

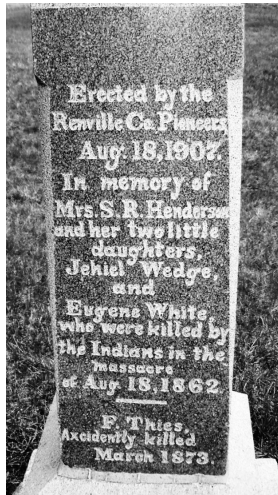
Background on Renville County in the U.S. – Dakota War

- In 1862, the Dakota lived on two reservations on the south side of the Minnesota River.
- The settlers in Renville County all lived within three miles of the Minnesota River. Some had arrived in the spring and summer of 1862. They were a young people, with many adults being in their 20s and 30s, with correspondingly young children. Many were recently arrived immigrants, with most of them German.
- A fraction of the Dakota were unhappy with their situation for a variety of reasons, and decided to go to war against the whites, attacking the Lower Sioux Agency early on August 18, 1862. Then they quickly moved to cross the Minnesota River and attacked settlers in Renville County. Others joined them and some were forced to join them. The majority of the Dakota leaders were not involved in the decision to go to war.
- Small Dakota raiding parties, often numbering from 4 to 12, attacked settlers in their homes or while they were trying to escape. Most of the settlers were unarmed and unable to defend themselves. Men, women and children were all considered to be fair game for the Dakota, and they fought their traditional enemies, the Ojibway, in the same manner.
- Those settlers who heard word of the attacks quickly moved to flee their homes, with all of them heading toward Ft. Ridgely, which was 13 miles from Morton. Many took with them what they could, including clothing, food, some utensils and money. Many hitched oxen to their wagons. Oxen were very slow moving, which made the settlers vulnerable to the Dakota catching up to them.
- In some cases, the Dakota and the settlers they were attacking knew each other, as the Dakota would regularly leave their reservation to go into the area where the settlers lived. Sometimes the Dakota hunted game or fished, and other times asked the settlers for food or water. Generally, relations between the two people were good, so the settlers were shocked when the Dakota arrived on August 18 with the intention of killing them.

- The Dakota's attacks were devastating, with about 150 settlers killed and another 70 – women and children – being taken captive. In contrast, very few or possibly no Dakota were killed while attacking the settlers in Renville County. The captives were freed at Camp Release, near present-day Montevideo, on September 26, 1862. Not all Dakota engaged in the war, and in late September, friendly Dakota and mixed-bloods took custody of the captives, protected them and turned them over to Col. Henry Sibley and his force at Camp Release. Renville County had more killed and more captured than any other county in the state.
- Most of the attacks on settlers in Renville County took place on August 18, with a few on August 19. By the end of August 19, nearly all of the surviving settlers had fled the area, so there were no more settlers left to kill or capture.
- Most of the victims were buried by strangers, where they were killed, many by the Joseph R. Brown Burial Party in late August and early September 1862. The graves may have initially had crude wooden markers indicating a burial, but they soon disappeared. Very few Renville County victims were buried in cemeteries. So today, there are nearly 150 graves at unknown locations. It is sacred ground.
- The experience was so traumatic for the settlers that most of them did not return to their homes afterward. If they did return, it was not for several years. This was unlike other areas such as Brown County.
- Statewide, 650 were killed by the Dakota. Of these, 400 were killed within 3 miles of the Minnesota River. Of the 650, about 400 lie in unmarked graves.

Tour of U.S. - Dakota War Sites

1A & 1B - Henderson, Wedge, & White Monument and Radnor Earle Monument: The morning of August 18, 1862, settlers living in the area of Beaver Falls heard that the Dakota were killing settlers. As a result, some 28 people gathered at the home of Jonathan and Amanda Earle in the NW quarter of section 23 of Beaver Falls Township. Among those in the party were Stephen and Clarissa Henderson and their two baby daughters. When the party hitched



up their wagons and began to flee to Ft. Ridgely. Clarissa, who was very ill, was placed in a buggy along with her babies. The party had traveled a very short distance before the Dakota stopped them and told them that they wanted the settlers' horses and oxen which were pulling the wagons. The settlers, who had a few guns, complied, hoping that it would satisfy the Dakota. The settlers then began to pull by hand the buggy with Clarissa in it. The Dakota then fired on the party, wounding Stephen, and coming up to the buggy, killed Jehiel Wedge, Clarissa, and her two babies. Radnor Earle, the 15-year-

old son of Jonathan and Amanda, 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 Jonathan to escape. Radnor was killed after shooting at the Dakota. Also killed in this encounter were Eugene White, 16, and young Willie and Johnny Carrothers. About 12 women and children were taken captive, including members of the White, Carrothers, and Earle families. The others, including Jonathan and Stephen managed to escape. These two monuments were erected in 1907, at the sites where Henderson and Earle were buried. They were moved to this present location in 1981. A sign next to the monument reads: "This monument was originally erected 1¼ miles S.W. of this site. It was erected herein 1981. Renville County Historical Society."



2 - Kietzmann Party Massacre: On August 18, 1862, the settlers living in western Flora Township heard that the Dakota were killing settlers. Just over 60 settlers from 13 families gathered at the home of Paul and Dorothea Kietzmann and decided to flee to Ft. Ridgely, which was 30 miles away. They traveled all night, reaching the area near Morton by morning. Here they met a small party of Dakota who persuaded them that it was the Ojibway who were causing the problems and that the Dakota would escort them back

to their homes. When nearing their homes, however, the Dakota turned on them, firing on the party who were unable to mount any effective defense. As a result, 27 were killed, 24 were captured and about 10 escaped. It was the largest massacre to take place in such a small area in the U.S. – Dakota War. The victims were buried at the site where they were killed, probably in the fall of 1862. The site of this massacre was probably in the north half of Section 20, Flora Township.

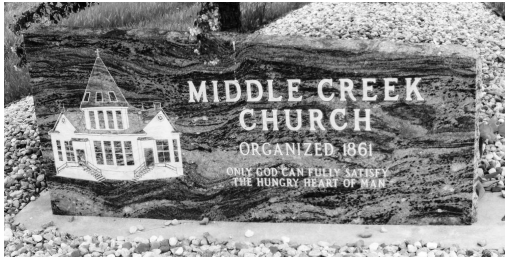
3 - Schwandt Monument: Johann and Christina Schwandt lived with their family in Section 33 of Flora Township. On August 18, 1862, they were attacked at their home by the Dakota. The two of them were killed, plus their sons, Frederick, 7, Christian, 5, their married daughter, Caroline Walz, 19, and her husband, John Walz. Caroline was pregnant and was brutally murdered. John Frass, a hired man, was also killed. Son August Schwandt, 11, was struck in the head by a tomahawk, but survived. Daughter, Mary, 14, who was absent from home, was taken captive and freed at Camp Release on September 26, 1862. The granite monument was erected by the State of Minnesota in 1915.



4 - Middle Creek Brave Settler Monument: There were many settlers who were killed in this immediate area, in particular in Sections 33 – 35 in southeastern Flora Township. This area was known as Middle Creek. Among those killed was Rev. Christian Louis Seder and up to 74 members of his congregation who lived in that area. They included members of the Boelter, Busse, Frass, Kochendorfer, Mannweiler, Reyff, Roessler, Schmidt, and Schwandt families. These killings took place on August 18, 1862, at or near the families individual homes, as most did not have a warning of the trouble or time to flee. This monument recognizes and honors these settlers who were killed.



5 - Middle Creek United Methodist Church: This congregation, the oldest in Renville County, was formed as the German Evangelical Church by the Evangelical Association, now the United Methodist Church, to minister to the German pioneers in the Middle Creek



area. Classes were first held in 1861 with services conducted by Rev. Christian Brill from the New Ulm Mission. In spring 1862, Rev. Christian Louis Seder was appointed to preach there every

other week. On Sunday, August 17, 1862, he preached to more than one hundred people and on the following day was killed along with seventy-five others from the congregation. Louis Thiele was the only surviving member who came back to live in the area. By 1866, settlers, especially from Le Sueur County, had moved into the area, so that services again could be held. The first church building was constructed in 1880 and the current building dates from 1911.

6 - Beaver Falls Cemetery & Town Hall: This township was also hit hard by the Dakota on August 18, 1862. Two large parties of settlers gathered together with hopes of fleeing from the Dakota. One party gathered at the home of John and Caroline Meyer, in the SE quarter of Section 7. They were attacked by the Dakota just as they were leaving the farm, and 17 were killed, many of them women and children as they huddled in terror in the wagons. The

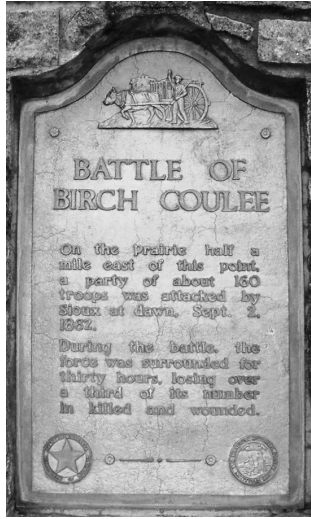


Above, Beaver Falls Town Hall

notorious Dakota, Cut Nose, personally killed most of the women and children. Some others were taken captive and a few escaped. The 17 were buried in the spring of 1863. Yet others living in the township were killed at their homes, were captured, or succeeded in making it to Ft. Ridgely. Four surviving families of the conflict are

buried in the Beaver Falls Cemetery: Ahrens, Gustava Robertson and wife, Franz Schmidt, and Wichmann families.

7 - Birch Coulee Battlefield: This battle took place between the Joseph R. Brown Burial Party and the Dakota. The Burial Party consisting of about 170 men had been dispatched from Ft. Ridgely to bury settlers killed in Renville County, soldiers killed at the battle of Redwood Ferry, and those killed at the Lower Sioux Agency.

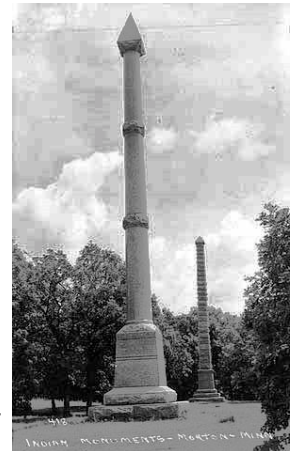


Brown was also to look for survivors and, if he could, try to locate the hostile Dakota. They camped at Birch Coulee the night of September 1, 1862, not suspecting that the Dakota were anywhere near them. But they were wrong about that. That night, the Dakota crept up on the poorly chosen campsite, and attacked at dawn on September 2. About 25 of the Burial Party were killed or mortally wounded, and about 60 others were wounded. Col. Henry Sibley headed up a relief force from Ft. Ridgely, and they reached them about midday on September 3. In addition to the human casualties, about 90 horses were killed. Few to no Dakota were killed.

The following are historic sites that will be visited by a car caravan on the journey to Fort Ridgely.

8 - Loyal Indian and Battle of Birch Coulee

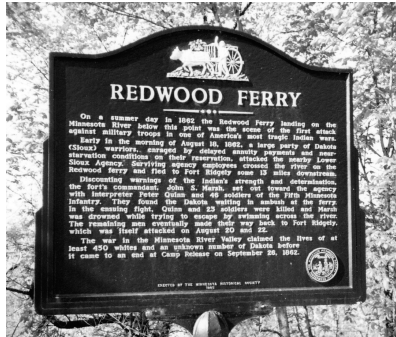
Monuments: These tall, imposing monuments are located on the top of the bluff just east of Morton. One is dedicated to six full-blood Dakota who remained friendly to the whites during the U.S. – Dakota War. The six are: John Other Day, or Ampatu Tokicha; Little Paul or Mahzakootemanne; Lorenzo Lawrence, or Towanetaton; Simon Anahwangmanne; Mary Crooks, or Mahkahta Heiya-win; and Maggie Brass, or Snana-win. They all individually saved the lives of whites, either



bringing them to safety or protecting them in their tepees in the Dakota's camp. The other marker is dedicated to those members of the Joseph R. Brown Burial Party who fought at the battle of Birch Coulee, just over one mile north of this site. These monuments were erected by the Minnesota River Valley Historical Society.

9 - Redwood Ferry, Battle of Redwood Ferry and Redwood Ferryman Monuments:

This battle took place in the early afternoon of August 18, 1862, between a force of 48 soldiers commanded by Capt. John Marsh of Ft. Ridgely and the Dakota



Indians. Marsh was taking his force to the Lower Sioux Agency to deal with the Dakota who were reportedly killing whites at that location. Marsh's force was ambushed by the Dakota at the Redwood Ferry, on the north side of the Minnesota River, opposite the Lower Sioux Agency. Half his force was killed, and Marsh drowned while trying

to cross the Minnesota River. Few to no Dakota were killed. The surviving soldiers made their way back to Ft. Ridgely. The battle

site is to the southwest of this marker on Highway 19 east of Morton. The monuments here recognize the ferry operator, Captain Marsh, and 24 of his men who were killed in the Battle of Redwood Ferry and Peter Quinn, an interpreter who was also killed. The ferryman saved



many lives by warning settlers when the outbreak began. The monument names Charlie Martel but some historians note his name was Peter or Oliver Martell and others Hubert Millier. These monuments, now located on private property, are found on the north riverbank of the Minnesota River in a remote locate inaccessible to the public and across the river from the Lower Sioux Agency. There were 2 roads from the west to Fort Ridgely in 1862: a bottom road and a bluff road. It is possible that some from the Birch Cooley and Lower Sioux Agency areas took the bottom road.

It may be that most if not all settlers west of Birch Cooley who went to Fort Ridgely, used the bluff road. We will be stopping on the bottom road northeast of the Battle of Redwood Ferry.

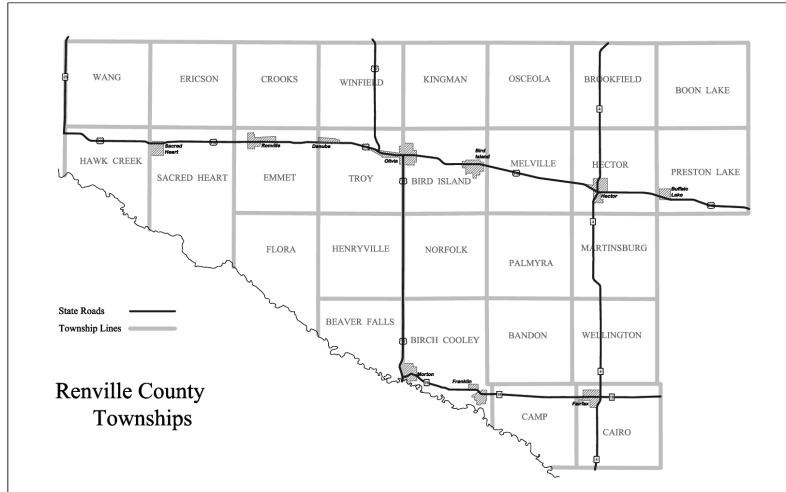
10 - Fort Ridgely: This fort is important because it was a refuge for many settlers. Construction of the fort began in 1853 and most of it was finished by 1855. It was built as an army outpost to maintain peace on the frontier and on the reservations. Over 200 Renville County settlers took refuge at the fort. They included 38 from Beaver Falls, 74 from Birch Cooley, 11 from Cairo, 31 from Camp, 41 from Flora and 6 from Hawk Creek Townships. Many of these settlers turned out to be an integral part in the defense of the fort. Men were called upon to man cannon and serve picket and guard duty. Women were called upon to assist in the hospital and to make cartridges by melting spent bullets fired by the Indians, as the defenders were running out of ammunition.



This memorial honors the above and also the military for their service. Three survivors of the uprising are buried in the Fort Ridgely Cemetery: John Frohrip, Charles Lammers and Louis Thiele.

Homestead Maps

Following are township maps and homestead names for Beaver Falls, Birch Cooley, Cairo, Flora, Camp, Hawk Creek, and Sacred Heart Townships. These homestead names and locations are correct to the best of our knowledge, but we welcome corrections and or additions. Maps courtesy of Renville County Public Works.

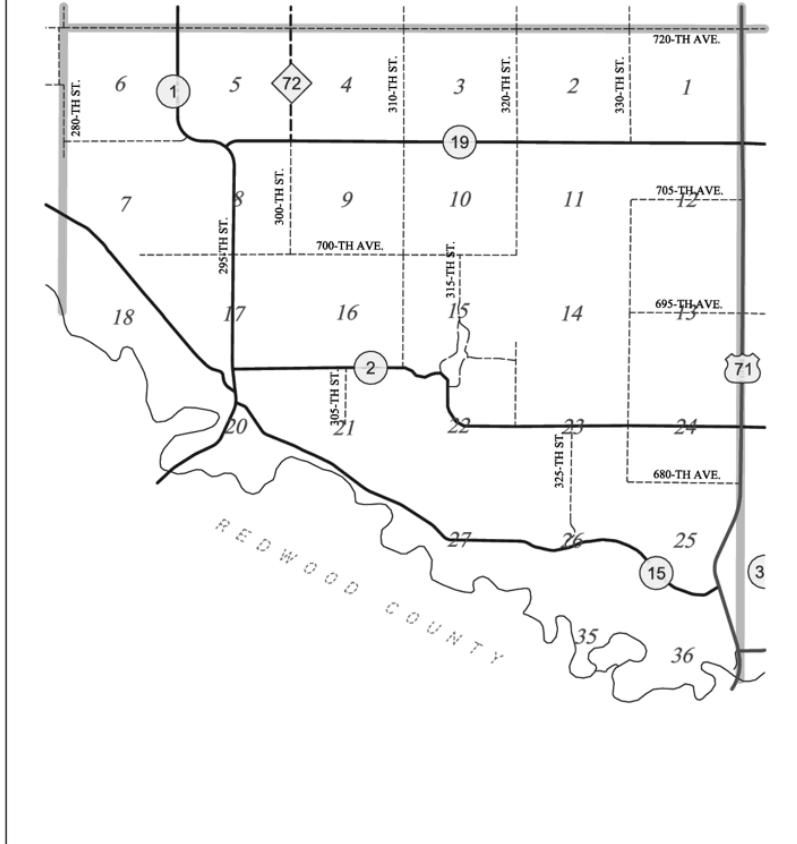


Beaver Falls Homestead Sections

Ahrens Sections 11, 14	Eisenreich Sections 26, 35	Ienenfeldt Enclave of Sieg, Ienenfeldt, Meyer, and Zitzlaff Section 7	Schmidt Sections 14, 15
Bahlke-Frohrip Section 25	Hauff South of Smith Creek	Juni Sections 25, 26	Sieg Section 7
Carrothers, David Sections 21, 22 & 15	Hayden Section 35	Levant Section unknown	Shepherd Furthest north homestead, north of Wichmann Section 11 or 14
Carrothers, James Sections 22, 28	Henderson Section 22	Meyer Section 7	White Section 15
Doyle Section 23	Hunter Section 23	Robertson Section 27	Wichmann Section 14
Earle Section 23			Zitzlaff Section 7

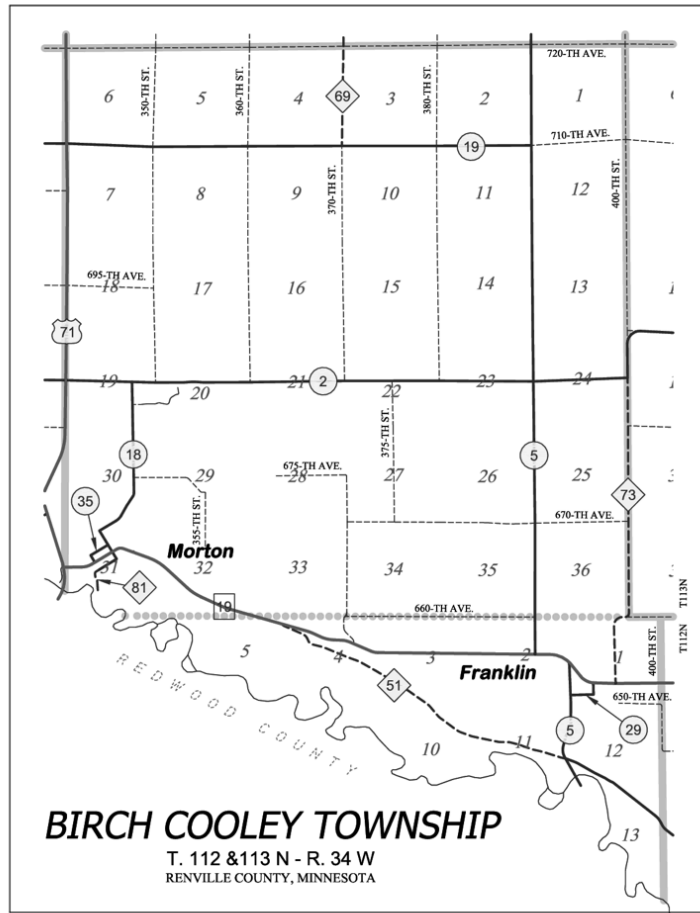
BEAVER FALLS TOWNSHIP

T. 113 N - R. 35 W
RENVILLE COUNTY, MINNESOTA



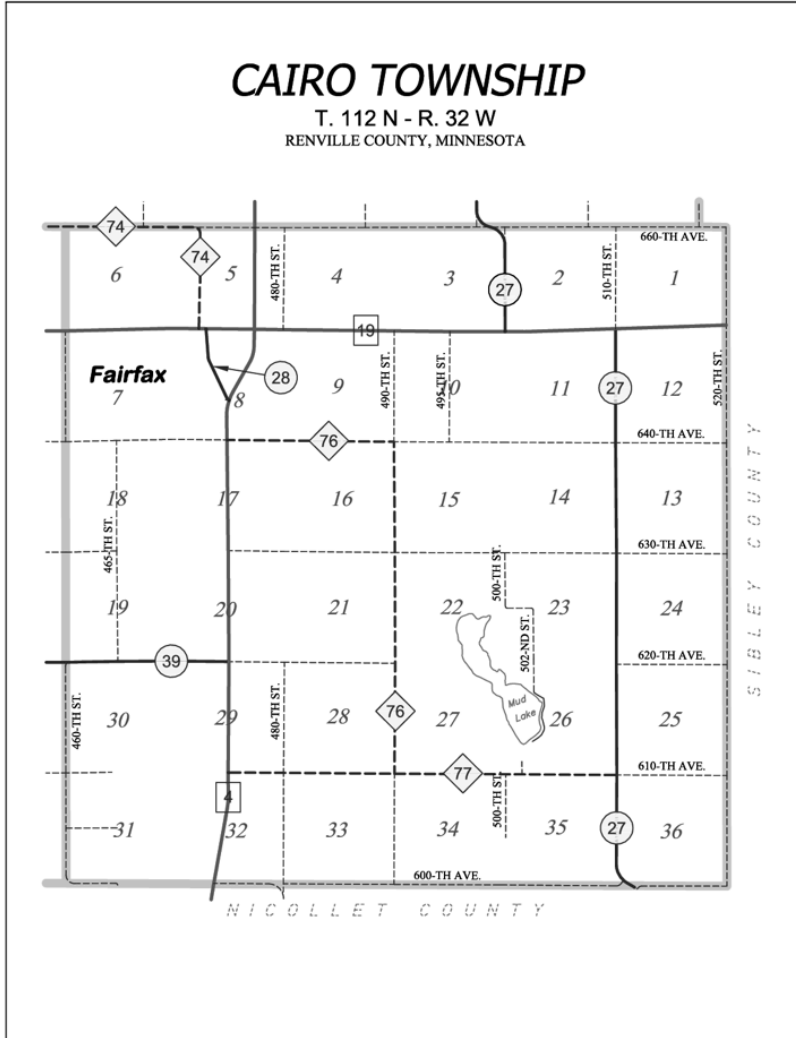
Birch Cooley Homestead Sections

Buery Section 30, 31	Faribault Section 3	LaCroix Section 5	McConnell Section 33	Sampson (Quam) Section 13
Cardinal Section 29	Horan Section 10	Magner Section 10	Perreault Section 20	Witt Section 20
Clasen Section 32	Kumro Section 32	Martell Section 5	Picard Section 20	Zimmerman Sections 31, 32



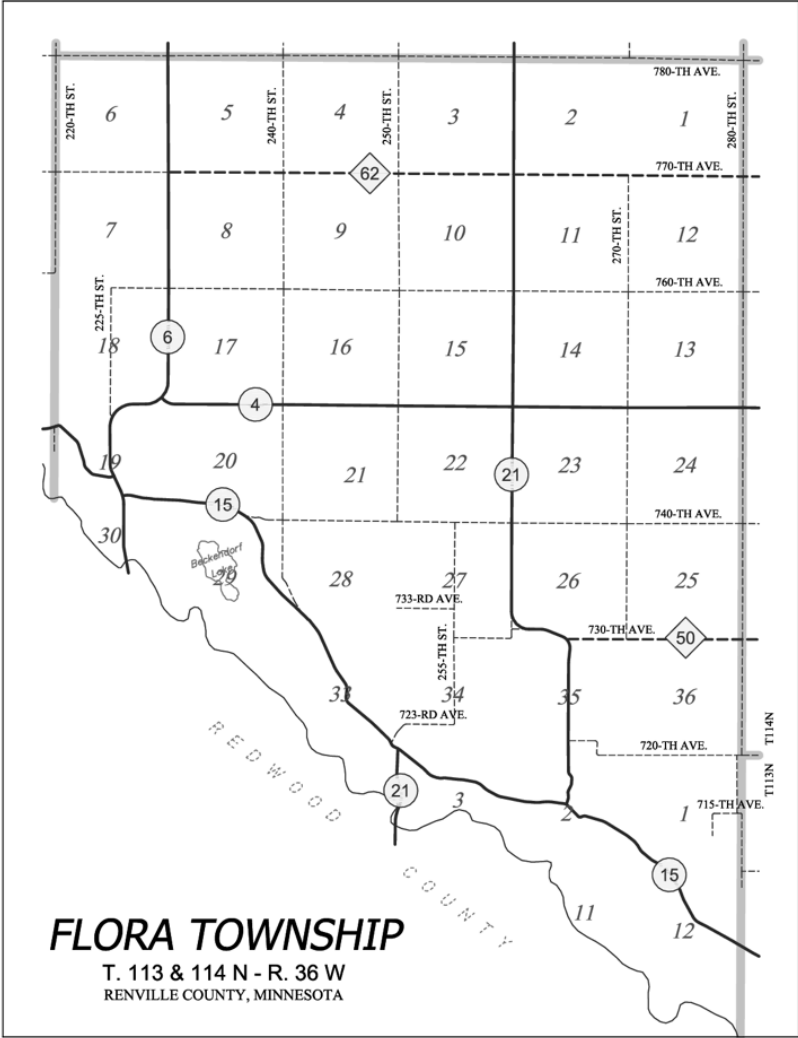
Cairo Township Homestead Sections

Bucher Section 33	Bührer Section 27	Rieke Section 26
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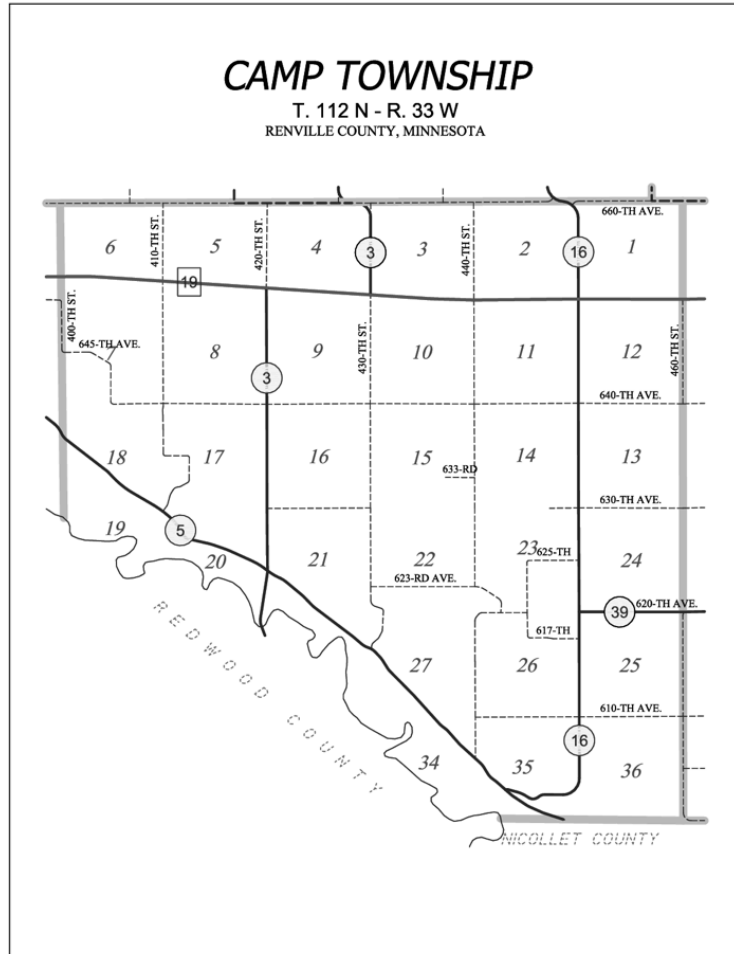
Flora Township Homestead Sections

Boelter Sections 34 & 35	Kochendorfer Section 33	Lettou Section 1	Schwandt Section 33
Busse (Buce) Section 35	Krause Section 20	Mannweiler Section 1	Tille (Thiele) Section unknown
Frass Section 19	Krueger Section 20	Neuman Section unknown	Thiele Sections 1 & 12
Grundmann Section 19	Lammers Section 19	Reyff Section 34	Urban Section 20
Henning Section 17?	Lange Section unknown	Roessler Section 34	Yess Section 18
Kietzmann Section 19	Lentz Section 2	Schmidt Section 2	Zabel Section 18



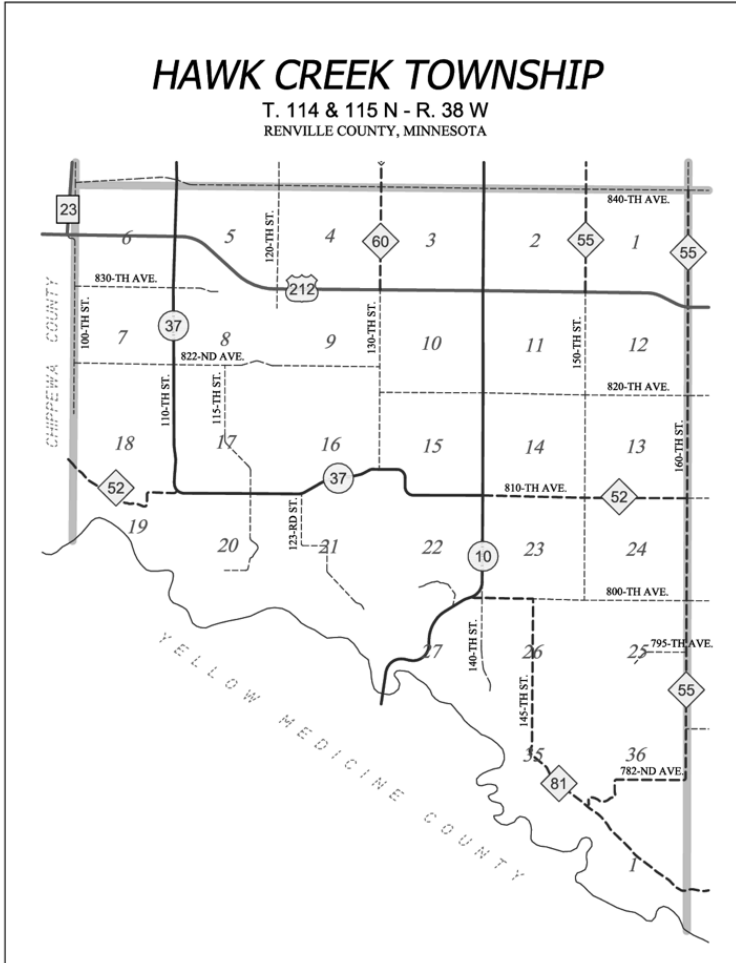
Camp Township Homestead Sections

Boesch Sections 22 and 23	Peterson Section 20
Halvorson Section 18	Schlumpberger Section 27
LaFramboise Section 22	Smith Section 21



Hawk Creek Township Homestead Sections

Ingalls Section unknown	LaBelle Section unknown
Robideau Probably Sections 27 & 28	Rousseau Section unknown



Principals Involved with this Event

- **Curtis Dahlin** is an independent historian and author who has researched extensively on the U.S.-Dakota War for over ten years and is widely known as an expert on the Dakota uprising. He has written and self-published 13 books, 10 on the Dakota Uprising since retiring. Dahlin has presented educational programs on this topic throughout the state to “advance the understanding of what took place in this complex, deeply tragic affair” to many who want to learn more about the war. He lives in Roseville, MN.
- **Jan Klein** is co-founder of *Family and Friends of Dakota Uprising Victims* created to honor and remember the uprising victims and preserve their stories. The group helped create panels that memorialize the Renville County settlers. The Facebook page and website honors all Dakota victims and has over 200 followers. Family and Friends has self-published two books on the Renville County experience. She lives in Casa Grande, AZ.
- **Joyce Klonc**, also a co-founder of *Family and Friends of Dakota Uprising Victims*, is a retired teacher with an interest in history and technology. She has written two hard-cover books for the New Brighton Area Historical Society and created and maintains its website. She also created the website, www.dakotavictims1862.com, which features ancestor stories, photographs and essays on the Dakota War. She lives in Surprise, AZ, and Onamia, MN.

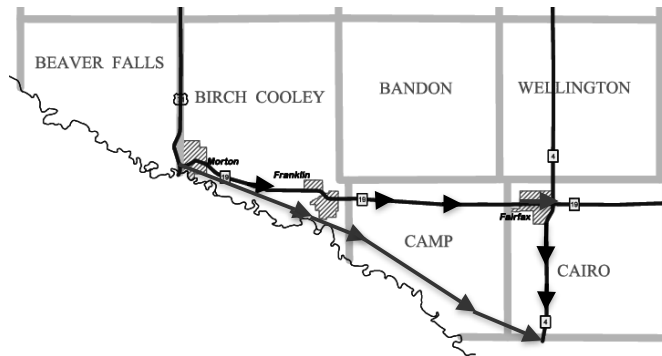
- **John LaBatte** is an independent historian and activist whose mission is seeking accuracy, balance and respect in products relating to the Dakota Indians and the Dakota War. He has many Dakota and white ancestors involved in the Dakota War. He conducts tours at historic sites and gives speeches about the war, the Indian culture and Dakota Indian history. LaBatte has written two books, one on the relationship between Germans and Indians in the New Ulm from 1856-1862 and another on Fort Ridgely. He lives in New Ulm, MN.
- **Dr. Don Heinrich Tolzmann** lives in Cincinnati, but is from Renville County. His great-grandparents acquired the Schwandt farm in Flora Township after the Uprising 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.



Lone Prairie Grave
From Heard's *History of the Sioux War*, published in 1863.

Fort Ridgely Route

The below map shows the caravan and alternate route to Fort Ridgely.
If you are not taking the caravan tour,
the upper route is the alternate route on paved roads.
Go left on MN 19 for 13.73 miles.
Turn right on MN 4 for 5.9 miles.
Take a slight right on County Road 30.
Fort Ridgely is at 72158 County Road 30.



The lower route is the caravan route
which is on a gravel road,
traveling southeast on County Road 5
and ending up at Fort Ridgely.

Family and Friends of Dakota Uprising Victims

website: www.dakotavictims1862.com

Facebook: In search box, type:

Family and Friends of Dakota Uprising Victims