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the CROSSING

a publication of the **Nicollet County Historical Society**

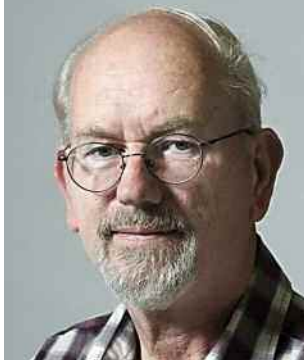
Summer 2024 | Volume 30 / Issue 2

HISTORY DISCOVERY PRESERVATION KNOWLEDGE HISTORY DISCOVERY PRESERVATION KNOWLEDGE HISTORY DISCOVERY PRESERVATION KNOWLEDGE

LOWERTOWN, NORTH MANKATO

by **Tom Hagen**

North Mankato historian and NCHS Volunteer



Tom Hagen
courtesy of Mankato Free Press

The Minnesota River valley formed about 13,000 years ago when Lake Agassiz broke through a barrier at Big Stone Lake on the border with South Dakota. The result was the largest freshwater lake in North America suddenly draining south through what must have been a depression or existing shallow valley created by earlier glacial melting. As the flow roared past the eventual site of Mankato, it turned north due to a bedrock obstruction, racing to the current city of

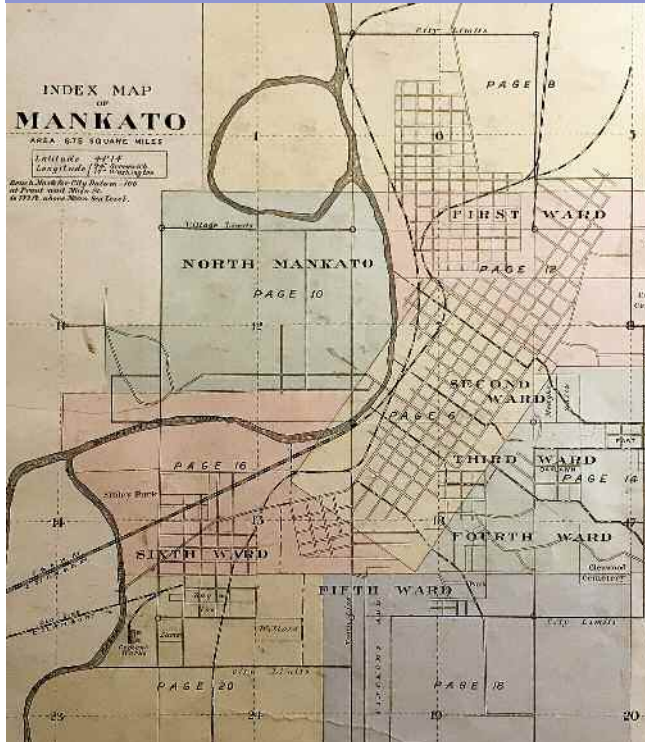
St. Paul, where it joined the Mississippi drainage system. The rapid drainage carved a river valley through glacial deposits two to four miles wide and hundreds of feet deep. After the lake drained, the scoured-out valley allowed the remaining much smaller river to meander back and forth in the valley for over 10,000 years, regularly changing its bed location, especially in times of flooding.

Early white settlers found a river with twists and bends all along its course and still subject to intermittent changes in bed location. In the 1850s, Mankato was laid out on the southern side of the great bend in the river, and North Mankato was on the north bank. An additional great loop in the river occurred just north of both cities, and the land contained in that loop on the Mankato side of the river was called "Lowertown" because its elevation was the lowest spot on the Mankato side of the river. (see map to right) Composed chiefly of mud flats,

sand, and clay, and overgrown with willows and wild grape vines, and clearly within the river flood plain, it was considered wasteland and unsuitable for building. With the exception of the clay once mined there for soft brick, Lowertown was of little value to anyone in the last quarter of the 19th century.

On the North Mankato side, the great loop of the river ran along what is now the north end of Lake Street and then turned east, a block north of Webster Avenue. (see map) The early steamboats coming

Map of Mankato and North Mankato from *Atlas of Mankato, Minnesota*, M. B. Haynes, C. E., Mankato, 1910, courtesy of Bob Sandeen.



Lowertown, North Mankato continued on page 6

ORGANIZATION INFO

NCHS Board

Executive Board Officers

Kate Martens, President, St. Peter
Tami Skinner, Vice President, St. Peter
Denny Schmidt, Treasurer, New Sweden Township
Scott Hermanson, Secretary, St. Peter

Directors

Eric Annexstad, St. Peter
John Chamberlain, St. Peter
Alma Forst, West Newton Township
Joe Metzson, St. Peter
Dana Melius, St. Peter
Bob Sandeen, St. Peter
Tracie Schwartz, North Mankato
Jon Smithers, St. Peter

NCHS Staff

Executive Director: Jessica Becker

director@nchsmn.org

Operations Coordinator: James Ihrke

office@nchsmn.org

Research Coordinator: Ruth Einstein

research@nchsmn.org

TSHC Museum Assistants:

Sarah Busse, Gary Kollman & Erica Smith

Anna Simmons, Collections Assistant

Custodian: Robert Weber

NCHS Sites information

Treaty Site History Center

1851 N. Minnesota Ave.
 St. Peter, MN 56082
 Phone: 507-934-2160
 Hours: Tue.-Sat. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
 E-mail: info@nchsmn.org

E. St. Julien Cox House

500 N. Washington Ave.
 St. Peter, MN 56082
 Phone: 507-934-2160
 E-mail: cox@nchsmn.org

Traverse des Sioux

Adjacent to the Treaty Site History Center
 1851 N. Minnesota Ave.
 St. Peter, MN 56082
 Open dawn to dusk year-round

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Members and Friends,

What a whirlwind we've had with Mother Nature lately. Unfortunately, natural disasters are part of life. While we can't stop them, we can prepare for them. The recent flood has been a vivid reminder that museums and water just don't mix.

Seeing our community rally was truly heartening. Our neighbors and friends pitched in immediately, filling sandbags and protecting our museum.

But it got me thinking—what if we hadn't had enough volunteers? Other places in town were also sandbagging. What if our sandbags hadn't held? What if the floodwaters had breached our defenses and put the collections at risk?

If the rain had continued and the flooding worsened, we could have faced even longer closures. While we can work from home, our income from admissions, gift shop sales, and research fees supports our operations. Flooding could have extended our closure further if we needed to replace carpeting and furnishings.

It's my job to think about the worst-case scenario and try to be several steps ahead. So, while we renewed our flood insurance despite the drought conditions, the stark reality is that most of our artifacts are irreplaceable, and we can't put a dollar value on them.

Right now, we have more questions than answers about how best to prepare for future challenges. We'll share more about our flood experience later in the newsletter. For now, I invite you to think about how we can prepare for the future and better protect our treasures.

Jessica Becker



Executive Director



Jessica Becker

KNUJ AM
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"Your Friend in Southern Minnesota"

Tune In!

Hear Executive Director Jessica Becker on Community Affairs every fourth Tuesday at 9:15 a.m. on KNUJ Radio! Turn your dials to 860 AM, 97.3 FM, or listen online at knuj.net.

MEMORIALS

received by NCHS between 3/1/2024–6/21/2024.

In Memory of **Vera Gale Kreykas**
Given by Marcia Jones Richards

In Memory of **Judy Scholl**
Given by Steve & Kimberly Alinder
Janet Anthony
Howard Bode
Marcia Gustafson
Stuart D. & Mary Ann Hanson
Eileen Holz
Harriet Mason
Colleen Osborne
Kristi Rogers
Kristine Simon
Loren & Roxane Sundboom
Evie Swenson

In Memory of **Mary Carol Ritz Sterner**
Given by Colleen Osborne

In Memory of **Howard Swenson**
Given by Ken & Patsy Rossow

We remember

with honor the following friends and members whom we lost between 3/1/2024–6/21/2024.

- ◆ Sue Gray (life member)
- ◆ Marjorie Renneke (friend)
- ◆ Howard Swenson (friend)
- ◆ Robert Volk (life member)

DONATIONS

received by NCHS since the last *Crossing* of 3–2023.

MONETARY

- Katha & John Chamberlain
- Mel Craig
- Bruce Gray
- Stephen & Elizabeth Hogberg
- Leona Isenberg
- Andru Peters
- Elizabeth A. Peters
- Bob Sandeen
- David & Linda Witte

ARCHIVES DONATION

- Steven & Becky Briggs
- Loren Lindahl
- Margaret Marschel
- Bob Sandeen

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Kate Martens, President
NCHS Board of Directors

As we head into summer, the Board is focusing on the future of the Nicollet County Historical Society. The Cox House remains a main discussion point as we try to encourage visits and maintain the building. Self-guided tours are available, and we will be watching the community's response to the chance to experience this wonderful asset. I hear so often the statement, "I've never been in the House!" We're hoping to remedy this situation this summer! Check the website <https://www.nchsmn.org/visit/e-st-julien-cox-house/> for more information.

Budget is always top of mind for the Board. We are still working to fund the History Center's emergency roof and mechanical repairs. Since we used some reserves on the last repair, we're exploring other options this time. According to staff, attendance at the museum is down by almost half, so boosting income through membership, donations, and rentals is a focus going forward.

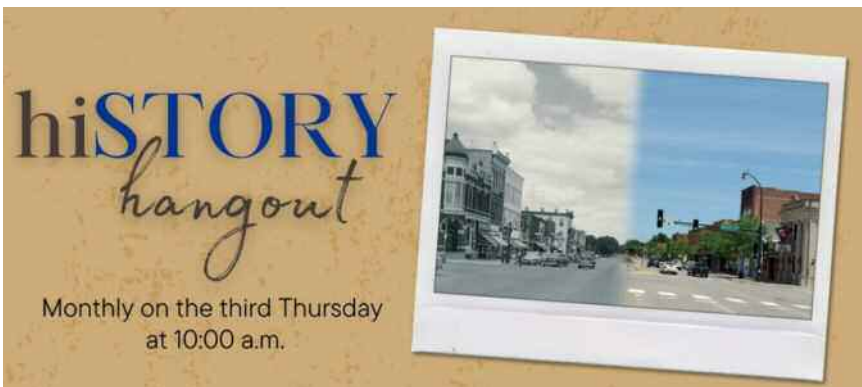
We were gratified by the number of members who attended the Annual Meeting and hope to see many of you over the rest of the year. Rachael Hanel's presentation about her book and Camilla Hall was enlightening. If you haven't seen the new exhibit about Camilla, please visit the History Center soon.

We are also already excited about our 100th anniversary in 2028. We know it's a few years out yet, but we are already planning. The Board will be having a work session in June to dig into our long-range vision for NCHS. How might our stakeholders change or stay the same? How about our partner industries? What foundation do we need in place to address the future? Please stay tuned as our plans develop; we will contact our members for input.

Thank you for your continued support of NCHS.

Kate Martens

NCHS President



SITE REPORTS



Cox House Corner

Summer at the Cox House

Summer has arrived, and the E. St. Julien Cox House is thrilled to invite visitors for self-guided tours all through the season. We had a fantastic opening day on June 8, with over two dozen visitors. They got to explore the house, interact with our staff and volunteers, and admire Marian Anderson's art on the first floor.

Self-Guided Tours:

- Dates:** July 6th & 20th, August 3rd, 17th & 31st
Time: 1 p.m.-4 p.m.
Admission: Free-will donations are always appreciated!

Marian Anderson: A Brush with Nature

Immerse yourself in the beauty of Minnesota with our current exhibit, "Marian Anderson: A Brush with Nature." This stunning collection showcases the artistic talents of Marian Anderson, highlighting the landscapes, rivers, trees, and wildlife that make our state so special.

A Big Thank You to Seed to Site!

We extend a heartfelt thank you to Seed to Site for their continued dedication to our beautiful gardens. Their hard work ensures a vibrant and flourishing green space for all to enjoy.

We can't wait to see you at the E. St. Julien Cox House this summer! For more information on tours, exhibits, and accessibility, please visit our website: <https://www.nchsmn.org/visit>

History Center Round-up

by **James Ihrke**

Operations Coordinator

A mild winter leads into a verdant spring, and we are as busy as ever at the Treaty Site History Center! We were once again fortunate to have nesting Kildeer guarding our door this year, and we even got to see them hatch! The heavy rains have caused the prairie to bloom as much as I've ever seen. It's been wonderful to see so many visitors walking the trails.

Our annual meeting was a rousing success, with our new exhibit, "More Than a Headline: A Closer Look at the Art and Life of Camilla Hall," making its debut. Our farming exhibit has also been extended, and an exciting new exhibit is on the horizon, so stay tuned!

Our busy guided tour and field trip season is just about wrapped up, with almost 200 visitors taking a guided tour with our docents this past month. Students from as far as Red Lake have come to learn about the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux and the surrounding prairie. Our docents, John Chamberlain, Cindy Freeman, and Kate Martens have done a remarkable job in sharing their knowledge with our visitors. If you have a group that is interested in a tour, reach out to us!



Our nesting Kildeer, Silvie and Truck

Keep an eye out for our events this summer, including hiSTORY hangout on the third Thursday of each month and Free Family Day on July 12.



James Ihrke
Operations Coordinator

Work continues in our collections room. Volunteers have helped build a workbench, extra shelving, and more to better secure our treasures. Our Collections Assistant, Anna, has been busy organizing and preserving our textiles.



Front desk volunteer, Gary Kollman, painting a landscape of our building

ARCHIVES DONATIONS

Artifact & Archival Donations as of the 7-2024 *Crossing*:

Barb Booren: American Legion St. Peter Post 37 and Veterans of Foreign Wars St. Peter Post 1120 garrison caps that belonged to Doug Pyan, a former mayor of St. Peter.

Becky Briggs: Materials relating to Donley Everett Johnson of Lafayette, Minn.

Gustavus Adolphus College Archives: Sign reading "Do not spit on the floor—to do so may spread disease. [Signed] L. J. Gault, Postmaster." Lorenzo James (Bink) Gault was postmaster in St. Peter from 1924 to 1927.

Rosemary Franta: Matsch-Bushard-Franta genealogy compiled by Cletus Franta; reproductions of documents relating to the Cletus and Rosemary Franta Sesquicentennial farm, 2008.

Marioan Giefer: Reproduction of a deed from Egidious and Marguerite Giefer transferring the land upon which the original Swan Lake Catholic Church was built, 1861.

Eileen Holz: Book reprint, *Tales of a Terrier*, by Anne Story Allen, illustrations by Adelaide Magner.

Roger Jemming: Piggy bank in the shape of a firefighter's hat inscribed "Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association 1982 / Mankato / No. Mankato" and a photo of Roger with the bank.

Wayne Johnson: Thimble promoting the Harkin Store in West Newton.

Gary Kollmann: Reproductions of oil paintings by Gary Kollmann of storefronts in Nicollet and of the Oscar Kollmann farm in Nicollet Township.

Fred Kreykes: Materials relating to Keith and Gale Kreykes and their participation in the Bicentennial Wagon Train to Pennsylvania, 1976.

Robert and Sally Lambert: Buffalo coat used by Robert E. Lambert and James Lambert at High Oaks Farm; cased six-barreled revolving percussion pistol ("Pepperbox") manufactured by Ethan Allen and patented in 1845, used by James Magner during the Civil War.

Saint Peter Chamber of Commerce: 2024 Winter Medallion.

Kristin Lindner: Materials relating to the Thorvild Peterson family.

Marge Anton Marschel: Dresser and Croesus glass berry set that belonged to the Joseph and Elizabeth Klingler family, St. George; Anton family photos and textiles; Cookbook, *What's Cooking in St. George, 1983*.

Nicollet County Office of Public Services: Reproductions of photos of past Nicollet County Recorders.

Olmanson family: Items primarily relating to the Olmanson family, including photographs, documents, business advertising, and a quilt made by Gunhild Overlie Olmanson.

Cheryl Peterson: Cigar box memorializing Gov. John A. Johnson, 1910.

Marlin Peterson: Digital aerial image of the Marlin and Florence Peterson farm in Lake Prairie Township, c.1959; Nakato Bar, promotional letter opener.

Dean Pettis and Lynnette Hoffman: Photo of Victor and Hilma Edblom, c.1925.

Sandra and Verl Pettis: Forty-nine-star flag that flew at Central School, given to the donors' son, Michael Pettis.

Evie Swenson: Reproduction of a photo of the donor's maternal great-grandparents, Franz Antonius Kienlen and Regina Drentell (Trantel) Kienlen.

Barbara Van Zee: Lambert-Magner family genealogical materials.

Jerry Weldy: *Hellendrung Family Ancestry of Elizabeth Agatha Hellendrung Murnan*, by Betsy and Tom Murnan, 2020.

Rick Wright: Tornado photo albums with images taken March 29, 1998, and a year later; VFW Post 1220 flag.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

by **Ruth Einstein**

Research Coordinator

"The chronicle of the wagon train is the story of infant America. Early in the eighteenth century, settlers began moving inland. An endless procession of covered wagons loaded with household goods and supplies headed westward." So begins the official souvenir program of the Bicentennial Wagon Train Pilgrimage to Pennsylvania. The program describes the journey of covered wagons and participants from all fifty states that traveled west to east along historic routes, converging at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, on the Bicentennial, July 4, 1976.



Ruth Einstein
Research Coordinator



Keith and Gale Kreykes at a campsite. (Credit: Ed Wetherill)

Keith Kreykes of Oshawa Township was selected to be the Wagon Master for the Upper Great Lakes Route and was later appointed National Wagon Master for the entire Wagon Train. Kreykes, along with his wife, Gale, accompanied the Wagon Train on horseback on the 1,650-mile trek.

The Kreykes's son, Fred Kreykes, recently donated his parents' collection of items relating to the

Bicentennial Wagon Train, likely comprising the most extensive compilation of materials on the subject in the country.

Documents concerning logistics, publicity materials, and even a Triple-A Trip Tik provide information about the planning and organization of the Wagon

Kreykes continued on page 8



Keith Kreykes and the Melon Queen of Milan, Ohio, in front of one of the replica Conestoga wagons. (Credit: Louis A. Weiss, Milan, Ohio.)

Lowertown, North Mankato continued from page 1

down to Mankato from St. Paul knew that when they came to Jefferson's Bend (so named from the stone Jefferson House standing on a bluff above the river's east side), it meant that just one last loop of the river, around lower town, would bring them to the docks in Mankato near the present site of the old Hubbard Mill. As it made this loop, steamboats passed right along the bluff only a few yards from current Lake Street in North Mankato. The oxbow lake along the street is the remnant of that old river loop.

Over the last century and a half, intermittent discussions have been about North Mankato joining with its sister city across the river. One of the more interesting suggestions in the early 1900s involved connecting the loop of the river along Lake Street to the Minnesota River at Cumming's Landing (Now Sibley Park) by digging a connection along the base of Lake Street. This would have brought the river directly in front of the then Nicollet County Commissioner Chairman Wendel Hodapp's house, dividing the rest of his property stretching from Lake Street to the river, from his house, an event he would probably have looked upon with disfavor. Nothing ever came of the proposal. It would have also put most of the current lower North Mankato in Blue Earth County and eliminated the need for any bridge at Main Street.

One of the major floods, common to the meandering Minnesota River, happened in 1908 and complicated the unification issue. The flood changed the river's course yet again, cutting off the loop north of the city and changing the river boundary between the two cities without human intervention. The dike constructed along Webster Avenue slowed the river current, causing it to back up to the north. This caused the main current to cut a new and straighter channel where it flows today. The remaining cut-off portion of the Minnesota River became an oxbow lake on the North Mankato side as the river's main channel had moved to the east. This resulted in the strange situation of part of Blue Earth County, formerly known as Lowertown, being located in what should have been, based on the new river boundary, in Nicollet County.

Mankato offered to transfer the title of Lowertown to North Mankato, but overtures were rejected. North Mankato evidently considered the marshy flood-prone ground to be worthless. For a number of years after that, North Mankato residents used the old river embankment past the Webster Avenue dyke at the end of Range Street as the place to dump their refuse.

The arrival of 4-lane highway 169, which followed the new river course, created a new dike out of its elevated roadbed. The once useless lower townsite suddenly had economic value. Commercial enterprises developed along a highway service road with tax revenue going to Mankato instead of North Mankato. Based on the pre-stream capture maps, only the old Best Western Hotel, the North Mankato City Garage, and several businesses along Webster were still on the Mankato side of the river. Traveling north on Lake Street past Webster Avenue, the houses on the left are in North Mankato, but the land on the right side of the road is in Mankato. The remnants of the old river bed are still visible as the oxbow at the north end of Lake Street.

With a new interchange with Highway 169 being planned and the re-development of the old Best Western site into commercial and residential use, the old Lowertown political exclave is suddenly primed for development by Mankato. Much of the new tax revenue will find its way into Mankato coffers. Despite its meandering history, the Minnesota River is not likely to change course in this part of the valley again soon. With increasing tax revenue generated in historic Lowertown, Mankato's old offer to transfer Lowertown to North Mankato from the turn of the century is off the table.



North Mankato aerial photo. Credit: <https://www.landsat.com/north-mankato-minnesota-aerial-photography-map.html>

TEXTILE COLLECTION ASSESSMENT UPDATE

by **Anna Simmons**

Collections Assistant

Working my way through collections at NCHS is proving to be both rewarding and educational. The wide array of textiles donated over the years is not only a joy to explore but also an opportunity to reflect on how these items represent the history of the county and the lives of the people who have lived here.

The textiles collection includes a vast array of objects, from workday clothes that have endured hard usage and careful mending to extend their functionality and usefulness to military uniforms of all eras from the Civil War to recent times and luxurious garments meant for special events that were kept lovingly as mementos of those occasions.



Vintage 1950s wedding ensemble with a satin and lace wedding dress, a satin hoop skirt with two hoops, a crinoline petticoat, a blue satin and tulle garter, and a cotton handkerchief with lace edging. The ensemble beautifully captures the intricate details and craftsmanship of this era.



Stylish olive green outfit featuring a beaded dress and (not shown) matching cropped jacket with covered buttons.

It's hard not to marvel at some of the beautiful, voluminous gowns from the turn of the century that required so many yards of silk and hours of labor to create. Crisp silk taffetas were extremely popular during this era, not only for their beautiful sheen but also for their drape and, perhaps most of all, for the enticing rustling sound made by the wearer moving about in them. Yet, as beautiful as these pieces are, the fragility of many of them is palpable. When viewing these gowns, one thing has become clear to me: gowns made of silk taffeta are, far and wide, the most vulnerable of all garments in the textiles collection. They have often become brittle and shatter, almost appearing to have been cut into shreds. I had to wonder why, counterintuitively, silk taffeta was more vulnerable than what appeared to be more delicate and sheer silks, which seemed to

Textile Collection continued on page 8

Textile Collection continued from page 7

withstand the test of time. Here is what I learned: During the 1870s, new techniques were developed, making silk taffetas more readily available and affordable. Silk, which had always been considered precious and reserved for the upper echelons of society, became increasingly affordable. The Industrial Revolution made this possible. Silk production became less arduous, and discoveries making the process more inexpensive came into widespread use. While this made silk affordable to a wider demographic, it came with serious issues.

Briefly, silk fibers were "degummed," removing about 25 percent of the original weight from the fibers to create a lustrous taffeta. The process of "weighting" that followed was intended to restore the weight lost during the degumming process. This was complex and expensive before the 1870s. Done initially with vegetable tannins, advancements in technology introduced metallic salts for this purpose. Unfortunately, while this new process gave the

silk a beautiful luster and its distinctive rustle, it also introduced fine metal shards into the fabric, which inevitably cut into the silk, causing it to "shatter."

This degradation did not take decades; some of the more heavily weighted silks showed signs of shattering in only a few years or even months! Gradually, regulations were introduced, which limited how heavily silks could be weighted, and by the 1920s, the issue was greatly reduced.

There is so much to explore and learn from our collections, and every day is a new adventure and an opportunity to delve into the boxes—and the past—and learn more!

Kreykes continued from page 5

Train. Newspaper clippings, photographs, and certificates of appreciation tell the story of activities at campsites, and of festivities and the warm welcome given by residents of towns along the route. Cards and correspondence, and the by-laws of the National Wagon Train Association, 1977, reflect the personal relationships forged on the trip and the formal establishment of an organization to commemorate the Wagon Train.

An undated newspaper clipping published as Keith and Gale were finally heading home reported that "Kreykes, his wife has been quoted as saying, aged five years during the time it took the wagonmaster to get the Great Lake's contingent of wagons from Minnesota to Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. The wagonmaster, 54, lost weight, suffered from lack of sleep and needed X-rays at a hospital after being knocked from his horse by a car." The leadership of Keith and Gale Kreykes is remembered by residents of St. Peter with pride.

Early European settlers in this area include the Magner and Lambert families, who immigrated from Ireland in the 1850s. The Magner family was recently in the news after a decision was made by the City Council to rename a road that traverses part of the farmland once owned by the family as Magner Road. A scion of these families, Bob Lambert, with his wife, Sally, has donated a buffalo coat worn by his grandfather, Robert E. Lambert, who was born on the family farm in 1862, and who handed the coat down to his sons, George and James.

The Lamberts have also made a noteworthy donation of a six-barreled Allen revolver, known as a Pepperbox revolver, used by James Magner during his service during the Civil War. Captain James Magner served with the 28th Massachusetts 4th Regiment Irish Brigade and died of wounds received during the second assault at Spotsylvania on May 18, 1864. His uniform, pistol, and sword were sent home. Marian Lambert donated his uniform to NCHS many years ago. Barb Lambert Van Zee is allowing us to reproduce materials from her vast genealogy of the Magner and Lambert families, which will provide context for these significant artifacts.

Many thanks to the members of Team Archives! Our stellar volunteers are devoted to making our archival collections more accessible to our researchers by digitizing newspaper articles, indexing genealogical collections and

Pepperbox revolver owned by James Magner



scrapbooks, cataloguing reference books, editing photograph descriptions (thanks, Bob!), and serving on the Collections Committee. We are grateful to Nita Aasen, Lynn Hanson, Eileen Holz, Jennifer Monke, Margo O'Brien, Brian Oviatt, Marlin Peterson, Bob Sandeen, Steve Sayre, and a volunteer returning after a hiatus, Victoria Steinhaus.

If you have photographs, documents, or artifacts relating to Nicollet County families, schools, churches, or organizations that you would like to be considered for acceptance into the Collection, or if you have a research request, I can be reached at 507-334-0591 or research@nchsmn.org.

MEMBERSHIP RECAP

Thank you to the following renewing and new members received by NCHS between 3/1/2024–6/21/2024.

Renewed Business Advocate Members:

Brighton Township,
Sarah Kelley

Renewed Supporter Members:

Bill & Deb Dixon
Scott Hermanson
Kate Martens
Dennis & JoAnn Schmidt

Renewed Patron Members:

Cindy Freeman
Marcia Gustafson
Stuart & Mary Ann Hanson
Leona Isenberg
Ellis Jones
Ryan Kupcho
Jill and Larry Potts
Dean & Jane Wahlund
Jerry Weldy

Renewed Family Members:

Duane & Brenda DeBlicek
Arden & Marilyn DeBoer
Bob & Judy Douglas
Ray & Liz Jacobson
Mary & Gordon Long
Dana Melius
Joe, Kay & Cordelia Metzen
Jim & Dee Dee Michels
Tuff & Ginny Miller
Debra Nelson
Bruce & Marci Norell
Byron & Jill Norell
Gerald & Peggy Wolfe
Rick Wright

Renewed Individual Members:

Paul Honken
Julie Johnson
Brandon Stolt

Renewed Senior Members:

John Berbrich
Howard Bode
Tom Brown
Nancy Bruch
Lois Currier
Barbara DeZuani
Gail Dummer
Daniel Groebner
Marlene Groves
Richard Holz &
Lorna Whitmore
Marjorie Johnson
Vickie Johnson
Jane Klein
Lou Ann Mayhew
Margaret Muchow
Elizabeth Peters
Karen Reyelts
Ron Roselli
Kenneth Saffert
Bob Schabert
Paul Schumann
Jennifer Spradling
Agnes Stensby
Barbara Van Zee
Nancy Zins

New Supporter Member:

Renee Lund

New Family Members:

Bryan Ebbenga
Melissa Gens
Joe & Angel Ihrke
Gary & Vicky Schmidt
Tacie Schwartz

New Individual Members:

Andy Hopp
Jared Mlaker

New Senior Members:

Clark Johnson
Nancy Nielson

We make every effort to provide an accurate listing of membership renewals and donors. If we have made an error please contact us at 507-934-2160 or info@nchsmn.org and we'll make corrections.

ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

Board Elections, Finances, and a Look at Camilla Hall

Thank you to everyone who attended the 2023 NCHS Annual Meeting on April 23rd at the History Center. The event addressed the Society's past year and looked ahead to our centennial celebration in 2028.

During the meeting, members elected Tacie Schwartz of North Mankato as our newest Board member and re-elected Jon Smithers to a second term. In addition, Kate Martens, Tami Skinner, Scott Hermanson, and Denny Schmidt were elected as officers for 2024.

Reports highlighted positive developments for NCHS in 2023, including nearly 3,000 visitors and well-received exhibits like the county-wide centennial and sesquicentennial farm exhibit.

Financials presented a mixed picture. While overall revenue dipped slightly, the investment portfolio showed positive growth. However, facility upkeep remains a pressing concern, especially regarding the aging Treaty Site History Center building and the Cox House. Due to ongoing maintenance costs, the Cox House transitioned to a self-guided tour model.

Looking ahead, the meeting sparked discussions about the NCHS's upcoming 100th anniversary in 2028. Attendees were introduced to the possibility of exciting membership opportunities in preparation for this milestone.

The annual meeting concluded with a special presentation by Rachael Hanel, author of "Not the Camilla We Knew: One Woman's Life from Small-town America to the Symbionese Liberation Army." Hanel's talk provided local insights into the Hall family and their connection to Nicollet County, enriching the event with a touch of local history.



Local author Rachael Hanel takes questions from the audience after her talk about Camilla Hall at the Annual Meeting on April 23.

HISTORY BITS

EXCITING NEW ARRIVALS AT THE GIFT SHOP!

Don't forget, NCHS Members enjoy a 10% discount



Get wrapped in comfort and history with our new unisex T-shirts!

- 100% Cotton
- Sizes M-3XL
- Available in Black and Royal Blue
- \$21.99



Start your mornings steeped in history with our *magnificent* new mugs! They're perfect for the history buff or coffee lover in your life.

- Ceramic
- 12 oz capacity
- Only \$9.99!

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO SINCE THE LAST NEWSLETTER

The History Center was featured in *Minnesota Monthly* magazine's ultimate travel guide story, "Tracing the Roots: A Journey through Native American History in Southwestern Minnesota."

Our sites were featured in *Southern Minn Scene Magazine's* May issue of One Tank Trips in Jane Turpin Moore's story "History provides entertainment with Nicollet County exhibits, Treaty Site History Center, Cox House."



We celebrated Preservation Month in May with a great event, "Strengthening Community Through Historic Preservation," on May 16th. Thanks to everyone who attended, especially Michael Koop from the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, for the insightful presentation. Everyone's contributions to the discussion on preserving historic places were genuinely outstanding.

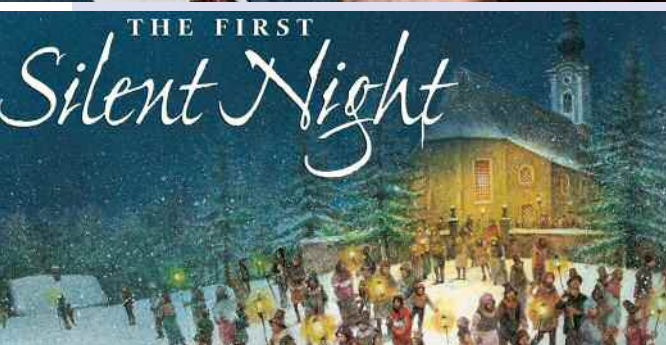
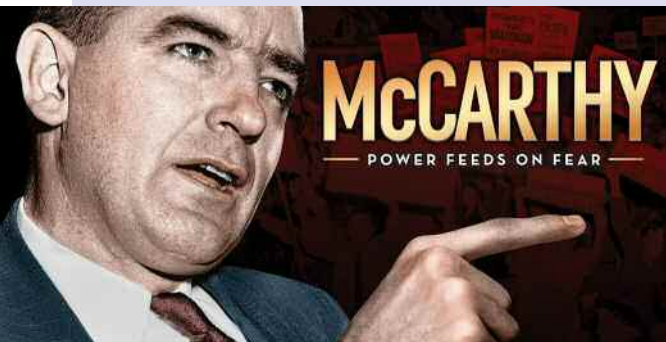
On May 10, we had our first snake visitor of the year! Don't worry; he was released safely from the building.

Water water everywhere... We have not escaped the constant rain unscathed. If you visit the History Center on an especially rainy day, you'll see buckets in the lobby in spots where the glass and metal skylights meet the stone building facade. However, we have bigger buckets in the back where a more significant issue looms. We are still working to fund the History Center's emergency roof and mechanical repairs. The History Center's heating and cooling rooftop unit (RTU) has a problem with a fitting that is allowing water and debris into the building. The base cost of the repair is \$29,950. We are in the process of applying for a grant to help cover this expense.

On April 11, we were delighted to host local author Cindy Wilson, who discussed the Nicollet County connections featured in her books, *The Beautiful Snow* and *We Suffered Much*. Both books are available for purchase in the History Center's Gift Shop.



DOCUMENTARY FILM SERIES LINEUP FOR 2024-25



The Nicollet County Historical Society and Saint Peter Community and Family Education present our fall lineup of documentary films. These documentaries inform, challenge ideas, and create conversation. Films are shown at the Treaty Site History Center and are free to the public.

Films are at 2 p.m. in the afternoon—free and open to the public but please note there is an admission fee to view the exhibits. Mark your calendars!

***The War on Disco* | September 5 @ 2 p.m. | History Center | 60 min.**

The War on Disco explores the culture war that erupted over the spectacular rise of disco music. Originating in underground Black and gay clubs, disco had unseated rock as America's most popular music by the late 1970s. But many diehard rock fans viewed disco, with its repetitive beat and culture that emphasized pleasure, as shallow and superficial. A story that's about much more than music, *The War on Disco* explores how the powerful anti-disco backlash revealed a cultural divide that to some seemed to be driven by racism and homophobia. The hostility came to a head on July 12, 1979, when a riot broke out at "Disco Demolition Night" during a baseball game in Chicago.

***McCarthy* | November 7 @ 2 p.m. | History Center | 120 min.**

McCarthy chronicles the rise and fall of Joseph McCarthy, the Wisconsin Senator who would test the limits of American decency and democracy. Free of restraint or oversight, he conducted a crusade against those he accused of being Communists and enemies of the state, a chilling campaign marked by groundless accusations, bullying intimidation, grandiose showmanship, and cruel victimization. Finally, after years in the headlines, he was brought down by his own excesses and overreach. He died a broken man, but his name lived on. For more than half a century, it has been linked to an all-too-familiar phenomenon, the modern-day witch hunt we call McCarthyism.

***The First Silent Night* | December 5 @ 2 p.m. | History Center | 60 min.**

Join renowned actor Simon Callow as he uncovers the moving origins of *Silent Night*. Simon journeys to the Austrian village of Oberndorf as well as the city of Salzburg, where the story of the world's favorite carol had its origins. *The First Silent Night* introduces us to two impoverished children—Joseph Mohr and Franz Gruber—who grew up in Austria's cobbled streets and wooded villages. The hard years that shaped them would also destine them to meet one day in a poor country church to unite Gruber's music and Mohr's text into this classic carol about the birth of a third poor boy on a quiet night in ancient Palestine.

HISTORY CENTER EVENT

SHADOWS AT THE CROSSING: Spirits of Old Traverse des Sioux

Treaty Site History Center & Traverse des Sioux Historic Site
Fri., Oct. 4 & Sat., Oct. 5, 6–8 p.m.

Experience history come to life on our **Shadows at the Crossing** walking tour! Accompany guides as they introduce you to the fascinating people who once called Traverse des Sioux home, with talented local actors reenacting their stories. This tour is great for families with children eight years and older, and tickets are available for \$10/adult, \$5/child, and \$20/family. Nicollet County and Minnesota Historical Society members receive a special 20% discount. Don't miss out—tours depart every hour from 6 to 8 p.m., but space is limited, so book in advance! Walk-ins are welcome if space allows.

Tickets go on sale on September 13. Visit nchsmn.org/events for tickets and more details.



Remo as Nicollet during 2023 Shadows at the Crossing

A STATEWIDE SCAVENGER HUNT THROUGH MINNESOTA HISTORY!



MINNESOTA
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

175

Join the MNHS 175

History Hunt

Complete challenges to earn great prizes in this historic scavenger hunt—part of our 175th anniversary celebration.

STEP 1

Download the Scavify app and create an account. Must be 13 or older to create an account but children of all ages are welcome to participate with adult supervision.



STEP 2

Search for “MNHS 175 History Hunt” or use the “Find Hunts Nearby” feature to join.

STEP 3

Scroll down to Tasks and start exploring!

The MNHS 175 History Hunt runs
June 24 through Labor Day.



Celebrate the Minnesota Historical Society's 175th anniversary with a scavenger hunt exploring Minnesota history across our state! We've put together a list of 175 tasks from Luverne to Grand Portage—one for each year MNHS has been around. You might be asked to take a photo with a giant fish statue, scan a QR code in a museum exhibit, or answer a trivia question. With every task you check off the list, you'll earn points and the chance to win prizes.

Fill out the form below to download the Scavify app and join the fun. Hit the road to visit MNHS historic sites and famous Minnesota landmarks, or stay home and discover history online or in your own backyard. Either way, you'll find new things to love about our state, learn more about our shared history, and have tons of fun along the way.

The **MNHS 175 History Hunt** is free to play and runs June 24th through Labor Day. See you out on the hunt this summer!

DESPERATE TIMES / THANK YOU

The rising waters of the Minnesota River have long posed a challenge for the Treaty Site History Center, reminding us of the constant vigilance needed to protect our heritage. Since the 1993 floods, when the waters surrounded the construction trailers, high-water closures have become a routine part of our lives. But this June's flood brought unprecedented threats.

On Monday, June 24th, we arrived at the museum to find the water had risen significantly overnight. It was well over our driveway, cutting off our lot from the highway. With record-high river crest predictions and growing concerns about the Rapidan Dam, the situation was developing rapidly. We knew immediate action was required.

The Board convened an Emergency Board meeting at noon to discuss our options and activate our emergency preparedness plan. Shortly after the meeting ended, the call went out for volunteers to help sandbag. Early that morning, anticipating that sandbagging might be necessary if conditions allowed, Bob Sandeen spoke with Pete Moulton at Saint Peter Public Works to arrange for sand delivery, and our County Commissioner, Marie Dranttel, coordinated with Sheriff Dave Lange to organize the delivery of sandbags, saving us valuable time. By 1:30 p.m., nearly 30 volunteers had gathered and begun sandbagging. Kate Martens staged volunteers in the Daniels Clinic parking lot while Jon Smithers used his Jeep to transport them through the water. Kwik Trip's generous donations of water and snacks kept everyone going throughout the sweltering afternoon. Together, they tirelessly filled and stacked sandbags to protect the museum.

By day's end, thanks to the collective effort of our neighbors and friends, the museum was protected against the rising waters. Fortunately, the water did not breach the building, and our collections remain safe. Some minor repairs, such as replacing mulch and gravel, are needed.

Thank you to everyone who answered our call, donated, or kept us in your thoughts. We are grateful to you.

Desperate Times continued on page 14



DESPERATE TIMES cont.

Desperate Times continued from page 13

We did our best to gather all the volunteer names, but if we missed anyone, we genuinely apologize. Please know that we are truly grateful for your help!

507 Outdoor Services

Anthony
Angie Anderson
Eric Annexstad
Matt Borony
Isabelle Brand
Jeff Brand
Bill Braunger
Kurt & Kathy Carson
City of Saint Peter
Marie Dranttel,
County Commissioner
Chandelle Fischer
Scott Hermanson
Jill Hildebrandt
Ryan Ihrke
Erika Kuhlers

Kwik Trip #1152

Sheriff Dave Lange
Kate Martens
Dana Melius
Sam Menendez and husband Juan
Nicollet County
Amber Palmquist
Kris Sack
Denny Schmidt
Jon Smithers
Sunrise Church
congregation members
Kara Vliem
Joy Wiley
Tyler Willaert
Rick Wright



ON-GOING EXHIBITS AT NCHS

Celebrating the Past, Cultivating the Future

AN EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTING THE LEGACY
OF AGRICULTURE IN NICOLLET COUNTY

through August 31, 2024

*More Than a Headline:
a closer look at the art and life of
Camilla Hall*

through August 24, 2024



AT THE COX HOUSE

through August 31, 2024

"Marian Anderson: A Brush with Nature" showcases her captivating artwork, featuring the beauty of Minnesota's landscapes and charming wildlife. Explore the historic E. St. Julien Cox House while experiencing the wonders of the natural world through Marian Anderson's lens.

Free admission (donations gratefully accepted). Self-guided tours are available every other Saturday from June 8 to August 31.

Dates

Saturday, July 6, 2024 | 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Saturday, July 20, 2024 | 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Saturday, August 3, 2024 | 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Saturday, August 17, 2024 | 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Saturday, August 31, 2024 | 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Admission: FREE

2024 CALENDAR OF EVENTS: All events are subject to public health recommendation

Event/Program information:

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

continuing on display

	<i>Celebrating the Past, Cultivating the Future</i> through August 31, 2024	History Center
	<i>More Than a Headline: A Closer Look at the Art and Life of Camilla Hall</i> through August 24	History Center
	<i>Marian Anderson: A Brush with Nature</i> through August 31, 2024	Cox House
July 6	Cox House Self-guided Tours, 1–4 p.m., see more info on page 4	Cox House
July 12	Family Day at the TSHC, 10 a.m.–4 p.m., FREE	History Center
July 18	HiSTORY hangout, 10–11 a.m., FREE	History Center
July 20	Cox House Self-guided Tours, 1–4 p.m., see more info on page 4, FREE	Cox House
Aug. 3	Cox House Self-guided Tours, 1–4 p.m., see more info on page 4, FREE	Cox House
Aug. 15	HiSTORY hangout, 10–11 a.m., FREE	History Center
Aug. 17	Cox House Self-guided Tours, 1–4 p.m., see more info on page 4, FREE	Cox House
Aug. 31	Cox House Self-guided Tours, 1–4 p.m., see more info on page 4, FREE	Cox House
Sept. 5	Documentary Film Series <i>The War on Disco</i> , 2 p.m., see details on page 11, FREE	History Center
Sept. 19	HiSTORY hangout, 10–11 a.m., FREE	History Center
Oct. 4 & 5	<i>Shadows at the Crossing</i> , 6–8 p.m., Advance sale tickets Sept. 15: \$10/adult, \$5/child, and \$20/family	Traverse des Sioux
Oct. 17	HiSTORY hangout, 10–11 a.m., FREE	History Center
Nov. 7	Documentary Film Series <i>McCarthy</i> , 2 p.m., see details on page 11, FREE	History Center
Nov. 21	HiSTORY hangout, 10–11 a.m., FREE	History Center
Nov. 21	GIVE TO THE MAX DAY	Online
Dec. 5	Documentary Film Series <i>The First Silent Night</i> , 2 p.m., see details on page 11, FREE	History Center

Please watch the NCHS website and Facebook for further events and details for additional programming.



It's Summer!

time to enjoy some cool history

at the Cox House and History Center.

NICOLLET COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1851 N. Minnesota Ave.
St. Peter, MN 56082



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HISTORY DISCOVERY PRESERVATION KNOWLEDGE

E. St. Julien Cox House • Traverse des Sioux • Treaty Site History Center

Your NCHS membership dollars at work...



E. St. Julien Cox House



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 2024 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/support/membership for details.