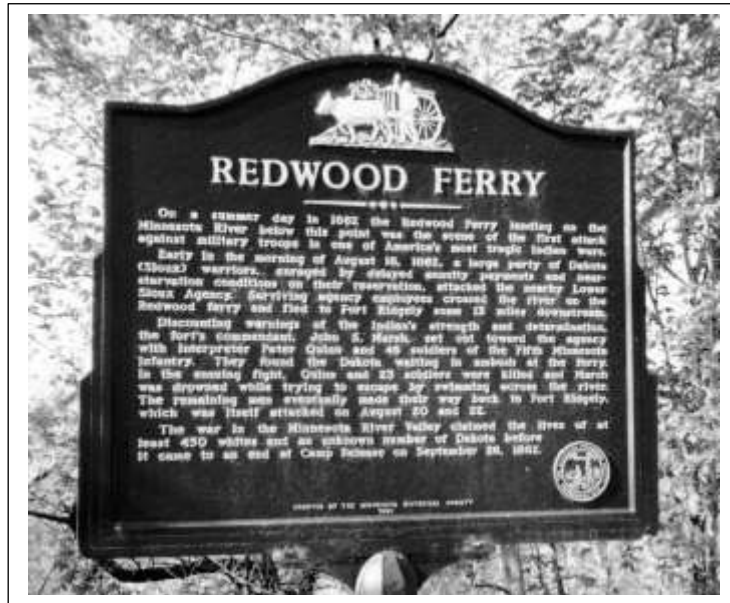


Historic Sites in Renville County

Renville County led the way in memorializing events connected with the 1862 Sioux Uprising. Much of this effort was steered by the group, Minnesota Valley Historical Society founded in 1895. The Old Settlers Society, the Minnesota Historical Society and the Renville County Historical Society also dedicated memorial monuments. The Renville County Pioneers Association also was instrumental in having monuments erected to mark the graves of several slain in the Indian outbreak, those of Mrs. Stephen Henderson and her daughters, Eugene White, Radnor Earle and also the Schwandt monument.

The Redwood Ferry historic plaque, erected by the Minnesota Historical Society, is on Highway 19 east of Morton.



Inscription: "On a summer day in 1862 the Redwood Ferry landing on the Minnesota River below this point was the scene of the first attack against military troops in one of America's most tragic Indian wars. Early in the morning of August 18, 1862, a large part of Dakota (Sioux) warriors, enraged by delayed annuity payments and near-starvation conditions on their reservation, attacked the nearby Lower Sioux Agency. Surviving agency employees crossed the river on the Redwood ferry and fled to Fort Ridgely some 13 miles downstream.

Discounting warnings of the Indian's strength and determination, the fort's commandant, John S. Marsh, set out toward the agency with interpreter Peter Quinn and 46 soldiers of the Fifth Minnesota Infantry. They found the Dakota waiting in ambush at the ferry. In the ensuing fight, Quinn and 23 soldiers were killed and Marsh was drowned while trying to escape by swimming across the river. The remaining men eventually made their way back to Fort Ridgely which was itself attacked on August 20 and 22. The war in the Minnesota River Valley claimed the lives of at least 450 whites and an unknown number of Dakota before it came to an end at Camp Release on September 26, 1862."

Historic Sites in Renville County

The Redwood Ferryman Monument and the Battle of Redwood Ferry Monument

The monument shown on the left, the Redwood Ferryman monument, was erected in memory of the bravery of the ferry operator at this site. He saved many whites by giving warning as the ambush began. The inscription reads: "In memory of CHARLIE MARTEL whose bravery as ferryman at this point saved many settlers in the massacre of 1862." The monument on the right is the Battle of Redwood Ferry Monument dedicated to the soldiers killed at the Redwood Ferry. The inscription reads: "At and near this spot CAPT. MARSH and 24 men were ambushed and killed by Sioux Indians Aug. 18, 1862 also Peter Quinn U. S. Interpreter." See the inset on P. 120 for details on the commissioning of the Martell marker. These monuments are located on private property on the north side of the Minnesota River across from the Lower Sioux Agency and inaccessible to the public.



From "The Elusive Hero of Redwood Ferry" by Joseph Connors in "Minnesota History Magazine", 34:237" Another controversy centering about the name and identity of Peter Martell developed in 1919, when the Minnesota legislature passed a law providing for the erection of monuments to victims of the Sioux Outbreak. The law specified that, because he "saved the lives of many citizens" during the massacre, a marker inscribed to Peter Martell should be erected at the ferry site. The plan was opposed by Satterlee and Julius Schmah, then secretary of state. The latter believed that the marker should bear the name of Hubert Millier." Charlie or Peter Martell or Hubert Millier?

Battle of Birch Coulee Marker and the Birch Coulee Battlefield

The Battle of Birch Coulee historic marker is located north of Morton on Highway 71 and this is the inscription: "On the prairie a half mile east of this point, a party of about 160 troops was attacked by Sioux at dawn Sept. 2, 1862. During the battle, the forces were surrounded for thirty hours, losing over a third of its number in killed or wounded."



Historic Sites in Renville County

The battleground itself is located three miles north of Morton, at the junction of Renville County Hwys. 2 and 18, one mile east of U.S. Highway 71. The site features a self-guided tour of the battleground focusing on the perspectives of Joseph Anderson, a captain in the U.S. Army, and Wamditanka (Big Eagle), a Mdewakanton soldier. The Battle of Birch Coulee was one of the hardest fought battles of the Dakota War as the U.S. soldiers were kept under siege for thirty-six hours before help arrived from Fort Ridgely.

Left marker found on west side of battlefield. Marker on right is found on the north side of the Birch Coulee Park and Battlefield. There is a third marker indicating Gray Bird's position during the battle but it was not located.



Left marker Inscription: "600 feet south in the ravine the Whites were attacked by the Sioux Indians under Mah-Ka-To Sept. 2, 1862." Right marker inscription, "West of crest of hill and 755 feet east was one of the principal points of attack by the Sioux Indians under Big Eagle Sept. 23, 1862."



The text on the Gray Bird Monument:

"In the then tall grass in the swale about 300 feet north a body of Sioux Indians under Gray Bird attacked the whites. Behind the hill 400 feet to the east was the last point of attack by the Indians whence they were driven by the relief forces into the river bottom to the south. September 3, 1862."

Monument at Camp Hope

There is an additional monument erected by the Minnesota Valley Historical Society, the Monument at Camp Pope located in Redwood County on the south side of the Minnesota River. The inscription reads: "Between this point and the river on the north and east was located Camp Pope from which Gen. Sibley marched against the hostile Sioux Indians – June 16, 1863".

Historic Sites in Renville County

Middle Creek Brave Settler Monument

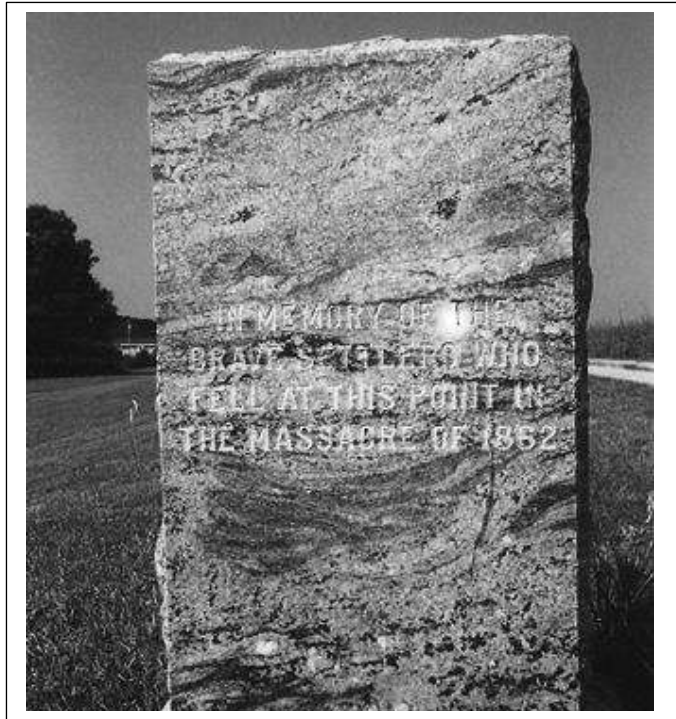


Photo courtesy of Don Heinrich Tolzmann

The statute that allowed the building of this:

<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/?view=session&year=1919&type=0>

1919 Minnesota Legislature, Chapter 464, Sec 49, Page 579:Sec. 49. For amount to be used by a commissioner to be appointed by the secretary of state, and whose expenses shall not exceed the sum of \$25.00, for the erection of a monument in Flora township, Renville county, to the memory of the settlers who were massacred by the Sioux Indians and for the erection of a monument to the memory of Peter Martelle, who, during said massacre, saved the lives of many citizens, the sites for said monuments to be furnished free to the state, and provided that the commissioner, who shall be a resident of Renville county, shall personally contract or and supervise the work of the erection of the monuments and shall furnish to the secretary of state an itemized statement of all necessary expenses incurred in the work, the same to be paid upon the approval of the secretary of state. \$300.00

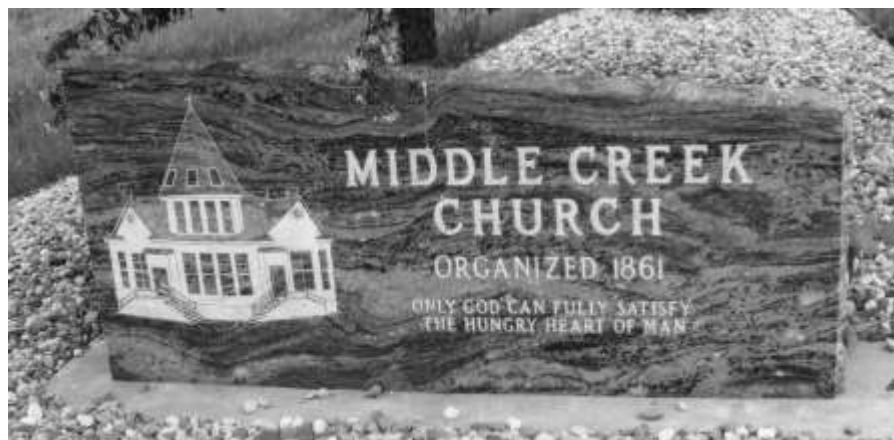
The monument is located on County Road 21, .4 mile south of the Middle Creek United Methodist Church, in section 35 of Flora Township, Renville County, near where many were killed during the U.S. – Dakota War of 1862. The monument's inscription reads: "IN MEMORY OF THE BRAVE SETTLERS WHO FELL AT THIS POINT IN THE MASSACRE OF 1862."

Thirty-nine settlers were killed at Middle Creek on Monday, August 18. They include Gottlieb and Justina Boelter, John Boelter and Amelia, Mrs. Michael, Justine, Pauline, Wilhelmina Boelter and Mrs. Michael's two unborn children, Gottlieb and Wilhelmina Busse, and Augusta, Bertha and Caroline Busse, John and August Frass, Johann and Catherine Kochendorfer, and Sarah, John Lettou and son, Gottlieb Mannweiler, Eusebius Reyff II, Margreth, Annie, and Benjamin Reyff, John and Justine Roessler, Gustav and Albert, Frederick Roessler, William and Louise Schmidt, Minnie and two other Schmidt children, Johann and Christina Schwandt, Frederick and Christian, Rev. Christian Louis Seder, and John and Carolina Walz.

Historic Sites in Renville County

Middle Creek United Methodist Church

The church is located on County Road 21, south of the intersection of #50 in Flora Township. For church history, see the Flora Township Chapter.



Historic Sites in Renville County

The Schwandt Monument

The Schwandt Monument was erected in 1915, memorializing the six Schwandt family members and one friend who died in the 1862 conflict. Two children survived. Their injured young son, August, crawled away. Their daughter, Mary Schwandt, who was taken captive, was not home at the time the Dakota attacked. She was working at the Joseph Reynolds School on the west side of the Redwood River, south of the Minnesota River. Mary published her remembrances in 1864. The monument is located on Renville County Road 15, south of Sacred Heart. Here is the inscription: "Erected by the State of Minnesota 1915 In Memory of Martyrs for Civilization, Johann Schwandt, Christina Schwandt and Their Children Fredrik and Christian, John Walz, Karolina Schwandt Walz & John Frass. Murdered by Sioux Indians August 18, 1862."



Photo submitted by Don Heinrich Tolzmann

The article on the next two pages appeared in 'Wild West' in April, 2008 and was written by Don Heinrich Tolzmann and used with his permission.

Dr. Warren Upham, archaeologist of the Minnesota State Historical Society, said: "In the dedication of this monument telling of the awful tragedy of race hatred and massacre which befell a German family of pioneers here fifty-three years ago, let us not forget the bright flower of a life-long friendship which blossomed above their graves, gladdening the life of a rescued survivor of that family and the life of the kind Dakota woman, Snahnah, her rescuer. The Historical Society of this state, in its published volumes, preserves to all coming time the narrations of Mary Emilia Schwandt Schmidt and Snahnah, children of parents and of races who met in mortal conflict, the one a captive German girl and the other a bereaved Dakota mother. They loved each other with affection that may be likened to that of David and Jonathan three thousand years ago. Can we learn something from this -- does it even shed forth a ray of hope that when the present direful world war shall be ended with treaties of peace, it may be the beginning of trust and helpfulness, of mutual respect and friendship, between the now warring nations?"

'Till the war drum throbs no longer,
and the battle flags are furled
In the parliament of men
And the federation of the world.'

PIONEERS AND SETTLERS

Mary Schwandt's Ordeal During the Sioux Uprising

Her family fell, and she was captured By Don Heinrich Tolzmann

Of the many personal stories from the 1862 Sioux Uprising in Minnesota, none is more emblematic of the experience of the recently arrived settlers than that of Mary Schwandt. Kidnapped at age 14, she lived to tell the tale of horror she and her German immigrant family had endured. They had been in Minnesota for only a few months when the area Sioux began spilling blood, but the uprising marked her and the region forever.

The conflict, also known as the Minnesota Uprising, lasted from August 17 to September 23. It resulted in the deaths of at least 700 settlers (probably many more than that; human remains continued to be found in plowed fields up to World War I), and led to what historian Gregory Michno has called "the largest military-Indian campaign in the West" (see his list of Western Indian fights in the June 2007 *Wild West*). Some 40,000 people fled their homes as 23 western counties of Minnesota were depopulated, and many of the homesteaders never returned.

The Santee Sioux, comprising the Mdewakanton, Wahpeton, Wahpekute and Sisseton tribes, had reason for discontent in 1862 after dealing with a harsh winter and corrupt traders and merchants. Trader

Andrew Myrick made the infamous remark that the Sioux "Eat grass or their own dung." This was like lighting a match in a tinderbox. On August 17, several young Sioux warriors killed five settlers at Acton, Minn., and the next day, a force led by Little Crow attacked the Redwood Agency, killing Myrick (and stuffing his

"The courageous settlers were soon to pay for their homes, not by the sweat of their brow, but from their blood," Alexander Berghold of New Ulm, Minn., wrote in his 1891 book (new edition in 2006) *The Indians' Revenge*. "Their houses were devoured by flames, their crops ruined by the hand of the destroyer;



Mary Schwandt, seen here about 1900, was 14 in the summer of 1862 when she found herself in an "utterly wretched" situation.

mouth with grass) and at least 19 other men, and taking a dozen women captives. The bloodbath continued through the Minnesota River Valley, with the Sioux mostly taking their wrath out on settlers who knew nothing about the swindling going on at the agencies.

and, instead of the cheerful harvest-song, came the war cry of fighting men, the heart-rending sound of the orphan's voice, and the doleful pleading of the dying mother."

The Schwandt family, originally from near Berlin, Germany, had come to Wisconsin

in 1858 and had settled in the spring of 1862 on a Minnesota farm in Flora Township of Renville County, on beautiful rolling hills just north of the Minnesota River. During the uprising, 39 people were killed in sections 33-35 of that township. Two monuments now border the old Schwandt farm. On the east side, a small monument reads:

IN MEMORY OF THE
BRAVE SETTLERS WHO
FELL AT THIS POINT IN
THE MASSACRE OF 1862.

To the south of the farm, another monument tells what happened to members of Mary Schwandt's family:

ERECTED BY
THE STATE OF MINNESOTA
1915 IN MEMORY OF
MARTYRS FOR
CIVILIZATION
JOHANN SCHWANDT
CHRISTINA SCHWANDT
& THEIR CHILDREN
FREDERICK & CHRISTIAN
JOHN WALZ,
KAROLINA SCHWANDT
WALZ &
JOHN FRASS
MURDERED BY SIOUX
INDIANS, AUG. 18, 1862.

Berghold recounted what happened when neighbors came to the Schwandt farm to see if anyone was alive:

As they approached the place they saw every indication that the house had been robbed. Schwandt's son-in-law (John Walz) was lying in the doorsteps with three bullets in his body. His wife (Schwandt's daughter), who had been with child, was found dead, her

womb cut open and the unborn child nailed to a tree. Her brother (August), a thirteen year-old lad, whom the Indians thought they had killed, saw how the child was taken alive from the womb of his sister, and nailed to the tree, where it lived for a little while. This terrible deed was done in the forenoon of August the 18th. The mother was found in the field, beheaded. Beside her lay the body of their hired man, Frass. Towards the evening the boy regained a little strength and fled into the next settlement, a distance of three miles.

The mother's head was never found. August, the surviving brother, managed to crawl half-dead from his home. Thereafter, he always wore a hat due to the scar from a tomahawk blow to the forehead. His 14-year-old sister Mary had been at the home of neighbors at the time of the attack on the Schwandt farm. Upon hearing news of the uprising, she had fled with others, but was soon captured.

The Sioux brought Mary to the camp of Wacouta, chief of the Wahpekutes, and she later described her experiences:

After while a number (of the tribe) came, and after annoying me with their loathsome intentions for a long time, one of them laid his hands forcibly upon me, when I screamed, and one of the fiends struck me on my mouth with his hand, causing the blood to flow very freely. They then took me out by force, to an unoccupied teepee, near the house, and perpetrated the most horrible and nameless outrages against my person. These out-

rages were repeated, at different times during my captivity.

The rape of Mary Schwandt was not an unusual event during the uprising in Minnesota. Not all females survived their ordeals, but Mary did. She explained:

Soon there came a time when I did not weep. I could not. The dreadful scenes I had witnessed, the suffering that I had undergone, the almost certainty that my family had all been killed, and that I was alone in the world, and the belief that I was destined to witness other things as horrible as those I had seen, and that my career of suffering and misery had only begun, all came to my comprehension, and when I realized my utterly wretched, helpless, and hopeless situation, for I did not think I would ever be released, I became as one paralyzed and could hardly speak...and went about like a sleepwalker.

Fortunately, Mary was befriended by Snana, the wife of Good Thunder (Good Thunder, Minn., was named in his honor). Snana took her in as a daughter and protected her for the rest of her time in captivity. Mary said that many times when her captors "were threatening to kill all the prisoners," Snana and Snana's mother would hide her. "[They would pile] blankets and buffalo robes upon me until I would be nearly smothered, and then they would tell everybody that I had left them," Mary recalled.

Colonel Henry H. Sibley defeated a Sioux force on September 23, 1862, at the Battle of Wood Lake, ending the up-

rising. Little Crow and his warriors left Mary Schwandt and the other white captives behind and fled northwest, and soon a group of peace-minded Santee Sioux turned the captives over to Sibley at Camp Release. Many other Sioux surrendered over the next few weeks. Mary was first sent to St. Peter, Minn., and from there to Wisconsin, where she had relatives.

On December 26, 1862, 38 Sioux participants of the Minnesota Uprising were hanged at Mankato based on the decision of President Abraham

less until the 1890 tragedy at Wounded Knee, S.D.

Mary Schwandt went back to her family farm in 1915, when the state historical monument was dedicated. According to a local newspaper article, several other survivors of the uprising were also in attendance. Mary, the paper said, "was so overcome with grief and gratitude toward the people who had so honored her parents that she was unable to speak." Later on during the ceremonies, however, she "consented to appear for just a minute to personally thank those present for their attendance and the beautiful monument presented." These and other addresses "left few dry eyes" and "deeply impressed all with the debt which they owe the pioneers."

The causes and aftermath of the Sioux Uprising have been fairly well documented, but the plight of the Minnesota settlers has often been overlooked. Fortunately, Mary was able to record her story, which became an integral part of my own family's history after my great-grandparents bought the Schwandt farm in 1870 and later received a visit from Mary. My grandfather recalled that she returned on that one occasion to locate gold coins her father had buried beneath the stepping stone at the entrance to her former home. She found them, but did not return again until the historical monument was dedicated in August 1915. Mary died on July 26, 1939. ww

Don Heinrich Tolzmann wrote the 2002 book German Pioneer Accounts of the Great Sioux Uprising of 1862.



The Schwandt Monument was dedicated on August 18, 1915, to the south of the old farm.

Lincoln, who had personally reviewed the cases. In June 1863, the remaining Sioux were sent to Dakota Territory. Trouble ensued, and Sibley led expeditions there during the 1863-64 Dakota (Sioux) campaigns. Conflicts with the Sioux would continue more or

Historic Sites in Renville County

The Henderson, Wedge and White Monument and the Radnor Earle Monument



The Henderson monument honors Mrs. S.R. (Clarissa) Henderson, and her two daughters (one named Lydia), and Jehiel Wedge, Eugene White and F. Thies. It was erected in 1907 by Renville County Pioneers in memory of five victims who were killed in the Dakota War of 1862 and F. Thies who died years later. It was originally located 1 1/2 miles southwest of its current site, on the Henry Homeier farm in Beaver Falls Township where they were killed and buried. It was moved to its present location in 1981 by the Renville County Historical Society to the Morton Pioneer Monuments Roadside Parking Area. The marker is located north of the midpoint of the curved wayside rest area on the western side of Hwy. 71 about 1.4 miles north of County Road 2. The site is located about four miles north of the town of Morton.

Nearby the Earle monument honors Radnor Earle, the 15-year-old son of Jonathan and Amanda, who had a gun but no ammunition, so he loaded it with pebbles. At one point in the flight, Radnor stopped to fire on the Dakota, thus enabling his father to escape. Radnor was killed after shooting at the Dakota. His mother and sisters were taken captive and his father and brothers managed to escape. After erecting a monument to their fallen son, the family moved to LeMars, Iowa. Radnor's monument was later moved next to his father's grave in LeMars, but his remains were left where he was buried. A monument was then erected at this wayside stop north of Morton, 1/2 mile from where he is buried. An adjoining marker indicates "This monument was originally erected 1 1/4 miles S.W. of this site. It was erected here in 1981. Renville County Historical Society."

Historic Sites in Renville County

The Loyal Indian Monument

In 1899, the Minnesota Valley Historical Society erected an approximately 50-foot high granite monument strictly to honor those faithful Indians who were loyal to the whites during the uprising. There were three criteria used in selecting names: 1. The subjects were to be full-blooded Indians.

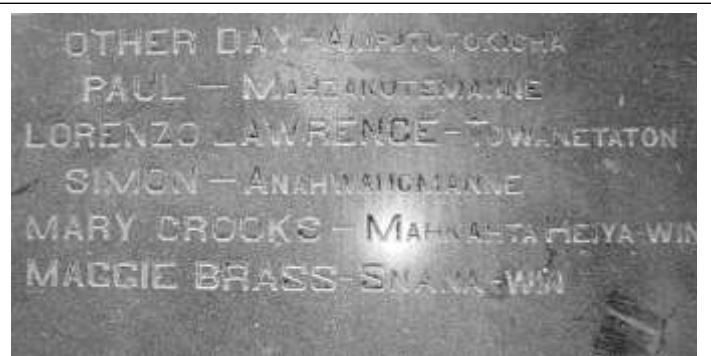
2. There were to have been truly loyal to the whites throughout the entire period of the outbreak, from its inception, on the 18th of August, 1862, until the close of that year. 3. They were to have actually, by personal effort and in a practical manner, saved the life of at least one white person.

Snana's name was added after she died.

There were only six Dakota who qualified but there were many others, including mixed-bloods, who helped out with escape plans, warning the settlers and doing special acts of kindness showed to some prisoners at Camp Release. This monument is located on the east side of Morton, high on the bluff that overlooks the Minnesota River Valley.



Inscription: Erected A.D. 1899 by the Minnesota Valley Historical Society to commemorate the brave, faithful and humane conduct of the loyal Indians who saved the lives of the white people and were true to their obligations throughout the Sioux War in Minnesota in 1862 and especially to honor the services of those named.

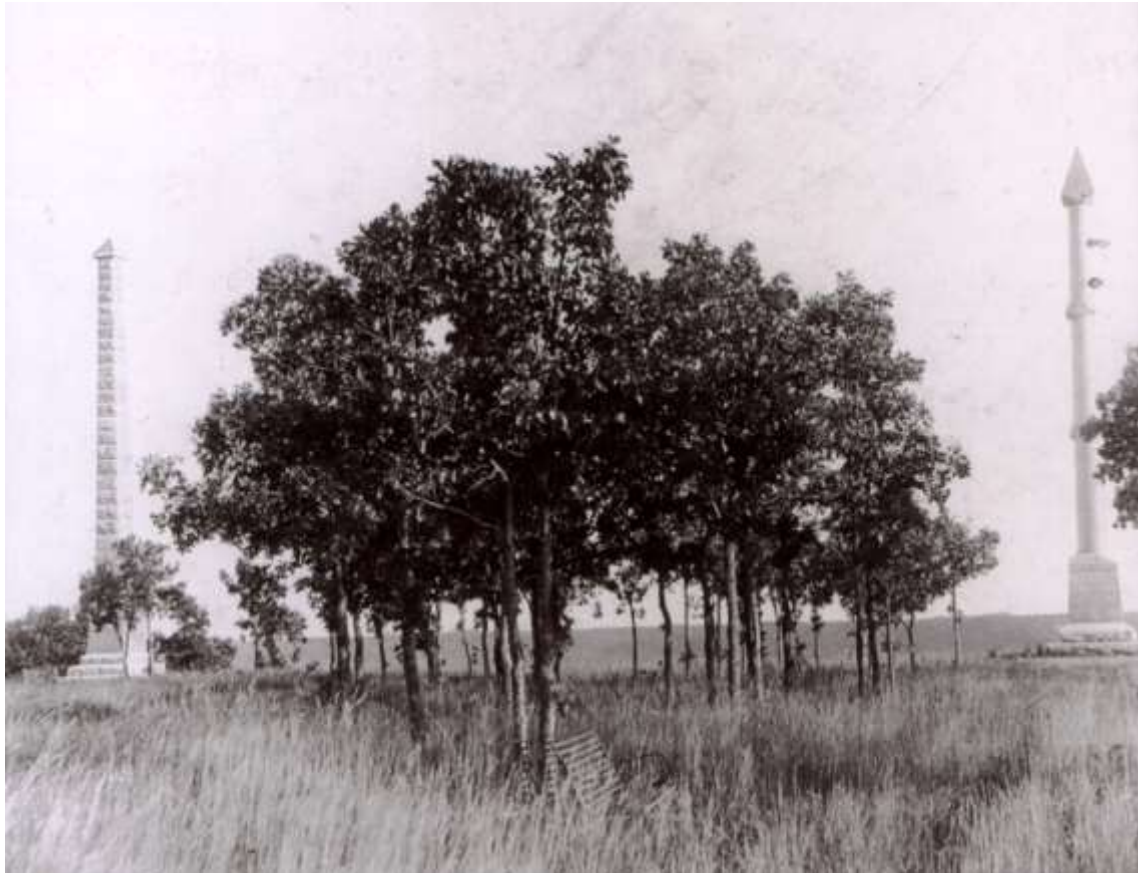


Other Day - Am-pa-tu To-ki-cha (known as John Other Day)
Paul - Mah-za-koo-te-manne (known as Iron that Shoots Walking)
Lorenzo Lawrence - To-wan-e-ta-ton (known as Face of the Village)
Simon - A-nah-wang-manne (Known as Walks Alongside)
Mary Crooks - Mah-kah-ta He-i-ya-win (Traveling on the Ground)

The words 'Patriotism, Courage, Fidelity, and Humanity' are on the four sides of the monument.

Historic Sites in Renville County

This photo shows the Loyal Indian and the Battle of Birch Coulee Monuments located in Morton, MN, ca. 1902 from the Renville County Historical Society collections, donation by Gladys Gooderum.



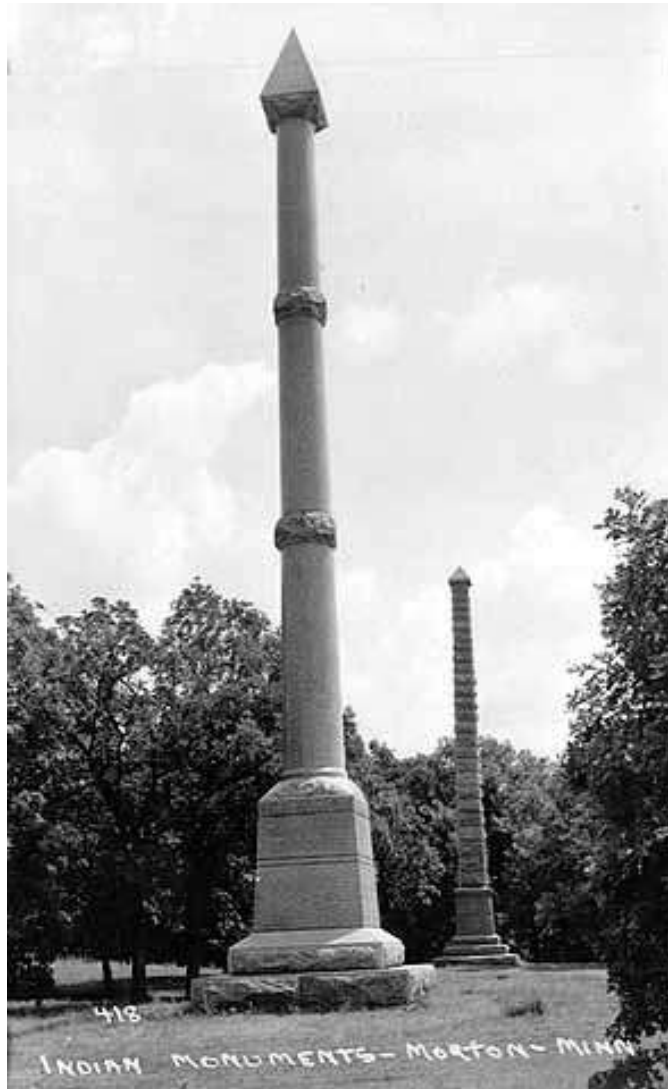
Battle of Birch Coulee Monument

This monument was erected by the State of Minnesota in 1894 and is located on the east side of Morton, high on the bluff which overlooks the Minnesota River Valley. The monument is a 52-foot granite shaft that honors the memory of those soldiers who were wounded or died in the Battle of Birch Coulee. The inscriptions were difficult to photograph.



Historic Sites in Renville County

The battle took place September 2 and 3, 1862, and the fighting continued both days, but was much more intense at the beginning. Joseph R. Brown's burying party were camped at the battlefield, located about 17 miles from Fort Ridgely. The early morning assault led by Mah-Ka-to left 23 who died, 13 at the battle site, and about 50 wounded, while the Dakota suffered but two casualties. The next afternoon, or 36 hours after the siege began, help arrived. The detachment was relieved by Col. Sibley's soldiers from Fort Ridgely.

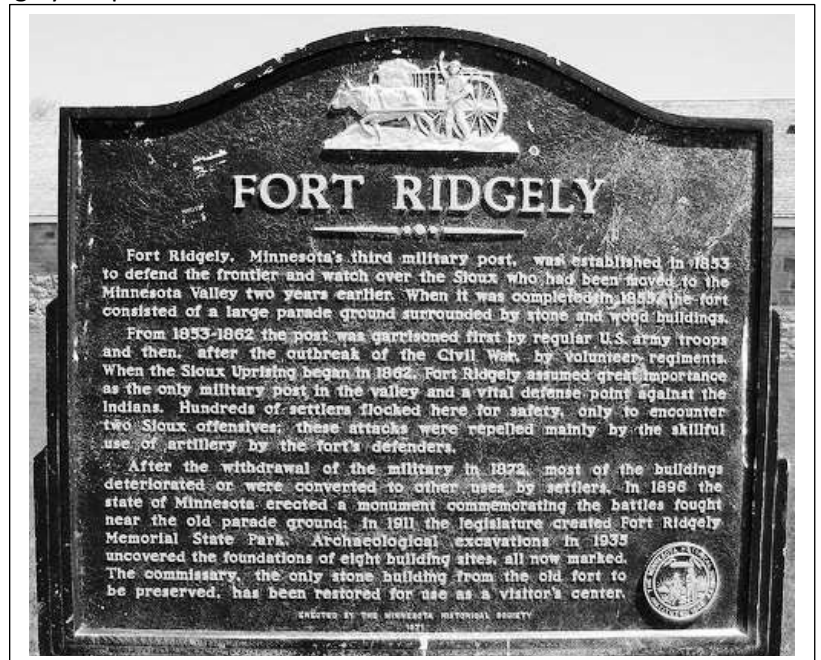


**Another perspective of both monuments from a postcard from the
Renville County Historical Society Collections.
Front, Battle of Birch Coulee Monument, back, Loyal Indian Monument.**

Historic Sites in Renville County

Fort Ridgely

Most of Fort Ridgely was located in Nicollet County, but part of the military reservation was located in Renville County. More on the fort is found in the Fort Ridgely chapter.



The inscription reads: "Fort Ridgely, Minnesota's third military post, was established in 1853 to defend the frontier and watch over the Sioux who had been moved to the Minnesota Valley two years earlier. When it was completed in 1855, the fort consisted of a large parade ground surrounded by stone and wood buildings. From 1853-1862 the post was garrisoned first by regular U.S. army troops and then, after the outbreak of the Civil War, by volunteer regiments. When the Sioux Uprising began in 1862, Fort Ridgely assumed great importance as the only military post in the valley and a vital defense point against the Indians. Hundreds of settlers flocked here for safety only to encounter two Sioux offensives; these attacks were repelled mainly by the skillful use of artillery by the fort's defenders. After the withdrawal of the military in 1872, most of the buildings deteriorated or were converted to others uses by settlers. In 1896 the state of Minnesota erected a monument commemorating the battles fought near the old parade ground. In 1911 the legislature created Fort Ridgely Memorial State Park. Archaeological excavations in 1933 uncovered the foundations of eight building sites, all now marked. The commissary, the only stone building from the old fort to be preserved, has been restored for use as a visitor's center. Created by the Minnesota Historical Society 1971."

Historic Sites in Renville County

Photos by Dan Traun | dantraun.com



Above, left, the Battle of Birch Coulee Monument and right, the Loyal Indian Monument.

The three panels that follow were done in collaboration with Family and Friends of Dakota Uprising Victims, the Renville County Historical Society, and the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byways group. They were commissioned and funded by descendants of Renville County Settlers. Source: Mary P. McConnell (2013).

Bravery and Betrayal

Settlers in the Area of Beaver Falls Township

In 1862, Beaver Falls was the most populated township in Renville County. The town of Beaver Falls had been elected the first County seat just before the outbreak of the U.S. Dakota War.

After an assault by some of the Dakota Indians on Lower Sioux Agency in the early morning hours of August 18, 1862, the warriors crossed the river to the north and spread out across the prairie attacking homesteads. Many were killed, some women and children were captured and homesteads were plundered of valuables and livestock. In the area of Beaver Creek and Birch Cooles Townships, 70 were killed, 24 captured and around 124 were able to escape to Fort Ridgely over 15 miles to the east.

Settlers in Renville County lived closer to the Dakota than any other settlers in Minnesota. The Dakota lived in villages on the south side of the Minnesota River directly across the river from settlers in Renville County. Given their closeness, many of the settlers and Dakota knew one another. Some settlers learned the Dakota language; the Dakota and settlers shared food and supplies with each other. This closeness added to the sense of surprise and disbelief by many settlers when they came to learn that the Dakota were attacking the settlements.

The causes of the War were complex. They included the scarcity of food and the dramatic change in the way of life for the Dakota that came with settlement of Minnesota. Plus, the payments owed to the Dakota as part of treaties with the United States government were delayed. Only a minority of the Dakota joined in the War and many of those were forced to do so under threats to their own lives. There are many stories of Dakota who risked their own lives to save the lives of settlers by warning or protecting them from harm. These Dakota came to be referred to as the Friendly Indians in history.

During the battle at Wood Lake near present-day Granite Falls, Minnesota, the Dakota who were opposed to the War took custody of the captives for safekeeping and turned them over to Colonel Henry Sibley at Camp Release near Montevideo, Minnesota on September 26, 1862. Of the 269 captives released at Camp Release, about 107 were white settlers and 162 were of mixed blood descent with Dakota ancestry. Many were from Renville County including 70 white settlers and 50 of mixed blood descent. This included the Renville family after whom the County was named in recognition of Joseph Renville, an early fur trader in the County. One hundred fifty years later, the descendants of these settlers returned to erect this panel to recognize their ancestors' sacrifice and place in Minnesota history.



Helen (pictured here) and James Carrothers and their two young children lived in Beaver Falls Township. Helen was born in the Dakota language and had been captured by a Dakota Medicine Man in the traditional time of war, peace and war in the treatment of various illnesses. When they learned the Dakota were killing settlers, she and her children tried to escape along with the Friendly Indians. They saved 25 people, but they were caught. They were taken to Fort Ridgely over 15 miles away. Seeking for food and carrying her children across the entire journey.

What Happened to the Settlers on August 18, 1862...

Among those Killed

Andrew Baskin
John and William Carrothers
Richard C. Kaula
Shelton Ekenstam
Benson, Augustus, Thome, Jr., Frederick
Adrian and Josephine Bluff
Hanson, Charles and Lydia
Henderson
and daughter
William Hennrich
Mr. and Mrs. Larnett, 3 daughters and a son
Gerritt, Lewis, Albert and Sarah Meyer
John, Anna, Joseph, Amelia, Henry and Lucinda Ring
Abel Wendig
August White
John, Michael and Mary Zinske

Among those Taken Captive

Helen, Anna and Thome Carrothers
Elizabeth and James Carrothers
Adrian, John and Emma Kaula
Thome, Joseph, Peter, Mary, John and
Joseph Ekenstam
Williamson and Bertha Hennrich
Hendrick John, Jr.
Orrick, John and Frank White

Among those who Escaped to Fort Ridgely

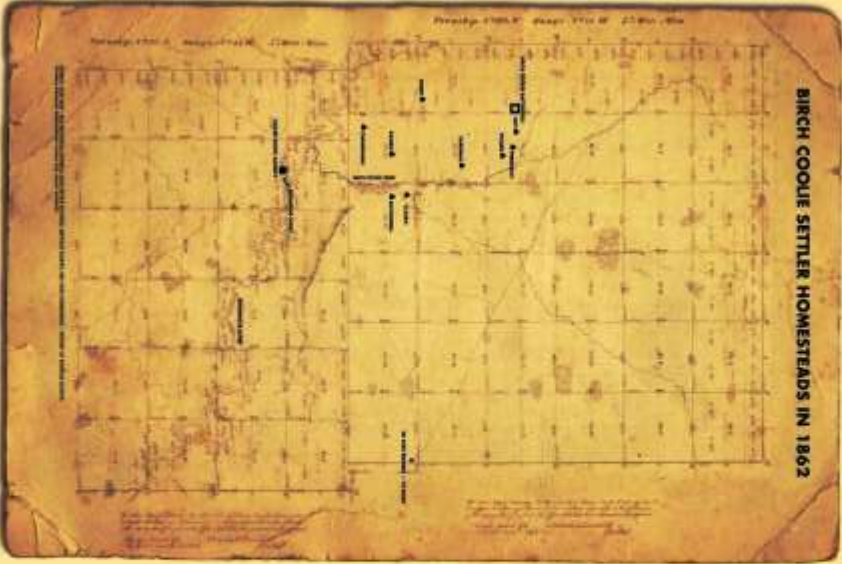
Henry and Minnie Abrams and family
Four Blackmen
David Carrothers
Anderson, Charles, Emma and Herman Kaula
Mabel, Louise and Sam Frederick
Mary and Catherine Ringden
Hendrick, Jr., Henry, Frederick, Chapman
Anna and Elizabeth Abel and Abel August Larnett
John Meyer
Michael White
Elizabeth and Margaret Williamson and family



mfrivervalley.com

Taught Unaware!

Settlers in the Area of Birch Cooley Creek



In 1862, settlers in the area of Birch Cooley Creek were living peaceful lives, having come to this area to take up new homesteads. They were in large part recent immigrants to this country. When they settled here they were mostly unaware of the tensions brewing between the U.S. government and the Dakota Indians. They were drawn here by the promise of land rich with fertile soil and natural resources. They were not traders or soldiers. They were without protection, administrative services, or any conventional local governmental structure. They were simply seeking better lives for themselves and their children.

On August 18, 1862, unarmed men, women and children were killed and wounded on their homesteads in a surprise attack by the Dakota Indians at the outbreak of the U.S. – Dakota War. Many of the dead lay in unmarked graves close to where they fell. Others were able to escape to Fort Ridgely. All were forced off their land and most never returned. The attack scattered the survivors and their descendants around

the State. One hundred fifty years later, the descendants of those settlers returned to erect this panel to recognize their ancestors' sacrifice and place in Minnesota history.

Just over 100 people, some military but most civilian, were killed within a 3-mile radius of the point where Birch Cooley Creek flows into the Minnesota River. It was the epicenter of the U.S. – Dakota War, during which hundreds of settlers were killed.


What Happened to the Settlers on August 18, 1862

Among Those Killed




Thomas Smith
Charles Olson
Frederick Olson
Perry Peterson
Elias Priest
Frederick West
John, John and
Harriet Zimmerman
Among Those Taken Captive
Margaretta (Kathleen)
Christina Crawford
Ellen Olson
Mary Olson
Martha McCannell Olson
Elizabeth Priest

Among Those who Escaped to Fort Ridgely

George, Nelson, Catherine, Margaret, Katie, Mary Ann, Martha and George Edward Olson
Charles Crawford
Cynthia and John Olson
John, Mary, William R., Isaac W. and Frederick Olson
Fred and George McCannell
Ellen Emma McCannell
Elizabeth, Catherine, Maria, Joseph, George and Frederick Peterson
Elizabeth and Emma Priest
Carl William, Mary Johnson, Joseph and Harriet Carl West
Mary, Mary, Elizabeth and John Zimmerman



The Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway

minnrivervalley.com

renvillecountyhistory.com

