

Minnesota State Monuments

Since 1873, Minnesota has officially established State Monuments. The list below features monuments related to people or events connected to the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862. Many other local and county markers, monuments and statues are found across Minnesota.

Monument to the Living

Minnesota State Capitol, St. Paul, Minnesota

Native American Monument

Minnesota State Capitol, St. Paul, Minnesota

Ness Lutheran Cemetery State Monument

Ness Lutheran Cemetery in Meeker County

Acton State Monument

Near Grove City in Meeker County

Lundborg-Broberg State Monument

Lebanon Swedish Cemetery in New London, Minnesota

Guri Endreson Rosseland State Monument

Vikor Lutheran Cemetery, near Wilmar, Minnesota

Traverse des Sioux State Monument

Traverse des Sioux Historic Site in Nicollet County

Jackson State Monument

Ashley Park in Jackson, Minnesota

Defenders' State Monument

Center Street in New Ulm, Minnesota

Milford State Monument

On County Road 4 near Essig, Minnesota

Captain John S. Marsh State Monument

Fort Ridgely Cemetery

Eliza Miller State Monument

Fort Ridgely Cemetery

Fort Ridgely State Monument

Fort Ridgely State Park

Chief Mouzoomaunee State Monument

Fort Ridgely Cemetery

Birch Coulee State Monument

Overlooking Highway 19 at Morton, Minnesota

Schwandt State Monument

On County Road 15 near North Redwood, Minnesota

Lake Shetek State Monument

Lake Shetek State Park, Murray County

Sioux Indians State Monument

Overlooking Highway 19 near Morton, Minnesota

Wood Lake State Monument

In Wood Lake State Wayside near Granite Falls, Minnesota

Camp Release State Monument

Camp Release Memorial State Wayside near Montevideo, Minnesota

Minnesota Historical Society Sites & Museums

Please call ahead for hours and admission.

Alexander Ramsey House (pages 14 & 15)

St. Paul • 651-296-8760

Birch Coulee Battlefield (pages 24 & 25)

Morton • 507-697-6321

Fort Ridgely (pages 22 & 23)

Fairfax • 507-426-7888

Harkin Store (page 28)

New Ulm • 507-354-8666

Historic Fort Snelling (pages 10 & 11)

St. Paul • 612-726-1171

Lac qui Parle Mission (page 16)

Watson • 320-269-7636

Lower Sioux Agency (pages 18 & 19)

Morton • 507-697-8674

Minnesota History Center (pages 2-5)

St. Paul • 651-259-3000

Sibley House Historic Site (pages 12 & 13)

Mendota • 651-452-1596

Traverse des Sioux (page 17)

St. Peter • 507-934-2160

W. W. Mayo House (page 28)

Le Sueur • 507-665-3250

Charles A. Lindbergh Historic Site

Little Falls • 320-616-5421

Comstock House

Moorhead • 218-291-4211

Folsom House

Taylors Falls • 651-465-3125

Forest History Center

Grand Rapids • 218-327-4482

Historic Forestville

Preston • 507-765-2785

James J. Hill House

St. Paul • 651-297-2555

Jeffers Petroglyphs

Comfrey • 507-628-5591

Marine Mill

Marine on St. Croix • 507-697-6321

Mill City Museum

Minneapolis • 612-341-7555

Mille Lacs Indian Museum

Onamia • 320-532-3632

Minnehaha Depot

Minneapolis • 651-228-0263

Minnesota State Capitol

St. Paul • 651-296-2881

North West Company Fur Post

Pine City • 320-629-6356

Oliver H. Kelley Farm

Elk River • 763-441-6896

Split Rock Lighthouse

Beaver Bay • 218-226-6372

"The Signing of the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux," by Francis Davis Millet, 1905. On view in the Governor's Reception Room at the Minnesota State Capitol.



 Minnesota Historical Society
345 Kellogg Boulevard West, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102-1906

Made possible by the
Legacy Amendment through
the vote of Minnesotans on
November 4, 2008.



**THE US-DAKOTA
WAR OF 1862**

Explore the War
that Changed
Minnesota.

Forever.

 Minnesota
Historical Society

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Foldout

Map of Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway and Mobile Tour

Thank You

The Minnesota Historical Society is grateful to the many individuals who are helping to share the history of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862. Special thanks to the many people who provided advice and input into the creation of the exhibition at the History Center and to the dozens of people throughout Minnesota, the Midwest and Canada who shared their stories through the Oral History Project. The audio interviews are available at www.usdakotawar.org and are included, in part, in the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byways Mobile Tour.



Tour the Minnesota River Valley

Learn about the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862

Call 888-601-3010 and Take a Mobile Tour

Listen to stories and reflections about historic sites along the river valley. Learn about the people who lived there and the lasting impact of the U.S.-Dakota War.

Mobile Tour Starts He

Call **888-601-3010** from any location – from the byway, from home, from anywhere. Press the * key at any time to return to the menu and select another stop. More stops will be added in 2013.

[Visit Minnesota Historic Sites, Parks & Cities](#)

Along the Minnesota River Valley

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THE US-DAKOTA WAR OF 1862

Opens June 30 at the
Minnesota History Center



Letter from the Director

2012 marks 150 years since the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 raged throughout southwestern Minnesota for six weeks in the late summer. But the war's causes began decades earlier, and the profound loss and consequences are still felt today.

Along with many organizations and communities across the state, the Minnesota Historical Society invites you to learn more. We hope you will:

- Visit www.usdakotawar.org for an overview of the war, links to resources, oral histories and a listing of events statewide,
- See the new exhibit "The U.S.-Dakota War of 1862," opening June 30 at the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul,
- Tour Minnesota's many historic sites and museums,
- Take in the wealth of knowledge available from sources throughout the state,
- Travel the Minnesota River Valley and take the mobile tour (888-601-3010), and
- Discuss the war and what it means to our state today with your friends and family.

We look forward to seeing you this year and hearing your perspectives about this defining period in history.



D. Stephen Elliott

Director and CEO, Minnesota Historical Society

THE U.S.-DAKOTA WAR OF 1862

An Exhibit at the Minnesota History Center

St. Paul • 651-259-3000
www.mnnesotahistorycenter.org

Opening June 30, "The U.S.-Dakota War of 1862" is a new exhibit that recounts the Minnesota war that tore apart lives, families and the Dakota nation. Visitors can view documents, images and artifacts related to the war, as well as hear heart-wrenching stories and learn about the broken treaties and promises that led to this disastrous chapter in Minnesota history.

There are many, often conflicting, interpretations of events related to the war. The exhibit includes multiple viewpoints, as well as historical and contemporary voices. Visitors are encouraged to review the evidence and determine for themselves what happened and why, to discuss the exhibit's content and to share their comments.

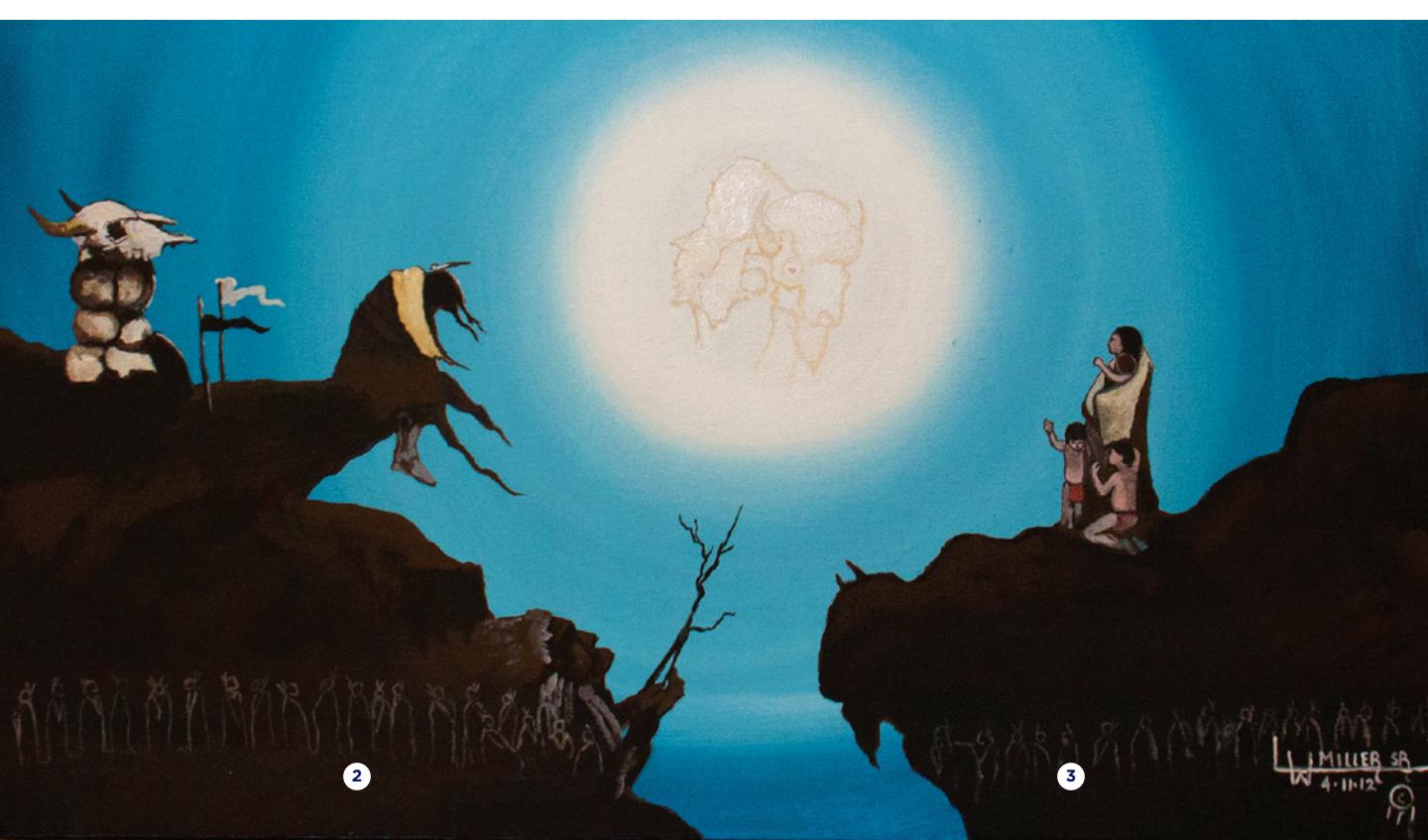
Special Programs at the Minnesota History Center

Mni Sota Makoce/Minnesota: The U.S.-Dakota War and the Making of Minnesota

(July 18, 7 p.m., FREE)

Explore how the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 forever transformed the land the Dakota call Mni Sota Makoce. With author Mary Lethert Wingerd, associate professor of history at St. Cloud State University.

"A Meeting of the Grandfathers" by Lyle Miller. Painted for the Minnesota History Center's exhibit "The U.S.-Dakota War of 1862."



Minnesota History Center

Special Programs, continued

We Are Still Here: Minnesota Is a Dakota Place

(July 25, 7 p.m., FREE)

The U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 marked a major turning point in the history of the Dakota people, but it is only one small part of their story. Join Dakota artist, poet and scholar Gwen Westerman as she shares her perspectives on the modern Dakota people and their place in Minnesota.

Dakota Family History Class

(Sept. 11, 6–7:30 p.m.)

Learn how to locate and use photographs, state and national records, censuses and online programs like Ancestry.com to research Dakota family histories in the Gale Family Library.

Dakota Tiospaye (Family) Day

(Sept. 29, Noon–4 p.m., FREE)

Learn and share traditional and contemporary crafts and culture of the Dakota people. This event is for families and people of all ages.

Also in the Twin Cities

“De Unkiyepi, We Are Here” Art Exhibit

This exhibition of contemporary American Indian artists is presented by the Native American Community Development Institute and All My Relations Gallery.

- **All My Relations Gallery**, 1414 E. Franklin Ave., Mpls., www.allmyrelationsarts.com (Aug. 3–Sept. 28, Tues.–Fri. 11 a.m.–6 p.m., Sat.–Sun., 11 a.m.–3 p.m.)
- **James J. Hill House**, 240 Summit Ave., St. Paul, 651-297-2555, www.mnhs.org/hillhouse (Oct. 13, 2012–Jan. 13, 2013, Mon.–Sat., 10–4 p.m., Sun. 1–4 p.m.)

The Minnesota Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the Grotto Foundation for their support of this exhibit.

Top: Caption...



U.S.-Dakota War of 1862: A Brief History

While the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 lasted just six weeks, the issues surrounding its causes and its aftermath continue to affect Minnesota and the nation to this day.

The U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 followed years of the U.S. government breaking treaties and promises to the Dakota people, combined with a burgeoning white population in the state. Months before the war, George E. Day, a government official from Washington D.C., visited Minnesota and wrote a report to President Abraham Lincoln documenting the rampant corruption associated with Indian Affairs, but no action was taken. In August 1862, when the Dakota were facing starvation after late annuity payments and the refusal by government agents and traders to release provisions, four young Dakota men killed five settlers near Acton. In the days that followed, tribal factions attacked the Lower Sioux Agency, Fort Ridgely and white settlements in south central and southwestern Minnesota.



Missionaries escaping from the fighting, Aug. 21, 1862.

The fighting lasted six weeks. Between 400 and 600 white civilians and soldiers and an unknown number of Dakota were killed. Troops

under the command of former Gov. Henry Sibley were sent to support Fort Ridgely and the settlers, ultimately defeating the Dakota forces and bringing the war to a close by the end of September 1862.

On December 26, 1862, 38 Dakota men were hanged in Mankato in the largest mass execution in U.S. history. More than 300 had initially been condemned to death, but President Lincoln commuted 264 to prison terms.



Taoyateduta's (Little Crow) wife and children at Fort Snelling, ca. 1863. Mdewakanton Chief Taoyateduta led Dakota forces during the war.

When the fighting ended, some Dakota fled west or into Canada. Approximately 1,600 non-combatant Dakota and mixed-race people who surrendered – mostly women, children and the elderly – were held over the winter of 1862-63 in an internment camp at Fort Snelling, suffering severe hardship. As many as 300 died. In 1863, those who survived were forcibly moved to reservations in the Dakota Territory and what is now Nebraska. Punitive expeditions in 1863 and 1864 resulted in numerous battles in which hundreds of Dakota were killed or forced further westward.

Visit www.usdakotawar.org for more information and a timeline of the war.



Bdote - Dakota Birthplace

The confluence area of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers is known to some Dakota as "Bdote" – or the place of creation. As such, it is also considered the center of Dakota spirituality and history.

In a series of treaties in the early- and mid-1800s, the U.S. government, through treaties which were not always upheld, coerced the Dakota into ceding land in exchange for promises of cash, goods, annuities and education.

"This is our ancient homeland; the birthplace of the Dakota people."

Dr. Clifford Canku, Sisseton-Wahpeton, Oral History Project Participant

Above: Fort Snelling as seen from the Minnesota River, by Henry Lewis, ca. 1850.

Fort Snelling State Park

St. Paul • 612-725-2389

www.dnr.state.mn.us/fortsnelling

Park is open year-round, 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.

In 1962, the area surrounding the junction of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers was designated as Fort Snelling State Park. Located within the park's boundaries are the sites of historic Dakota villages, a treaty location and the internment camp, also referred to as a concentration camp, where Dakota prisoners were held following the war. Information in the Thomas Savage Visitor Center and interpretive signs along the trail to Pike Island highlight this area's importance to the Dakota.

"At that point it was starting to settle that their lives were going to be changed forever and there wasn't a thing they could do about it."

Dallas Ross, Upper Sioux, Oral History Project Participant



Historic Fort Snelling: U.S. Outpost and Military Launch Point

St Paul • 612-726-1171

www.historicfortsnelling.org

Once the farthest outpost of the United States, Fort Snelling was built in the 1820s to serve the fur trade. In the early 1800s, Europeans hunted and traded with the Dakota. In 1851, the settler population in Minnesota was about 7,000. By 1858, it had grown to 150,000. As Dakota were pushed onto smaller reservations of land, tensions mounted. When the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 broke out, Fort Snelling served as a launching point for U.S. soldiers.

Fort Snelling Today

Today, the reconstructed fort is a National Historic Landmark and interprets stories throughout the fort's 120-year active history. Historic Fort Snelling offers visitors an orientation film with an overview of the war. Visitors may call 877-411-4123 from the fort's Round Tower and

Half Moon Battery for recordings about the Indian Agency located near the fort in the 1800s and the internment camp, or concentration camp, where 1,600 Dakota were held after the war.

Special Programs at Historic Fort Snelling

Commemorating Controversy: The U.S.-Dakota War of 1862

(Aug. 1–Sept 2: Tues.–Sat., 10 a.m.–5 p.m., Sun.,

noon–5 p.m.; Sept. 3–29: Mon.–Sat., 10 a.m.–5 p.m.)

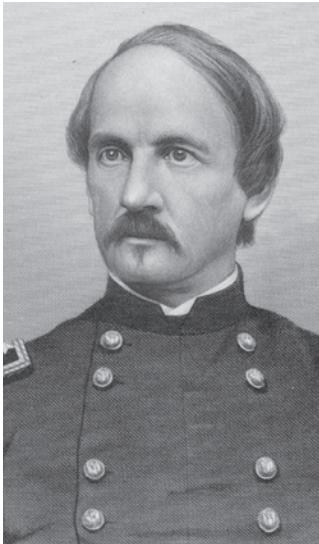
A 12-panel exhibit in the visitor center explores the causes, voices, events and long-lasting consequences of the war. Produced by Gustavus Adolphus College students in conjunction with the Nicollet County Historical Society.



Top: Internment camp at Fort Snelling, by photographer Benjamin H. Upton, ca. 1862. *Above:* Historic Fort Snelling today.

Henry H. Sibley's Role in the War

Born in 1811, Henry Hastings Sibley came to Minnesota in 1834 as the regional manager of the American Fur Company. He established close ties with the Dakota community and often hunted with Dakota men. Because of his connections, Sibley also played an important role in treaty negotiations.



Col. Henry H. Sibley. Engraving by J. C. Buttre, ca 1862.

By the early 1840s the fur trade was dying. Treaties had reduced prime fur hunting territories for the Dakota, and the demand for furs declined due to changing fashion trends. In 1853, Sibley liquidated his holdings and began investing in land at Traverse des Sioux, Mendota, Hastings and Saint Anthony Falls.

Soon after the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 began, Sibley was given command of the state's military response. After the war, he led "punitive expeditions" against the Dakota who had left Minnesota for the western territories.

"They made promises in those treaties that they never intended to keep. They had browbeaten and coerced the Indians to the point where they didn't have much choice."

Dr. Elden Lawrence, Sisseton-Wahpeton, Oral History Project Participant

Sibley House Historic Site

Mendota • 651-452-1596
www.mnhs.org/sibleyhouse

The restored home of Gen. Henry H. Sibley and other historic buildings are located near Historic Fort Snelling, just east of Highway 55, on Sibley Memorial Highway/Highway 13. Visitors can learn about Sibley's interaction with the Dakota before, during and after the war.

Special Programs at the Sibley House

Henry Sibley and the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862

(Sept. 8, 15, 22 & 29, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.)

Tour restored historic buildings and learn about the roles Sibley played in the fur trade and early treaties with the Dakota, his military service during and after the war, and how he is remembered today.

The restored home of Gen. Henry H. Sibley.

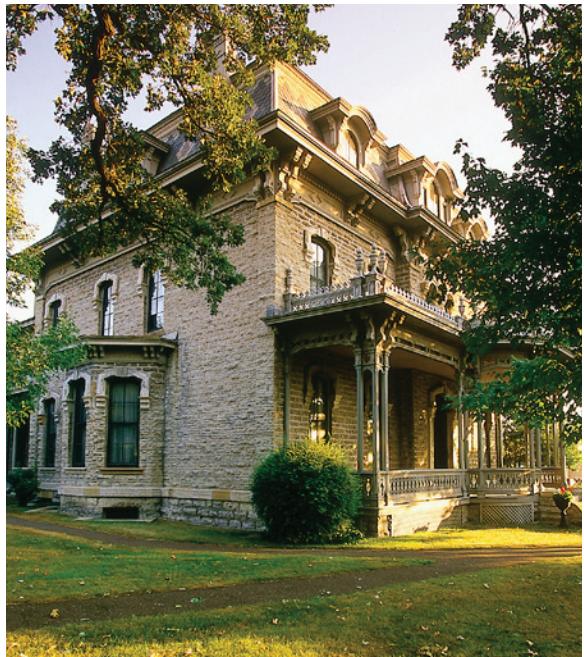


Alexander Ramsey's Role in the War

In 1851, as territorial governor and superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Minnesota Territory, Alexander Ramsey negotiated treaties on behalf of the U.S. government with the Dakota for the cession of large areas of Minnesota land for white settlement, most notably the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux in 1851.

Ramsey also served as governor during the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862, the causes of which were directly related to the treaties and lack of compliance with them by the government and traders. He appointed his longtime friend and political rival Henry Sibley as commander of the forces raised to fight against the Dakota, and notoriously stated that "the Sioux Indians of Minnesota must be exterminated or driven forever beyond the borders of the state."

Alexander Ramsey and his granddaughter, Laura Furness, ca. 1901.



Alexander Ramsey House

St. Paul • 651-296-8760
www.mnhs.org/ramseyhouse

Only open for special events and programs, the Alexander Ramsey House was home to Minnesota's first territorial governor during his retirement. Ramsey's granddaughters willed the home and all of its contents to the Minnesota Historical Society in 1964.

Special Programs at the Alexander Ramsey House

Alexander Ramsey and the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862

(Sept. 8, 15, 22 & 29, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.)

Learn about Gov. Ramsey's role in the politics and events leading up to and during the war, as well as his actions in the aftermath.

Above: The restored home of Alexander Ramsey.



Lac qui Parle Mission

Near Montevideo • 320-269-7636

www.mnhs.org/lacquiparle

Established in 1835, the Lac qui Parle Mission was one of the first churches and schools in Minnesota. It was built by missionaries at a trading post founded by explorer and fur trader Joseph Renville. The missionaries also completed the first Dakota dictionary, grammar and gospel at this location. The site features artifacts and exhibits related to Dakota people and the missionaries who worked with them.

Learn More

- See what life was like at a pre-territorial mission.
- Learn the role of missionaries in developing the written Dakota language.
- View exhibits that share more about the Dakota people and the impact of the war.

The Minnesota Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the Chippewa County Historical Society, which manages this site.

"We didn't own the lands, they belonged to everybody, and so we were willing to share with others... It was used against us; the generosity was used against us."

Michael Childs, Prairie Island, Oral History Project Participant



Traverse des Sioux

Near St. Peter • 507-934-2160

www.mnhs.org/traversedes Sioux

A shallow river crossing, Traverse des Sioux was a gathering place for thousands of years. When European settlers first came to Minnesota, they traded information and ideas here with Dakota hunters. It was also the site of the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux in 1851 where the upper bands of the Dakota nation sold about half of present-day Minnesota to the U.S. government. Today, visitors can walk trails along the 10,000-year-old Minnesota River Valley and learn about Dakota culture. The nearby Treaty Site History Center, provides information about treaties, the fur trade and Dakota culture.

The Minnesota Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the Nicollet County Historical Society, which manages this site.

"The Indians wanted to live as they did before the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux—go where they pleased..., hunt game wherever they could find it, sell their furs to the traders and live as they could."

Big Eagle, Mdewakanton, 1894



Call: 888-601-3010 Stop #02

Listen to perspectives on the treaty signings of 1851 and 1858 and their lasting impact.



The First Attack: Lower Sioux Agency

Near Redwood Falls • 507-697-8674

www.mnhs.org/lowersioux

The scene of the first attack of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862, this site was a U.S. government administrative center for the Mdewakanton and Wahpekute Bands of Dakota. In the months leading up to the war, the U.S. government failed to pay annuity payments owed to the Dakota and refused to provide food and supplies. These actions contributed to the growing unrest that led to the war in the summer of 1862. As tensions mounted, a reluctant Taoyateduta (Little Crow) led an attack on the Lower Sioux Agency on August 18, 1862, killing 18 traders and government employees. The Dakota then attacked settlements along the Minnesota River Valley, killing white settlers and compelling thousands to flee in the first few days in a strategic effort to reclaim their homeland.

Above: The Lower Sioux Agency warehouse where, in 1862, government officials refused to release food and supplies to the Dakota.

Today, the visitor center features exhibits on Dakota history, life and culture. Self-guided interpretive trails allow visitors to explore the landscape and the warehouse building and to walk along the Minnesota River.

The Minnesota Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the Lower Sioux Indian Community, which manages this site.

Learn More at the site

- Learn about reservation life and causes of the war.
- Walk interpretive trails along the Minnesota River.

"I'm standing in a place where my ancestors were... and I wonder what they were thinking when they were here? ...It gives me comfort to know that they stood right here."

Sandra Geshick, Lower Sioux, Oral History Project Participant



Call: 888-601-3010 Stop #04

Gain insights into the notion of land and home for the Dakota people along the Minnesota River Valley and how the war changed this.



Upper Sioux Agency

Near Granite Falls

The Upper Sioux Agency, also known as the Yellow Medicine Agency, was established in 1854 near the confluence of the Yellow Medicine and Minnesota Rivers as a place to teach the Dakota about European farming methods. The agency never realized its mission. Most of the buildings were destroyed in the war. One remaining structure has been reconstructed to its pre-1862 condition and the foundations of other buildings are marked.

Learn More

- Visit the Upper Sioux Agency State Park, which is managed by the State of Minnesota and preserves the site of the Upper Sioux Agency.
- Walk the 18 miles of trails around the Yellow Medicine River Valley.
- Read interpretive signs that tell the history of this area and the Upper Sioux Agency.

“Families were torn apart. I just wonder how my relatives made it through all of that, how difficult a time that had to have been, to be able to survive.”

Lavonne Swenson, Lower Sioux, Oral History Project Participant

Above: Upper Sioux Agency, photograph by Dale Bohlike.



Call: 888-601-3010 Stop #06

Hear reflections on the values and enduring strength of the Dakota.

Attacks on New Ulm, Minnesota

New Ulm was the site of two attacks on settlers by the Dakota – on August 19 and 23, 1862. Using outlying buildings for cover, the Dakota fired on the town's defenders and burned buildings near the river. The Dakota retreated after both battles leaving more than a third of the town in ruins.

When word of the attacks reached St. Paul, Col. Henry Sibley gathered his forces, mostly untrained civilians, and headed up the valley. With little food and ammunition left in New Ulm and fear of another attack, about 2,000 residents fled to Mankato, St. Peter and St. Paul. New Ulm settlers began returning in early September. In December 1862, the town officially reorganized. Today, monuments and memorials commemorate the attacks.

Learn More

- **Visit the Brown County Historical Museum.** Located at 2 N. Broadway St., see exhibits, many dealing with the war.
- **See the Frederick W. Kiesling Haus.** Located at 320 N. Minnesota St., this little house is one of few structures that survived the war.
- **Visit the Harkin Store Historic Site.** See page 28.

“New Ulm basically became a ghost town.”

Robert Beussman, New Ulm Settler Descendent,
Oral History Project Participant



Call: 888-601-3010 Stop #03

Hear reflections on European immigrant life on the prairie and the legacy 1862 left on the people of New Ulm.

Attacks on Fort Ridgely

**In Fort Ridgely State Park, near Fairfax
507-426-7888 • mnhs.org/fortridgely**

Built in 1853, Fort Ridgely was originally designed as a law enforcement center to keep peace as settlers poured into the former Dakota lands. By 1862, it was being used as a training base for Civil War volunteers.

Dakota forces attacked the fort twice—on August 20 and 22, 1862. The fort suddenly became one of the few military bases west of the Mississippi to ever be formally attacked by an American Indian Nation. Fort Ridgely's 280 military and civilian defenders held out until U.S. Army reinforcements ended the siege.

Today, visitors to the Fort Ridgely Historic Site can wander through the ruins of this once thriving outpost and learn more about its role in the U.S.-Dakota War. A visit to the adjacent Fort Ridgely Cemetery offers more history.

Special Programs at Fort Ridgely

Building Fort Ridgely with Historian Roger Breckenridge (May 26, 2 p.m.)

State Park Open House Day

(June 9, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. FREE. No park permit required). See traditional Dakota dancing and military demonstrations by the First Minnesota Infantry and the New Ulm Battery.

Causes of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 and Battlefield Tour with Independent Historian

John LaBatte

(June 16, July 14 & Aug. 18, 1 & 2:30 p.m.)

Minnesota River Steamboats with Dr. William Lass, MSU-Mankato Professor Emeritus

(June 23, 2 p.m.)

See photographs and hear stories of early travel by steamboat from St. Paul to the Lower Sioux Agency.

The Spirit Lake Massacre of 1857 with Independent Historian Mary Bakeman

(June 30, 2 p.m.)

Learn about the 1857 attack near Spirit Lake.

The Christian Dakota with

Independent Historian John LaBatte

(Aug. 4, 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.)

Learn about missionaries among the Dakota, their influence and the experiences of Christian Dakota in 1862.

The Minnesota Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the Nicollet County Historical Society, which manages this site.





Birch Coulee Battlefield

Near Morton • 507-697-6321
www.mnhs.org/birchcoulee

One of the hardest fought battles of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 took place in this now peaceful prairie field. On Sept. 2, 1862, Dakota soldiers attacked a burial party sent by Col. Henry Sibley. The Dakota kept U.S. soldiers under siege for 36 hours before a relief detachment arrived from Fort Ridgely.

Visitors can tour the self-guided site where markers explain the battle from Dakota and U.S. soldiers' perspectives.

Learn More

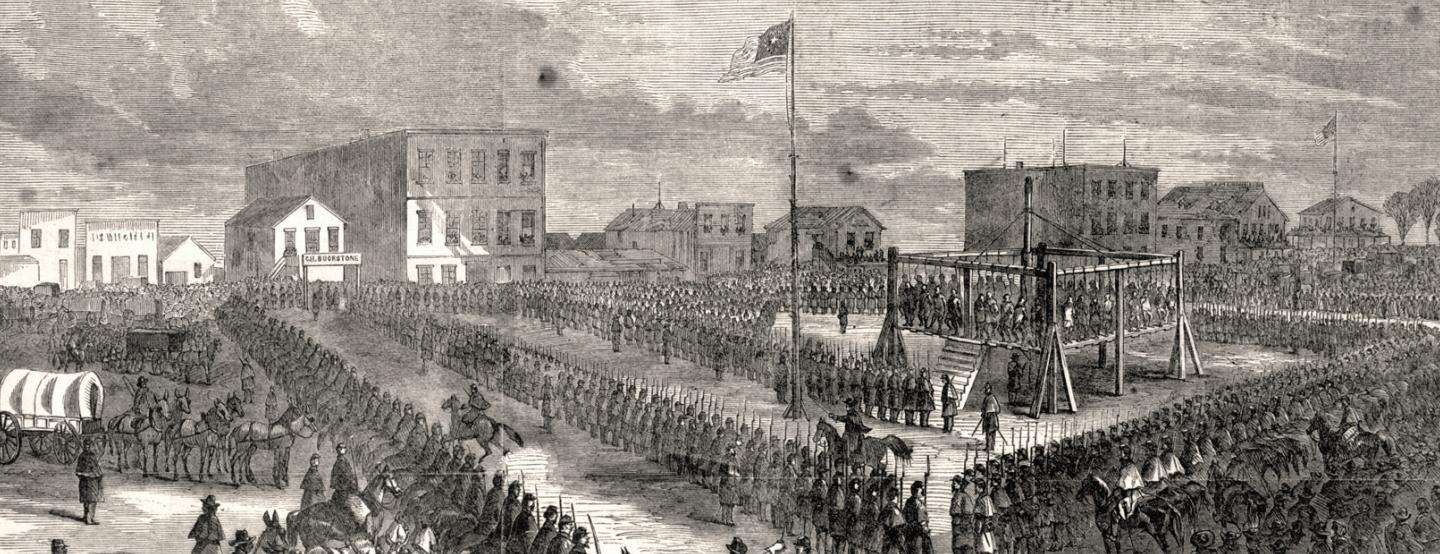
- Stand where history happened.
- Read about the battle from the perspectives of an Army captain and a Mdewakanton soldier.
- Walk a self-guided trail through restored prairie.
- See a soldier's sketches of vivid battle scenes.
- Find guideposts pinpointing U.S. and Dakota positions.

Above: "The Battle of Birch Coulee," Lithograph by Paul G. Biersach, 1912.



Call: 888-601-3010 Stop #03

Hear reflections on the spiritual connection Dakota people have with the land and their fight for survival.



Execution in Mankato, Minnesota

Of the hundreds of Dakota who surrendered or were captured during the U.S.-Dakota War, 303 men were tried in a military court and convicted. At the urging of Missionary Henry Whipple, President Abraham Lincoln reviewed the convictions and commuted the sentences of 264 to prison terms. Lincoln then signed the order condemning 39 men to death by hanging. One prisoner was reprieved just before the sentencing was carried out. The remaining 38 men were hanged at Mankato on December 26, 1862—the largest mass execution in U.S. history.

"The aftermath for the people was horrendous. Some of the trials only took a few minutes for the people to condemn them to death."

Pamela Halverson, Lower Sioux, Oral History Project Participant

Learn More

- Visit Reconciliation Park at 100 North Riverfront Drive in Mankato.

On the site of the execution, this park was built through a collaboration of the Dakota and Mankato communities.

- Visit Blue Earth County Heritage Center, www.bechshistory.com.

Operated by the Blue Earth County Historical Society in Mankato, the center preserves, displays and celebrates Dakota culture.

Special Programs

Pow Wow Etiquette and Reconciliation

(Sept. 8, 10 a.m., Blue Earth Co. Heritage Center)

Mahkato Wacipi (Powwow)

(Sept. 21-23, Land of Memories Park)

2012 marks the 40th anniversary of this annual event, which memorializes the 38 executed with music, dance, crafts and food. Located at the confluence of the Blue Earth and Minnesota Rivers off Highway 169, west of Mankato.

Film "Dakota War of 1862"

(Nov. 3, 10 a.m., Blue Earth Co. Heritage Center)

Discovering Dakota Culture and Heritage

Monthly Educational Series

(Oct. 6, Nov. 3 and Dec. 1, 10 a.m., Blue Earth Co. Heritage Center)

The Minnesota Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the Blue Earth County Historical Society for its role in planning events to commemorate the war.

Above: Public execution of 38 Dakota Indians at Mankato, by W. H. Childs, 1862.



W W Mayo House

Le Sueur • 507-665-3250

www.mnhs.org/mayohouse

Dr. William Worrall Mayo and his family lived in a house in Le Sueur at the time of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862. In August 1862, Mayo went to New Ulm to provide medical assistance to the town's defenders. In December 1862, after 38 Dakota men were hanged in Mankato and their bodies were buried in shallow graves nearby, doctors in the area, including Dr. Mayo, unearthed some of the bodies for medical study and demonstrations.

Today, visitors can tour the house, hand-built by W. W. Mayo, and learn about the Mayo family.

Harkin Store

New Ulm • 507-354-8666

www.mnhs.org/harkinstore

While the Harkin Store Historic Site does not interpret the events of 1862, it provides a glimpse of settler life after the war. Scottish-born Alexander Harkin opened his store 10 years after the war. It served as the center of a bustling community in the early 1870s. A visit to the Harkin Store today allows visitors to see an authentic mid-19th century general store with period wares still on the shelves.

The Minnesota Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the Nicollet County Historical Society, which manages these sites.

Camp Release

Near Montevideo

In late September, after the defeat of Little Crow's forces, a group of Dakota chiefs released white and mixed-race captives to Col. Henry Sibley. He then moved the captives to his own encampment near Montevideo, which came to be known as Camp Release.

Sibley also took into custody about 1,200 Dakota, a number which grew to nearly 2,000 as more surrendered or were captured.

The mass trial of the Dakota who took part in the war began at Sibley's Camp Release headquarters on September 28, 1862. Sibley later moved his troops and the prisoners to the Lower Sioux Agency where the trials continued.

"I just try to imagine what it would have been like to be there... The Indians [must have been] realizing: This is over. What's our next step?"

Terry Sveine, New Ulm Settler Descendent, Oral History Project Participant

Above: Captives at Camp Release, by photographer Adrain John Ebell, ca. 1862.



Call: 888-601-3010 Stop #07

Hear the story of Mazasa and learn about the mounting tensions within the Dakota community leading up to the war.

The War's Aftermath

The U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 tore apart thousands of Dakota and settler homes and families. The losses were great and the consequences were severe for all who were touched by the fighting.

Even after the war ended, the destitution, disease and displacement it caused continued for years. In 1863, the Dakota were forced onto reservations in the Dakota Territory and what is now Nebraska. Punitive expeditions that followed resulted in numerous battles in which hundreds of Dakota were killed or forced further westward. The war also forced around 20,000 settlers to flee their homes – many never to return.

Meanwhile, the Treaties of 1851 and 1858 and a U.S. victory in the war opened up thousands of acres for new settlement.

Minnesota had changed forever.

"They said 500 people were killed, and virtually a nation disappeared; land right along with it."

Judith Anywaush, Sisseton Wahpeton, Oral History Project Participant

"It impacted everyone in one way or another. That conflict molded a great deal of what we are. To forget that would be immoral and wrong."

Fred Juni, New Ulm Settler Descendent, Oral History Project Participant

Lac qui Parle Mission, near Montevideo.



Learn More

Visit www.mnhs.org – a gateway to all Minnesota Historical Society services, information, museums and historic sites.

Check out www.usdakotawar.org for resources and information on the war:

- Learn more about history
- Experience an interactive timeline of the war
- Listen to oral histories (or interviews) with descendants of those touched by the war
- Discover your family history
- Find events, programs, books and initiatives related to the war
- Share your story or leave a comment
- Link to informative websites:

Explore the Society's collections
www.mnhs.org/collections for art, photographs and historical artifacts

Find 1,000 artifacts related to the Dakota, Lakota and Nakota at
www.collections.mnhs.org/sevencouncilfires

Visit the Gale Family Library
www.mnhs.org/library for periodicals, newspapers, maps and atlases, moving images, sound recordings, manuscripts and government records

Research newspapers from 1862 at
www.mnhs.org/newspapers

Locate library resources related to the war at www.mnhs.org/library/tips/history_topics/94dakota.html

Plan to visit a historic site at
www.visitmnhistory.org

Check out the Minnesota History Center at
www.minnesotahistorycenter.org