



# Attacks on Fort Ridgely

**In Fort Ridgely State Park, near Fairfax**  
**507-426-7888 • [www.mnhs.org/fortridgely](http://www.mnhs.org/fortridgely)**

Built in 1853, Fort Ridgely was originally designed as a law enforcement center to keep peace as settlers poured into the ceded Dakota lands. By 1862, it was 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 withstand a direct assault. 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.

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



**Call: 888-601-3010 Stop #11**  
Learn about archaeological findings at Fort Ridgely and hear Dakota people reflect on the site today.