2**
4th Quarter 2019 Member recap **2**
President's Report **4**
Educational Excellence **4**
From the Archives **5**
Archive/Collections Donantions **5**
Welcome aboard! **6**
Sites Reports & Events:
Cox House & Thank You **7**
Fort Ridgely **8**
Harkin Store **9**
2019 Monetary Donations **8**
Documentary Film Series **9**
COVID -19/NCHS Support **10**
WANTED Writers/History Buffs/ Storytellers **10**
2019 Memorials **10**
2020 Member recap, Monetary Donations & Memorials **11**
Events Calendar **11**
Membership Form **12**

The Story of Alexander Harkin and the Village of West Newton

by Bob Sandeen

Visitors to the Harkin Store, located on Nicollet County highway 21 between New Ulm and Fort Ridgely, encounter a scene that is very different from what was present in the 1800s. The Harkin Store was constructed about 1870, and still contains original inventory that was left in place when the store was closed in 1901. However, what visitors may not realize is that the store and the Harkin home next to it are the only buildings left of the community of West Newton.

"This is the granddaddy of shopping centers."

~ Opal Dewanz, former Harkin Store Site Manager, *Mankato Free Press*, 1999

The Harkin story begins in the 1850s, when Barney Harkin encouraged his brother, Alexander, to join him in Minnesota. Barney emigrated from Scotland in 1848 and had eventually made his way to Fort Ridgely, where he served as the commissary sergeant. Alexander, who had arrived in the United States in 1850, received a letter from Barney that was sent in September of 1855. It mentioned the preparations that he had made for the farm that the two brothers would operate when Alexander reached Minnesota. On April 27th, 1856, Alexander Harkin married Janet Crawford in North Andover, Massachusetts. Shortly afterward, the couple set out to join Barney.

Alexander probably did not expect that he would ever have as many job titles as he listed in an 1858 letter from Minnesota to Janet's sister, Margaret, in Scotland. He wrote that he was a farmer, a justice of the peace, an overseer of the poor, a coroner, an executor of two estates, and a guardian of two minors. Alexander's many duties often meant long

West Newton *continued on page 3*

Alexander Harkin store (left) and the original Harkin home (right), across the road from the Minnesota River in what used to be the Village of West Newton.

Members

Thank you to the following renewing and new members of NCHS for 4th quarter 2019

Renewed Patron Members:
Paul & Nita Aasen
Mike & Pam Bidelman
Eileen W. Holz
Ellis J. Jones
Lori Ann Lahlum
Kate Martens
Rob & Janice Meyer
Lawrence Potts
Eugene Retka
Roland & Edi Thorstensson

Renewed Supporter Members:
Joy Lutzi
Jerry Weldy

Renewed Sustaining Members:
Nannette Chambers
Julie. A. Johnson
Buster & Nina West

Renewed Family Members:
Dr. Bruce & Debra Beatty
William & Marilyn Bessler
Duane & Brenda DeBlieck
Bob & Judy Douglas
John Hall
John Hickman
Robert & Leona Isenberg
Ray & Liz Jacobson
Joe, Kay & Cordelia Metzen
Jim & Dee Dee Michels
Tuff & Ginny Miller
Cindy & Larry Mohr
Joel & Carol Moline
David Nelson
Doug & Judy Schultz
Marty & Mary Sterner
Gerald Wolfe

Renewed Individual Members:
Maria Erling
Brian Fremo
Trudi Olmanson

Renewed Senior Members:
Gail Dummer
Alma Forst
JoAnn Gieseke
Lynnette Hoffman
Marjorie Johnson
Maurine Johnson
Vickie Johnson
Robert Lambert
Sally Lambert
Willis Lindquist
Mary Long
Dee Dee Michels
Revae Nygard
Elizabeth Peters
Marshall Peterson
Tim Pulis
Karen Reyelts
Sara Samuelson
Helen Schauer
Agnes Stensby
Terry Sveine
Mary Topp

New Advocate Business:
eholz graphix

New Crossing Circle:
Maria Lokensgard
Marlin Peterson

New Patron Members:
Stephen & Barb Grams

New Individual Member:
Paul Honken
Ryan Kupcho
Dana Melius
DeNel Potter Richert
David Vavreck

New Family Members:
Patty & Darryl Breitenfeldt
Lori Heslep
Dennis Kemp

New Senior Members:
Barbara DeZuani
Marlene Groves
Marjorie Johnson

NCHS Board…

Executive Board Officers

Kate Martens, President, St. Peter
Tami Skinner, Vice President, St. Peter
Loren Sundboom, Treasurer, St. Peter
Matthias Leyrer, Secretary, North Mankato

Directors

Tim Bartelt, St. Peter
Tom Brown, St. George
Marie Dranttel, St. Peter
Ray Jacobson, St. Peter
Joe Metzen, St. Peter
Donna Nelson, St. Peter
Bob Sandeen, St. Peter

NCHS Staff…

Executive Director: Jessica Becker
director@nchsmn.org
Research Coordinator: Ruth Einstein
researchcoordinator@nchsmn.org
Office Manager: Elaine Deschaine
elaine@nchsmn.org
TSHC Museum Assistants:
Amanda Johnson, Erica Smith
TSHC Janitor: Robert Weber
NCHS Webmaster: Scott Lassiter

Harkin Store Manager: Ruth Grewe
harkinstore@mnhs.org
Harkin Store Site Guides: Donna Dose, Justin Grewe, Robin Grewe, Glenn Stryker

Ft. Ridgely Manager: Amber Bentler
amber@nchsmn.org
Ft. Ridgely Guides: Opal Dewanz, Annaliese Endorf, Char Nack

NCHS Sites information…

Treaty Site History Center
1851 N. Minnesota Ave., St. Peter, MN 56082
Phone: 507-934-2160; Fax: 507-934-0172
Closed temporarily due to community coronavirus concerns
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 info: cox@nchsmn.org
Watch for program info.

Fort Ridgely
72404 County Road 30, Fairfax, MN 55332
Phone: 507-508-2848, ridgely@mnhs.org
Hours:
- May 22–Sept. 5:
  Sat. 10 a.m.–4 p.m., Sun. 12–4 p.m.
- Holiday schedule:
  - Open Memorial Day weekend:
    Sat. 10 a.m.–4 p.m., Sun. 12–4 p.m.
  - Closed Independence Day observed (July 3, 2020)
  - Open Independence Day: 10 a.m.–4 p.m. (July 4)
  - Open Labor Day: 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Harkin Store
P.O. Box 112, New Ulm, MN 56073
Eight miles West of New Ulm on Co. Hwy. 21
Phone: 507-354-8666, harkinstore@mnhs.org
Hours:
- May 1–Sept. 7: Fri.–Sun 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
- Sept. 8–Oct. 18: Sat. & Sun. 12–4 p.m.
- Holiday schedule:
  - Open Memorial Day: Sat. 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
  - Open Independence Day observed (July 3, 2020) 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
  - Open Independence Day: 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
  - Open Labor Day: 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

- Closed all other holidays

Director's Column

Jessica Becker

Dear members,

We are truly living in extraordinary times. History has taught us to be wary of barriers we erect out of fear. These days we must all use an abundance of caution in our choices, including those of us at the Nicollet County Historical Society.

That is why for the safety of our staff, volunteers, and visitors the Treaty Site History Center is closed March 17, 2020, through at least April 4, 2020. All public events in April are canceled. The Board of Directors and I did not make this decision lightly. In the end, closing was the socially responsible choice.

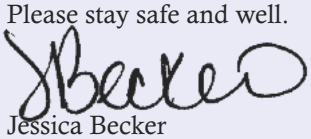
You should also know the Minnesota Historical Society made the decision to close their sites through March 31, 2020 though right now this does not affect Fort Ridgely or Harkin Store because they are still closed for the season. The Traverse des Sioux historic site trail is still open to the public. Even though it's outdoors visitors should remember to practice social distancing, no large groups, cover your coughs and sneezes, and please stay home if you're sick.

While we're temporarily closed and monitoring the situation, for the time being, staff will still be working (unless they're sick or quarantining) so we'll be checking e-mails and phone messages regularly. The business of history continues and for as long as we're able, staff will be on-site ensuring the protection and preservation of our objects, photographs, documents, and working to make our history accessible online. There's a lot of history happening on our Facebook pages so be sure to like and follow us there.

Ruth will be answering requests via e-mail and phone. You can reach her Tuesday–Friday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 507-934-2160 or research@nchsmn.org. Our website has a list of common research resources. We ask that you check there for answers first.

While history is fun and important, it is available from sources other than our museum. By closing to the public, we hope to do our part to slow the spread of the disease. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause, but we want everyone to stay healthy. Thank you for your continued support. I promise we'll keep you updated with any changes to our current plan.

Please stay safe and well.



Jessica Becker
Executive Director

West Newton *continued from page 1*

absences from home. He frequently traveled to Fort Ridgely, the Upper and Lower Sioux Indian Agencies, and the communities of Traverse des Sioux and St. Peter. He and his family got along well with the Indians, who were frequently seen in the area.

Alexander and Janet experienced many difficulties as pioneers, including the destruction of their crops by locusts in 1857, losing their wheat and potatoes in 1858, and the loss of the corn crop to frost in 1859. Harkin successfully raised sheep and cattle in the 1860s. The Harkins survived the Dakota War in 1862 by fleeing to Shakopee after receiving a warning that settlers were being killed nearby. By 1867, and possibly earlier, Alexander was operating a general store. It is known that an early version of the store was in one room of a log cabin that he built for his family that year.

The community of West Newton was growing as well. A February 1871 New Ulm newspaper article stated West Newton contained a sawmill, a large grain warehouse, a brewery, two grist mills under construction, a school, a blacksmith shop, two hotels, and numerous houses, in addition to Alexander Harkin's store. Steamboats could reach West Newton, Fort Ridgely, and other sites beyond. They were often seen until the arrival of the railroad through Nicollet County in 1871. Unfortunately, the population of West Newton began to decline after the steamboats stopped coming until only the Harkin store remained in business. And as time passed, it was easier to reach communities such as New Ulm to do their shopping. When Rural Free Delivery started in the area, it was no longer necessary for people to stop at the Harkin store to pick up their mail. This caused a considerable decline in business, and the store closed in 1901.

The town of West Newton and Harkin properties are located in the lower-left corner of the 1885 West Newton township map.

Janet and Alexander Harkin

Two daughters were born to Alexander and Janet Harkin: Catherine in 1857 and Elizabeth in 1859. Sadly, Janet died of consumption in 1874. Janet's sister, Margaret, came from Scotland in 1876 to help Alexander care for the two girls. She married Alexander two years later. The marriage was a happy one that lasted until Margaret's death in 1892, five years after she suffered a severe stroke.

Alexander returned to Scotland early in 1893, possibly intending to stay there permanently. Harkin was very unhappy back in the old country. He allegedly sent a telegram with the single word "Come" to the widow of his close friend and business partner, A. J. Lamberton of St. Peter. Helen Lamberton arrived in Scotland in June. She and Alexander were married before the end of the summer.

The couple returned to the United States, where they settled in St. Peter. Alexander had business interests to manage and was encouraged to run for mayor. He appreciated the honor but declined to run. Alexander Harkin died in St. Peter on September 16th, 1907. He was a man of great integrity and was highly respected by those who knew him. He was buried in New Ulm City Cemetery.

On July 1, 1999, the Minnesota Historical Society placed the Harkin Store site under the management of the Nicollet County Historical Society.

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

Kate Martens, president
NCHS Board of Directors

Tune In!

Hear Executive Director Jessica Becker on Community Affairs every fourth Tuesday at 9:15 a.m. on KNUJ Radio! Turn your dials 860 AM or listen online at knuj.net.

President's Report

Kate Martens, President, NCHS Board of Directors

If you are like me, history is more than a subject in school (which, unbelievably, some kids seemed not to like!), it's a view of the past with a challenge to connect what went before to what is happening today, shaping our future. That is why you have chosen to be members of the Nicollet County Historical Society. This passion was on our minds as we made the decision to do our part in protecting against Covid-19 by closing the Treaty Site History Center. But fear not, there is plenty of history to explore!

As we have time to be socially responsible and shelter in, we also have time to do more than clean out closets. That same media access which has been blamed for spreading panic can be used in a positive way. You can become a researcher on your own. Internet searches can pique your interest in Nicollet County history and beyond. The Traverse des Sioux treaty is available online, as well as rich related information. Learn about the townships surrounding us as well as the people after whom our streets and towns are named. Don't be afraid of Wikipedia, the blue links on pages can lead you on a merry adventure into more discovery!

Again, if you are like me, you have a stack of books waiting to be read. Mine right now have to do with the 100-year anniversary of Women's Suffrage as well as the tribes who were here before and what we should know about them today. The next few weeks beckon with the possibility of uninterrupted reading time.

When we reopen, you will find our current exhibits interesting in new ways and you may even have ideas for future exhibits at the History Center (please share those!). As members, we contribute not only to presenting these exhibits and programs, we support ongoing research and archiving of objects donated by people around the area. Who knows, you may find artifacts of your own when you are cleaning out those closets!

Be safe, be well, and read—we'll see you when we reopen.

Educational Excellence

This exhibit, featuring the Saint Peter School District 508, will be ready and waiting for your visit when the Treaty Site History Center re-opens its doors after the present health crisis. We invite present-day students to see their school's history and SPHS alumni to re-visit their lives as students in the Saint Peter school system.

SPHS Class of 1880 SPHS Class of 1932 SPHS Class of 2019

Educational Excellence:
Saint Peter School District 508

Put on your saddle shoes and lace up your hightops to take this stroll down memory lane. We're going back to school and the subject is the history of Saint Peter Schools. Reminisce about your teachers, hot lunches in the cafeteria, FFA, pep fests, cheering on the home team, and much more.

Now Open thru
Sept. 5, 2020

Treaty Site
History Center
1851 N. Minnesota Ave.
St. Peter, MN
507-934-2160 | nchsmn.org

NICOLLET COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY EST. 1928

From the Archives…

by Ruth Einstein
Research Coordinator

Recent Donations

The NCHS Archives has recently received two exceptional collections of documents, photographs, and artifacts relating to two participants of the Civil War, George Anderson and Andrew A. Lind.

Steve Anderson, great-grandson of George Anderson, donated materials that reflect the breadth of George's experience in this country, from a diary describing his immigration from Sweden to Minnesota, to a receipt from the First Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Peter (now First Lutheran) for his burial plot.

Notably, the collection includes a diary in Swedish and English kept by Anderson during his service in Company E, Second Minnesota Veteran Volunteer Infantry, August 1864–June 1865. Anderson's descriptions and anecdotes provide accounts of the regiment's participation in the Atlanta Campaign, the burning of Atlanta, the March to the Sea, the Goldsboro Campaign, and the Grand Review. The collection includes the Springfield rifle carried by Anderson during his service.

The Andrew August Lind Collection, donated by Lind's great-grandson, Rick Wright, also includes a Springfield, complete with bayonet, ramrod, and wooden barrel plug, and carries the story forward with materials reflecting Lind's participation in the Asgrim K. Skaro Post No. 37 of the Grand Army of the Republic in St. Peter. In addition to Lind's discharge and military pension certificates, the collection includes a photograph of Lind among veterans at a G.A.R. reunion posing in front of Rinkel Groceries on Minnesota Avenue.

Another photograph of Lind shows him wearing his G.A.R. uniform jacket with brass buttons engraved with our state motto, "L'Etoile du Nord – Minnesota" and adorned with his Third Minnesota, Company B Volunteer Infantry, 1861–1865 badge. A uniform button and the badge are included in this remarkable collection.

We are grateful to have been entrusted with materials that help tell the story of local Civil War soldiers and something of their lives when they returned to the community.

George Anderson

Andrew Lind, seated

Artifact & Archival Donations

Fourth Quarter 2019 & First Quarter 2020 Donations:

Steve Anderson: Materials relating to George Anderson, including documents and artifacts reflecting his Civil War service in Company E, Second Minnesota Veteran Volunteer Infantry.
Lois Annexstad: Bound copies of the daily logs of Gust Annexstad describing life on his farm, 1928–1965.
Nancy Birch: Items from Johnson Uniform Company; photos from the 1920s and '30s of Nicollet County 4-H clubs.
Blue Earth County Historical Society: Materials relating to Northland Beverage, 7-Up Bottling Co.; architectural drawings.
John Braun: Photos of St. Peter buildings.
Michael Frederick: Holy Rosary Parish, N. Mankato, 2006 directory; matchbooks, St. Peter businesses.
Chris Harris: Materials relating to the Armin Altmann and Vivian Youngblom Erickson Altmann families.
Lori Heslep: Items relating to Helen Ellen Anderson Gustafson, including a 1925 SPHS memory book/scrapbook.
Eileen Holz: Mug and souvenir button, Rock Bend, 2019.
Bev Johnson: Photograph "Furrie [dog], Bob & Gene in cutter" taken at the Nicollet County Fairgrounds.
Ruth Klossner: Digital photographs from the restoration of Norseland Lutheran Church, 2019, and the NCHS annual meeting, 2020.
Robert Lambert: Vietnam Era Oral History Project, Robert Lambert, Narrator, Douglas Bekke, Interviewer, publication of the Minnesota Historical Society.
Solveig Langr: Minutes of meetings of the New Sweden Farm Bureau Unit Secretary Book from the inaugural meeting in November 1948 through 1956.
Ed Lee: St. Peter Winterfest medallions, 2019 and 2020.
Willie Lindquist: *Peter Patters*, the newsletter of SPHS, 1945-46.
Loren Lindsay: Photo of Kerns School, District 8, in Belgrade Township, c.1880; writing by Loren Lindsay describing his experience at the school during the Armistice Day blizzard of 1940.
Nancy Luker: Photographs taken of the aftermath of the 1998 tornado.
Murray County Museum: Photos taken at or near Ft. Ridgely, 1925.
Old Mill Museum: Cabinet card photographs of Carl Harry Hedberg.
Brian Oviatt: Engesser Brewing Co. bottles; collection of 12 wood cases branded Engesser Brewing Co, St. Peter.
Marion Pomplun: Copy of My School Days at District 13, by Marion Tollefson Pomplun with illustrations by Colleen Dietz.
Bob Sandeen: Engesser Brewing Company and St. Peter Bottling Works/Scheibel bottles.
Yvonne Splettstoeser: "Together Again: Saint Peter High School Class of 1969" 50th reunion commemorative book, 2019.
Warren Wagner & Peggy Kreber: Genealogical materials relating to the August & Amelia Wagner family of North Mankato.
Emma Woods: Items relating to Helen Larson Pehrson of New Sweden Township and her service in the Women's Army Corps during World War II.
Rick Wright: Materials relating to Andrew August Lind, including documents and artifacts documenting his service as a private in the Third Regiment, Minnesota Veteran Volunteer Infantry, Company B, Aug 23, 1864–July 28, 1865.
Mark & Nancy Zallek: Lions Club of St. Peter, organizational records, 1946-1993.

Marie Dranttel,
NCHS Board Director

Ray Jacobson,
NCHS Board Director

Donna Nelson,
NCHS Board Director

Bob Sandeen
NCHS Board Director

Tami Skinner
NCHS Board Director

New Faces at the History Center…

Welcome aboard!

The Society gained five new board members after the January Annual Meeting. We are lucky and honored Marie, Ray, Donna, Bob, and Tami join us!

Marie Dranttel, St. Peter

I'm a lifelong resident of Traverse Township—my family has farmed just north and west of the Treaty Center and the "park" for four generations. I was a member of the NCHS board when the TSHC was in its infancy during the years of the Traverse des Sioux Encampment – it has been wonderful to see the Society grow, educate and entertain. Currently, I attempt to simultaneously balance two vastly different occupations – Certified Public Accountant and County Commissioner.

Ray Jacobson, St. Peter

Ray grew up on a family farm in Oshawa Township. The first three years of school were at Dist. 27 one-room School. After consolidation, St. Peter was the place to be. Ray Graduated from St. Peter High School and Mankato State College with a B.S. in Education. Taught for 14 years then returned to Mankato State University and earned a degree in Information Technology. Ray took a position with NationWide Ins. in Wisconsin and return home after 25 years. Preserving history has been important, whether it is family or community. Understanding where you come from helps you find your way forward. I believe that all history is important and needs to be preserved and presented to the community as often as possible and in many different ways.

Donna Nelson, St. Peter

Donna was born and raised in Eagan Minnesota. It was a Township from 1860-1972, became a Village in 1972 and a City in 1974. It was not the big city like it is now. It was still fields, woods and full of wildlife and history. Growing up she was fascinated with the history of Eagan as well as all of Dakota County Minnesota.

Donna then relocated to St. Peter in 1991. It's her forever home. She is interested in the preservation and rich history of Nicollet County. Donna works for Good Samaritan Society Home Care as their Community Liaison, Chamber Diplomat and a Board Member of the St. Peter Lions. She is passionate about the preservation of Nicollet County so generations to come will continue to learn its rich history. Bob and Donna have three boys and three grandchildren. They also have three horses and a Bernese Mountain Dog.

Bob Sandeen, St. Peter

I am Bob Sandeen, a St. Peter native who lived here until I finished college at Mankato State in 1970. With a B. S. degree in chemistry, I worked for 30 years as a laboratory technician at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester. In August of 2000, I returned to the family home in St. Peter. In June of 2001, I began working in the archives of the Historical Society. I have had a strong interest in history since grade school. My huge library clearly demonstrates that. I am part of the St. Peter Tourism Bureau, the St. Peter Lions Club Board of Directors, and the St. Peter All-School Reunion Committee. I was a member of the St. Peter Area Veterans Memorial Committee as well.

Tami Skinner, St. Peter

Tami Skinner grew up in St. Peter and serves as the Community & Family Education Director for the Saint Peter Public School District. At an early age, she became interested in history, and some of her favorite childhood vacations included visits to historical museums and sites. Tami and her husband, Jeff, have strived to provide similar experiences in their children's lives. She believes that preserving and finding meaningful ways to share history is vital to the community. She has worked with Nicollet County Historical Society for many years to co-host the monthly documentary film series and has previously served on the board. NCHS is a huge asset to the county, and she is excited to be a part of the important work of the society.

Historical Society Sites Reports…

Cox House Corner…

After a long, cold winter, the E. St. Julien Cox House committee is "thinking spring" and is making plans (remotely for right now) for the rest of the year. This year the house celebrates 50 years on the National Register of Historic Places, so our focus for the year is preservation.

NCHS is partnering with **Rethos: Places Reimagined** to offer a series of monthly preservation-focused workshops at the Cox House this summer. Barring any community health concerns, the first class will be on May 30 focused on wood rot. Using the Cox House as our "lab" for the day, instructor Laura Leppink will show how to assess, repair, and prevent rot. You'll learn to understand buildings as systems and consider why rot happens. You'll leave with a list of necessary tools and materials for repairing or replacing rotted wood in your home. This workshop is designed for anyone who lives in or cares for an older home or building. No experience necessary—come with questions!

Our work continues to implement the new site interpretation. Visitors will have a new way to experience the house with a self-guided tour. To engage more and different audiences, we're shifting away from the traditional tour model. Once we get through the planning stages, visitors should expect to experience more vibrant programming and displays about Victorian life and times.

Exterior maintenance projects are slowing moving ahead as well. The garden fence needs to be replaced, and the house and carriage house needs a coat of paint. Once those projects are complete, we'll be restoring the gardens to the 1890s look more sympathetic to the house's history. If anyone is interested in helping with any of these projects, please let us know. Many hands make light work!

We are sad to report this year's Annual Heritage Plant Sale fundraiser is canceled due to community health concerns.

Cox House Program:
All events are subject to public health recommendations.

May 30 | Rehab Lab: Rot Repair,
9 a.m.–1 p.m.

A Heartfelt Thank You

The Board at the Nicollet County Historical Society wishes to extend heartfelt thanks to Larry and Judy Biederman for their recent generous support of the Cox House. The Biedermans are longtime members of NCHS and have regularly supported philanthropic causes in the area. Upon hearing of the specific needs at the Cox House site, including painting, foundation and window work, fence and tree removal, they made a substantial donation specifically for the care of the site.

Especially in this difficult time, when our sites are closed to facilitate public safety, this type of contribution is invaluable. For the immediate future, visitors are restricted, therefore admissions will temporarily disappear. Thanks to the Biederman's gift—when the Cox House re-opens—the experience will be even more impressive. Members and donors like the Biedermans provide the ongoing quality, historical support on which NCHS depends.

FORT RIDGELY

Fort Ridgely Events
Programs are included with site admission of $6 adults, $5 seniors and college students, $4 ages 5–17, free age 4 and under and MNHS members. State Park vehicle permit required.

Opening Day
May 23 | 12–4 p.m.

Minnesota River Program with Scott Kudelka
May 30 | 2 p.m.

Learn about Bison with Scott Kudelka
June 6 | 2 p.m.

Fathers' Day with the New Ulm Battery
June 20 | 1–4 p.m.

Fort Ridgely Cemetery Tour
July 4 | 2 p.m.

Monetary Donations

received by NCHS for the 4th quarter of 2019.

Monetary
Anonymous
for the Cox House Christmas
John & Rosemary Braun
Ilene Bussler
for the Harkin Store Programs
GP Engineering, PLLC
for Ghost Town Bus Tour
Stephen & Elizabeth Hogberg
Beatrice Martinson
James McPherson
Cindy & Larry Mohr
for Archive Supplies
Robert & Kay Moline
SPHS Class of 1969
for the Cox House
St. Peter Ambassadors Club
for Ghost Town Bus Tour

From Give MN
Anonymous
Scott Hermanson
Eileen Holz for the Cox House
Diane Lochner for Archives
Marie Renneke
Mary Vinquist

Ridgely Report...

by Amber Bentler
Site Manager Fort Ridgely Historic Site

The 2020 season at the Fort is shaping up to be a good one. Time on the prairie with all its sunshine, grasses, and flowers is always a welcome time. There are many programs scheduled for the season and we are looking forward to meeting new people and seeing old friends.

We are looking for fun, pleasant, smart, hard-working individuals that love history and people to work at the Fort for the season. We are open Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. Our staff is fun and easy going and would love to add some great people to our group. The season opens Saturday, May 23, 2020, and goes through Sunday, September 6th.

Fort Ridgely Events

Programs are included with site admission of $6 adults, $5 seniors and college students, $4 ages 5–17, free age 4 and under and MNHS members. Minnesota Historical Society and Nicollet County Historical Society members are admitted for free, memberships are available for purchase. State Park vehicle permit required. ***All events are subject to public health recommendations.***

May 23: Opening Day! We invite you to come to experience our exhibits in the museum. Refreshments will be provided for all visitors or you are welcome to pack a picnic to enjoy on the parade grounds. Fort Ridgely Historic Site will be hosting a Children's Day from 12–4 p.m. We will have baseball on the parade grounds, graces, as well as other great outdoor games. There will also be crafts in the Commissary building

May 30: Come on out to the Fort and learn about the mighty Minnesota River from area naturalist Scott Kudelka. Flowing across the southern part of the state, the Minnesota River has its own unique story beginning with the last glacial event some 10,000 years ago and continuing to the present day. The Dakota called it Mnisota or clear blue water or clouded blue water. This program will look at both the natural and historical significance including the role of geology, rich culture and how the valley has seen a dramatic change since Euro-Americans.

Learn about the mighty Minnesota River from naturalist, Scott Kudelka, May 30.

June 6: Fort Ridgely welcomes area naturalist Scott Kudelka. Kudelka will be talking about Bison! As the largest mammal on the Great Plains, millions of bison once roamed all over North America and played an integral role in the livelihood of many American Indian Tribes. The American bison is an animal built to live in harsh conditions and it will be shown through an activity called "Build a Bison." Kudelka will also talk about the distribution of bison prior to the arrival of Europeans, the difference between bison and buffalo, and how they are doing at Minneopa State Park. This program is wonderful for all ages and it will take place at the Commissary building at 2 p.m.

June 20: Happy Father's Day! In honor of fathers, we will be hosting The New Ulm Battery. The Battery will be educating visitors about black powder as well as firing off a few rounds that day. They will be with us from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Bring family and friends along with a picnic so you can spend the afternoon.

July 4: Happy Fourth of July! Fort Ridgely will be hosting a Cemetery Tour for a tour of the historic side of the Fort Ridgely National Cemetery. Many important players in our history are buried here in this cemetery, Joseph LaFramboise, area fur trader and Captain Marsh and the men that died at Redwood Ferry, to name a few. Join us at 2 p.m. for this informative tour. Meet at the amphitheater if you are interested in this program.

Harkin Happenings…

by Ruth Grewe
Site Manager Harkin Store Site

The Harkin Store is getting ready for an exciting year. The 1870s general store is 150 years old this year! We're planning on doing some extra celebrating by hosting extended programs for all to enjoy this year. Opening day is scheduled for Alexander's 192nd birthday. We are also including a program we haven't had for a while, gardening. We are also doing more activities and games for children. Check the listing on the web and newspapers for what is coming up throughout the year. Call the store during open hours for more information. We'll see you for our exciting year!

A selection of children's aprons on display at the Harkin Store. Join us for Mother's Day & Aprons, May 10.

HARKIN STORE

Upcoming Events at Harkin Store
All programs take place at 1 p.m. Programs are included with site admission of $6 adults, $5 seniors and college students, $4 ages 5–17, free age 4 and under and MNHS members. All events are subject to public health recommendations.

tMay 1 | Alexander's 192nd Birthday
May 3 | Opening Sunday with "Egg Coffee and Newtons"
May 10 | Mother's Day: Aprons
May 17 | Arriving in West Newton: Transportation
May 24 | Music by Bill Cagley
Mary 25 | Games
May 31 | Gardening
June 7 | Dairy Day Dairy samples
June 14 | Flag Day
June 21 | Father's Day: Men's Interests
June 28 | Music by Carver Creek

Documentary Film Series…

MN State Fair Stories

Thu., May 7 | 7 p.m. | Treaty Site History Center | *FREE*

Renowned storyteller Kevin Kling narrates this zippy, fun, slice of life documentary covering all 320 acres of the fairgrounds. Discover hidden gems. Find out what happened to Machinery Hill. Unearth diverse fair history. Meet the cast of characters who make the MN State Fair great. Get your curds, cows, and crop art right here! Following the film, you'll get a preview of the upcoming Nicollet County Fair from one of the fair board members! ***Not Rated. Runtime is 58 minutes.***

Image courtesy of Explore Minnesota and TPT

History Center Bits...

During the NCHS Covid-19 Closure

Here are some ways you can support NCHS while our doors are closed:

- If you're ordering from Amazon instead of venturing out to the big box store, consider doing so through **AmazonSmile** and make the Nicollet County Historical Society your charity. AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice.
- Direct your **Thrivent Choice Dollars** to the Nicollet County Historical Society. The program gives eligible Thrivent members an opportunity to recommend where Thrivent distributes some of its charitable outreach funds each year. To direct Choice Dollars, go to Thrivent.com/thriventchoice or call 800-847-4836 and say "Thrivent Choice" after the prompt. Deadline is March 31, 2020.
- Eligible IRA owners could consider making a **Qualified Charitable Distribution**. A qualified charitable distribution (QCD) is a distribution of funds from certain IRAs directly to a qualified charitable organization, such as the Nicollet County Historical Society. Your tax advisor can provide additional information on your particular situation.
- Consider renewing your **NCHS membership** at a higher level if your budget allows. You can still mail in your renewal payments or you can pay online. Visit nchsmn.org/membership.

preserve our past
solidify our future

- **endowed fund or planned gift**
- **leave a lasting legacy**
- **provide a base for the future**
  - one-time gift by check, stock, bonds, mutual funds
  - pledge a gift over one, two, or more years
  - name NCHS in your will or trust
  - name NCHS as beneficiary of insurance policy
  - give tangible personal property or real estate

contact Jessica at 934-2160 for more information
1851 N. Minnesota Ave., St. Peter, MN 56082
director@nchsmn.org

Keep updated on Society happenings here:
- **www.nchsmn.org**
- **Facebook | NCHSMN**
- **Twitter | nchshistory**
- **Instagram | nchsmn**
- **or call 507-934-2160**

NICOLLET COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY EST. 1928

WANTED

Writers | History Buffs | Storytellers

We invite members to volunteer to write articles for *The Crossing*. Share your knowledge of Nicollet County and Minnesota history by contributing an article for the newsletter. Does your family have a story to share? Do you have a favorite Nicollet County anecdote to relate? Do you have an old picture with a story to tell? Share your talents. If you are interested in donating for an upcoming edition please contact **Jessica at 507-934-2160 or director@nchsmn.org**

Memorials

received by NCHS for the 4th quarter of 2019.

In Memory of **Carl E. Anderson**
Given by
Mildred Anderson

In Memory of **Mary Christianson**
Given by
Helen Christianson

In Memory of **Stan Davis**
Given by
Harold Rodning
Richard & Janet Wettergren

In Memory of **Bud & Corinne Johnson**
Given by
Richard Holz

In Memory of **Vreely Nelson**
Given by
Ardith & Thorild Nelson

In Memory of **William Robertz**
Given by
Marilyn Robertz
Ed & Bev Wetherill

In Memory of **Marilyn Rodning**
Given by
Kathy Cuthbertson
Janet Lindstrom
Dan Rodning
Karen Rodning
Ken Rodning
Doug & Judy Schultz

In Memory of **Arlene Sandeen**
Given by
Jayne Sjostrom

Are you moving? If you are moving, please remember to call or send in your new contact information so you will continue to receive *The Crossing* and other Society correspondence in a timely manner. Contact Elaine at 507-934-2160 or elaine@nchsmn.org with changes.

Third class bulk rate mail is not forwarded and if a newsletter is returned to us, the Society must pay the return postage.

2020 Members, Monetary Donations & Memorials…

Members

Thank you to the following renewing and new members of NCHS for 1st quarter 2020.

Renewed Advocate Business Member:
Arts Center of Saint Peter

Renewed Patron Members:
John & Katha Chamberlain
Gail & Paul Lindfors

Renewed Sustaining Member:
Scott Hermanson

Renewed Family Members:
Claude & Sandy Brew
Arden & Marilyn DeBoer
Stuart & Mary Ann Hanson
Thorild & Ardith Nelson
Janet & Byron Nordstrom
Dennis & JoAnn Schmidt
Howard & Jane Swenson

Renewed Senior Members:
Eunice Amos
Ruth Brandel
Tom Brown
Elsa Cornell
Lois F. Currier
Daniel Groebner
Richard Holz
Donna Kowal
Harriet Mason
Marcy Muchow
Donna Resner
Evelyn Swenson
Judy Teigen
Barbara Wilkinson

New Benefactor Business Member:
Pioneer Bank

New Crossing Circle Member:
Eleanor Depuydt

New Family Members:
Bob Martens & Melissa Windom
James Martens & Jamie Gibbs Schmidt
Donna Nelson

New Individual Members:
Haley Ashwood
Marcia Gustafson
Jay Hanson
Rebecca Novak

Monetary Donations

received by NCHS for the 1st quarter of 2020.

Monetary
Anonymous fund of InFaith Community Foundation
Biederman Family Fund of the Mankato Area Foundation-
Peg Bindner
Carolyn Dobler
Marie Dranttel
Carl & Susan Johnson
Emilie Lokensgard
Lorraine Olson
Bill & Durene Pedersen
Herb & Louise Poncin
Betty Thompson

Memorials

received by NCHS for the 1st quarter of 2020.

In Memory of **Julian Olson**
Given by
Thorild & Ardith Nelson
Doug & Jucy Schultz

In Memory of **William Robertz**
Given by
Marilyn Robertz

2020 Calendar of Events: *All events are subject to public health recommendations*

Event/Program information:

Harkin Store and Fort Ridgely: $6 adults (18–64), $5 seniors (65+) and college students, $4 children (ages 5–17). Free for age 4 and under, MNHS and NCHS members.

TSHC: Treaty Site History Center events are free for NCHS members unless stated otherwise.

continuing	***Educational Excellence: Saint Peter School District 508*** **an exhibit celebrating the history of Saint Peter schools**	**Treaty Site History Center**
May 7:	**Egg Coffee & Newtons Day,** 1 p.m. *(see page 9)*	**Harkin Store**
May 1:	**Opening day at Harkin Store and Alexander's 192nd Birthday**	**Harkin Store**
May 3:	**Egg Coffee and Newtons,** 1 p.m. *(see page 9)*	**Harkin Store**
May 7:	**Documentary Film Series: State Fair Stories,** 7 p.m., Free *(see description on page 7)*	**Treaty Site History Center**
May 10:	**Mother's Day-Aprons,** 1 p.m. *(see page 9)*	**Harkin Store**
May 17:	**Arriving in West Newton-Transportation,** 1 p.m. *(see page 9)*	**Harkin Store**
May 23:	**Opening Day!** *(see description on page 8)*	**Fort Ridgely**
May 23:	**Children's Day,** 12–4 p.m. *(see description on page 8)*	**Fort Ridgely**
May 24:	**Music by Bill Cagley,** 1 p.m. *(see page 9)*	**Harkin Store**
May 25:	**Games,** 1 p.m. *(see page 9)*	**Harkin Store**
May 30:	**Rehab Lab: Rot Repair,** 9 a.m.–1 p.m. *(see description on page 7)*	**Cox House**
May 30:	**Minnesota River Talk with Scott Kudelka,** 2 p.m. *(see description on page 8)*	**Fort Ridgely**
May 31:	**Gardening,** 1 p.m. *(see page 9)*	**Harkin Store**
June 6:	**Bison! Talk with Scott Kudelka,** 2 p.m. *(see description on page 8)*	**Fort Ridgely**
June 7:	**Dairy Day-Dairy samples,** 1 p.m. *(see page 9)*	**Harkin Store**
June 14:	**Flag Day,** 1 p.m. *(see page 9)*	**Harkin Store**
June 20:	**The New Ulm Battery,** 1–4 p.m. *(see description on page 8)*	**Fort Ridgely**
June 21:	**Father's Day-Men's Interests,** 1 p.m. *(see page 9)*	**Harkin Store**
June 28:	**Music by Carver Creek,** 1 p.m. *(see page 9)*	**Harkin Store**
July 4:	**Independence Day Carnival,** 1 p.m. *(see page 8)*	**Harkin Store**
July 4:	**Fort Ridgely National Cemetery Tour,** 2 p.m. *(see description on page 8)*	**Fort Ridgely amphitheater**

Please watch the NCHS website, Facebook & Twitter and MNHS website for further events and details for additional programming.

NICOLLET COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
EST. 1928

NICOLLET COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
1851 N. Minnesota Ave. • St. Peter, MN 56082

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

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 9
St. Peter, MN

Your membership dollars at work…

E. St. Julien Cox House

Historic Fort Ridgely

Alexander Harkin Store

Traverse des Sioux Townsite

Treaty Site History Center

NCHS Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Phone (_____) _____

E-mail _____

My check is enclosed ☐ Please debit my credit card ☐

Acct. Number _____

CVV Code _____ Expiration Date _____
3 #s on rev–VISA®, MC®, Disc®, 4 #s 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 2020 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.