

Media Contacts:

Julianna Olsen
Marketing & Communications
651-259-3039
julianna.olsen@mnhs.org

Amy Danielson
Marketing & Communications
651-259-3020
amy.danielson@mnhs.org

Lory Sutton
Marketing & Communications
651-259-3140
lory.sutton@mnhs.org

This news release and high-resolution images are available online at www.usdakotawar.org/media-room.

NEW EXHIBIT RECOUNTS THE MINNESOTA WAR THAT TORE APART LIVES, FAMILIES AND THE DAKOTA NATION

“The U.S.-Dakota War of 1862” opens at the Minnesota History Center June 30

ST. PAUL (May 2012)—Visitors to “The U.S.-Dakota War of 1862” exhibit at the Minnesota History Center will examine the evidence, hear heart-wrenching stories and learn about the broken treaties and promises that led to this disastrous chapter in Minnesota history.

The war ended with hundreds dead, the Dakota people exiled from their homeland and the largest mass execution in U.S. history: the hangings of 38 Dakota men in Mankato on Dec. 26, 1862.

2012 marks 150 years since the U.S.-Dakota War. It was waged for six weeks in southern Minnesota over the late summer of 1862, but the war’s causes began decades earlier and the profound loss and consequences of the war are still felt today.

“The U.S.-Dakota War, its causes and its devastating aftermath are a fundamental part of Minnesota’s story,” said Steve Elliott, director and CEO of the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS). “This exhibit reflects a search for truth about this tragic chapter in Minnesota and American history, examining the historical context, presenting the many perspectives, and describing the long-reverberating consequences.”

There are many, often conflicting, interpretations of events relating to the war. “The U.S.-Dakota War of 1862” exhibit will include multiple viewpoints as well as historical and contemporary voices. Visitors will be encouraged to make up their own minds about what happened and why, to discuss what they are seeing and learning, and to leave comments.

“The history of the war is complex and compelling. We hope the exhibit will inspire visitors to learn more, do their own research and uncover the truth for themselves,” said Senior Exhibit Developer Kate Roberts.

Descendants of people involved in the war have taken an active role in shaping the exhibit. Exhibits staff members have met with Dakota people from throughout Minnesota, the Upper Midwest and Canada and with settler descendants from the Minnesota River Valley region to solicit research advice and comb through original documents, letters, diaries, artifacts and other historical sources to assemble a narrative of what happened. These meetings with descendants are part of a broader initiative called a “truth recovery” project.

“We’ve been humbled by the great wealth of knowledge and passion these individuals have shared with us,” said Dan Spock, director of the Minnesota History Center. “It has dramatically shaped our thinking about the causes, violence and aftermath of the war. The choices we inevitably made for presenting the exhibition and associated website are the products of that process.”

Throughout this year, the Minnesota Historical Society is offering many new ways to learn about the U.S.-Dakota War, how it shaped our state and how its bitter consequences are still felt today. Visit www.usdakotawar.org for a list of all initiatives, events and resources for commemorating and learning about the war.

Admission

The exhibit is included with regular History Center admission of \$11 for adults, \$9 for seniors and college students, \$6 for children ages 6 to 17; free for children age 5 and under and Minnesota Historical Society members. Free for all ages Tuesday evenings from 5 to 8 p.m. Call for special group tour rates, 651-259-3003.

Hours

The exhibit is open during regular History Center hours, Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. (admission is free from 5 to 8 p.m.); Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Sundays, noon to 5 p.m. For History Center information call 651-259-3000 or visit www.mnhs.org/historycenter.



“The U.S.-Dakota War of 1862” exhibit is made possible by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund of the Legacy Amendment through the vote of Minnesotans on Nov. 4, 2008.

The Minnesota Historical Society is a non-profit educational and cultural institution established in 1849. The Society collects, preserves and tells the story of Minnesota’s past through museum exhibits, libraries and collections, historic sites, educational programs and book publishing. Using the power of history to transform lives, the Society preserves our past, shares our state’s stories and connects people with history.

The Minnesota Historical Society is supported in part by its Premier Partners: Xcel Energy and Explore Minnesota Tourism.

For high-resolution copies of these and more images related to the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862, visit www.usdakotawar.org/media-room/image-gallery.

St Anthony Minn Jan 1. 1862
Mr President
in August last I was appointed Special Commissioner by the Cole Comm. Ind. Affairs with the approbation of Hon Mr Smith Sec. Interior at the request of Hon J.R. Cockle Chairman of the Sen. at Com. Ind. Affairs & Hon G. Aldrich Chairman of House Com. same subject for 100 days only. I visited the Chippewas of the M^{ist} first - then of Lake Superior - held 3 Councils with them - then I visited the Minneshagoes & then the Sioux or (Dacotah) travelling all by land (mostly) about 1500 miles in my own wagon driving my mules, often sleeping in the woods & generally without any comfortable distance between stopping places from 20 to 60 miles frequently. Everywhere I have been treated by the present officers of the Govt with Courtesy & have received all facilities & are also herewith a copy of a letter of the Hon Mr Gallatin Sioux. Agt. for consideration. I have discovered numerous violations of law & many hands committed by post Agents & Superintendent. I think

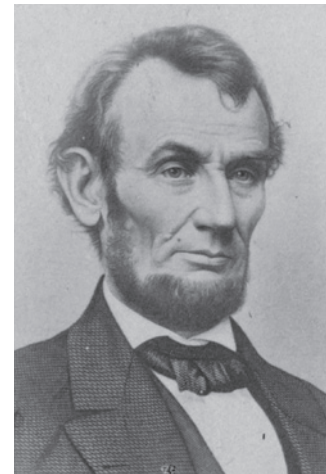
Image of letter courtesy of the Library of Congress.



Months before the war, a government official from Washington, D.C., visits Minnesota and witnesses rampant government corruption associated with Indian affairs.

"The whole system is defective & must be revised or, your red children, as they call themselves, will continue to be wronged & outraged & the just vengeance of heaven continue to be poured out & visited upon this nation for its abuses & cruelty to the Indian."

— George E. H. Day, report to President Abraham Lincoln, early 1862



Snana, a 23-year-old Dakota woman whose seven-year-old daughter dies just before the war breaks out, forms a lifelong bond with Mary Schwandt, a 14-year-old German American, whose parents and five siblings are killed during the war. Snana frees Mary from captivity and protects her during the war by hiding her and dressing her in Indian clothing.

Mary writes later to Snana, "I want you to know that the little captive German girl you so often befriended and shielded from harm loves you still for your kindness and care."

THE US-DAKOTA WAR OF 1862

AN EXHIBIT AT THE MINNESOTA HISTORY CENTER

IMAGES - CONT.

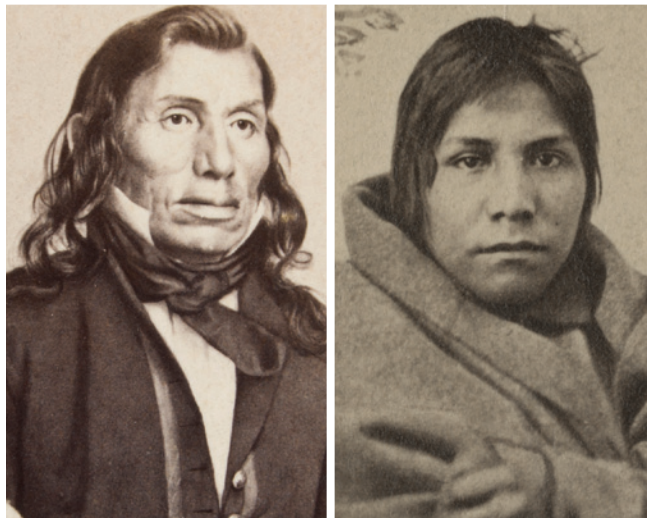
Executive Mansion,
Washington, December 6th, 1862.

Brigadier General W. H. Sibley
St. Paul
Minnesota.

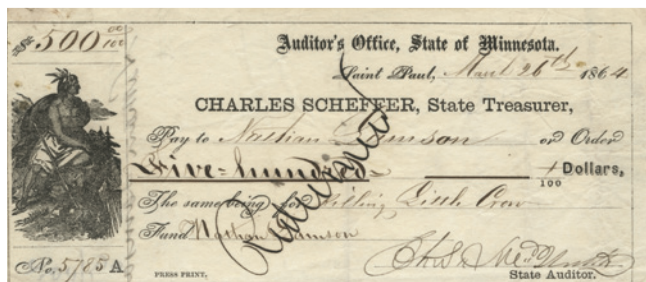
Ordered that
and half-breed, sentenced to be hanged by
Commissioners of Colonel Crook, St. L.
also, Captains Grant, Captain Bailey, and Lieut.
Lately, sitting in Minnesota, you came to be
Friday the nineteenth day of December, inst.
names, to-wit:

"He-ha-ha-nu-chai"	No. 2.	by the rec.
"Wagon" alias "Plan-doo-tai"	No. 4.	by the rec.
"Ny-a-tah-to-wah"	No. 5.	by the rec.
"Kiw-han-shoon-ko-yag."	No. 6.	by the rec.
"Muz-ga-bom-a-din"	No. 10.	by the rec.
"Wah-pag-a-tai"	No. 11.	by the rec.
"Man-hu-hu-hu"	No. 12.	by the rec.
"Anas-mas-mi."	No. 14.	by the rec.
"Iv-to-mi-na."	No. 15.	by the rec.
"Rosa-in-yaw-kna."	No. 19.	by the record.
"Do-waw-pai"	No. 23.	by the record.
"How-hen."	No. 24.	by the record.

President Abraham Lincoln writes by hand the list of 39 Dakota men to be hanged at Mankato. One man, Tatamina, was reprieved at the last minute.



Almost a year after the war, Dakota leader Taoyateduta (Little Crow) is shot and killed while gathering berries with his son, Wowinape, outside of Hutchinson.



The State of Minnesota awards this \$500 bounty check to Nathan Lamson for killing Taoyateduta.

Visit www.usdakotawar.org for additional history and resources.

The U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 followed years of broken treaties and promises to the Dakota people combined with a burgeoning white population in the state. In early 1862, a government official reported to President Abraham Lincoln about impending violence and rampant government corruption regarding Indian affairs in Minnesota. A few months later, the official's warning came true. In August 1862, when late annuity payments and the refusal by agents and traders to release provisions pushed many Dakota to the brink of starvation, factions attacked white settlements, the Lower Sioux Agency and Fort Ridgely in south central and southwestern Minnesota. A significant number of Dakota were against the war and did not participate.

The fighting lasted six weeks. Between four and six hundred white civilians and soldiers were killed. The number of Dakota killed in battle is not known. In early September, Gov. Alexander Ramsey told the state legislature, "The Sioux Indians of Minnesota must be exterminated or driven forever beyond the borders of this state." Troops under the command of former Gov. Henry Sibley, who served as a U.S. Army colonel during the war, 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.

After a trial by military tribunal, 38 Dakota men were hanged in Mankato on Dec. 26, 1862. It remains the largest mass execution in U.S. history. More than 300 Dakota men had initially been condemned to death, but President Abraham Lincoln commuted all but 39 of the sentences. Another was reprieved at the last minute because of questions about the testimony used to convict him.

Approximately 1600 Dakota and mixed-race people at Camp Release near Montevideo were taken into U.S. Army custody. In November the prisoners, mostly women, children, the elderly, non-combatants and others who had filtered into the camp, were taken on a six-day march to Fort Snelling. There, they were held over the winter of 1862-63 in an internment camp, sometimes called a concentration camp, below the fort. As many as 300 Dakota prisoners died over the winter. Eventually, they were forcibly removed from the state to reservations in the Dakota Territory and what is now Nebraska. The convicted prisoners whose death sentences were commuted were transported to a military prison at Camp McClellan, near Davenport, Iowa.

Thousands of Dakota had fled the state to Dakota Territory following the Battle of Wood Lake. Punitive expeditions into the territory in 1863 and 1864, led by Col. Sibley and Gen. Alfred Sully, a Civil War veteran, resulted in numerous battles in which hundreds of Dakota were killed or forced farther westward. Although these expeditions effectively ended the war between the Dakota and the U.S. government that started in Minnesota, conflict continued in bloody battles at Fort Phil Kearney, the Little Big Horn, and finally, in 1890, at Wounded Knee.

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

Dan Spock, Director, Minnesota History Center, has worked in museums for more than 28 years in numerous positions including exhibit designer, exhibit developer and program administrator. At the Minnesota History Center, Spock oversees exhibits, including the development of the exhibit about the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 and also educational programs, visitor services and facilities management.

Kate Roberts, Senior Exhibit Developer, Minnesota History Center and exhibit developer for “The U.S.-Dakota War of 1862,” has worked for the Minnesota Historical Society since 1989. Roberts developed the permanent exhibits for Mill City Museum, the “Minnesota 150” exhibit at the Minnesota History Center and also developed interpretive signs at Birch Coulee. Roberts has taught several history-related courses and has written articles and books on Minnesota history.

Visit www.usdakotawar.org/events for a complete list of events related to the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862.

Minnesota History Center, St. Paul

www.minnesotahistorycenter.org

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

July 18, 7 p.m.

Explore how the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 forever transformed the land the Dakota call Mni Sota Makoce into the State of Minnesota at this exclusive lecture with eminent historian Mary Lethert Wingerd.

We Are Still Here: Minnesota is a Dakota Place

July 25, 7 p.m.

Join Dakota artist, poet and scholar Gwen Westerman as she shares her perspective on the modern Dakota people and their special 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.

Dakota Tiospaye (Family) Day

Sept. 29, noon-4 p.m.

Learn and share traditional and contemporary crafts and culture of the Dakota people.

Alexander Ramsey House, St. Paul

www.mnhs.org/ramseyhouse

Alexander Ramsey in 1862

Sept. 8, 15, 22, 29, hourly from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Alexander Ramsey was Governor of the State of Minnesota in 1862 during the U.S.-Dakota War. This special tour takes guests into the Alexander Ramsey House and focuses on the role Ramsey played in the politics and events prior to, during and after the war.

Historic Fort Snelling, St. Paul

www.historicfortsnelling.org

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

Aug. 1-31, Tues.-Sat., 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun. 12-5 p.m.

Sept. 1-28, Mon.-Sat., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

(also open Sun., Sept. 2, 12-5 p.m.)

This exhibit explores the causes, voices, events and long-lasting consequences of the war. The exhibit was produced by Gustavus Adolphus College students in conjunction with the Nicollet County Historical Society.

Fort Ridgely, near Fairfax

www.mnhs.org/fortridgely

Building Fort Ridgely

May 26, 2 p.m.

Historian Roger Breckenridge discusses the very beginning of the new federal post along the Minnesota River.

State Park Open House Day

June 9

Visit Fort Ridgely to see traditional Dakota dancing by the Lower Sioux Community's Lucio Family, as well as military demonstrations by the 1st MN Infantry and the New Ulm Battery. Free Admission. No park permit is required on this day.

Causes of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862

June 16, July 14, Aug. 18, 1 and 2:30 p.m.

Independent historian John LaBatte will examine the causes of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862, including why some Dakota wanted war while others opposed it. LaBatte has both Dakota and white ancestors who were involved in the war.

Minnesota River Steamboats

June 23, 2 p.m.

Minnesota State University-Mankato professor emeritus Dr. William Lass will share photographs and stories of the early travel by steamboat on the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers from St. Paul to the Lower Sioux Agency.

Fort Ridgely, continued

Inkpaduta and Spirit Lake

June 30, 2 p.m.

Independent historian and publisher Mary Bakeman recounts the 1857 attack by a Wahpekute band of Santee Sioux near the northwestern Iowa towns of Okoboji and Spirit Lake and how those events contributed to the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862.

The Christian Dakota

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

Independent Historian John LaBatte talks about missionaries among the Dakota, their influence and the experiences of Christian Dakota in 1862.

All My Relations Gallery, Minneapolis

www.allmyrelationsarts.com and
James J. Hill House, St. Paul
www.mnhs.org/hillhouse

Di Unkiyepi, We Are Here

Opens Aug. 3 at All My Relations Gallery.

Moves to James J. Hill House Oct. 13-Jan 13, 2013.

An exhibition of contemporary American Indian artists responding to the anniversary of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862.

Mille Lacs Indian Museum, Onamia

www.mnhs.org/millelacs

Mni Sota: Reflections of Time and Place

Through May 18, 2012

This traveling exhibit showcases the innovative nature of Native American artists whose ingenuity promotes cultural continuity. Developed by All My Relations Arts of NACDI.

Sibley House Historic Site, Mendota

www.mnhs.org/sibleyhouse

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

Sept. 8, 15, 22, 29, 10-4 p.m.

This special tour takes guests through restored historic buildings and focuses on the roles Minnesota's first governor played in the fur trade and early treaties with the Dakota, his military service in the U.S. Dakota War of 1862 and after, as well as how he is remembered today.

More Historic Sites Related to the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862

Birch Coulee Battlefield, near Morton

www.mnhs.org/birchcoulee

Site of one of the hardest fought battles of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862. Visitors can tour the self-guided site where markers explain the battle from Dakota and U.S. soldiers' perspectives.

Lac qui Parle Mission, near Montevideo

www.chippewacohistory.org

A mission established in 1835 where the first Dakota dictionary, grammar and gospel were completed. The site features artifacts and exhibits related to Dakota people and the missionaries who worked with them. Managed by the Chippewa County Historical Society.

Lower Sioux Agency, near Redwood Falls

www.mnhs.org/lowersioux

The site of the outbreak of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862, the visitor center features exhibits on Dakota history, life and culture. Managed by the Lower Sioux Indian Community.

Traverse des Sioux, near St. Peter

www.mnhs.org/traversedessioux

Site of 1851 treaty negotiations between the U.S. government and the Dakota. Visitors to this site can learn about Dakota history and culture and the lives of the people who settled in the area. Managed by the Nicollet County Historical Society.

The Nicollet County Historical Society's Treaty Site History Center is adjacent to Traverse des Sioux.
www.nchsmn.org/sites.html

W.W. Mayo House, Le Sueur

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, upon hearing of the outbreak of war, 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.

Most of the Minnesota Historical Society sites listed above are open May-Sept. Please visit visitmnhistory.org for more information.