

Welcome to the culmination of our project to honor and remember our brave ancestors. Three years ago, in 2011, our group, *Family and Friends of Dakota Uprising Victims*, was formed to recognize those Renville settlers who were killed, captured, or had escaped the horrors of the U.S. – Dakota War in 1862. The first panel, *Caught Unaware*, honored the Birch Coolie settlers and was dedicated in 2012; the second and third panels, *Sacred Ground*, honored the settlers in Flora Township and *Bravery and Tragedy* honored the Beaver Falls settlers. Those two panels were unveiled in 2013 and today we proudly dedicate these panels. The panels were completely funded by descendants like you and we thank you for that. I also want to thank Joyce Kloncz, Mary McConnell, Curt Dahlin, Don Heinrich Tolzmann and John LaBatte for all they did to complete this project and plan today's events. Will you stand and be recognized?

A few housekeeping notes: The bus tour has been sold out, but some of you will be following in cars behind the bus. Most of the tour is on paved roads except the stop at the Schwandt monument. The route of the tour is in the Tour Brochure. The lunch is also available only for those who have prepaid but you are welcome to stay after the tour and hear our speaker, Dan Munson, who will speak about his new book *Malice Toward None*, a story of the Kochendorfer family.

After the lunch, we will caravan by car to Fort Ridgely on a tour led by John LaBatte on the old fort road that many of your ancestors took for refuge and safety. That too is gravel and if you prefer, you may take the highway to the fort. Maps of both trips are included in the tour brochure. Most of you have purchased prepaid Fort Ridgely State Park gate passes. These should be affixed to your window and will allow you to drive into the park and past the check-in building. For those who have not, stop at the gate to pick up the specially priced \$3.00 gate pass for the day.

John LaBatte will then lead a battlefield tour at 2:30 and Curt Dahlin will speak in the commissary at 3:00. You will need to purchase commissary tickets to hear his speech.

The Renville County Historical Society was a co-sponsor of our panel program. Their museum is open today for visiting and while there, please consider

purchasing a membership. Forms are available at the welcome desk here on the grounds as well.

We want to thank the society for their support, Shirley Dove and the City of Morton for the use of their facility and their support, and you for your attendance. And now, please welcome, David Torgelson, chair of the Renville County Historical Society.

Dr. Don Heinrich Tolzmann lives in Cincinnati, OH but is from Renville County. His great-grandparents acquired the Schwandt farm in Flora Township after the uprising (which we will visit on our tour today), and his grandfather was a charter member of the Renville County Pioneers Association. His interest in the uprising led him to edit and translate several books on the topic. Now retired, he served on the Library and German Department faculties at the University of Cincinnati. I'm extremely proud to introduce him as our dedication speaker.

Our prayer will be led by Pastor Ric Jacobson, pastor of the Oakwood United Methodist Church in New Ulm, MN. Pastor Ric has a keen interest in the uprising because of his church's affiliation with the Middle Creek United Methodist Church, which we will be visiting today. Pastor Ric:

Dan Munson is our luncheon speaker. He recently published *Malice Toward None, Abraham Lincoln, the Civil War, the Homestead Act, and the Massacre-and Glorious Survival-of the Kochendorfers*. This is Amazon's review: A gravestone inscription leads the author on a search through early Minnesota history, and then U.S. and Civil War history. He discovers that four siblings orphaned by the Dakota War commissioned that inscription in memory of their parents and younger sister, and that their many descendants now live all around him. Those quiet descendants have kept many wonderful family records, and in those letters and photographs he learns that those four brave orphans lived lives of tolerance and gratitude, lives that answered President Lincoln's hopes in that Second Inaugural Address. Welcome, Dan.