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# “Extermination or Removal”: The Knights of the Forest and Ethnic Cleansing in Early Minnesota

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**“Extermination or Removal”:**

**The Knights of the Forest and Ethnic Cleansing in Early Minnesota**

by  
Catherine M. Coats

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

St. Cloud State University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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### **Abstract**

The Knights of the Forest was an 1863 secret society that formed in Mankato, MN, during the aftermath of the U.S.-Dakota War. They took an oath to advocate for the banishment of “all Indians” from the state of Minnesota. But newspaper articles written by and about four members show that the organization was only concerned with the exile of the Ho-Chunk people, who had not participated in the U.S.-Dakota War. In the winter of 1862-1863, settlers in the Mankato region pressured the federal government for Ho-Chunk removal under the threat of extermination of the Ho-Chunk people. Their reservation had comprised the majority of prime farmland in Blue Earth County just southeast of Mankato since 1855. The Knights of the Forest sent armed men to surround the Ho-Chunk land and shoot anyone who crossed the line. Once the Ho-Chunk were forced from the county in May of 1863, the secret society ceased to exist. Hundreds of Ho-Chunk people died because of their removal from Minnesota. Conditions at Crow Creek Reservation in South Dakota were so desolate many left to Omaha or back to their Wisconsin homeland within months. Meanwhile, new settlers moved onto their former southwestern Minnesota reservation, and Blue Earth County experienced its earliest economic expansion at the expense of the Ho-Chunk Nation.

## Acknowledgements

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## CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

On May 3, 1968, leaders at Minnesota State University Mankato (MSUM) held a ceremony to open a “tin box” time capsule that had been sealed inside the cornerstone of the university’s historic Old Main building for a century. The *College Reporter* listed the contents in vague categories: business cards, newspapers, and miscellaneous items, with no mention of the secret society “ritual” that had survived a fire and over one hundred years inside the box. Although it was the second time the time capsule had been opened, it was an appropriate activity for the college’s centennial celebrations that had taken place throughout that year. The box had first been opened and resealed with additional items after it survived a 1922 fire where the first Old Main building burned to the ground. During the 1968 centennial, it looked like the time capsule items might finally debut in public and move to the university’s archives. *The College Reporter* stated that “a display will be set up on campus for the viewing of the contents,” but university leaders were “debating whether to put the articles into another corner stone or into the archives of the college.” There is no report of an exhibit that presented items from the box, but there was another event in September of that year where the tin box was again resealed with additional contents into Old Main as part of the university’s final centennial celebrations.<sup>1</sup>

The time capsule had originally been sealed inside the cornerstone of the Old Main building at the then-named Mankato Normal School on June 22, 1869, during a large dedication ceremony featuring fraternal organizations and attended by thousands of guests. A procession had traveled down Front Street, the main street in Mankato. At the parade's end, the crowd of

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<sup>1</sup> *College Reporter*, May 7, 1968, September 30, 1968.

1200-1500 awaited to observe a musical performance, a reading of the contents of the time capsule box, and the “laying of the corner stone according to the impressive ceremonies of the Odd Fellows, conducted by Noble Grand [Sheldon] F. Barney.”<sup>2</sup> Cornerstone time capsule ceremonies with fraternal organizations were a common occurrence in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially for publicly funded buildings.<sup>3</sup> Many public buildings in Minnesota have contained cornerstone time capsules, including buildings at St. Cloud State University, the State Capitol, and the Grand Army of the Republic Hall in Litchfield.<sup>4</sup>

It wasn't until 2004 that the original 1869 items from the Old Main cornerstone were publicly listed online. Among them was a document for the Knights of the Forest, a short-lived



Figure 1. Old Main and students from Mankato State Normal School, 1884.  
Source: [MSUM Archives](#).

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<sup>2</sup> *Mankato Weekly Record*, June 26, 1869.

<sup>3</sup> William Jarvis, *Time Capsules: a Cultural History* (McFarland and Co., Jefferson, N.C., 2003), 10, 102.

<sup>4</sup> *St. Cloud Times*, October 7, 1992; Minnesota Historical Society webpage for Time Capsules <http://www.mnhs.org/preserve/conservation/timecapsule.php> (accessed April 2017); *Litchfield Independent Review*, September 6, 2015.

but influential secret society that existed in Mankato during the early months of 1863, immediately following the U.S.-Dakota War and the execution of thirty-eight Dakota soldiers in Mankato.<sup>5</sup> This ritual document contains the text of the membership oath, opening ceremonies, and initiation rites, which promised to bind the men “together as brothers in common interest” so they could go forth “stronger and braver in the determination to banish forever from our beautiful State every Indian who now desecrates our soil” (see Appendix A).<sup>6</sup> The organization’s singular goal was to provoke the removal of the Ho-Chunk reservation from Blue Earth County.<sup>7</sup>

Accounts of the group allege that many of the area’s prominent men were among its membership. So, it is possible that numerous members of the Knights of the Forest attended the 1869 cornerstone ceremony. One member identified in later newspaper articles was Asa Barney, whose brother had presided over the cornerstone ceremony.<sup>8</sup> The MSUM Archives eventually retrieved the box after the university moved operations up a steep hill and sold all lower campus buildings in 1973, which included Old Main.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The term U.S.-Dakota War is used in this thesis because the Dakota likely did declare war, see Colette Routel, “Minnesota Bounties on Dakota Men During the US-Dakota War,” *William Mitchell Law Review* 40 (October 2, 2013): 8n46, 60-68; For further understanding of the use of the term American, see Carol Chomsky, “The United States-Dakota War trials: a study in military justice,” *Stanford Law Review*, 43, no.1 (November 1990): 16n7; U.S.-Dakota War is also the term used by a Dakota historian, see Angela Wilson (Waziyatawin), *What does justice look like?* (Living Justice Press, St. Paul, Minn., 2008), 38.

<sup>6</sup> Ritual/Initiation, Grand Lodge of the Knights of the Forest. Old Main Cornerstone. Collection. MSU Archives Collection 200. Mankato State University Library, Mankato, Minn., 1869-1969.

<sup>7</sup> This thesis will use the traditional name, Ho-Chunk. However, Winnebago, the name in government publications and newspapers while they lived in Blue Earth County, is also used when transcribed directly from source quotations, document titles, or place names like the Winnebago Agency.

<sup>8</sup> *Mankato Daily Review*, April 18, 1916; *Mankato Daily Free Press*, May 4, 1926.

<sup>9</sup> Old Main Cornerstone Collection Finding Aide. <http://lib.mnsu.edu/archives/fa/msu/msu22.html> (accessed April 2017).

Compelling evidence of Minnesota's unexamined history of hate was locked away in that time capsule along with the ritual document that day. Scholars have recently begun to uncover more details of the ethnic cleansing of indigenous people throughout the United States in the nineteenth-century. Gary Clayton Anderson's exhaustive and extensive study of the Texas Rangers along with Mark Lause's research on secret societies of the Civil War era has shown us that American frontiersmen organized locally on behalf of the nation's expansion agenda, known as Manifest Destiny, and were often the main drivers of ethnic cleansing.<sup>10</sup> Their work challenges the idea of "the government" as a singular actor of dispossession. Minnesota's history is no different. Many Minnesota historians and authors have grappled with Minnesota's history of race. But very few have challenged U.S.-Dakota War history in a way that presents it as ethnic cleansing in Minnesota that was encouraged, organized and enacted by white settlers.<sup>11</sup>

The Knights of the Forest ritual oath was dedicated to a general anti-Indian sentiment and political allegiance, but all first-hand descriptions of the existence and participation in the group center exclusively on the nearby Ho-Chunk reservation. These Mankato men were not concerned with the already-assured removal of Dakota people from nearby Brown County. The Knights of the Forest was organized after the government had already taken most of the Dakota people in Minnesota to a concentration camp at Fort Snelling. Furthermore, the group existed only until the

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<sup>10</sup> Gary Clayton Anderson, *The Conquest of Texas: Ethnic Cleansing in the Promised Land, 1820-1875* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005); Mark Lause, *A Secret Society History of the Civil War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011); although Lause's work does not directly focus on atrocities committed by secret societies, he does describe the organizational social networks behind those described in Anderson's Texas book.

<sup>11</sup> For an understanding of the U.S.-Dakota War, see Gary Clayton Anderson, *Little Crow: Spokesman for the Sioux* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1986); *Through Dakota Eyes: Narrative Accounts of the Minnesota Indian War of 1862*, edited by Gary Clayton Anderson and Alan R. Woolworth (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1988); Wilson (Wazyatawin), *What does justice look like?*; and Mary Wingerd, *North Country: The Making of Minnesota* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

Ho-Chunk left the state. In fact, the majority of white settlers in Blue Earth County had vigorously opposed the reservation and had advocated, agitated, and organized for Ho-Chunk removal from Minnesota before they arrived in the southern part of the state in 1855.<sup>12</sup> The men in Mankato took advantage of the post-war racialized rhetoric and settlers' hysteria to push the federal government into finally exiling the Ho-Chunk along with the Dakota.

But the Knights of the Forest's impact on the Ho-Chunk people went beyond their forced removal from Minnesota. The group identified itself as a secret society, but it advanced the agenda typical of a hate group, perpetuating a culture of ethnic violence. Like other hate groups, they used political power, intimidation, and racial intolerance to promote their cause, but cloaked themselves in the rhetoric of noble defense. Following the U.S.-Dakota War in the fall and winter of 1862, a statewide call for extermination of "all Indians" by white settlers and the threat of post-war mob violence in Mankato was constantly an issue for federal and state authorities. Masses of men held "secret meetings" and traveled from New Ulm, St. Peter, and all over Brown County to Mankato, threatening to attack Dakota prisoners.<sup>13</sup> The execution in December publicly enacted and seemed to satisfy the desired revenge of New Ulm and Brown County settlers who had fought battles with Dakota men close to their homes. But the men of Blue Earth County, who had not experienced conflicts with the Ho-Chunk near their homes, still had the reservation in their midst. So in January 1863, they organized a campaign for the ethnic cleansing of Southern Minnesota.

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<sup>12</sup> Thomas Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County and Biographies of its Leading Citizens*. (Marceline, Mo.: Walsworth Publishing Company, 1901); 59-60, 99.

<sup>13</sup> Walt Bachman, "Colonel Miller's War," in *Trails of Tears: Minnesota's Dakota Indian Exile Begins* ed. Mary Hawker Bakeman and Antona M. Richardson (Roseville, Minn.: Prairie Echoes, Park Genealogical Books, 2008), 107-122.

The Knights of the Forest caused the indirect, yet intentional loss of innocent Ho-Chunk lives. These men wanted the Ho-Chunk reservation abolished and were willing to kill them if necessary to make that happen. Had the Ho-Chunk people stayed in the state any longer, the Knights of the Forest might well have incited more violence in Minnesota. And it is important to note that even though the Ho-Chunk escaped mob massacre in Blue Earth County, historians have shown the immense suffering and loss of life for both Ho-Chunk and Dakota people at the Crow Creek reservation, where they were exiled together.<sup>14</sup> A Ho-Chunk statement to the Court of Claims of the federal government states that during this time they “were held in a state of bondage...that continued for a long period to-wit: of five years, during which time, by reason of the inhuman treatment inflicted upon them, by reason of their lack of food, clothing and shelter, and absence of medical aid or attention, a large number of said Indians died.”<sup>15</sup>

The Knights of the Forest had achieved their goal within a few months and left a record of their existence in proud confidence of the historical significance of their role in the Ho-Chunk removal from Blue Earth County. Ironically, they have been acknowledged by only a few historians and have never been accorded more than a few paragraphs treatment as an aside to the U.S.-Dakota War. No scholarly work has been devoted entirely to the Knights of the Forest, and academic consideration of the Ho-Chunk people in Minnesota is nearly as scarce. Some recent historians have connected the Knights of the Forest to wider anti-Indian sentiment during and

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<sup>14</sup> Amy Lonetree, “Visualizing Native Survivance: Encounters with My Ho-Chunk Ancestors in the Family Photographs of Charles Van Chaick,” in *People of the Big Voice: Photographs of Ho-Chunk Families by Charles Van Schaick, 1879-1942* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2011), 13-22; Colette A. Hyman, “Survival at Crow Creek, 1863-1866,” *Minnesota History* 61, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 148-161.

<sup>15</sup> Winnebago Tribe of Indians, United States, and Court of Claims, *Winnebago Tribe of Indians, Plaintiffs, vs. the United States of America, Defendant, no. M-421: Petition of the Winnebago Tribe of Indians (Filed 3rd Day of December, 1931)* (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1931).

after the Dakota imprisonment period, and at least one historian, Amy Lonetree, has mentioned the Knights in Ho-Chunk history.<sup>16</sup> But none gives an in-depth analysis of this group of men. Some scholarly material exists specifically about the Ho-Chunk in Blue Earth County and Minnesota, but most is not current.<sup>17</sup> While a thorough study of the Knights of the Forest will make a small contribution to Ho-Chunk history, the Minnesota Ho-Chunk story needs more attention from scholars because it is one of the best examples of how American frontier settlers forced federal policy toward dispossession of indigenous nations.

More resources are available for Ho-Chunk history in Wisconsin and their final government reservation in Nebraska than for Iowa, Minnesota and South Dakota. The work of Patty Loew, Nancy Lurie, Linda Waggoner, Lucy Eldersveld Murphy, and Amy Lonetree offer a basic understanding of Ho-Chunk history.<sup>18</sup> Many scholars in the past have focused on the Ho-Chunk relationship to the Blackhawk War in Illinois or their relationship to Wisconsin statehood. Most published material related to the Ho-Chunk history in Minnesota is embedded in U.S.-Dakota War literature. Few published quotes are available from Ho-Chunk people who lived in

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<sup>16</sup> Lonetree, "Visualizing Native Survivance," 18; Wingerd, *North Country*, 328-329; Carrie Zeman, "Through the Heart of New Ulm: the Persistence of Place in Stories of the 1862 Dakota Conflict" in *Trails of Tears: Minnesota's Dakota Indian Exile Begins* ed. Mary Hawker Bakeman and Antona M. Richardson (Roseville, Minn.: Prairie Echoes, Park Genealogical Books, 2008), 138.

<sup>17</sup> William E. Lass, "Ginseng Rush in Minnesota," *Minnesota History* 41, no. 6 (Summer 1969): 249-266; William E. Lass, "The removal from Minnesota of the Sioux and Winnebago Indians," *Minnesota History* 38, no. 8 (Dec. 1963): 353-364; Edward Pluth, "Account of Winnebago Indian Affairs at Long Prairie, Minnesota Territory: 1848-1855." (Master's Thesis, St. Cloud State University, 1963); Edward Pluth, "The Failed Watab Treaty of 1853," *Minnesota History* 57, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 2-22; L. M. Waggoner, "Sibley's Winnebago Prisoners: Deconstructing Race and Recovering Kinship in the Dakota War of 1862," *Great Plains Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (January 2013): 25-48; Wingerd, *North Country*, 328-329.

<sup>18</sup> Patty Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin: Histories of Endurance and Renewal* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2013); Lonetree, "Visualizing Native Survivance."; Nancy Lurie, *Wisconsin Indians* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2002); Lucy Eldersveld Murphy, *A Gathering of Rivers: Indians, Métis, and Mining in the Western Great Lakes, 1737-1832* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000); Linda Waggoner, *Fire light: the life of Angel De Cora, Winnebago artist* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008).



Blue Earth County, and they are mostly found in government documents. Even so, the details of their presence and activities in southern Minnesota are more readily available than those of the self-styled “secret society,” the Knights of the Forest.

At least four members of the Knights of the Forest revealed their involvement with the organization in Mankato newspapers. Though the group’s activities are difficult to track, once members are named there is little difficulty in discovering basic details of their lives in Mankato. John F. Meagher, Asa Barney, and Charles A. Chapman were quoted or wrote themselves about their Knights of the Forest membership in the Mankato newspapers, while John J. Porter was identified as a member in his 1929 obituary.<sup>19</sup> These were well known Mankato men who left a trail of personal papers, published works, as well as business, occupation-related and government documents. As respected members of the Knights, they can provide solid clues as to the nature of the group as a whole. Still, the most valuable and directly related evidence of the Knights of the Forest is their ritual in the MSUM Archives.

The Knights of the Forest ritual that was placed in the time capsule is the only known document that survives from the organization. One newspaper account from 1916 reports that the ritual is “still in existence,” possibly referring to the time capsule document, and an 1886 article notes the organization's records, including a constitution and by-laws, were destroyed in a fire.<sup>20</sup> There may have been proceedings, charters, and rosters that were forever lost. It is possible they

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<sup>19</sup> *Mankato Review*, April 27, 1886, January 20, 1897; *Mankato Daily Review*, April 18, 1916; *Mankato Free Press*, January 15, 1929.

<sup>20</sup> *Mankato Review*, April 27, 1886; *Mankato Daily Review*, April 18, 1916.

were in John Meagher's warehouse, which burned down some years after the war.<sup>21</sup> Nonetheless, the ritual document provides some indication of the organization's political activities and mechanisms. This political posturing should be understood as the means to an end, not the end in itself. The desire for white settlers to occupy reservation lands was at the heart of the matter, even if the politicians involved used the group to engage in electioneering activities.

The Knights of the Forest ritual contains mostly political promises and leaves the impression that their motivation was simply to win elections, but the biggest political issues in 1862 Minnesota were land and race. The histories of Mankato and Blue Earth County (both edited and heavily influenced by contemporary Mankato historian Thomas Hughes) read like a Who's Who of Mankato's U.S.-Dakota War profiteers. It is more than likely that most members of the Knights of the Forest personally benefited in some way from Ho-Chunk removal as did Chapman, who was a Harvard-educated land surveyor and Asa Barney, whose brother Sheldon made so much money from the Ho-Chunk lands that he closed another business.<sup>22</sup> Chapman and Sheldon Barney both had real estate interests in the county for years before the war, and all four men purchased land patents in the county that likely earned them profit.<sup>23</sup>

Charles Chapman seemed particularly proud of his involvement. He used racialized and paternalistic language to boast about his role in local economic development, and he wanted to make sure the Ho-Chunk exile was part of that legacy. His portrayals of Mankato men, including

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<sup>21</sup> *Mankato Free Press*, July 23, 1896.

<sup>22</sup> Semi-Centennial Committee on Publications, *Mankato: its first fifty years*. (Mankato, Minn.: Free Press Printing Co., 1903), 95.

<sup>23</sup> Minnesota Geospatial Information Office. General Land Office Historic Plat Map Retrieval System (original plat maps); U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management General Land Office Records. Land Patent Documents (original land patents).

him, usually included their ethnicity. He often characterized white settlers such as Jews, Irish, and Welshmen (like himself) as industrious pioneers paving the way for advancement. But Chapman described the Ho-Chunk people, who arrived in Blue Earth County in 1855, as “miserable savages” who were “the first great drawback to the prosperity” of the county. He recorded the Knights of the Forest history in his 1902 Masonic *History of Mankato Lodge No. 12* and his *Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Trade of the City of Mankato, Minnesota* in 1878. Chapman and his fellow Knights wanted credit for the Knights of the Forest, which they believed to be crucial in the protection and promotion of progress for white settlers.<sup>24</sup> He also seemed proud of the deadly threat they had posed to the Ho-Chunk people.

One newspaper article that was likely authored by Chapman alludes to murders committed by the Knights of the Forest, although no official evidence has yet been uncovered of a Ho-Chunk person killed in Blue Earth County during the winter of 1862-63.<sup>25</sup> The federal agent who lived on the reservation in Blue Earth County, St. Andre Balcombe, did report that “a Winnebago was killed while crossing the Mississippi River, for no other reason than that he was an Indian.” But this was in September 1862 and nearly 100 miles away from Blue Earth County.<sup>26</sup> Also, a Ho-Chunk named John Blackhawk told Thomas Hughes years later that during their removal from the county, the Ho-Chunk were subjected to “ruffian soldiers” who raped

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<sup>24</sup> Charles Chapman, *History of the Mankato Lodge No.12* (Mankato, Minn.: Mankato Masons, 1902); Charles Chapman, *Journals*. Blue Earth County Historical Society, Mankato, Minn. 1856-57, 1876; Charles Chapman, *Mankato and Blue Earth County, Minnesota, A Historical and Descriptive Sketch with the Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Trade of the City of Mankato, Minnesota, for the year 1877* (Mankato, Minn.: Wise and Coffin Printers, 1878), 8.

<sup>25</sup> *Mankato Review*, April 27, 1886.

<sup>26</sup> *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1862* (Washington D.C.: GPO), 1863, 92.

women and “murdered men.”<sup>27</sup> It is unknown if these murders happened at a reservation, on the journey to South Dakota, or if these soldiers were from Blue Earth County. Federal soldiers charged with Ho-Chunk removal were reportedly from Company I of the Tenth Regiment of Minnesota, which was primarily recruited from other Minnesota counties.<sup>28</sup> Hughes claimed that the necessities of wartime allowed the enlistment of soldiers who were “scum...profane, drunken, vicious types,” and “took advantage of their opportunity to commit all kinds of crimes” against the Ho-Chunk people on their journey to South Dakota.<sup>29</sup>

It must be noted that, given the boastful tone of his article, Chapman may have exaggerated the Knights of the Forest’s activities. However, Mankato teetered on the cusp of mob violence against the Dakota prisoners there throughout December 1862, so there is a likelihood Chapman was truthful about these otherwise unreported murders. It is possible that Ho-Chunk homicides on the reservation went unrecorded. After all, Agent Balcombe reported in September 1862 that, “such is the state of public opinion that the [Mississippi River] murderer went unpunished.”<sup>30</sup> It seems this was a statewide practice. One northern Minnesota settler later stated, “If we did kill anybody in those days, it was no crime; you couldn’t hang a man for killing ten Indians.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Thomas Hughes, *Indian chiefs of southern Minnesota: containing sketches of the prominent chieftains of the Dakota and Winnebago tribes from 1825-1865* ed. Thomas Lowe Hughes. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Minneapolis: Ross and Haines, Inc., 1969), 179; Thomas Lowe Hughes and Family. Papers. Minnesota Historical Society. 1845-2007.

<sup>28</sup> Minnesota. Board of Commissioners on Publication of History of Minnesota in Civil and Indian Wars. *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars 1861-1865*. (St. Paul, Minn.: Pioneer Press Co., 1890), 1: 455-457.

<sup>29</sup> Hughes, *Indian chiefs of southern Minnesota*, 179-81.

<sup>30</sup> *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1862*, 92-93.

<sup>31</sup> Anton Treuer, *The Assassination of Hole in the Day* (St. Paul, MN: Borealis Books, 2011), 145.

Various militias and ad hoc guardsmen groups existed in Mankato, throughout Blue Earth County, and at the Winnebago Agency during the U.S.-Dakota War. But all government-sanctioned militias had been mustered out of service by the time the Knights were active in January 1863. John Meagher's Mankato Home Guard defended Mankato and vicinity, so perhaps some of those men refocused their energies to the Knights of the Forest.<sup>32</sup> Regardless of whether or not the Knights actually engaged in paramilitary vigilante violence, the threat was real. The Ho-Chunk people were in danger of a slaughter by their neighbors at any moment between September 1862 and May 1863. Agent Balcombe wrote that whites had informed him the Ho-Chunk "will be massacred if they go out of their own country," so he had stationed soldiers at the agency and was attempting to keep the Ho-Chunk within the reservation.<sup>33</sup>

It is unclear if the function of U.S. soldiers posted at the agency throughout the winter of 1862-63 was to guard the settlers, the Ho-Chunk people, or just keep the peace. Balcombe said the Ho-Chunk people were uneasy with the nearby hostility, and the arrival of soldiers led by Captain Alonzo Edgerton, had "allayed their fears to a great extent and also allayed to some extent the fears of the surrounding white people."<sup>34</sup> But as Thomas Hughes noted, these soldiers were just as antagonistic as the settlers toward the Ho-Chunk people and believed "the only way to avoid Indian massacres was to massacre all the Indians."<sup>35</sup>

Very little documentation exists for activities at the Blue Earth County reservation during the months of January through April 1863 when the Knights of the Forest was operational. There

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<sup>32</sup> Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 125, 237,

<sup>33</sup> *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1862*, 92.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>35</sup> Hughes, *Indian chiefs of southern Minnesota*, 180.

is a curious absence of Winnebago Agency letters from these months. Most information from Agent Balcombe is collected from his Annual Report. But according to Ho-Chunk claims filed against the government in 1931, the army held them in captivity the winter following the U.S.-Dakota War before forcing their removal at gunpoint in the spring. The *Mankato Record* and Hughes also reported that soldiers were directed to round up a Ho-Chunk leader, Winneshiek, and his followers after they refused to leave.<sup>36</sup>

Whether the Ho-Chunk on the Blue Earth County reservation were aware of the Knights of the Forest is undetermined, though they certainly experienced intensified aggression from the nearby whites. Yet they still favored the Southern Minnesota reservation over a move to South Dakota. When visiting their newly designated reservation in South Dakota, one Ho-Chunk leader told the agent he was willing to risk the unfriendly white neighbors over the barren wasteland of Crow Creek, saying, “We are not afraid to die, but we do not wish to die here.”<sup>37</sup> Their agent’s letters and contemporary newspaper articles attest that they wanted either to stay on their Blue Earth County reservation despite the hostile neighbors, or preferably return to their homeland of Wisconsin where they knew anti-Indian sentiment among whites was equally strong. They had no desire to move farther from their ancestral home to uninhabitable land. But experience probably told them that an American war with nearby indigenous people meant they would be forced to move again.

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<sup>36</sup> *Mankato Record*, May 16, 23, 1863; Hughes, *Indian chiefs of southern Minnesota*, 178.

<sup>37</sup> Mark Diedrich, *Winnebago Oratory: Great Moments in the Recorded Speech of the Hochungra, 1742-1887* (Rochester, Minn: Coyote Books, 1991), 92.

Ho-Chunk people had a long history of war and broken treaties with the United States before their arrival in Blue Earth County. The American pattern of deception, colonization, conflict, anti-Indian sentiment, coercion, confinement, and removal was old news to them by the time the U.S.-Dakota War commenced in 1862. Some Ho-Chunks had ceded the most lucrative area of their Wisconsin homeland to the United States in 1829 amid a similar post-conflict anti-Indian atmosphere. Leaders from clans not authorized to make land agreements signed the treaty that ceded the last of the Wisconsin Ho-Chunk homeland in 1837. They had been intentionally sent to treaty negotiations to show that the Ho-Chunk did not want to leave their land.<sup>38</sup>

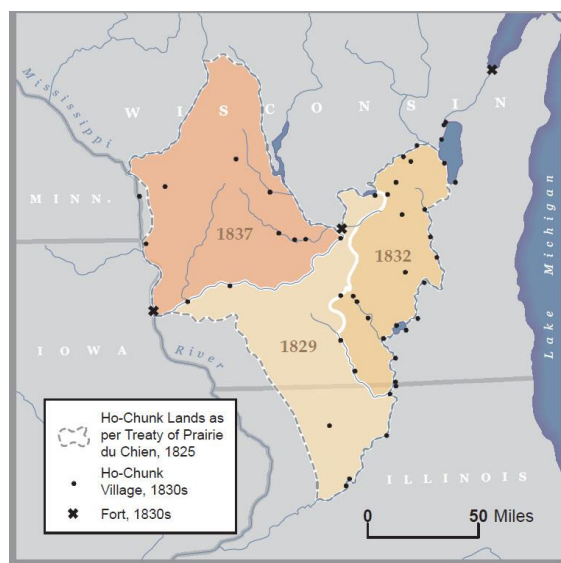
The blemished and complicated record of the Wisconsin Ho-Chunk removals continued and intensified in Minnesota as American expansion and pre-Civil War discord took hold of the nation. In the end, it took decades of repeated military roundups to physically force the Ho-Chunk from their homeland at gunpoint, but hundreds of families yet remained. Ho-Chunk leaders in Blue Earth County, such as Little Decora, Winneshiek, and Little Priest, were descendants of those early treaty signers. They likely knew exactly what to expect from Minnesotans when hostilities started in 1862.

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<sup>38</sup> Lonetree, "Visualizing Native Survivance," 17.

## CHAPTER II. HO-CHUNK HISTORY

By the time their reservation was created in Blue Earth County in 1855, the Ho-Chunks had much different priorities than the nearby Dakota. Thousands of Ho-Chunk people had already been forced from their ancestral homeland to several different reservations and had experienced the brutal results of encounters with Americans. By the late 1850s, newspapers, government documents, and letters all indicate that they just wanted to be assured a lasting home. If the government reservation could not be in their Wisconsin homeland, the second choice seemed to be in Blue Earth County. Meanwhile, the Dakota were fast approaching the culmination of a decade of change from land cessions, reservation confinement, and loss of mutual cultural understanding with whites. Ho-Chunks in Blue Earth County had finally moved to land that was somewhat agreeable to them, but the U.S.-Dakota War heightened passionate calls for their forced removal, encouraged by the Knights of the Forest.



Map 1. Cessions of Ho-Chunk Homelands: 1829, 1832, 1837. Map by Cole Sutton.



## “People of the Big Voice”

The Ho-Chunk people are indigenous to Wisconsin and have lived on the land within its borders since time immemorial.<sup>1</sup> The name they use for themselves is *Hochungra*, “which translates to ‘People of the Big Voice’ or ‘People of the Sacred Language.’” and “refers to the Ho-Chunk belief that they are the original people from whom all Siouan-speaking people sprang.”<sup>2</sup> Nearby people like the Ojibwe called them the Winnebago, and Europeans followed suit. Ho-Chunk tradition says their people originated at Red Banks north of Green Bay. Anthropologists believe the Ho-Chunk are most likely related to ancient mound builders who migrated to the region from the south and east. Mounds similar to those found in a large ancient Mississippian culture were found throughout the Ho-Chunk homelands, and animals portrayed in some Wisconsin mounds corresponded to Ho-Chunk clans. Jean Nicolle, the first European to visit the Ho-Chunk in 1634, recorded that the tribe numbered in the thousands and spanned most of the region that is now Wisconsin.<sup>3</sup>

Over the next few decades, encroachment from northern Algonquian tribes and disease drastically reduced their population before eventual recovery and growth during the fur trade era. According to oral traditions and early documents, Ho-Chunk people were especially impacted by disease, possibly because they were concentrated in large communities. Eventually, their former

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<sup>1</sup> Amy Lonetree, “Visualizing Native Survivance: Encounters with My Ho-Chunk Ancestors in the Family Photographs of Charlse Van Chaick,” in *People of the Big Voice: Photographs of Ho-Chunk Families by Charles Van Schaick, 1879-1942* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2011), 15.

<sup>2</sup> Patty Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin: Histories of Endurance and Renewal*. (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2013), 44; Lonetree, “Visualizing Native Survivance,” 15.

<sup>3</sup> Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin*, 6; Paul Radin, *The Winnebago Tribe*. Landmarks in Anthropology. (New York: Johnson Reprint, 1923).

Algonquian enemies married into Ho-Chunk families. The Algonquian influence on their social and political structures as well as the growing fur trade led Ho-Chunk groups to expand into smaller villages south and west from the larger villages of the Green Bay area home base.<sup>4</sup> Their population and prosperity was on the rebound in the early 1700s when the French began to take an active interest in the area. The Ho-Chunk were reluctant to trade with Europeans, and many only engaged in the fur trade as a side business to their own more successful sustenance patterns of agriculture, hunting, and lead mining.<sup>5</sup> By the late eighteenth century, Ho-Chunk territory included the area from Green Bay in eastern Wisconsin across the state to Prairie du Chien, Black River Falls and the lead mining districts of south and west Wisconsin.<sup>6</sup>

Prior to European contact, Ho-Chunk women held prominent positions of power and esteem in a matrilineal society. They served as the civil peace chiefs while men served as military chiefs in a dual leadership system.<sup>7</sup> Mid-seventeenth century matriarchal leader, Hopokoekau or Glory of the Morning, maintained stability in the tribe during a period of intertribal wars, early European encounters and devastating diseases. She was a leader from the dominant Thunderbird clan, who resided in the Green Bay area. Sometime in early or mid-eighteenth century Hopokoekau married a Frenchman who gave her several children before leaving with their daughter. This union inaugurated a dynasty of Ho-Chunk leaders who used a variation of his name, Decora. Hopokoekau's sons and grandsons became prominent diplomats

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<sup>4</sup> Nancy Lurie. *Wisconsin Indians* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2002), 13-14.

<sup>5</sup> Patricia Richards. "Winnebago subsistence: change and continuity," *The Wisconsin Archeologist* 74, no. 1/4 (1993): 272-289.

<sup>6</sup> Lurie, *Wisconsin Indians*, 13-14.

<sup>7</sup> Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin*, 44-45.

and statesmen, and one of her granddaughters went to Washington to sign a treaty.<sup>8</sup> Decoras signed every Ho-Chunk treaty with the United States and were perceived by settlers to be “the most powerful of the Winnebago families.”<sup>9</sup>

Other Ho-Chunk women managed day-to-day village work. Men traveled on long hunting trips while women maintained farms, mines, and villages. Ho-Chunk people had been mining lead for hundreds of years as part of their regular seasonal rotation of production, and women were the primary workers of these mines. Women had influence over mining techniques and who could access the mines. When French traders arrived, the only white men who were allowed to dig were those who married Ho-Chunk women. After a favored Canadian trader named Julien Dubuque died in the late eighteenth century, the Ho-Chunk evicted all whites from the mining area except three who were married to indigenous women.<sup>10</sup>

Since the Ho-Chunk had the lead mines and agriculture, they hunted more often for subsistence than for market. This meant they were less dependent on the fur trade than neighboring tribes.<sup>11</sup> The mines provided the southern and western bands with economic autonomy for several centuries, which they maintained during the brief era of British presence in their homelands. This lack of attachment to market trade meant the American arrival on the

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<sup>8</sup> Genevieve G. McBride, *Women's Wisconsin: From Native Matriarchies to the New Millennium* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2005): 3-5.

<sup>9</sup> Louise P. Kellogg, "Glory of the Morning and Decorah Family," *Madison Democrat*, February 12, 1912.

<sup>10</sup> Lucy Eldersveld Murphy, "Autonomy and the Economic Roles of Indian Women of the Fox-Wisconsin Riverway Region, 1763-1832" in *Negotiators of Change: Historical Perspectives on Native American Women* ed. Nancy Shoemaker (New York: Routledge, 1995), 81-82; Lucy Eldersveld Murphy, "'Their Women Quite Industrious Miners,' Native American Lead Mining in the Upper Mississippi Valley, 1788-1832," in *Enduring Nations: Native Americans in the Midwest* ed. David Edmunds (Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 2008), 36-53.

<sup>11</sup> Murphy, "Autonomy and the Economic Roles of Indian Women of the Fox-Wisconsin Riverway Region, 1763-1832," 81-82; Murphy, "'Their Women Quite Industrious Miners,'" 36-53; Richards, "Winnebago Sustenance," 3-5.

scene in the early nineteenth-century was less than welcome. Unlike the British and French before them, the Americans established communities and farms. They also trespassed to mine Ho-Chunk minerals and created permanent settlements on Ho-Chunk land.

Many Ho-Chunk were uncomfortable with the American intention to stay on their homeland. Consequently, some fought alongside the British in the War of 1812 and joined Tecumseh's pan-Indian struggle in order to resist American encroachment.<sup>12</sup> However, once those wars were lost, many Ho-Chunk leaders quickly moved toward diplomatic relations with the United States. Still, some Ho-Chunk bands were rumored to remain on the British payroll at the very same time other groups signed the Ho-Chunk's first "treaty of peace and friendship" with the United States in 1816.<sup>13</sup>

Then, in 1825 the U.S. government brought together a number of indigenous nations, including Ojibwe, Dakota and Ho-Chunk, for a treaty council at Prairie du Chien. This treaty was supposed to end disputes over hunting areas by drawing agreed upon borders, but it mostly prepared the way for future land cession treaties with each nation. A Ho-Chunk leader named Carmani told the treaty council that all groups had equal claims to parts of the land and "it would be difficult to divide it—it belongs as much to one as the other." He argued that they held the

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<sup>12</sup>Loew, *Indian Nations of Wisconsin*, 46-47. Tecumseh's War ended decades of struggle for control of the Great Lakes Region between the United States and various tribes. After Tecumseh and the American Indian Confederacy lost the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811, many indigenous people simply joined the British and continued to fight the United States in the War of 1812.

<sup>13</sup> John W. Hall, *Uncommon Defense: Indian Allies in the Black Hawk War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), 80; Martin Zanger, "Red Bird," in *American Indian Leaders: Studies in Diversity* ed. David Edmunds, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 41-43; *Treaties between the Winnebago Indians and the United States of America, 1817-1856*. Museum of Anthropology Miscellaneous Series. v.1. (Greeley: Colorado State College, 1967).

land in common and no group “had any particular land.”<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, the government created borders between the Ho-Chunk and their neighbors for the first time. Some Ho-Chunk people avoided and ignored American intrusion for as long as possible. But once those first boundaries were established at Prairie du Chien, Ho-Chunk leaders were in an almost constant state of treaty negotiation for the next four decades.

### **Ho-Chunk Resistance and Diplomacy**

As the government became increasingly unable and/or unwilling to stop intrusion and theft by settlers, Ho-Chunks in the lead mining district found themselves with more and more white antagonists for neighbors. The settlers not only stole their minerals, but they also abducted Ho-Chunk people. One Ho-Chunk leader complained that a group of white men “came and took some of our women, and we could hardly get them back.”<sup>15</sup> Meanwhile, Secretary of War John C. Calhoun threatened the annihilation of all Ho-Chunk people when just one or two were accused of a crime. In one incident, U.S. Officials held Ho-Chunk leaders hostage until they turned over three men who were accused of murdering white settlers. On another occasion, Ho-Chunk leaders and American authorities were unable to find Ho-Chunks who murdered a settler

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<sup>14</sup> *Ratified treaty no. 139, Documents relating to the negotiation of the treaty of August 19, 1825, with the Sioux, Chippewa, Sauk and Fox, Menominee, Iowa and Winnebago Indians and part of the Ottawa, and Potawatomi of the Illinois Indians* (National Archives), 28.

<sup>15</sup> *Ratified treaty no. 153, Documents relating to the negotiation of the treaty of August 25, 1828, with the Winnebago and United Potawatomi, Chippewa, and Ottawa Indians* (National Archives), 9.

family, so an innocent man who was in custody, named The Boxer, offered his own life in order to save his people.<sup>16</sup>

A series of events in June 1827 brought Ho-Chunk anger over the invasion by American settlers to a boiling point. American miners continued to encroach on the Ho-Chunk lead mines without permission, and an attack on Ho-Chunk women by American keelboat men went unpunished by American authorities. After a contingent of Dakota men misled the Ho-Chunk to believe that the army had executed some of their relatives at Fort Snelling, Ho-Chunk leaders broke diplomatic relations with the United States by not showing up for a treaty council that had been gathered by the government to draw new borders between several regional tribes. Then, Prairie Du Chien chief Red Bird and a few followers attacked a mixed-ancestry family and an army keelboat. What has been called the “Winnebago War” or “Red Bird’s Uprising,” was mainly just a small conflict among a few men. Most Ho-Chunk leaders were attempting diplomatic resolutions whereas Red Bird diverged with his own solution of direct action.<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, a panic spread among whites throughout the area and settlers “were convinced that the entire Indian population of the region had risen against them.” Militias mobilized across Illinois and Wisconsin, where settlers built provisional blockhouses and forts. People in Chicago were terrified that the nearby Potawatomi tribe would join Red Bird. Wisconsin businessman and civic leader, General Henry Dodge, organized the “Committee of Safety” in Galena, now Illinois, that later grew into a militia. Territorial Governor Lewis Cass

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<sup>16</sup> Zanger, “Red Bird,” 67-69.

<sup>17</sup> Hall, *Uncommon Defense*, 80; Zanger, “Red Bird,” 64-87.

attempted to calm settlers before traveling to St. Louis to request military action. It took nearly two months for General Henry Atkinson's federal army to penetrate Ho-Chunk country in pursuit of Red Bird with the aid of Henry Dodge's militia from Galena. As Atkinson moved into the Ho-Chunk homeland in August 1827, Cass revived the treaty council that had been put on hold back in June. He then "played a shrewd game of psychological warfare" upon the Ho-Chunk Nation. Dispatches from the army advancement into Ho-Chunk territory were read aloud to the entire council of several regional tribes in an attempt to isolate the Ho-Chunk people from their neighbors.<sup>18</sup>

The lone Ho-Chunk orator at the August 1827 council attempted to maintain the Ho-Chunk Nation's right to the lead mines and only received threats of extermination in return. Chief Four Legs told the government "we want to know your intentions...we are afraid of you." He received his answer the next day when the army threatened to attack the tribe "so hard that they will remember it and their children's children."<sup>19</sup> After days of remaining silent while he listened to communications about the army advancing on his people, Four Legs reminded the government that the hostilities had been incited from "your young men at the mines...working without our permission," to say nothing of the capture of Ho-Chunk women by army keelboat men. Cass promised to evict American miners, but he added, "You know as well as we do that we must have blood for blood."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Peter Shrake, "Chasing an Elusive War: The Illinois Militia and the Winnebago War of 1827," *Journal of Illinois History* 12, no.1 (Spring 2009): 33-45.

<sup>19</sup> *Ratified treaty no. 148, documents relating to the negotiation of the treaty of August 11, 1827, with the Chippewa, Menominee and Winnebago Indians, August 11, 1827* (National Archives), 25-26.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 31, 33.



Figure 2. Red Bird. *Source:* [Wisconsin Historical Society](#)

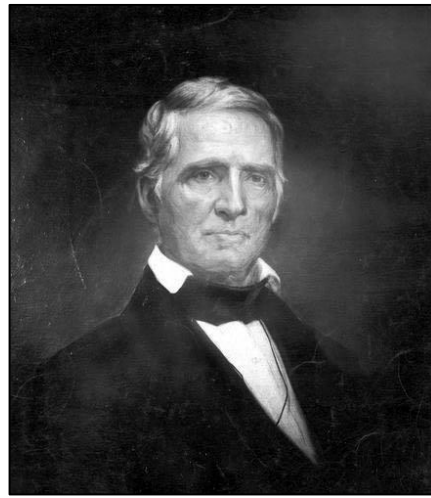


Figure 3. Henry Dodge. *Source:* [Wisconsin Historical Society](#)



Figure 4. Waukon Decorah. *Source:* [New York Public Library](#)

As they awaited word of Red Bird's fate, the council turned to the pretenses under which it had originally meant to assemble back in June. The government was concerned with boundary lines between the Ho-Chunk, Menomonee and Ojibwe (although American trespassers were the greatest problem for the Ho-Chunk). Four Legs continued his tribe's stance by upholding the Ho-Chunk opposition to needless American-drawn inter-tribal boundaries, saying the new white officials should "appeal to the ancient traders to say whether they have not at all times...found us hunting as brothers." He then ended his speech by stating emphatically, "We do not need any line."<sup>21</sup> Clearly, the Ho-Chunk leader was less concerned with intertribal borders than with American encroachment.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 18.



After Waukon Decorah and other leaders turned over Red Bird, U.S. officials coerced them to sign a document allowing the illegal white miners to remain in the mines until there was a more official adjustment to borders. Ho-Chunk traditions of justice meant they expected Red Bird and his cohorts to be executed and were dismayed that they instead suffered in prison. They told government officials:

We gave them up to you...we did so to keep our nation from a war, our women and children from slaughter and to save our country to live and hunt in...but now these Indians' lodges are desolate. They are not in the hunting camps or war parties—yet we cannot mourn them—they are not dead.<sup>22</sup>

Ho-Chunk leaders then negotiated the release of Red Bird in exchange for permanent ownership of the lead mines, but he died of illness in prison before he could be discharged.<sup>23</sup> U.S. authorities had led Ho-Chunk leaders to believe that Red Bird's surrender assured there would be no more bloodshed and they would be allowed to remain on their homeland.

Unfortunately, thousands of settlers poured into the mining region after the conflict had ended. Just one year later at the treaty negotiations of August 1828, the conversation had completely changed. Henry Dodge was now a veteran lead miner. He had apparently stumbled upon a perfect mine while traveling through Ho-Chunk country in pursuit of Red Bird, set up a smelting operation there, and never left. The Ho-Chunk's government agent at the time, Joseph Street, threatened Dodge with military force to leave their lands. But as more armed miners joined his operation and Street found little support from the military, Dodge was able to avoid

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<sup>22</sup> Zanger, "Red Bird," 77-78.

<sup>23</sup> Lonetree, "Visualizing Native Survivance," 16.

removal just long enough to have the lines re-evaluated so that his claim to the smelting operation was somehow valid.<sup>24</sup> He eventually became the Wisconsin Territorial Governor and a U.S. Senator for the state Wisconsin. With local American leaders like Dodge openly setting up mining camps on tribal land, the government and the Ho-Chunk people acknowledged that it was now impossible to keep Americans out of their mines.

### **The Takeover of Ho-Chunk Homelands**

As encroachment on their land increased, the economic resources of the Ho-Chunk people decreased. One Ho-Chunk leader, Spotted Arm, asked the government to at least pay for the minerals that whites stole from their mines “so that we may have enough to keep our families warm.”<sup>25</sup> Waukon Decorah pointedly told a treaty council, “White men are where we need to hunt. Now that there are so many on it, we see no game...do not make us all suffer...what happened last year [with Red Bird] did not come from us.”<sup>26</sup> White settlement itself had been detrimental to both the scope of Ho-Chunk hunting grounds and the game population. Government agents agreed with these facts and argued that their inability to hunt on it meant that the land was “more valuable to us than it is to you.”<sup>27</sup> The government was not going to pay for small amounts of stolen minerals because they wanted the entire mine region.

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<sup>24</sup>Ronald A. Rayman, “Confrontation at the Fever River Lead Mining District: Joseph Montfort Street vs. Henry Dodge, 1827–28,” *Annals of Iowa* 44, no. 4 (Spring 1978): 278-95.

<sup>25</sup> *Ratified treaty no. 153, documents relating to the negotiation of the treaty of August 25, 1828, with the Winnebago, and United Potawatomi, Chippewa, and Ottawa Indians* (National Archives), 13.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

The Ho-Chunk leaders successfully resisted a land cession for another year even though a provisional treaty was signed to ensure its inevitability. Their diplomats stood their ground on several issues despite the presence of a settler panic after Red Bird's actions. When the Americans drew a map of the Ho-Chunk lead mining district that they wished to purchase, tribal leaders in attendance all agreed, "The line is not right." They refused to make a final agreement until several of their key leaders could attend the next spring. A Ho-Chunk leader named Little Priest told them he was not going to sell his land or have it "cut up" with borderlines.<sup>28</sup> But Ho-Chunk leaders were forced to sell the rich lead mining district the following year in a finalized 1829 treaty with the United States, "for the shockingly low sum of 29 cents an acre. Even by a conservative estimate, the land was valued at \$1.25 an acre."<sup>29</sup>

Just three years later in 1832, another panic spread among white settlers in Ho-Chunk country during the Black Hawk War. A Sauk leader named Black Hawk led around a thousand of his people, mostly women and children, back to their Illinois homeland in defiance of a U.S. removal treaty. The U.S. military enlisted Ho-Chunk soldiers to aid their attacks on the Sauk in parts of Wisconsin. But other Ho-Chunks were sympathetic to Black Hawk, and some leaders like Winneshiek and White Crow tried to appear neutral.<sup>30</sup> Later that fall, Waukon Decorah aided in the surrender of Black Hawk to end the war, a fact that he used for leverage the rest of his life.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 18, 20.

<sup>29</sup> Lonetree, "Visualizing Native Survivance," 16.

<sup>30</sup> Hall, *Uncommon Defense*, 9, 204, 211-213.

Nearly thirty years later at an 1859 treaty council in Blue Earth County, Decorah would demand Ho-Chunk pensions, equal to those that white veterans of the Black Hawk War had received.<sup>31</sup>

In 1832, Ho-Chunk leaders were coerced into signing treaties that ceded their eastern lands amid worsened anti-Indian sentiment after the Black Hawk War. This left them with the area between the Black and Mississippi Rivers and also contained a mandate for the Ho-Chunk to move to a Neutral Ground reservation in northeastern Iowa to act as a buffer between Sauk, Fox and Dakota people.<sup>32</sup> As more settlers arrived in the region, Michigan prepared for statehood and Wisconsin Territory encompassed what was still the Ho-Chunk's sovereign land in 1836. But by 1837, the clamor for Ho-Chunk removal from Wisconsin had reached a fever pitch as settlers began to anticipate the formation of their own state.

The Ho-Chunk were officially forced from the remainder of their homeland in an 1837 treaty that paved the way for Wisconsin statehood. The government attempted to move all Ho-Chunk people to the Iowa reservation. But this treaty was not recognized by much of the tribe because the treaty signers were not leaders who were authorized to negotiate land cessions, so many groups refused to leave.<sup>33</sup> Soldiers were then tasked with their removal in 1840 and the Ho-Chunk protested at every camp. People sobbed, kissed the ground and lamented the forced abandonment of their ancestors' resting place. A group of elderly women on the Kickapoo River begged the soldiers to kill them rather than force them to leave their homes on an impossible

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<sup>31</sup> *Ratified treaty no. 310, documents relating to the negotiation of the treaty of April 15, 1859, with the Winnebago Indians* (National Archives).

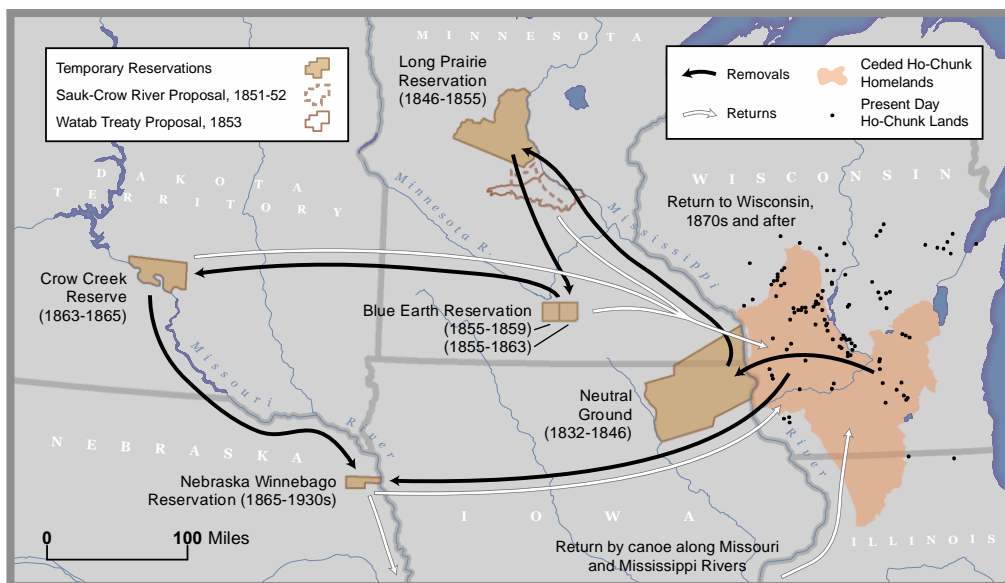
<sup>32</sup> Lonetree, "Visualizing Native Survivance," 17.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

journey. The soldiers permitted the women to remain, along with three young men to hunt for them. But most Ho-Chunk people were brought to Prairie du Chien for transportation to Iowa.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Hall, *Uncommon Defense*, 260-261.



Map 2. Ho-Chunk Relocations. Map by Cole Sutton.

### CHAPTER III. HO-CHUNK DISPLACEMENT

The Ho-Chunk people were so attached to their homeland that the government's forced removal efforts were largely unsuccessful in the long run. From this point on, the Ho-Chunk Nation consistently expressed to the federal government a desire to live on or return to their Wisconsin homeland, and over the years many left distant reservations to go home. Constant complaints by Wisconsin settlers brought several attempts to round up the Ho-Chunk yet again for forced relocation. The government even offered payments for their detainment for a time, which was to be deducted from tribal annuities. But with federal and state governments unwilling to fully fund an intensive forced relocation effort and bounty hunters incapable of the task, many Ho-Chunk were able to evade removal from Wisconsin. Furthermore, some returned

when they faced desperate reservations conditions. There were about 400 Ho-Chunks estimated in Wisconsin after the 1840 removal effort, a number that increased to around 1000 by 1871.<sup>1</sup>

The Ho-Chunk people spent a brief time at the Neutral Ground reservation in what is now Iowa, but they did not remain on the reservation at all times as the nearby settlers wished. They returned to Wisconsin and left the reservation to hunt or do business in the area. The mere appearance of native people made white settlers uneasy, so they began to advocate that the Ho-Chunk be moved “away from white settlers.”<sup>2</sup> Ho-Chunk leaders chose land in southwestern Minnesota when they were informed that the new reservation would be west of the Mississippi River. But they ended up in central Minnesota on landscape that was unfamiliar to them and incompatible with their lifestyle.

### **First Years in Minnesota**

Minnesotans hailed the news when Ho-Chunk people first arrived in the state. After an 1847 economic downturn, white settlers welcomed a new Ho-Chunk reservation that brought much needed business activity to the state from tribal annuities received as payment for their land. While Wisconsin settlers were anxious to get rid of Ho-Chunk people, some Minnesota

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<sup>1</sup> Robert E. Bieder, *Native American Communities in Wisconsin, 1600-1960: A Study of Tradition and Change* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 171; United States Bureau of Indian Affairs and National Archives (U.S.). *Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-81. Winnebago Agency, 1826-1875*. Washington, D.C: The Bureau, 1826-1875. Reels 931-946.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Pluth, *Account of Winnebago Affairs at Long Prairie, Minnesota Territory, 1848-1855*, (Master’s Thesis, St. Cloud State University, 1963), 6-7.

businessmen lobbied to bring treaty tribes into the state.<sup>3</sup> Although Ho-Chunk leaders had eyed the Mankato region or Missouri River near Omaha, they had actually agreed to purchase a vague area of land somewhere north of the Minnesota River and west of the Mississippi. As the government looked for a tract of land, Ho-Chunk leaders asked for land in Wisconsin, or their second choice was in the Southwestern Minnesota prairie lands.<sup>4</sup>

The Iowa Ho-Chunk had entrusted their trader Henry Rice with selection of their first Minnesota home, and he failed to purchase the prairie land from the Dakota that Ho-Chunk leaders had requested. Instead, a tract of land more favorable to Rice's business was acquired from the Ojibwe near Long Prairie in present-day central Minnesota. The Ho-Chunk reservation was moved there, where they would be isolated from other traders and their Wisconsin families. They spent their first years in Minnesota in extremely unhappy conditions surrounded by dense forest, whereas the Ho-Chunk Nation's sustenance patterns required prairie land. Ho-Chunk leaders began working toward a more suitable environment almost immediately.<sup>5</sup>

The Long Prairie reservation was problematic for the Ho-Chunk from the start. First, it was located in between the feuding Dakota and Ojibwe tribes to function as a buffer zone, an intention that officials were fairly honest about. Next, the landscape was covered with more forest than prairie grass as they were accustomed and requested. The Ho-Chunk people complained of mosquitoes, unsuitable farmland, and most devastatingly, the lack of sufficient game. The Long Prairie reservation was also inaccessibly too far from their Wisconsin home and

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<sup>3</sup> Mary Wingerd, *North Country: The Making of Minnesota* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 136-137.

<sup>4</sup> Edward Pluth, "The Failed Watab Treaty of 1853," *Minnesota History* 57, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 4-5.

<sup>5</sup> Pluth, *Account of Winnebago Affairs at Long Prairie*.



relatives, not to mention from other trade markets. Traders like Rice had virtually no competition in Long Prairie and were able to push their profits at the expense of the Ho-Chunk.<sup>6</sup>

Since the Ho-Chunk were very unhappy and Territorial Governors Alexander Ramsey and Willis Gorman received so many complaints from nearby settlers as well as the Ho-Chunk leaders, both governors considered new locations for the next reservation. Ramsey first opposed proposed Ho-Chunk requests for a new reservation before agreeing to support a land exchange. Long Prairie area businessmen like Rice resisted a relocation and were able to get the support of both the Ho-Chunk's agent and the Commissioner of Indian affairs before Gorman replaced Ramsey in 1853. Governor Gorman, who "stands out for his unstinting efforts to effect the land exchange" for the Ho-Chunk people, seemed determined to find a home that would satisfy the



Figure 5. Henry Rice, ca. 1860.  
Source: [Minnesota Historical Society](#).



Figure 6. Willis Gorman, ca. 1860. Source: [Minnesota Historical Society](#).

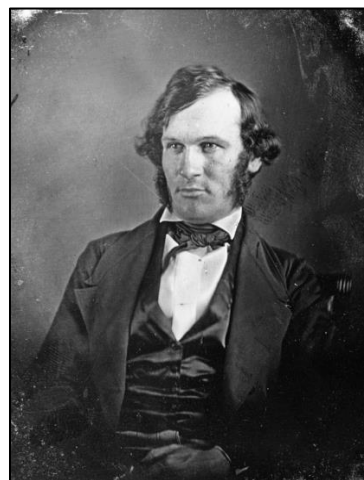


Figure 7. Alexander Ramsey, ca. 1850. Source: [Minnesota Historical Society](#).

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<sup>6</sup> Pluth, "Failed Watab Treaty," 5-7.

Ho-Chunk and maintain the promise made by the government.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, every site proposed met with strong opposition.

In 1853, the Ho-Chunk signed a treaty that created a reservation near the Mississippi River and closer to their preferred location. Settlers around the state as well as the Minnesota territorial press expressed opposition to a treaty that would evict whites from the Minnetonka area that had only recently been acquired from the Dakota people. The Ho-Chunk's agent also opposed this reservation, citing tribe's past experience with "vicious whites" along with their bad reputation among settlers. Congress returned an amended version of the treaty that offered a choice of three different locations that had been previously requested by the tribe, but the Ho-Chunk rejected it. The record shows contradictions in Ho-Chunk approval of this treaty, which is probably evidence of the tribal divisions, and the tendency for government officials to recognize whomever they saw fit as Ho-Chunk leaders to sign treaties.<sup>8</sup>

It took two more years to negotiate and secure a new treaty, and by then the lumber on the Long Prairie reservation had become more valuable than the business created by their annuities. Henry Rice, now engaged in the timber business, was again involved with administration and implementation of the move even though he had proven to act only in his own economic interests. But the Ho-Chunk leaders had selected the land for their reservation this time, and it was the same choice some leaders had made back in 1846 before they were moved to the despised Long Prairie reservation. So they agreed to exchange their central Minnesota land

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<sup>7</sup> Wingerd, *North Country*, 222.

<sup>8</sup> Pluth, "Failed Watab Treaty," 13-18.

for a smaller Blue Earth County reservation in 1855. This of course brought Ho-Chunk people onto recently ceded Dakota lands as tensions were rising toward the U.S.-Dakota War.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Settlement of Minnesota and the Dakota Treaties**

The land that is now Minnesota was first the homeland of Dakota people. Before Europeans arrived, Ojibwe groups had moved farther west and south into Minnesota from the Great Lakes Region. Southern Minnesota was inhabited by eastern bands of Dakota in the early nineteenth-century, with the Mdewakanton Dakota occupying the St. Anthony Falls area. They first traded European goods with other tribes in the seventeenth century, followed by a succession of explorers and then French, English and American fur traders in subsequent centuries. When Ho-Chunk leaders were signing their first land cession treaties with Americans who had already moved onto their mines in the 1830s and 1840s, Mdewakanton Dakota leader, Little Crow, and other Dakota leaders were also traveling to Washington to lay diplomatic foundations. They too watched as Americans set up permanent settlements that were far more intrusive than the previous whites of the fur trade era had ever built.<sup>10</sup>

The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux and the Mendota Treaty in 1851 together opened most of southern Minnesota for settlement when eastern Dakota bands were pressured to sell their land to the government. The United States obtained almost 35 million acres of land from Dakota

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>10</sup> For an understanding of early Minnesota history and the Dakota Treaties, see Gary Clayton Anderson, *Little Crow: Spokesman for the Sioux* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1986); Wingerd, *North Country*.

people and confined them to reservations that were too small to accommodate their lifestyle, culture, or even basic subsistence. Missionaries and government agents encouraged the Dakota to farm in order to adapt to the new smaller hunting grounds. The government agents who doled out payments even showed favoritism to the farmer Indians as an incentive to give up traditional lifeways. However, most of the Dakota continued to depend on hunting and annuities for subsistence. As white settlement increased in the early 1850s, game became scarce and some native people turned to subsistence farming that often suffered from bad crop years. Late annuity payments from the government increasingly meant life or death.<sup>11</sup>

### **The Ho-Chunk Move to Blue Earth County**

At this point, the Ho-Chunk and Dakota people had different priorities. The Ho-Chunk moved near the southwestern Minnesota Dakota reservation in 1855 right as conditions were becoming unbearable for the Dakota people. They were experiencing frustration over a decade of white encroachment that robbed them of their resources and threatened their culture. Dakota leaders had been pressured to sign treaties by the United States, and settlers constantly trespassed on reservation lands.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, many Ho-Chunk leaders seemed to simply want an acceptable permanent home after two removals from unsatisfactory reservations. Even though they appealed first, once again, to have a reservation in Wisconsin, the Ho-Chunk who moved to Blue Earth County believed, and the government promised, that it would be their last move.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Anderson, *Little Crow*, 121.

Unlike the previous two reservations, the Ho-Chunks had selected this prime farmland themselves as an acceptable location to make their home.<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, there were pressures building just north of their new home that the Ho-Chunk knew all too well.

During the 1850s whites in Blue Earth County, as well as settlers in other areas under consideration, like Montevideo and Minnetonka, organized mass protests when they heard news that a reservation was planned. Southern Minnesota settlers had rejoiced at the two 1851 Dakota treaties that enabled massive settlement, but they turned out en masse to object when the government signed a treaty with the Ho-Chunk in 1855. This treaty evicted all “pre-emptors” from eight Blue Earth County townships and provided for their compensation to make way for a Ho-Chunk reservation. When their agent employed the county surveyor to draw the boundary lines in April, “the [settlers] raised a most vigorous protest against these confiscations of their territory.” They lamented that all that remained of their county was a “thin shell embracing at its center a big Indian reservation.” So on June 2, 1855, settlers within or near the reservation lines held an opposition meeting with a chairman, secretary and orators.<sup>14</sup>

This assembly signed resolutions expressing a concern for the safety of nearby white settlers, but mostly they complained about losing land that they did not even own. “Pre-emptors” were settlers who hoped they would be granted legal ownership of public lands based on an 1854 law that allowed people to file an intention to purchase land that they improved and occupied.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Pluth, “Failed Watab Treaty,” 17-18.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County and Biographies of its Leading Citizens* (Marceline, Mo.: Walsworth Publishing Company, 1901), 59-60.

<sup>15</sup> Verne E. Chatelain, “The Federal Land Policy and Minnesota Politics, 1854-60,” *Minnesota History* 22, no. 3 (1941): 237.

Despite the settlers' objections to "the putting so many savages as a menace to the lives and property of the adjacent white settlements," almost 2000 Ho-Chunk people arrived in mid-June of 1855.<sup>16</sup> Some settlers, like Basil Moreland, refused to give up their claims to the Ho-Chunk land. For several years, he continued to live alongside the Ho-Chunk at the homestead before moving away and returning years later. He continued this issue in court for most of his life, finally reaching a settlement with the government long after he had moved away.<sup>17</sup> Other settlers moved off the reservation but continued to make claims to the government for years.<sup>18</sup> Some pre-emptors possibly took the compensation to move once another economic recession hit in 1857.

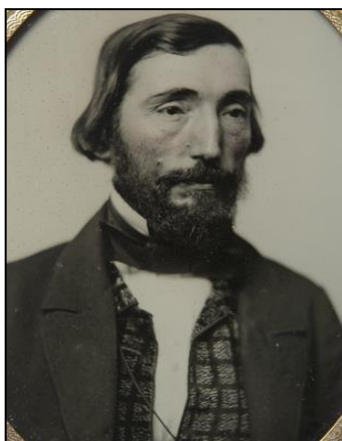


Figure 8. Basil Moreland, 1858.  
Source: [Minnesota Historical Society](#)



Figure 9. Winnebago Agency in Blue Earth County, 1860.  
Source: [Minnesota Historical Society](#)

<sup>16</sup> Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 60.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 69-70.

<sup>18</sup> *Pre-emptors on Home Reservation of Winnebago Indians, Letter from the Secretary of the Interior*. Congressional Serial Set, Issue 1189. Vol. 9. Ex. Doc. 50. March 9, 1864.

As Minnesotans, reeling from economic troubles, reached statehood in 1858, they set their sights on obtaining even more indigenous lands. Under duress, Dakota diplomats signed a devastating treaty in Washington that same year that gave up half their reservation. They had traveled to the capital with the intention of requesting enforcement of existing treaties but were detained and forced to sign a new treaty. This treaty cut their reservation in half and further stipulated the remainder of the tribe's land would be allotted to individual families. The Dakota people were both heart-broken and furious at the news that they must give more land to their antagonists and also divide the property they had always held in common. Immediately after this success in procuring land from the Dakota, the government turned to the Ho-Chunk reservation with the same purpose in mind.

In 1859 when Ho-Chunk leaders were asked to sell half their recently acquired Blue Earth County reservation and parcel the remainder into allotments, one leader resisted fiercely while others negotiated the best deal possible. Winneshiek adamantly opposed the treaty put before him, so the government agents unseated him. Other leaders like Waukon Decorah went to Washington and reminded the treaty council of federal obligations to the Ho-Chunk people for their service in the Black Hawk and other wars. Baptiste LaSallier, another leader, requested longstanding treaty debts that the federal government had never paid. He told the treaty council that if the Ho-Chunk people were expected to act like white men, "we want to tell you that it takes a great deal of money to do so."<sup>19</sup> The government promised once again to pay its debts to the Ho-Chunk and continued the treaty negotiations without Winneshiek. Government

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<sup>19</sup> *Ratified treaty no. 310, documents relating to the negotiation of the treaty of April 15, 1859, with the Winnebago Indians* (National Archives), 19.

representatives then decided they recognized Baptiste as the head chief and awarded him a medal for “rendering himself obnoxious to the wrath of the rebel Winneshiek.”<sup>20</sup> But Winneshiek still had influence as a leader among his people, and Americans had no authority to overthrow him.

Ho-Chunks were determined to hold onto their reservation and their collective identity. After the 1859 treaty was signed that left them with half their Blue Earth County reservation, Winneshiek attempted to prevent implementation of treaty stipulations that carved the remainder of their land into individual allotments. This requirement threatened Ho-Chunk traditions and sovereignty by taking away their shared land in favor of individual ownership. Winneshiek and his men broke the surveyor’s instruments and attempted to block his entrance to parts of their land. Protesters then proceeded among those in an enrollment line “vociferating at the top of their voices,” convincing most of the tribe to refuse the roll call. Winneshiek had evidently “made up his mind deliberately to defy the government.” The surveyor requested the government imprison Winneshiek, so Superintendent Clark Thompson sent for troops from Fort Ridgley to make the arrest. But the agent withheld the distribution of goods to anyone who declined to enroll for land allotments. In the end, soldiers were not needed. Winneshiek calmed his efforts, and the surveyor used old lists to accomplish the lost roll call.<sup>21</sup>

This treaty dramatically cut their land base and the Ho-Chunk people were relegated to allotted farmland, a further erosion of their traditional communal lifestyle. Their agent expressed Ho-Chunks’ concern for the permanence of their home and pointed out their reluctance to erect

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<sup>20</sup> Edward Wolcott to William P. Dole. United States Bureau of Indian Affairs and National Archives (U.S.). *Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-81. Winnebago Agency, 1826-1875.* (Washington, D.C: The Bureau, 1826-1875) Reel 935.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.



buildings or plow fields until they knew for certain they would remain at this reservation forever.<sup>22</sup> After so many false starts, some Ho-Chunk people disagreed with Winneshiek and believed the allotments might give them an enduring legal title to their property as guarantee that they could stay on it. Until they held legal title to their allotments, many were hesitant to make serious improvements to their land. In the meantime, they made money from digging ginseng and selling it to Mankato businessmen.<sup>23</sup>

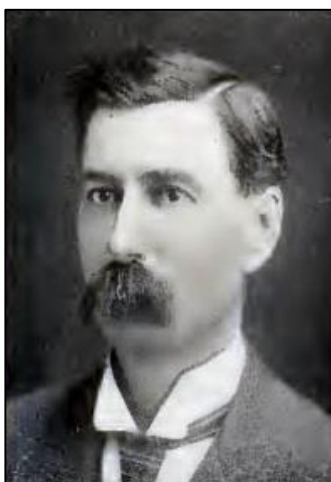


Figure 10. Thomas Hughes.  
**Source:** *Mankato: its first fifty years* (Mankato, Minn.: Free Press Printing Co., 1903), 241.

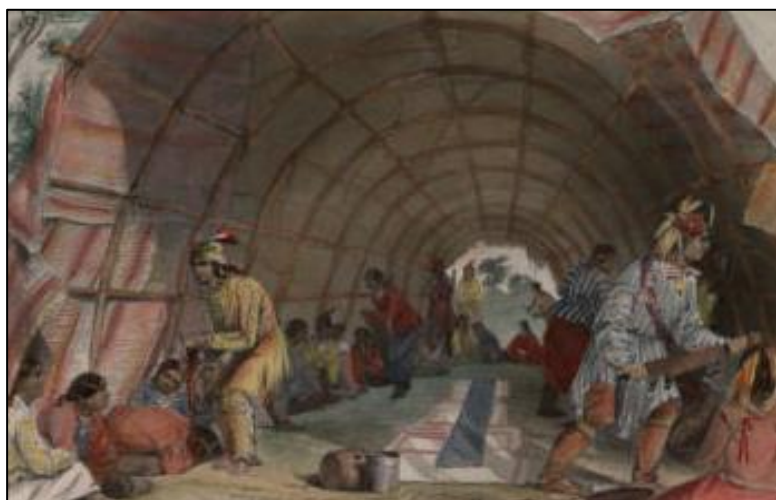


Figure 11. "Medicine Dance of the Winnebagoes," ca. 1850. This is a print by the artist Seth Eastman who was a military officer stationed in Minnesota before statehood. *Source:* [Nicollet County Historical Society](#).

### Culture Clash in the County

Settlers and county leaders agitated for Ho-Chunk removal throughout their entire tenure in the county, beginning with their 1855 objection to the reservation's creation. Because settlers had already pre-empted homesteads on the land and the county leaders had thought their political

<sup>22</sup> Agent Balcombe to William P. Dole. United States Bureau of Indian Affairs and National Archives (U.S.). *Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-81. Winnebago Agency, 1826-1875*. (Washington, D.C: The Bureau, 1826-1875), Reel 935.

<sup>23</sup> William E. Lass, "Ginseng Rush in Minnesota," *Minnesota History* 41, no. 6 (Summer 1969): 260.

boundaries had been set, they took it as a hard and personal economic loss when the Territorial Legislature ejected settlers in favor of a reservation. Blue Earth County historian Thomas Hughes describes the arrival of Ho-Chunk people with a chapter titled “Loss of Territory,” even though these settlers had pre-empted claims to the land and had no legal right to it.<sup>24</sup> Leaders and settlers in Blue Earth County continued to protest the presence of Ho-Chunk people in the area throughout their tenancy. Lawmakers and citizens passed several resolutions and petitions over the years at many different levels to promote the elimination of the reservation. Politics, progress, and profiteering, were all factors in the call for removal, but ethnic culture clashes were a pervasive force as well.

The arrival of the Ho-Chunk people in central Minnesota had been lauded as an economic boon back in 1847, but by 1855 settlers in southwestern Minnesota viewed native reservations as obstacles to the area’s advancement. Historian Bruce White has documented the social shift in Minnesota during this period. As indigenous people were forced onto reservations during the territorial years, Minnesota transformed from a multiethnic world of fur traders and mixed ancestry cultural brokers, to an American market mentality and an “Indian business” that took as much money as possible from native people who received payments for the land.<sup>25</sup> Much like the Wisconsin settlers before them, many Minnesotans believed they would make better use of the land than Ho-Chunk people. Hughes recounted the settlers’ dismay that the reservation

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<sup>24</sup> Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 59.

<sup>25</sup> Bruce M. White, "The Power of Whiteness: Or, the Life and Times of Joseph Rolette Jr.," *Minnesota History* 56, no. 4 (Winter 1998): 178-197.

encompassed the “very best farm lands in the county.”<sup>26</sup> But area residents also worried that the presence of the reservation might impede the area’s growth by slowing white immigration.

In the *History of Blue Earth County*, Hughes relates one story of white immigrants on their way to the county who met a large group of Ho-Chunk immigrants on their way to the new reservation there. Hughes wrote that “the sight of so many savages and the thought that they were to be such close neighbors, rather intimidated our immigrants and they halted some days in doubt whether to advance, retreat or go elsewhere.”<sup>27</sup> These travelers evidently decided to continue their move to Blue Earth County, but anecdotes and attitudes like this worried area leaders that Minnesota’s growth would bypass their county as long as the reservation was there. Mankato newspapers at the time discussed the reservation as a temporary setback that would eventually be fixed if only they could overwhelm its supporters, whom they lambasted often. Likewise, brief Mankato and Blue Earth County histories that appeared in marketing and historical publications in the late nineteenth-century nearly all describe the years of the reservation’s existence as a pause in the county’s early development.<sup>28</sup>

Race and culture clashes were the main feature in removal rhetoric from the start and although there were instances of friendship between settlers and Ho-Chunk people, most encounters only served to confirm biases and fears in the minds of white settlers. Hughes

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<sup>26</sup> Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 59.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>28</sup> Charles A. Chapman, *History of Mankato Lodge no. 12* (Mankato, Minn.: Mankato Masons, 1902); Charles A. Chapman, *Mankato and Blue Earth County, Minnesota, A Historical and Descriptive Sketch with the Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Trade of the City of Mankato, Minnesota, for the year 1877* (Mankato, Minn.: Wise and Coffin Printers, 1878); William B. Griswold, *Mankato and Blue Earth County* (Mankato, Minn.: Griswold and Neff Union Office, 1867); John A. Willard, *Blue Earth County: Its Advantages to Settlers* (Mankato, Minn.: John C. Wise “Record” Office, 1868).

describes one 1855 “Indian scare” near the reservation when a group of white men determined to chase down a report of possible attacks after gun shots were heard, only to find a single Ho-Chunk teenager. Apparently, the boy “was quite friendly with the settlers and a favorite among them...and he burst into a big laugh, and explained how he had been out hunting with other Indians on Rice Lake.”<sup>29</sup> In another 1855 incident, Mankatoans were upset that Ho-Chunk people had “painted the village red,” so they “turned out en masse and broke up all the liquor shops in town and poured the liquors into the streets.” The stores had sold alcohol to the Ho-Chunks, against a local law that banned the sale of intoxicants to native people.<sup>30</sup>

But even when there was no alcohol or hunters involved, white residents expressed irrational fears of their Ho-Chunk neighbors. The Mankato newspapers repeatedly referred to the Ho-Chunk people in Blue Earth County as “savages” and “annoyances,” whose differences were feared. According to Hughes, most settlers near the reservation acquired “a good savage watch dog” because they often received neighborly requests for food or assistance from Ho-Chunk people.<sup>31</sup> The reciprocation of food and gifts was an important part of the culture and alliance-building for all indigenous nations in Minnesota Territory, but white settlers perceived these visits as Ho-Chunk people begging for food.

In February 1858, just a few months before reaching statehood, the Minnesota Legislature sent a joint resolution to the United States Congress to promote the removal of the Ho-Chunk people from the state. The resolution claimed the Ho-Chunk people were “constantly

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<sup>29</sup> Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 60.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

being supplied with spirituous liquors” and “the civilization of these Indians would doubtless be greatly advanced by removing them beyond the influence above alluded to.”<sup>32</sup> The contradiction in the resolution’s premise is astounding: they would be better Americanized if only they were moved farther away from said Americanized civilization. But the real focus of the resolution was on moving them beyond white settlement, saying that the reservation was surrounded by white settlers and located in the most densely populated area of the state. The overall message sent to Washington was that the Ho-Chunk reservation was simply in the way, and that everyone would be better off if they were segregated from settlement. However, the Ho-Chunk people could have never moved far enough to live beyond white settlement, and history has shown that the Ho-Chunk were not better off after they were forced out of Minnesota.

After Blue Earth County settlers had put years of effort into the removal of Ho-Chunk people from the county, they likely expected that Congress would finally take such action when the 1862 U.S.-Dakota War had commenced just miles from the Ho-Chunk and Mankato. While the national Democrats and Republicans fought over slavery and other Civil War issues in 1862, the Blue Earth County partisans engaged in a fierce argument over which party was more anti-Indian. The two Mankato newspapers, which represented opposing political parties, accused each other as well as politicians from the opposite party of not working hard enough or taking the right steps toward the removal effort.<sup>33</sup> The competition between the parties to be most active for Ho-Chunk removal meant the overall effort was bi-partisan. As the weather, settlers, agents, and

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<sup>32</sup> Minnesota Legislature. *Joint Resolution relative to the Sioux and Winnebago Reservations. February 25, 1858.*

<sup>33</sup> David M. Sorensen, “Press Coverage of the Dakota Conflict of 1862,” (Master’s Thesis, St. Cloud State University, 2005), 101, 106.

traders continued to drain the Ho-Chunk monies dry and government payments for their land were perpetually late, both the Dakota and Ho-Chunk became more desperate.

### **The U.S.-Dakota War and Post-war Anti-Indian Sentiment**

After bad crop years combined with another late annuity payment from the government to leave the Dakota near starvation in the summer of 1862, their traders dealt another blow by cutting off credit. Dakota people began to demand that traders open their food warehouses to alleviate hunger. There were many tense encounters at the Dakota agencies that came close to bloodshed before violence erupted on August 18. The late annuity payment for the Dakota arrived in Minnesota a day too late as tensions reached the breaking point. The story of the subsequent U.S.-Dakota War is well documented by many historians such as Mary Wingerd and Gary Clayton Anderson.<sup>34</sup>

The intense anti-Indian fervor and its implications for the Ho-Chunk and all tribes in the region were evident immediately following the first bloodshed. Newspapers in Mankato, St. Paul, and St. Cloud called for removal, retribution and even extermination. All native people were seen as guilty, and that included Dakota women, children and elderly, as well as men who had not participated in the war. It wasn't long before the removal rhetoric also included nearby indigenous nations who did not necessarily identify with the Dakota in any sort of common

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<sup>34</sup> Gary Clayton Anderson, *Little Crow: Spokesman for the Sioux* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1986); *Through Dakota Eyes: Narrative Accounts of the Minnesota Indian War of 1862*, edited by Gary Clayton Anderson and Alan R. Woolworth. (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1988); Wingerd, *North Country*.

identity. Even the Ojibwe in the Minnesota north woods, far from larger white settlements, felt the consequences of U.S.-Dakota War. The panic reached as far as Wisconsin, with people there once again frantically attempting to have the remaining Ho-Chunk people removed.<sup>35</sup> The U.S.-Dakota War, it was argued by white settlers over and over again, was proof that white people and Indians could not coexist in peace.

In early November, settlers warned General Henry Sibley of a possible attack on his Dakota prisoners-of-war. As they approached New Ulm while traveling to Mankato, New Ulm residents were engaged in digging new graves for loved ones who had been hastily buried during the battles. Sibley led the condemned Dakota around the town to avoid a clash, but an enraged mob of mostly women attacked them with stones, hatchets and boiling water. The attack on the Dakota prisoners outside of New Ulm was partially planned or at the very least encouraged by civic leaders of New Ulm and Brown County. Sibley failed to adequately serve justice to the instigators, but he did manage to prevent an unreserved massacre that day.<sup>36</sup>

Minnesotans soon showed they were prepared to attack any native person they saw, not just the combatants proclaimed guilty by a military tribunal. Settlers near the town of Henderson attacked the procession of women, children and elderly Dakota as they traveled to Fort Snelling where they were to be confined. Sibley wanted to ensure that law and order prevailed in the

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<sup>35</sup> M. M. Quaipe, "The Panic of 1862 in Wisconsin" *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 4, no. 2 (Dec., 1920): 166-195; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1862*, 96; United States Bureau of Indian Affairs and National Archives (U.S.). *Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-81. Winnebago Agency, 1826-1875*. (Washington, D.C: The Bureau, 1826-1875).

<sup>36</sup> Lois Glewwe, "The Journey of the Prisoners: Convoy to South Bend" in *Trails of Tears: Minnesota's Dakota Indian Exile Begins* ed. Mary Hawker Bakeman and Antona M. Richardson (Roseville, Minn.: Prairie Echoes, Park Genealogical Books, 2008), 100-101; Carrie Zeman, "Through the Heart of New Ulm: the Persistence of Place in Stories of the 1862 Dakota Conflict" in *Trails of Tears: Minnesota's Dakota Indian Exile Begins* ed. Mary Hawker Bakeman and Antona M. Richardson (Roseville, Minn.: Prairie Echoes, Park Genealogical Books, 2008), 123-147.

treatment of the Dakota people, rather than mob attacks. So he entrusted Colonel William Marshall with the leadership of the “family caravan,” a man who proved to live up to Sibley’s standards, doing his utmost to protect his charges. Unfortunately, the families were brutally confronted near Henderson, where one woman threw a nursing Dakota baby to the ground, eventually causing death hours later.<sup>37</sup> Marshall also faced the same difficulties as Sibley in that his soldiers were not necessarily willing to protect the Dakota. It was clear that even the innocent women, babies, and children were under threat of death.

Once the Dakota people had arrived at their respective destinations for the winter, some Minnesotans were worried that President Abraham Lincoln would set them all free and settlers became determined that no Dakota people would make it out of the state alive. Dakota family members were constantly vulnerable in the Fort Snelling internment camp over the winter, and some were killed by nearby whites.<sup>38</sup> Minnesotans seethed with the desire for vengeance. The internment of the Dakota only made some settlers more angry simply because they were allowed to live. Rumors that the Dakota prisoners would be allowed to live spread throughout the region, and men began to travel to Mankato to ensure the Dakota men were killed. They did not wait for the federal government to make a decision that had the possibility to be lenient.

On December 4, 1862, Colonel Stephen Miller put his own life and money on the line to stop an advancing mob on its way to kill the prisoners in a dramatic showdown on the Blue Earth bridge in Mankato. He called troops from the Ho-Chunk agency into Mankato to help arrest and

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<sup>37</sup>Mary Hawker Bakeman and Alan R. Woolworth, “The Family Caravan” in *Trails of Tears: Minnesota's Dakota Indian Exile Begins* ed. Mary Hawker Bakeman and Antona M. Richardson (Roseville, Minn.: Prairie Echoes, Park Genealogical Books, 2008), 53-78.

<sup>38</sup> Bakeman and Woolworth, “The Family Caravan,” 70-74.



eventually released the ringleaders about 150 to 200 armed agitators, many who had come down from St. Peter and possibly New Ulm. The prisoners were then moved to a more secure location in the center of town. Miller also dispatched his own German spies to infiltrate “an extensive secret organization including men of character in all this upper country, including soldiers,” with plans to murder the prisoners. For the few weeks between Sibley’s departure from Mankato on November 25 and Lincoln’s decision to execute thirty-eight Dakota in late December, Miller attempted to control growing public hostility against the prisoners in Mankato.<sup>39</sup>

During this time, Colonel Miller met with “leading citizens” of Mankato at least twice in attempts to gain their support in the protection of Dakota prisoners from the public and to threaten the city with military force if citizens did not remain peaceful. The first meeting was late in November where the Mankato men expressed their concern that the prisoners might leave the



Figure 12. Stephen Miller, ca. 1863. Source: [Minnesota Historical Society](#)

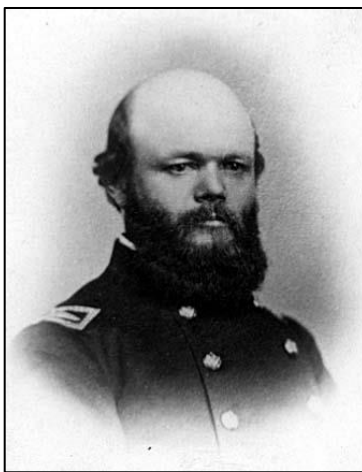


Figure 13. William Marshall, 1864. Source: [Minnesota Historical Society](#).

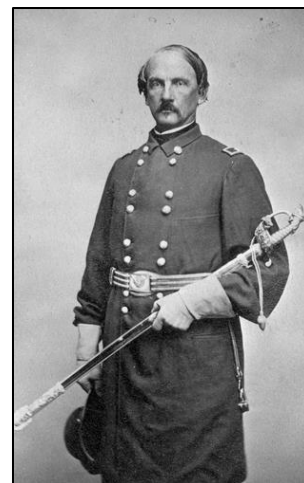


Figure 14. Henry Sibley, 1862. Source: [Minnesota Historical Society](#).

<sup>39</sup> Walt Bachman. “Colonel Miller’s War” in *Trails of Tears: Minnesota’s Dakota Indian Exile Begins* edited by Mary Hawker Bakeman and Antona M. Richardson, (Roseville, Minn.: Prairie Echoes, Park Genealogical Books, 2008), 107-122; *Mankato Semi-Weekly Record*, December 6, 1862.

city alive. Meanwhile, Miller “appealed to [their] civic pride,” telling them he was confident that “they would help him in upholding the law.” However, reports that the Blue Earth County Sheriff, Daniel Tyner, was instigating public anger showed that local officials were not interested in enforcing the law when it came to the Dakota prisoners. Miller held another “long interview” with Mankato’s “prominent citizens” a few days after the intense bridge confrontation, where he apparently threatened to raze the town with his cannons if the citizens attacked the prisoners again. After the confrontation on the bridge with mostly St. Peter men and possibly some other outsiders, Miller received conflicting reports of the sentiments of Mankato residents toward direct violence against the prisoners. It was probably prudent for him to approach the Mankato men and try to strong-arm their support for keeping order in the city.<sup>40</sup>

Minnesota governor Alexander Ramsey struggled to deescalate the situation. He issued a “Proclamation to the People of Minnesota” on December 6, 1862 that was likely directed at the mob of men in Mankato. He called upon “all citizens engaged in these disorderly demonstrations, to desist therefrom.” The governor implored Minnesotans to think about “the good name and reputation of the people of this state.” Although he felt there was “justification of this...high-handed method of retaliation,” he knew “the civilized world will not so regard it.” He promised the citizens that Lincoln would allow them to hang the Dakota prisoners lawfully. Ramsey argued that it would “teach these savage men hereafter to respect the authority” of the government if Minnesotans would allow the military to execute the prisoners rather than openly defy law and order with “the blind fury of a mob” and “barbarous violence.” He assured the

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<sup>40</sup> Bachman, “Colonel Miller’s War,” 109, 113-116.

settlers that Lincoln's decision would come soon and if he decided against execution, state lawmakers would do so under local laws.<sup>41</sup> They only had to wait a few more weeks.

The hangings in Mankato on December 26 may have been enough to satisfy citizens of New Ulm and settlers of Brown County, but people in Mankato and Blue Earth County still had the Ho-Chunk reservation in their midst. White settlers wanted the Ho-Chunk people to leave and didn't care where they went, how they got there, or what happened to them. They just wanted the Ho-Chunk gone. The aggressive public pressure to rid the state of Dakota people was successful. So, anti-Ho-Chunk residents in Blue Earth County attempted to mimic those tactics. The nefariously mysterious secret society format of the Knights of the Forest perfectly performed that function. The ethnic fear mongering in their ritual document suggests that leaders used race to create and encourage fear of Ho-Chunk people among rank-and-file Knights members. They condemned all indigenous people for the war with the Dakota, and so hanging thirty-eight Dakota men would not be enough for Mankato area settlers.

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<sup>41</sup> Alexander Ramsey, *Proclamation to the People of Minnesota*, December 6, 1862.



Figure 15. The hanging of 38 Dakota men near the levee in Mankato on December 26, 1862 was the largest mass execution in United States history. At least some of the Knights were likely viewing from the Masonic Lodge, which was probably in the top floor of the three-story brick structure in the background. The Knights of the Forest formed in or near that building one week later and held some meetings at the Masonic Lodge. *Image Source:* [Minnesota Historical Society](#).

#### CHAPTER IV. THE MEN AND MILIEU OF MANKATO

With thousands of people in attendance, it is probable that most or all the members of the Knights of the Forest witnessed the execution of the condemned Dakota men. In support of a soldier's request for compensation, Asa Barney, Charles Chapman, and John Meagher all signed a letter swearing to their eyewitness of the hanging.<sup>1</sup> Chapman further boasted in his history of the Mankato Masons that the Dakota prisoners were hanged "on the levee in full view from the windows of the Masonic Hall," where he also claimed Knights of the Forest meetings were held.<sup>2</sup> Asa Barney's obituary contained a full description of his exact location at the execution, including the position of his footing.<sup>3</sup> And it is doubtful that John Porter and his father, John J. Porter Sr., who was a Mankato Mason and local politician, would have missed the largest event of the year in his hometown. Mob threats had pressured President Lincoln and must have had an impact on his decision to quickly execute the Dakota. This probably seemed to settlers a good way to push the government into a quick removal of the Ho-Chunk as well. So, a week later, on the same day the president issued the Emancipation Proclamation to end slavery, men in Mankato created an organization meant to extend the successful campaign against the Dakota to the Ho-Chunk.

Most known and suspected members of the Knights of the Forest had lived near the Ho-Chunk for years and were undoubtedly aware of their history with the United States. The government agents and white traders who lived on the reservation were part of the business

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<sup>1</sup> United States Senate. *Reports of Committees of the Senate of the United States for the First Session of the Fiftieth Congress, 1887-88. Committee on Pensions. Report no.2282.* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1888).

<sup>2</sup> Charles A. Chapman, *History of Mankato Lodge no. 12* (Mankato, Minn.: Mankato Masons, 1902), 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Mankato Daily Free Press*, May 4, 1926.

community of Mankato and mentioned often by Chapman, Hughes, and other contemporary Mankato history writers. The trader Asa White had married a Ho-Chunk woman, lived on the reservation, and was friends with the elder John J. Porter.<sup>4</sup> White and his partner, Isaac Marks, owned a hardware store, a ginseng business, and several other business ventures. They also built a large stone building in 1855 where Marks became the first Masonic initiate and the Knights of the Forest later held meetings.<sup>5</sup> Minnesota newspapers before and after the U.S.-Dakota War often vilified reservation traders not for their swindle of native people as much as accusations they were attempting to keep the reservations located in Minnesota for their benefit. However, traders and agents sometimes participated in anti-Indian militias or armies during an “Indian scare” even though they often had mixed ancestry children of their own and were well connected within indigenous communities.

Despite the militant mob culture in Mankato at the time, there are no known reports of organized attacks on the Ho-Chunk reservation other than vague insinuations by Chapman. The murder of a Ho-Chunk person on the Mississippi River that had been reported by Agent Balcombe in September 1862 was a hundred miles away from Mankato and months before the Knights formed. But he also wrote that he exerted great effort to keep the Ho-Chunk confined inside the reservation lines because, he said, he had “been notified by the whites that the Indians

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<sup>4</sup> Madam White to William P. Dole and John J. Porter to William P. Dole. United States Bureau of Indian Affairs and National Archives (U.S.). *Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-81. Winnebago Agency, 1826-1875.* (Washington, D.C: The Bureau, 1826-1875) Reel 935-936; Porter wrote a reference letter for White in 1862. Porter and “Madam White” wrote letters to the Office of Indian Affairs in the spring of 1863 to request that she be allowed to keep her 1859 allotment.

<sup>5</sup> Chapman, *History of Mankato Lodge no. 12*, 7.

will be massacred” if they leave the reservation.<sup>6</sup> Official companies of U.S. soldiers stationed at the Ho-Chunk agency and town sites near the reservation during and after the U.S.-Dakota War only reported boredom during the winter of 1862-1863, except for the executions in Mankato.<sup>7</sup>

There is only one newspaper article that alludes to violent actions organized by the Knights. It is most likely authored by Chapman since it has exact passages from another article about the Knights with his name on the byline. The author states that the “business transacted” by the Knights can be easily understood from reading the oath. But he adds:

One noteworthy act of the Mankato Lodge, however, merits particular attention. This was the employment of a certain number of men whose duty was to lie in ambush on the outskirts of the Winnebago Reservation, and shoot any Indian who might be observed outside the lines. It is not the province of this sketch to relate how many, if any, Indians were thus disposed of. It is sufficient to say that the designated parties went out on their scouting excursions, and in due time returned and reported. For obvious reasons their reports were not made a matter of record.<sup>8</sup>

He leaves no doubt that Knights of the Forest was responsible for murders of Ho-Chunk people. Even though there are no other indications that homicides of Ho-Chunk people took place, there is a strong possibility that there were a few murders that flew under the radar. As we have seen, killings of indigenous people during this time were not always reported or rebuked.

But the Knights of the Forest organizers were primarily intent on removal at all cost, and both Chapman articles emphasize a goal of government pressure. The 1886 article also states that

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<sup>6</sup> *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1862* (Washington D.C.: GPO), 92.

<sup>7</sup> Minnesota. Board of Commissioners on Publication of History of Minnesota in Civil and Indian Wars. *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars 1861-1865* (St. Paul, Minn.: Pioneer Press Co., 1890), 1: 455-457; Edward Noyes, "Neighbors 'to the Rescue': Wisconsin and Iowa Troops Fight Boredom, Not Indians, in Minnesota in 1862." *Minnesota History* 46, no. 8 (Winter 1979): 312-327.

<sup>8</sup> *Mankato Review*, April 27, 1886; *Mankato Daily Review*, April 18, 1916.

the group's "prestige was magnified in the minds of the people, and of the government, by the secrecy thrown around it's proceedings." The author indicates that they knew exactly what the Knights contributed to the decision to remove the Ho-Chunk from Minnesota. The article claims that the "mystery had its effect on the government, and it is very probable that without it the removal of the Indians might have been delayed for years."<sup>9</sup> The Knights were well aware that the war meant the Ho-Chunk would eventually leave. The problem for the Knights was that it would not happen fast enough, which is why the article proudly says they prevented the *delay* of the removal but does not take full responsibility for it. Four years before his death, Chapman explained precisely how the secret society functioned in their political movement for forced relocation of the Ho-Chunk Nation:

Notwithstanding the oath of secrecy, hints of the organization got out and went even to government circles in Washington, exaggerated, of course, as they traveled until the U.S. Government began to take notice, for many in congress believed that a general uprising of the people of southern Minnesota was imminent, for the purpose of massacring the whole tribe of Winnebagoes.<sup>10</sup>

It is still uncertain if the Knights of the Forest attempted to massacre the Ho-Chunk people or if they just wanted everyone to think as much. Their only stated goal was the immediate removal of the Ho-Chunk tribe. There was not an outright call for armed action against the Ho-Chunk in the ritual or petition. Even if Chapman's account of "excursions" to the reservation is true, their top priority was removal from the prime farmland. The Knights had no concern for the hundreds of Ho-Chunk lives that would be lost and undoubtedly viewed it as

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<sup>9</sup> *Mankato Review*, April 27, 1886.

<sup>10</sup> *Mankato Daily Review*, April 18, 1916.



added benefit after the war. One 1867 descriptive pamphlet marketing Mankato for settlement (and also Willard and Barney's Real Estate business) said the Ho-Chunk had left Blue Earth County, probably to "utter extinction," but "nobody cares where."<sup>11</sup>

By the time the Knights of the Forest convened for the first time in January 1863, only a few hundred Dakota men remained in the Mankato prison while most Dakota people were at Fort Snelling. Even though the Knights' oath repeatedly calls for the removal of "all Indians from the state of Minnesota," every source that mentions the Knights of the Forest credits them for the removal of the "Winnebago" people from Minnesota. Chapman's personal account of the society specifically mentions the Ho-Chunk and no other tribe. Tellingly, he reported that the group dissolved after the Ho-Chunk left because "the object for which the order was constituted having been accomplished...the order itself...ceased forever."<sup>12</sup> The Knights were not concerned with the Ojibwe who continued to live in the northern half of the state. Rather, they wanted the Ho-Chunk people who possessed valuable farmland near their own homes to leave so they could occupy that land without "annoyance."<sup>13</sup> Their strategy toward that end was to engage in typical nineteenth century political activities. They held public meetings, sent "resolutions" to

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<sup>11</sup> William B. Griswold, *Mankato and Blue Earth County*, (Mankato, Minn.: Griswold and Neff Union Office, 1867), 5.

<sup>12</sup> *Mankato Review*, April 27, 1886.

<sup>13</sup> "Removal of the Winnebago Indians" Petition. United States Bureau of Indian Affairs and National Archives (U.S.). *Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-81. Winnebago Agency, 1826-1875*. (Washington, D.C: The Bureau, 1826-1875) Reel 936.

newspapers and legislatures, signed petitions, wrote editorials, and organized grass roots societies like the Knights of the Forest.<sup>14</sup>

### **Secret Societies in the Nineteenth-century**

In *A Secret Society History of the Civil War*, historian Mark Lause describes a distinct tradition of American fraternal orders based on a European model of freemasonry, which he calls the “oldest model of a secular voluntary organization,” that “emerged...with unavoidable implications for the political organizations built in its wake and for the revolutionary movements of the eighteenth century.” The tradesmen in Europe had formed organizations like the Freemasons for centuries with secret hand signs or passwords to accommodate an illiterate membership (and to distinguish trade skills), but in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries more affluent men began to join. The Freemasons eventually formed the Grand Lodge at London in 1717 as masonry spread throughout Europe and America. Members of masonic lodges were not asked to reject their religion, nation or social class, but only to put Masonic interests before these other concerns. However, according to Lause, the further masonry spread from the reach of the Grand Lodge, the more predisposed the organization became to subversive political and social modifications.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Mankato Record*, October 7, 1862; “Removal of the Winnebago Indians” Petition. United States Bureau of Indian Affairs and National Archives (U.S.). *Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-81. Winnebago Agency, 1826-1875*. (Washington, D.C: The Bureau, 1826-1875) Reel 936.

<sup>15</sup> Mark A Lause, *A Secret Society History of the Civil War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011), 1-37.

Even more alterations of the freemasonry model of fraternal orders came when transplanted revolutionaries from Europe brought the idea of secret societies to the United States in the late eighteenth century. The European example of secret fraternal organizations was reshaped and developed by Northeastern labor groups, religious, mutual aid or benevolent societies, as well as grassroots political movements in the early nineteenth-century America. By the 1830's the idea of fraternal orders for political action had spread through the Midwest to Ohio and Michigan, where a secret society known as the Hunters Lodges participated in border skirmishes between the British and Canadians known as the Patriot Wars. The Hunters Lodges were among the earliest American secret societies that acted as a paramilitary organization for an expansionist political cause in the face of federal opposition.<sup>16</sup> Then in the 1840s and 1850s, fraternal associations like the Brotherhood of the Union and the Universal Democratic Republicans, whose ranks and leadership were often made up of military members, veterans, and officers, both provided financial and militia assistance for their controversial political causes.<sup>17</sup>

In the decades before the U.S. Civil War, Americans were absorbed with their desire for expansion based on the ideals of Manifest Destiny, and secret societies functioned more and more as social networks for political activity among white males. When expansionist settlers encountered a problem in border regions of the country, local elites sometimes formed organizations like fraternal orders, filibusters, councils, committees on safety, or secret societies that would send a political messages to the federal government by their very existence, but also

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<sup>16</sup> Andrew Bonthius, "The Patriot War of 1837-1838: Locofocoism with a Gun?" *Labour / Le Travail* 52 (Fall, 2003): 9-43; Oscar Kinchen, *The Rise and Fall of the Patriot Hunters* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1956).

<sup>17</sup> Lause, *A Secret Society History of the Civil War*, 21-50.

literally by sending petitions, letters, and resolutions. When these organizations were focused on slavery or native people, they occasionally functioned as a ready militia or paramilitary if the federal government did not respond adequately to their official messages sent in the petitions and letters. At the same time, federal officials encouraged local expansionist exploits on the frontier when it met political and diplomatic needs.<sup>18</sup>

As the issue of slavery began to form sectional divides in the late 1850s, one Southern secret society formed with an explicit paramilitary purpose. The decade before the Civil War was the golden age of filibustering for expansion, and the rhetoric of these movements was increasingly about extension of slavery rather than territory. The notorious Knights of the Golden Circle are the best illustration of this shift in filibustering and in American society. The group was created in 1858 by George Bickley and was dedicated to the expansion of slavery within a geographic golden circle that stretched from Maryland to Oregon to South America. Lause describes Bickley as a “confidence man” who often moved around the border regions of America as people discovered he was a schemer or his debts were too large. He created the secret society as a moneymaking scheme that first focused on filibustering expeditions before turning its

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<sup>18</sup> For further reading on the role of filibusters and secret societies in Manifest Destiny and the U.S. Civil War, see Antonio Rafael De la Cova, "Filibusters and Freemasons: The Sworn Obligation." *Journal of the Early Republic* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 95-120; David C Keehn, *Knights of the Golden Circle: Secret Empire, Southern Secession, Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013); Frank L. Klement, *Dark Lanterns: Secret Political Societies, Conspiracies, and Treason Trials in the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984); Lause, *A Secret Society History of the Civil War*; Robert E. May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld: Filibustering in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Frank Lawrence Owsley and Gene A. Smith, *Filibusters and Expansionists: Jeffersonian Manifest Destiny, 1800-1821*. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997).

ambitions toward secession and the buildup to the U.S. Civil War when the societal atmosphere demanded it.<sup>19</sup>

Organizations like the Freemasons, the Knight of the Golden Circle, and the Union of Brotherhood provided the social networks that were needed for white men to coordinate solidarity for their privileged positions in early nineteenth-century American society. Lause characterizes this era as having a “paranoid style” that was marked by a transition into market capitalism, romanticism and the high emotions of antebellum America.<sup>20</sup> Bickley’s propensity to skip town and successfully reinvent himself whenever his local social networks collapsed indicates he likely used the larger, more universal social structures provided by fraternal orders to advance in this era. As Lause says, Bickley was part of an entrepreneurial “growing acceptance that the young American man on the make had to become a kind of confidence man himself in order to succeed.”<sup>21</sup> The Masons and other secret societies were located throughout America, and allowed men on the move in the frontier to recognize like-minded strangers via their hand signs, rituals, or other symbols.

The Knights of the Golden Circle is an early example of how secret societies functioned in controversial political movements. Their influence came in the form of the propaganda imageries they created both for and against their own group. Northerners feared them as the real world “Slave Empire Conspiracy,” and they played this reputation up or down, depending on their needs of the moment. The mystery around fraternal orders that billed themselves secret

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<sup>19</sup> Lause, *A Secret Society History of the Civil War*, 51-66.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

societies allowed fluidity for men who wish to bend the story their way. Lause points out that secret societies used “smoke and mirrors to create the perception of scale,” and Bickley knew that “the importance of any secret society turned largely on how it presented itself” in order to exert pressure on governments.<sup>22</sup> The impression that their particular threat exists is where their power and influence resided, no matter the reality of the situation.

Members of secret societies in the nineteenth-century usually belonged to multiple political and social organizations. Many men who joined the Knights of the Golden Circle were in filibusterer or paramilitary groups like the Texas Rangers, some were politicians, and most belonged to other orders like the Freemasons, the Order of the Lone Star, and the Sons of Liberty, not to mention their roles in religious and trade groups. This kind of social web thrived on fraternal organizations whose military manifestations often took to mystery, intrigue and secrecy to mask controversial or morally questionable martial motivations. Less nefariously secret organizations like the Order of Odd Fellows or the Freemasons were common nineteenth-century fixtures throughout nearly all of America, especially at startup towns in the border regions, and Mankato was no exception. Lause points out that by this time, “fraternal hucksterism had become a sort of in-joke in which everyone seemed to be in the know.”<sup>23</sup> Such groups were considered an essential element to any successful pioneer town.

New settlements in nineteenth-century America were vying for future economic power, and Mankato’s founders were quick to set up the social structures needed to become a

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 152

respectable city. Despite the settlers' worries that the reservation would inhibit the area's growth, Mankato was what one historian described as an up-and-coming American "market town" and "distributing center for goods" that was full of "economic opportunity."<sup>24</sup> Fraternal orders were as key to the county's development as churches, businesses, and local governments. The Masons were the only fraternal organization in Blue Earth County at the time of the U.S.-Dakota War, but there were numerous by the time Hughes wrote his history of the county in 1901. Ceremonies of any kind, including anniversary parties, cornerstone dedications, and funerals in Mankato often incorporated the rites or rituals of fraternal organizations.

The fraternal orders were a central part of Mankato civic leaders and businessmen's identities. In Thomas Hughes' "Biographical History" of the county, nearly all of the men's biographies include a list of their "fraternal relations." A keyword search in the e-book version of the *History of Blue Earth County* for "fraternal" returns 102 results, almost exclusively in the biographical section.<sup>25</sup> Hughes also discusses the Knights of the Forest in his county history, but does not attach any person's name to the organization, nor provide any details beyond the existence of "sublodges" in nearby towns.<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, we can only identify four men as Knights of the Forest members, but they are probably perfect illustrations of local "prominent men" who joined the Knights.

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<sup>24</sup> Schloff, Linda Mack. "Overcoming Geography: Jewish Religious Life in Four Market Towns." *Minnesota History* 51, no. 1 (Spring, 1988): 3n2, 4, 8.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County and Biographies of its Leading Citizens* (Marceline, Mo.: Walsworth Publishing Company, 1901), 311-622. Online version: <http://www.archive.org/details/cu31924028912925> (accessed April 2017)

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

### Charles Chapman and the Secret Society Tradition

When Charles A. Chapman arrived to survey land in Blue Earth County in 1856 at the age of twenty-three, he was a young, recently graduated, entrepreneurial, American man on the make. Born in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1833, he grew up the son of Welsh immigrants in New England, where Lause has described a thriving and innovative fraternal order scene connected to labor groups, politics, and European revolutionaries. Chapman eventually graduated from Harvard University and moved to Minnesota as a surveyor for a private company. It is more than likely Chapman was familiar with the creation, process, and political function of secret societies before he moved to Minnesota. He was an early member, officer, and historian of the Mankato Masonic Lodge. Thomas Hughes wrote that Chapman’s “Harvard training and his cultured New England ancestry” always remained a part of his personality.<sup>27</sup>



Figure 16. Charles Chapman.  
**Source:** *Mankato: its first fifty years* (Mankato, Minn.: Free Press Printing Co., 1903), 193.



Figure 17. Charles Chapman House, 2009. Built in 1858, the house is on the National Register of Historic Places. **Source:** [Wikimedia Commons](#).

<sup>27</sup> Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 361.



Chapman's move to Mankato could not have come at a more opportune time. Minnesota had just acquired large swaths of land from Dakota people and was on the verge of statehood, which meant there would be plenty of work for surveyors to carve out new homesteads. Furthermore, Mankato was an up-and-coming market town that would soon be at the apex of land sales for the new state. Chapman promptly set up a surveying business and established himself as a Mankato civic leader and one of the original settlers in South Bend, the settlement across the river from Mankato that rivaled it in the early years. He was involved in surveying much of the county, drawing maps, and laying out new town sites.<sup>28</sup>

Chapman is a major figure in Mankato's earliest history. He was a City Engineer for Mankato, Blue Earth County Auditor, and served as the Blue Earth County Surveyor in 1862. He also authored pamphlets, histories, newspaper articles, and business advertisements as well as participated in local government, churches and other organizations. In short, he became one of the "town fathers" of Mankato. His 1858 pioneer home is on the National Register of Historic Places and still stands today. It is evident from his newspaper articles in later years that he wanted credit for his role in the growth and development of the Mankato area, and he considered his association with the Knights of the Forest to be a significant feature of that legacy.

It is possible that Chapman was a leader or at least a founding member of the Knights of the Forest, but his outspokenness does not necessarily equate to an administrative role. One newspaper article says that the "Grand Lodge" for the Knights of the Forest was located at

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<sup>28</sup> Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 98, 362; Semi-Centennial Committee on Publications, *Mankato: its first fifty years*. (Mankato, Minn.: Free Press Printing Co., 1903), 193-4.

Mankato, the hometown of two of its founders. That same article places subordinate “chapters” in nearby Blue Earth County towns like Madelia and Garden City, which is the home of a third founder.<sup>29</sup> This suggests that the leadership was based in Mankato, where Chapman served among the officer ranks of the Mankato Masons.<sup>30</sup> His descriptions of the Knights of the Forest leaves the impression that he might sometimes present an embellished version of events in an attempt to secure his legacy as a town father and pioneer hero. If he did have a leadership role in the Knights of the Forest, he did not claim as much in his reports. That would seem unlikely, given his tendency to overstate stories that involved his own importance.

Regardless of whether Chapman was a leader, the newspaper articles and several other texts he authored provide the most information to be found about the Knights of the Forest beyond their ritual. He wrote several short histories in various publications about the growth and development of the area, and he mentioned the Knights of the Forest in nearly every one. Although they claimed to be shrouded in secrecy, he clearly wanted the organization to be remembered in history. Chapman seemed determined that the group be credited for the removal of the Ho-Chunk people from Blue Earth County after the U.S.-Dakota War. Though official histories or essays by Chapman simply stated the fact the society existed and its purpose, he was much more forthcoming in newspaper articles about possible activities of the group. The articles in the *Mankato Review* in the last decades of his life contain much more detail conveyed with

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<sup>29</sup> *Mankato Review*, April 27, 1886.

<sup>30</sup> Chapman, *History of Mankato Lodge no. 12*, 55-56.

obvious pride.<sup>31</sup> He was convinced that the prosperity and progress of the county was owed to the long fight for removal of the Ho-Chunk reservation.

Chapman was militantly active for Ho-Chunk removal from Blue Earth County for years before the U.S.-Dakota War. In 1859, he was listed as Second Sergeant in the Mankato Artillery Company, which had organized in response to the shooting of a removal advocate, John Burns, by a Ho-Chunk person in the nearby town of Danville. This incident had “stirred up the military spirit of the county” three years before the war. According to Thomas Hughes, “there was much activity among the militia companies in the county,” and “during the winter [of 1859-60] large public meetings were held...to agitate the matter” of moving the Ho-Chunk people. During this time, a sharp shooters’ group was also organized at Garden City, which was only a few miles from the Ho-Chunk reservation lines.<sup>32</sup> These public meetings amid the militant atmosphere foreshadowed the post-war panic and prove that the U.S.-Dakota War served a useful purpose in pressing a long-standing demand for the Ho-Chunk removal.

### **The Porter Family**

John J. Porter Jr. was born in 1838 and likely grew up in Pennsylvania during the active and innovative fraternal order culture in the Northeastern United States described by Mark

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<sup>31</sup> *Mankato Review*, April 27, 1886; *Mankato Daily Review*, April 18, 1916; Chapman, *History of Mankato Lodge no. 12*; Chapman, *Mankato and Blue Earth County, Minnesota, A Historical and Descriptive Sketch with the Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Trade of the City of Mankato, Minnesota, for the year 1877* (Mankato, Minn.: Wise and Coffin Printers, 1878).

<sup>32</sup> Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 99, 285.

Lause.<sup>33</sup> Obituaries in the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Mankato Free Press* say John J. Porter was aged ninety-one when he died in 1929 as “the last surviving member of the Knights of the Forest.”<sup>34</sup> The *Mankato Free Press* obituary also states that he was the son of E.D.B. Porter, but this is probably incorrect. E.D.B. Porter’s obituary said he was sixty years old when he died in 1895, and the 1875 Ramsey County census corroborates the obituary, both in age and location.<sup>35</sup> This means E.D.B. was born around 1835 and could not have been John J. Porter Jr.’s father. Meanwhile, the Blue Earth County census records for 1857 show two John J. Porters, one aged forty-five and one nineteen, among a family of six who were all born in Pennsylvania, including a mother, Susan, a twenty-eight-year-old named Mary Porter, and two more teenagers, Daniel and Henry Porter.<sup>36</sup> Daniel was celebrated as a war hero in his 1915 obituary for his part in the Battle of New Ulm, where he served with Mankato militiamen under John F. Meagher.<sup>37</sup>

There were many John Porters in late nineteenth century Minnesota, but only two, a father and son, were known to be involved with the removal of the Ho-Chunk from Blue Earth County. The younger John J. Porter is the one defined as the “last Knights of Forest” by the *Mankato Free Press* and the *Chicago Tribune*. But the elder John J. Porter was probably the one involved in most of the other removal activities in Mankato, including his son’s Knights of the

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<sup>33</sup> 1857 Minnesota Territorial Census. Census ID 4231374, Blue Earth River, Blue Earth County, Minnesota, United States. Line 27. <http://people.mnhs.org/finder/census/4231374> (accessed April 2017); Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 285.

<sup>34</sup> 1857 Minnesota Territorial Census. Census ID 4231374, Blue Earth River, Blue Earth County, Minnesota, United States. Line 27. <http://people.mnhs.org/finder/census/4231374> (accessed April 2017); *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 15, 1929, pg. 20; *Mankato Free Press*, January 14, 1929.

<sup>35</sup> 1875 Minnesota State Census. Census ID 4230520, Rose, Ramsey County, Minnesota, United States. <http://people.mnhs.org/finder/census/4230520> (accessed April 2017); *Mankato Daily Free Press*, March 20, 1895.

<sup>36</sup> 1857 Minnesota Territorial Census. Census ID 4231375, Blue Earth River, Blue Earth County, Minnesota, United States. Lines 25-30. <http://people.mnhs.org/finder/census/4231375> (accessed April 2017).

<sup>37</sup> Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 113; *Mankato Free Press*, November 1, 1905.

Forest. The man who posed for the photo in 1863 appears much older than twenty-four, which would have been the age of the John Porter described in the obituary (see figure 18). The signature below his photo also matches the signature on a letter sent to the Commissioner of Indians Affairs in June 1863 requesting an allotment for Asa White's Ho-Chunk wife. Therefore, the John J. Porter who represented Mankato in the state legislature was likely the elder Porter.

Thomas Hughes' *History of Blue Earth County* notes that John J. Porter arrived in Minnesota from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania in 1857. Although he was probably describing John J. Porter Sr., the family undoubtedly arrived from Pennsylvania together. The elder Porter was certainly an entrepreneurial American man on the make when they moved to Blue Earth County. According to Thomas Hughes, John J. Porter, likely the senior, immediately "purchased a big interest in the townsite" of Shelbyville near the Ho-Chunk reservation and constructed a

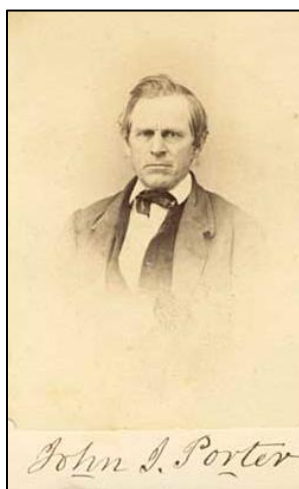


Figure 18. John J. Porter Sr. Source: [Minnesota Historical Society](#).



Figure 19. Location of Camp Porter, the Ho-Chunk concentration camp along the Minnesota riverside in Mankato. According to Thomas Hughes' *History of Steamboating on the Minnesota River*, Hubbard Mill (shown here ca. 1909) was later built there. (p.151) Image Source: [Blue Earth County Historical Society](#).

large sawmill there. Hughes wrote that John Porter claimed to be a “personal acquaintance” of President James Buchanan, and that the president had promised Porter the Minnesota Land Office, “which, had it been fulfilled, would have been a big boom for their townsite.” However, the town site and sawmill were a failure, so Porter moved into Mankato in 1860, where he started a tannery and was elected to the state legislature in 1862.<sup>38</sup> When the U.S.-Dakota War commenced, he was still advertising the sale of his farm at the unsuccessful town site near the Ho-Chunk reservation.<sup>39</sup>

Unlike the other Porter families in Blue Earth County, E.D.B. Porter was also from Pennsylvania, and so it is likely he was a brother, cousin, or uncle, to the younger John J. Porter.<sup>40</sup> E.D.B. was an officer in the Mankato Masons, and quite likely a member of the Knights of the Forest along with the John J. Porter family.<sup>41</sup> His signature appears on a petition sent to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in January 1863 calling for the removal of the Ho-Chunk people.<sup>42</sup> E.D.B. is also listed in a militia that called themselves “Frontier Rangers” who traveled between Mankato, South Bend, and Madelia during the U.S.-Dakota War.<sup>43</sup> Interestingly, E.D.B.’s father-in-law was the Ho-Chunk physician, Moses Wickersham, who moved with the

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<sup>38</sup> Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 92, 284-6; Semi-Centennial Committee on Publications. *Mankato: its first fifty years*, 106; Minnesota Legislative Reference Library. "Porter, John J. "J.J.", "G.A."" <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/legdb/fulldetail.aspx?id=14403> (accessed April 2017).

<sup>39</sup> *Mankato Record*, October 4, 1862.

<sup>40</sup> 1875 Minnesota State Census. Census ID 4230520, Rose, Ramsey County, Minnesota, United States. <http://people.mnhs.org/finder/census/4230520> (accessed April 2017);

<sup>41</sup> Chapman, *History of Mankato Lodge no. 12*, 67.

<sup>42</sup> “Removal of the Winnebago Indians” Petition. United States Bureau of Indian Affairs and National Archives (U.S.). *Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-81. Winnebago Agency, 1826-1875*. (Washington, D.C: The Bureau, 1826-1875) Reel 936 (see Appendix B).

<sup>43</sup> Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 125.

Ho-Chunk to Nebraska.<sup>44</sup> After the war, E.D.B. moved to St. Paul and then the state of Washington, where he worked for the state treasury until he died.<sup>45</sup> Chapman wrote in their history that the Mankato Masons convicted E.D.B. of embezzlement after he moved away, which he denied via letters from Washington and never paid.<sup>46</sup>

John J. Porter Sr. died a little more than a decade after the war in Mankato, where he was hailed in his obituary as “deservedly popular with the people” for his “active interest in everything pertaining to the welfare of this county and state.”<sup>47</sup> During the war, he had traveled to St. Paul to bear witness of the events in New Ulm and then assisted the commander while Mankato was under martial law on August 24, 1862.<sup>48</sup> But mostly, the *Mankato Review* memorialized him for “being prominently identified in...the removal of the Winnebago Indians.” After the war, John Porter Sr. won two more elections to the state legislature, where he served until 1865.<sup>49</sup> Two J. J. Porters are listed on the 1865 Mankato census right below Basil Moreland, S.F. Barney, and his business partner John A. Willard and a tax assessment for Mankato in 1866 lists John J. Porter as a real estate agent.<sup>50</sup> According to his 1874 obituaries, he

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<sup>44</sup> Semi-Centennial Committee on Publications, *Mankato: its first fifty years*, 331-333.

<sup>45</sup> *Mankato Daily Free Press*, March 20, 1895.

<sup>46</sup> Chapman, *History of Mankato Lodge no. 12*, 35.

<sup>47</sup> *Mankato Record*, March 7, 1874; *Mankato Review*, March 13, 1874; *Mankato Union*, March 13, 1874.

<sup>48</sup> Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 116; *St. Paul Pioneer*, August 22, 1862.

<sup>49</sup> Minnesota Legislative Reference Library. "Porter, John J. "J.J.", "G.A."."

<http://www.leg.state.mn.us/legdb/fulldetail.aspx?id=14403> (accessed April 2017).

<sup>50</sup> 1865 Minnesota State Census. Census ID 4231179, Mankato, Blue Earth County, Minnesota, United States. Lines 12-18. <http://people.mnhs.org/finder/census/4231179> (accessed April 2017); Internal Revenue Assessment Lists for Minnesota, 1862-1866; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M774, 3 rolls); Records of the Internal Revenue Service, Record Group 58, Ancestry.com online database (accessed April 2017); The National Archives at Washington, D.C.

was involved with reorganizing the Minnesota Valley Railroad and then lived in Jackson, MN, where he worked for the St. Paul and Sioux City Railroad Land Office.<sup>51</sup>

Meanwhile, John J. Porter Jr. moved to St. Paul sometime after the U.S.-Dakota War before going to live with his daughter in Glencoe, Ill. Most likely, he and his wife relocated in the early 1870s when his father died and Cordelia's became proprietor of the International Hotel in St. Paul.<sup>52</sup> The 1895 and 1905 Ramsey County censuses lists the younger John J. Porter alongside his wife, Cordelia, and identifies him as a "freight inspector."<sup>53</sup> He is also mentioned in a St. Paul newspaper article as a clerk for the International Hotel, which was owned by his father-in-law Marcus Flower, who first owned the Clifton House in Mankato. The 1903 biography of Flower in the Mankato semi-centennial history states that his daughter, "Mrs. J. J. Porter," lived in St. Paul. According to Cordelia's 1913 obituary and her husband's 1929 obituary, John J. Porter Jr. lived nearly forty years in St. Paul before he spent the last nineteen years of his life in the care of his daughter.<sup>54</sup>

In the end, it is more than likely that both John J. Porter Sr. and Jr. were active member of the Knights of the Forest. It is fitting that the *Mankato Free Press* remembered John Porter Jr. as the "last of Knights of the Forest." It was his largest effect on the town during his short tenure there. There are no details on their exact role in the Knights of the Forest. But it was probably the

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<sup>51</sup> *Grange Advance* (Red Wing, MN), March 11, 1874.

<sup>52</sup> *Daily Globe* (St. Paul, MN), November 7, 1879.

<sup>53</sup> 1895 Minnesota State Census. Census ID 4231378, St. Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota, United States. Line 1-2. <http://people.mnhs.org/finder/census/4231378> (accessed April 2017); 1905 Minnesota State Census. Census ID 4231339, St. Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota, United States. <http://people.mnhs.org/finder/census/4231339> (accessed April 2017).

<sup>54</sup> *Irish Standard* (Minneapolis), August 2, 1913; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 15, 1929, pg. 20; *Mankato Daily Free Press*, March 26, 1895; Semi-Centennial Committee on Publications, *Mankato: its first fifty years*, 214-5.



responsibility of politicians like John J. Porter Sr. to bring those mysterious threats, implied or explicit, from secret societies to the halls of government. It is significant that the Ho-Chunk encampment in Mankato where they awaited removal in the spring of 1863 was named “Camp Porter.” According to Hughes, this was to “honor John J. Porter, who had been most active in their removal.”<sup>55</sup> The camp was probably named for John Porter Sr., since he was the more prominent of the two as a state legislator. Possibly, John Porter Sr. occupied the highest leadership role in the Knights, the Worthy Chancellor (see Appendix A).

### **The Barney Brothers**

Another young pioneer Minnesotan from the Northeastern United States moved to the county with ambitions like those of Chapman and Porter. Asa Barney was born in 1835 and grew up in New York State the youngest of three brothers, whom he followed to Mankato in 1857. Chas was first to arrive following the death of their father in 1855. The eldest, Sheldon, moved to Minnesota immediately after his admission to the bar in 1856 and opened a law practice in Mankato. They proclaimed an exclusively American heritage, with Chas Barney’s biography stating that they descended both from Benjamin Franklin and from a 1634 Salem, Massachusetts settler.<sup>56</sup> The brothers were probably well versed in the possibilities for political and social power in secret societies. Though Asa is the only brother named as a Knights of the Forest member in a *Mankato Free Press* newspaper article, and Chas was living in Wisconsin at the

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<sup>55</sup> Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 139; *Mankato Record*, May 2, 1863.

<sup>56</sup> Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 327-328; Semi-Centennial Committee on Publications, *Mankato: its first fifty years* (Mankato, Minn.: Free Press Printing Co., 1903), 172-175.

time of the U.S.-Dakota War, it is hard to imagine that Sheldon was not involved, or even a leader, in the Knights of the Forest.

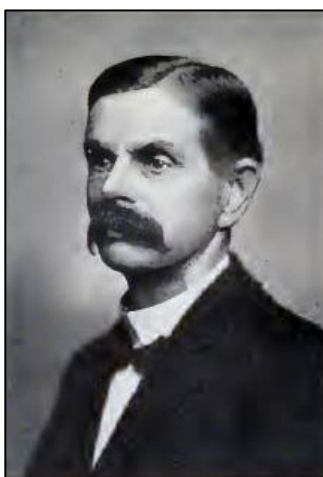


Figure 20. Asa C. Barney.  
**Source:** *Mankato: its first fifty years* (Mankato, Minn.: Free Press Printing Co., 1903), 172.



Figure 21. Sheldon F. Barney. **Source:** *Mankato: its first fifty years* (Mankato, Minn.: Free Press Printing Co., 1903), 174.



Figure 22. John A. Willard, Sheldon's longtime business partner. **Source:** *Mankato: its first fifty years* (Mankato, Minn.: Free Press Printing Co., 1903), 338.

Sheldon and Asa led active professional, civic and social lives in Mankato. Sheldon partnered with John A. Willard at his law office and most other enterprises. Meanwhile, Asa operated various businesses and is often listed as a bookkeeper by occupation. According to *Mankato: its First Fifty Years*, the brothers engaged in multiple industries over the years, sometimes with each other, on their own, or with other partners like Willard. It is uncertain if any of those businesses ever turned a profit, but Sheldon Barney and John Willard were the most vocal of all the profiteers about the fortune they made from Ho-Chunk land. Both Barney

brothers and John Willard's names appear on Government Land Office Land Patents for their purchase of "Winnebago Lands." The Barney brothers and Willard, like Chapman, remained respected civic leaders in Mankato until their deaths. Asa attended a 1916 "Old Settlers Reunion" where historian Thomas Hughes interviewed someone about the Knights and later included the story in his *History of Blue Earth County and Biography of its leading citizens*.<sup>57</sup>

There is a possibility that Asa Barney was a founding member of the Knights of the Forest. An 1886 newspaper article says there were "three persons, two of them citizens of Mankato, and one of Garden City, conversing about the situation, [and] conceived the idea of forming a secret order, whose object should be the removal of all Indians from the State."



Figure 23. Advertisement for Willard and Barney. *Source:* Winnebago File. Blue Earth County Historical Society. Photocopied by the author.

<sup>57</sup> Old Settlers Reunion Notes. Thomas Hughes. Papers. SMHC Manuscript Collection 101. Mankato State University Library, Mankato, Minn.

Although Asa Barney moved to Mankato later in his life, his family homestead was near Garden City, where he lived at the time of the U.S.-Dakota War. According to Thomas Hughes, the Knights formed in a “law office” in Block 14, which “was for years the only important business block of the town.”<sup>58</sup> Of course, the “three persons” could have been other members of the Knights from those cities.

Most likely Sheldon Barney was a founding member and perhaps a leader in the Knights of the Forest. There is no mention of leadership roles in the articles that name Chapman, Asa Barney, and Meagher as “members,” even describing Asa as being “initiated at Garden City.”<sup>59</sup> But Sheldon also owned a homestead near Garden City in Ceresco Township, although he lived and worked in Mankato.<sup>60</sup> He and Willard also advertised their law office on Front Street across from the Levee, which was the exact position of Block 14. This was also the location of the large stone building where the Masons held meetings and observed the hanging of 38 Dakota men.

Sheldon and Asa were members of the Masonic Lodge as well as several other fraternal organizations in Mankato, including the Knights Templar and Odd Fellows. As mentioned above, Sheldon conducted Odd Fellows rituals at the time capsule ceremony in 1866. Historian Mark Lause has shown that these fraternal organizations and societies were interconnected social networks that functioned as sorting mechanisms for like-minded people. The more controversial the club’s purposes and culture, the more “secret society” and less “fraternal order” they became.

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<sup>58</sup> Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 138; Semi-Centennial Committee on Publications, *Mankato: its first fifty years* (Mankato, Minn.: Free Press Printing Co., 1903), 85.

<sup>59</sup> *Mankato Review*, April 27, 1886.

<sup>60</sup> Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 233, 327-328; Semi-Centennial Committee on Publications, *Mankato: its first fifty years*, 172-175.

People joined organizations based on their religion, political leanings, or other business and social interests. Sometimes they offered a way for people to rise above other differences toward a common goal. For instance, Irish-Catholic immigrant John Meagher followed the papal ban on Masonry and was not a member of the Mankato Masons, but he was a very successful and active businessman in the community. A secret society like the Knights of the Forest could help bridge the distinctions that might have otherwise limited social and political relations between him and the other members who had a Masonic and Protestant background.



Figure 24. John F. Meagher.  
**Source:** *Mankato: its first fifty years* (Mankato, Minn.: Free Press Printing Co., 1903), 276.



Figure 25. First National Bank at the corner of Front and Hickory Streets in Mankato, ca. 1870. According to *Mankato: its first fifty years*, the bank was started with \$60,000 capital in 1868 by several Mankato businessmen, including John Willard and Meagher as its president. (p.115) *Image Source:* [MSUM Archives](#).

### **John Meagher: War Profiteer**

John Meagher was among the most determined and prosperous moneymakers of all the Mankato men on the make entrepreneurs. He was born April 11, 1836, in County Kerry, Ireland

and immigrated to America in 1847 at the age of eleven, living first for a few years on a farm in Illinois. When he was fourteen, he began work as a tinsmith apprentice in Illinois. He moved to Red Wing, MN, before relocating permanently to Mankato in 1858. Three years later, he bought an existing hardware store. Over the next few decades, he acquired “a large private fortune” from war profits.<sup>61</sup> His store profited from the temporary population boom as soldiers and other visitors stayed in Mankato in November and December 1862. Advertisements for Meagher’s hardware store contained only a few lines of basic text in the spring of 1862. But by the fall of 1863, he had more wealth to spend on marketing in the *Mankato Record* and the *Mankato Independent*, and his ads now included graphics a sizeable picture of a stove. A few years later, he was able to purchase an entire “Agricultural Column” in the newspaper (see Appendix C).<sup>62</sup>

Meagher did not have quite the same background as the Barney brothers, John Porter, or Charles Chapman. He was not born in America, nor was he a member of the Masons. It is likely he was not overly familiar with secret societies or fraternal organizations since he had spent his youth surviving a famine, immigrating, and apprenticing. But he was a shrewd capitalist in Mankato, and the U.S.-Dakota War was where he first made his mark and built a reputation. Meagher’s biography does not credit the hardware store for his wealth. Apparently, he “was always active and alert in business enterprise, building many houses and acquiring much property” and much like Willard and Barney, he “dealt largely and profitably in lands.”<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Semi-Centennial Committee on Publications, *Mankato: its first fifty years* (Mankato, Minn.: Free Press Printing Co., 1903), 172-175.

<sup>62</sup> *Mankato Record*, 1862-1863; *Mankato Independent*, 1862-1866 (see Appendix C).

<sup>63</sup> Semi-Centennial Committee on Publications, *Mankato: its first fifty years*, 276-278.

His role as militiaman and member of the Knights of the Forest was likely part of his effort to integrate with the business culture. Frontier militias functioned as inter-cultural social clubs in the same way that fraternal organizations often spanned differences. During the U.S.-Dakota War, he enlisted in the militia to fight at New Ulm and served as captain of the Mankato Home Guards.<sup>64</sup> His participation in the Battle of New Ulm made him a local hero in Mankato, especially among members of St. Peter and Paul Catholic Church.<sup>65</sup> In 1862 and the years that followed, Meagher worked to attain business partnerships and elected offices. This wartime success was followed by other business ventures. He was a leader at First National Bank, a Woolen Factory, and held interests in real estate.<sup>66</sup>

The U.S.-Dakota War, and likely the Knights of the Forest, launched Meagher into political and economic success, but his veteran status was also a big part of his identity. He was intimately involved with war commemoration and served on the commission to locate the New Ulm battle site, where he gave a speech at the monument dedication.<sup>67</sup> Meagher's biography is the only one of the four men that emphasizes his militiaman status. There's a possibility that the Mankato Home Guard and all reservation-area militias were populated with Knights of the Forest members. Militias called "Home Guards" were created during the U.S.-Dakota War but continued through the fall of 1862 to defend Mankato and other town sites, ostensibly against the Ho-Chunk. Since John Meagher is listed as a leader of the Home Guard and is a confirmed

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Wilhelm von Festenberg-Pakisich and Arthur Schaub. *The History of SS. Peter and Paul's Parish in Mankato, Minnesota, 1854-1899*. (Mankato, Minn.: S.S. Peter & Paul Heritage Committee, 1999).

<sup>66</sup> Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 180; Semi-Centennial Committee on Publications, *Mankato: its first fifty years*, 276-278.

<sup>67</sup> Semi-Centennial Committee on Publications, *Mankato: its first fifty years*, 276-278.

member of the Knights of the Forest, it is possible that the Knights of the Forest coordinated or collaborated with the Mankato Home Guard.

If Meagher directed the Knights' militia activities through the Home Guards, there were likely other Knights-controlled militias throughout the county. There is no record of the specific activities of the Mankato Home Guards beyond the muster roll, which also includes Chapman and Sheldon Barney. Hughes' history of the county notes that no muster rolls were kept for Home Guards formed at Garden City, Vernon, and Shelby, areas where the Porter and Barney families owned homesteads at the time. These "Home Guards" could have functioned as ready militias for the Knights of the Forest to utilize. Militia groups had formed in those locations in 1859 and in 1861, and Garden City had maintained "a flourishing militia company" since 1857.<sup>68</sup> In the days after the Battle of New Ulm, the Danville Home Guards formed near the reservation and "were stationed each night, and every move of the Winnebagoes closely scrutinized...at the Winnebago Agency, where the main body of the Indians were congregated."<sup>69</sup> With all that paramilitary activity around the reservation, the Mankato Knights of the Forest Grand Lodge could have easily coordinated and operated militias with their subordinate lodges in those areas.

### **Participation in the Knights of the Forest**

Evidence suggests widespread membership in the Knights of the Forest, or at least sympathy with their goals, throughout Blue Earth County and areas surrounding the reservation.

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<sup>68</sup> Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 125.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 237.



The founding of the secret order took place in Mankato. But according to Hughes, its membership included “some of the most prominent and influential men in Mankato and Blue Earth County.” Mankato was headquarters of the Grand Lodge that took applications and issued charters to subordinate lodges. Both an 1886 newspaper article and Hughes’ county history mention “sublodges” in Garden City and Meridan. Unfortunately, the Grand Lodge records and those of subordinate chapters are forever lost to a fire.<sup>70</sup>

A nineteen-page petition containing hundreds of signatures was sent to the Office of Indian Affairs on January 21, 1863, just three weeks after the Knights of the Forest was founded. The petitioners demanded the “Removal of the Winnebago Indians” because “Humanity requires it; the welfare of the Indians, as well as the peace of the whites demand it.” They wrote that they had long suffered as neighbors of the “wandering” Ho-Chunk people:

With a marvelous patience the people have for years submitted to their annoyances, and perhaps they might have longer remained quiet but for the horrid massacres in their midst, which, from its sudden violence and brutality shocked and alarmed the people of the entire state. Henceforth, the Indians cannot be permitted to leave the reservation, and to be confined to it is starvation, for they will not work. Hence the removal of the Indians is a necessity.<sup>71</sup>

But this was not exactly true. The settlers surrounding the Ho-Chunk reservation had never been quiet about their desire to have them removed. The debate had taken place in the Mankato press

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<sup>70</sup> *Mankato Review*, April 27, 1886; Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 138.

<sup>71</sup> “Removal of the Winnebago Indians” Petition. United States Bureau of Indian Affairs and National Archives (U.S.). *Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-81. Winnebago Agency, 1826-1875*. (Washington, D.C: The Bureau, 1826-1875) Reel 936.

for years, and this was not the first petition that asked for Ho-Chunk removal from Blue Earth County. Clearly, petitioners were exploiting the U.S.-Dakota War to push for removal.

The petition was signed in the weeks following the establishment of Knights of the Forest, which suggests that it was distributed at the organization's meetings. However, there are no signatures of known Knights of the Forest members on the document, aside from suspected Knights participant E.D.B. Porter (see Appendix B). The name signed along with the text of the petition was Senator Morton Wilkinson, a Republican from Mankato. John Porter Sr., the Barneys, Chapman, and Meagher were all staunch Democrats. A membership roster could possibly be speculated from the names on the petition. But without any signatures of confirmed Knights, it is uncertain if the Knights were involved with the petition.

Of course, it is conceivable that the Democratic-leaning members of the Knights of the Forest circulated a Republican-conducted petition at their meetings despite the political rivalries. The Knights of the Forest oath, taken with Democratic politicians John Meagher and John Porter, included the promise to vote for candidates sympathetic to the cause. But nearly all Minnesota politicians were supportive of the Knights' goals in the early months of 1863. John Wise's Democratic newspaper, the *Mankato Record*, was in fierce post-war competition with the Republican *Mankato Independent*, as to which party was anti-Indian in the correct way, a battle that had been going on for years in Mankato but intensified in 1862.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> David M. Sorensen, "Press Coverage of the Dakota Conflict of 1862," (Master's Thesis, St. Cloud State University, 2005), 101, 106.

A separate petition circulated by Brown County men in January 1863 responded to Eastern critics by asking to move the Ho-Chunk people to parks in Philadelphia. Wise's *Mankato Record* said this was "carrying a joke too far" and condemned "its tone and character" for being "disrespectful to the communities named therein," even though the *Record* had repeatedly printed calls for "extermination or removal" of "all Indians." Wise wrote that "a petition respectful and earnest in request and language" would be much more effective and the Brown County petitioners should not have "intermeddled in our local affairs."<sup>73</sup> Presumably, this more "respectful" petition was Wilkinson's, but the Democrat John Wise probably would not have publicly admitted as much.

At least one signature of a prominent Democrat appears on Wilkinson's petition. Well-known Democrat and longtime Mankato businessman Daniel Buck signed the petition.<sup>74</sup> He later served as Blue Earth County Attorney, a Minnesota Supreme Court Justice, a state legislator for the Mankato area, and a member of the Minnesota State Normal School Board. It is more than likely that Judge Buck was also a member of the Knights since he was elected to the legislature in 1863 and was in the same political, social, and business circles as Meagher, Chapman, the Barneys, and Willard. He was involved with the First National and Citizen's National Banks along with John Meagher. Chapman's biography states that he surveyed Buck's South Bend land in 1858. Judge Buck is celebrated in Mankato history as a "noble specimen of American manhood" and is often listed as the speaker for any public event in Mankato during the

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<sup>73</sup> William E. Lass, "The removal from Minnesota of the Sioux and Winnebago Indians," *Minnesota History* 38, no. 8 (Dec. 1963): 353; *Mankato Record*, November 8, 1862; January 17, 1863.

<sup>74</sup> "Removal of the Winnebago Indians" Petition. Reel 936.

nineteenth-century. Late in his life, the Democratic Judge Buck gave the oratory at the dedication ceremony for a monument to the deceased Republican Senator Morton Wilkinson.<sup>75</sup>

Behind the scenes, the demand to remove Ho-Chunk from their reservation was a bipartisan effort. The three men who “conceived” the lodge meant to provide an organization that would connect men from different partisan affiliations to work toward the goal of Ho-Chunk removal. An 1886 article in the *Mankato Review* said the three founders of the Knights “believed that by uniting men of both political parties to work for a common object, throwing over their proceedings the mysterious veil of secrecy, they would be able to wield more power than by

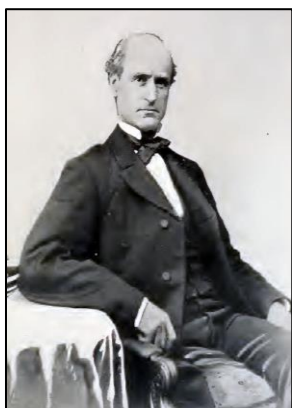


Figure 26. Morton S. Wilkinson. **Source:** *Mankato: its first fifty years* (Mankato, Minn.: Free Press Printing Co., 1903), 335.



Figure 27. Front Street between Jackson and Cherry Streets in Mankato, 1860. According to the April 27, 1886 *Mankato Review*, the Knights held some meetings at a carpenter shop on the corner of Front and Jackson Streets, then at “an office” in Block 14 near Walnut Street, before meeting in the Masonic Lodge, which was located on the third floor of “Marks’ stone building” (see figure 15). *Image Source:* [Blue Earth County Historical Society](#).



Figure 28. Daniel Buck. *Source:* [MSUM Archives](#).

<sup>75</sup> Semi-Centennial Committee on Publications, *Mankato: its first fifty years*, 115, 156, 188-194; Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 102.

working openly by politicians or otherwise.”<sup>76</sup> They knew very well that their influence came from rumors of nefarious intrigue and bipartisan cooperation.

So far, there is no evidence that any Republicans joined the Knights of the Forest. But many Republican Party members signed Wilkinson’s petition for removal in January 1863 along with Daniel Buck and E.D.B. Porter. Thomas Hughes never tied E.D.B. to a political party, but he was a relative of Democratic state legislator John Porter. Several other locally-known but politically-unaffiliated men appear on the petition, like John Porter Jr.’s brother-in-law, G.M. Flower, as well as Josiah Whipple, Harvey Burgess, Judge Lorin Cray, and Reuben Butter, to name a few.<sup>77</sup> A secret society like the Knights of the Forest was probably the perfect political action outlet for someone like E.D.B., who may have socialized with both Republicans and Democrats but was not necessarily politically associated. The Knights might have also been attractive to people like Judge Buck, who was friendly with Republicans and could maybe even recruit some into the organization. At the same time, it is evident from their ritual that there was at least some political maneuvering during their meetings.

The ritual of the Knights of the Forest displays the singularity of their objective as well as their fear-mongering political opportunism. It lays out no goals, questions, promises or statements pertaining to any subject other than “Indian removal.” The politician in Porter and Meagher must have been especially mindful of the part where members took an oath to “sacrifice every political and other preference to accomplish” their goals. Each member vowed he would

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<sup>76</sup> *Mankato Review*, April 27, 1886.

<sup>77</sup> “Removal of the Winnebago Indians” Petition. Reel 936.

“not aid or assist in any manner to elect to office in this state or the United States any person outside this order, who will not publicly or privately pledge himself” to the removal of Indians from Minnesota.<sup>78</sup> Since the known Knights of the Forest in the Mankato Lodge were Democrats, it seems unlikely that the many Republicans names on the January 1863 petition took this oath. However, the careful phrasing did leave the door open for Republicans to join, since their candidates were just as anti-Indian as the Democrats.

Years later, Charles Chapman gave a description of Knights of the Forest recruitment techniques in the local newspaper. When a person was “known to be in sympathy with the objects of the order he was approached by a member, who in the course of conversation asked him casually what he would think of the formation of a society.”<sup>79</sup> He explained that a surprise initiation into the group would take place, whereby the recruit would undergo questioning by a committee. The newcomer would then swear an oath stating

I \_\_\_\_\_, of my own free will and accord, in the full belief that every Indian should be removed from the state, by the memory of the cruelties perpetrated upon defenseless citizens, and in the presence of the members of this order here assembled, do most solemnly promise, without any mental reservation, to use every exertion and influence in my power to cause the removal of all tribes of Indians from the State of Minnesota...

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<sup>78</sup> Ritual/Initiation, Grand Lodge of the Knights of the Forest. Old Main Cornerstone. Collection. MSU Archives Collection 200. Mankato State University Library, Mankato, Minn., 1869-1969. Box 1, File 42.

<sup>79</sup> *Mankato Daily Review*, April 18, 1916.

Members also promised “not only to advocate the banishment of all Indians from this state, but to prevail on others to do so.”<sup>80</sup> This rite of passage must have taken place dozens of times if there was a large enough membership to include multiple chapters throughout the county.

It is unclear why, or if, the Knights felt the need to remain a secret. The initiation portion of the ritual contains a promise of confidentiality, and the newspaper articles emphasize the secrecy of the group. They might have desired secrecy to protect reputations, although it is unlikely that they were ashamed of their membership in such a group in 1863 Minnesota. Lause’s explanation of secret societies as being a smoke and mirrors tactic seems an appropriate description of the Knights of the Forest. As mentioned above, Chapman’s newspaper articles stress their goal to pressure government. The late nineteenth-century Ku Klux Klan needed the confidentiality of a secret society because they advocated and engaged in activities that were illegal like lynching, especially when they were supported by the law enforcers of the area. So perhaps the Knights were secret at least in part because they too advocated unlawful and inhumane activities, such as shooting any Ho-Chunk person they found off their reservation.

Their ceremonial promises, oaths, and goals were focused on a generic image of an “Indian.” They justified the organization’s existence as a fight for their very survival. During initiation, the “Worthy Vice Chancellor” reminded recruits that many American lives had been lost to the Dakota, proving “that the white man and the Indians cannot dwell together in peace and harmony.” New initiates were then commended because they had “chosen the only path

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<sup>80</sup> Ritual/Initiation, Grand Lodge of the Knights of the Forest. Main Cornerstone. Collection. MSU Archives Collection 200. Mankato State University Library, Mankato, Minn., 1869-1969. Box 1, File 42.

which will give security and safety to the future and prevent the blow of the glittering knife and merciless tomahawk.”<sup>81</sup> Their ritual targets a generic “Indian,” with no specific tribe named even though every mention of the Knights of the Forest in local histories and pamphlets states their goal is only Ho-Chunk removal from the state.

The terminology and battle imagery contained in their ritual oath combines the Dakota and Ho-Chunk people into one enemy group, even though the known Knights were well aware that they were two very separate nations. In fact, if the ritual document was studied by itself without the newspaper articles or any other information about the organization, it could seem as though the group had targeted the already interned Dakota people. During the “obligation” ceremony, Knights of the Forest initiates were commended for choosing “the only path which will give security and safety to the future and prevent the blow of the glittering knife and merciless tomahawk.” The recruits vowed that they would not rest until the entire “accursed race of infuriated demons” was “driven far away towards the setting sun.” They only promised the removal of “all Indians,” and they do not specifically mention the Ho-Chunk.<sup>82</sup>

The authors of the Knights ritual probably used the term “all Indians” intentionally, even though they only focused on the Ho-Chunk by all other accounts. First, it is likely that they did favor the removal of “all Indians” from the state, which would have included the Ojibwe in the north. Second, they might have been leaving the door open for an expansion of the Knights to the northern part of the state or anywhere else that indigenous people lived. Third, it worked in their

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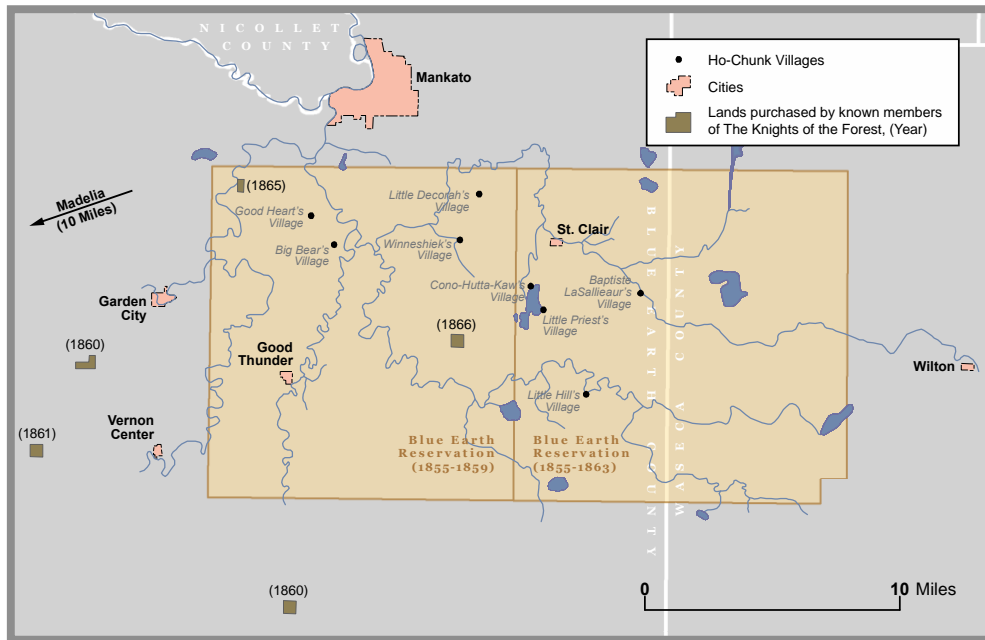
<sup>81</sup> Ritual/Initiation, Grand Lodge of the Knights of the Forest. Old Main Cornerstone. Collection. MSU Archives Collection 200. Mankato State University Library, Mankato, Minn., 1869-1969. Box 1, File 42.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.



favor for the peaceable Ho-Chunk people to seem the same as the Dakota people who had recently participated in hostilities.

The racial hatred against the Ho-Chunk was present when they arrived at Mankato in 1855, and whites simply used the U.S.-Dakota War to validate their racism. They did this by conflating all indigenous people into one group of outsiders, or what many scholars of ethnic conflict refer to as “the other.” When studying the record of the Ho-Chunk in Blue Earth County, it almost seems as if some settlers were waiting for something like the U.S.-Dakota War to vindicate their long held racism and calls for removal. Over the years, the petitions, meetings, and letters asking the federal government to move the Ho-Chunk out of Minnesota had exhausted every conceivable justification for their removal. The U.S.-Dakota War finally gave them the leverage they needed to convince the federal government. The Knights, then, brought a threat of mass violence that the federal government could not ignore.



Map 3. The Ho-Chunk Reservation in Blue Earth County and land purchases of the known members of the Knights of the Forest. Map by Cole Sutton.

## CHAPTER V. HO-CHUNK REMOVAL FROM MINNESOTA

It is unclear if Ho-Chunk living near them were aware of the Knights of the Forest's existence as an organization, but they were certainly alert to the danger of nearby whites. Their agent reported that they could no longer dig ginseng or go into the towns to conduct business for fear of their safety. The Office of Indian Affairs approved funds for farm implements in the fall of 1862, but Henry Rice and Alexander Ramsey promptly intervened to have the funds canceled. They reasoned that the excitement of the settlers meant the Ho-Chunk would surely be leaving and there was no point in making permanent arrangements for their continued stay in Minnesota. Their agent must have agreed because he pointed to incidents like the Mississippi River murder

and requested enough money to provide Ho-Chunk subsistence over the winter so they would not be forced to leave the reservation for food.<sup>1</sup> Rice and Ramsey proved correct in their assumptions. A bill was first introduced in Congress to remove the Ho-Chunk on December 16, 1862, even before the introduction of a Dakota removal bill or the Dakota execution and preceding the creation of the Knights of the Forest.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the danger of hostile neighbors, Ho-Chunk people fought hard to keep their reservation in Blue Earth County. Many were upset when the agent informed them that settlers were asking Congress for their removal because it was “unjust under the circumstances,” and they had “become attached to this location.” Winneshiek, who had previously protested a treaty that forced the reservation into allotments, adapted to the shifting conditions and changed his stance on the 1859 allotment treaty. He now wanted the allotments to be set in stone immediately, demanding permanent titles to their individual acreages.<sup>3</sup> Thomas Hughes claimed that some Ho-Chunk people blamed Winneshiek for the removal because he had so fiercely opposed and blocked the allotment treaty’s enactment.<sup>4</sup> According to one Mankato newspaper article, Ho-Chunks on the reservation also arrested a white man for advocating their removal. They held him for a time before turning him over and then threatened the arrest of two others for the same, including the trader Asa White.<sup>5</sup> Some Ho-Chunk families went to the courthouse and

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<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1862* (Washington D.C.: GPO); *Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-81. Winnebago Agency, 1826-1875*, Reel 935-936.

<sup>2</sup> Lass, “The Removal from Minnesota of the Sioux and Winnebago Indians,” 354.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1862*, 93.

<sup>4</sup> Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 138-139.

<sup>5</sup> *Mankato Record*, October 4, 1862; L. M. Waggoner. “Sibley’s Winnebago Prisoners: Deconstructing Race and Recovering Kinship in the Dakota War of 1862.” *Great Plains Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (January, 2013): 34.

applied for U.S. citizenship to keep their allotments, but they were denied and Marcus Moore, the white man assisting them, was arrested for his effort.<sup>6</sup>

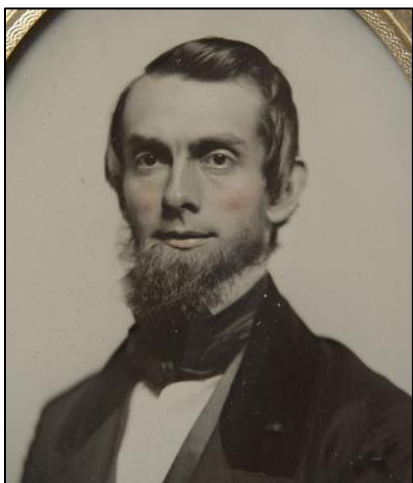


Figure 29. St. Andre Balcombe, ca. 1858. Source: [Minnesota Historical Society](#).



Figure 30. Winneshiek (second from left) and other Ho-Chunk leaders. The man third from left is possibly Waukon Decorah, according to Mnopedia. Source: [Minnesota Historical Society](#).

Government records reveal very little communication from the agency during the three months the Knights were active, so it is uncertain what direct impact the men “lying in ambush” at the reservation had on the Ho-Chunk people. The confinement to the reservation under hostile conditions worse than any experienced in Wisconsin must have produced an unhappy situation. The roll call counts during their transport to South Dakota show that possibly a quarter of the population did leave over the winter, probably back to Wisconsin where settlers still complained to the Indian Office of their presence. The *Winona Daily Republican* reported on May 18, 1863,

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<sup>6</sup> Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 138-139.

that about twenty Ho-Chunk people passed through town on their way to Wisconsin.<sup>7</sup> This group of Ho-Chunk likely never arrived in Mankato for census counts, and there were surely others who did the same.

The only letter from Agent Balcombe to his superiors in the early months of 1863 describes his work toward getting the Ho-Chunk reservation ready to move. His long letter details each of his activities toward the relocation of the reservation, but does not mention the condition or disposition of the Ho-Chunk people whatsoever.<sup>8</sup> Balcombe, like most government officials in 1863, had been the focus of immense criticism since the U.S.-Dakota War. The Democratic *Mankato Record* accused Republicans and their chosen Ho-Chunk agent, Balcombe, of supporting the reservation's existence in Blue Earth County. Furthermore, Balcombe was involved in a longstanding rivalry with Asa White concerning the refusal of White's trader license and accusations by both White and *The Record* that he was stealing from the Ho-Chunk.<sup>9</sup>

White and his partner Isaac Marks had followed the Ho-Chunk as traders for years alongside government agents and other traders like Henry Rice who had nearly all been appointed and licensed by Democratic presidents and governors. But when Republicans Abraham Lincoln and Alexander Ramsey were elected to the presidency and Minnesota governorship in 1860, Republican loyalists replaced the Democrats in political appointee

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<sup>7</sup> *Winona Daily Republican*, May 18, 1863.

<sup>8</sup> S.F. Balcombe to William P. Dole. United States Bureau of Indian Affairs and National Archives (U.S.). *Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-81. Winnebago Agency, 1826-1875*. (Washington, D.C: The Bureau, 1826-1875) Reel 936.

<sup>9</sup> Letters to William P. Dole from Balcombe, Porter, and White. United States Bureau of Indian Affairs and National Archives (U.S.). *Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-81. Winnebago Agency, 1826-1875* (Washington, D.C: The Bureau, 1826-1875) Reel 936; *Mankato Semi-weekly Record*, October 25, 1862.

positions, like Indian Agents. Some Indian Agents, like Balcombe, extended the political cronyism to trader licensure and promptly refused longstanding trader licenses of Democratic partisans, like Asa White and Isaac Marks. At the time he wrote the letter in March 1863, Balcombe was probably fatigued from a long winter among white neighbors who were hostile to both him and the Ho-Chunk. Yet he expressed more concern for his reputation than he did for the security of Ho-Chunk people.<sup>10</sup>

On February 23, 1863, an Act of Congress ordered the Ho-Chunk to leave Blue Earth County for Crow Creek Reservation in South Dakota. A Mankato newspaper proclaimed, “Glorious News!” and the Ho-Chunk people were expelled from Minnesota in the spring of 1863



Figure 31. Winneshiek.  
Source: [Minnesota Historical Society](#).



Figure 32. The steamboat “Favorite” in 1870. According to Thomas Hughes’ *History of Steamboating on the Minnesota River*, the “Favorite” was the last of three steamboats that transported Ho-Chunk people out of Blue Earth County, carrying over 300 people. (p.151) It is likely that Winneshiek was on this boat. Image Source: [Minnesota Historical Society](#).

<sup>10</sup> S.F. Balcombe to William P. Dole. United States Bureau of Indian Affairs and National Archives (U.S.). *Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-81. Winnebago Agency, 1826-1875* (Washington, D.C: The Bureau, 1826-1875) Reel 936.

without negotiations or treaties.<sup>11</sup> With no other justification for the government to force removal on the tribe other than the fervent anti-Indian sentiment among nearby whites, it seems that the Knights of the Forest had achieved their desired effect. The Ho-Chunk gathered at Camp Porter that May in Mankato to await transportation.<sup>12</sup> The *Mankato Independent* announced the “Departure of the Winnebagoes” on one page, and “Valuable Land For Sale,” which were “Winnebago Trust Lands” on another page.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps the Knights of the Forest bestowed some honor to John Porter beyond naming their concentration camp for him, or maybe they performed some traditional-style closing ceremony to forever end their group.

### **A Place to Call Home**

Some Ho-Chunk people in Blue Earth County fought the removal from Minnesota until the bitter end. Many of the families had already planted crops for the year and were said to have “actually shed tears” at the prospect of leaving them behind.<sup>14</sup> Winneshiek and his people refused to leave his Lake Elysian village, and a company of soldiers was sent to force them into Mankato at gunpoint.<sup>15</sup> They eventually left to the deplorable conditions of Crow Creek Reservation in what is now South Dakota. There was so much suffering there that most Ho-Chunk people eventually made their way down the Missouri to live near the Omaha tribe.<sup>16</sup> In

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<sup>11</sup> *Mankato Independent*, February 20, 1863.

<sup>12</sup> Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 139.

<sup>13</sup> *Mankato Independent*, May 15, 1863.

<sup>14</sup> *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1863* (Washington D.C.: GPO), 312.

<sup>15</sup> Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 139.

<sup>16</sup> Hyman, "Survival at Crow Creek, 1863-1866," 148-161; William E. Lass, "The 'Moscow Expedition'." *Minnesota History* 39, no.6 (Summer, 1965), 227-240.

1865, they negotiated their own treaty with the Omaha people to purchase half their reservation in Nebraska, which is where the Nebraska Tribe of Winnebago reservation is today. Because there was no census taken of Ho-Chunk in Wisconsin until 1874, it is difficult to know how many died in 1863 and 1864 as result of the Knights of the Forest pressure for removal. Ho-Chunk historian Amy Lonetree estimates about 550 Ho-Chunk people died on the journey from Minnesota to Crow Creek.<sup>17</sup>

One thing Ho-Chunk people never seemed to let go was their collective desire to live on their original homeland in Wisconsin. Over the years, Ho-Chunk resilience and determination to return only seemed to strengthen each time the federal government forced them to move. Parts of the tribe never left Wisconsin, and many of those who left to live at “the reservation of the moment,” eventually went back. Some Ho-Chunk moved back and forth between Wisconsin and wherever the government reservation was located at the time. Agents at all five reservations received numerous letters from Wisconsin settlers requesting removal of Ho-Chunk people who remained there. In 1871, they forced more than 1000 Wisconsin Ho-Chunk into boxcars at gunpoint. The train then brought them to the reservation in Nebraska, where only 860 arrived. A

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<sup>17</sup> Amy Lonetree, “Visualizing Native Survivance: Encounters with My Ho-Chunk Ancestors in the Family Photographs of Charlse Van Chaick,” in *People of the Big Voice: Photographs of Ho-Chunk Families by Charles Van Schaick, 1879-1942* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2011), 19.



final effort by the military to round up Ho-Chunks in Wisconsin came in the 1874 with the same outcome as the previous attempts.<sup>18</sup>

Meanwhile, the groups that lived on the government reservations were repeatedly moved to places they hated. When they finally found a place outside Wisconsin that they could tolerate in Blue Earth County, they were exiled from it to a place even more undesirable than the despised Long Prairie reservation. The Ho-Chunk even made one last effort for a government-sanctioned return to their homeland when they met General Henry Sibley's military expedition on their way to Crow Creek. Ho-Chunk leaders asked the General for a reservation in Wisconsin with American soldiers to guard them from hostile whites. Sibley saw the unfairness of their situation and implored the government to treat them justly, without necessarily endorsing their request.<sup>19</sup> By this time, Minnesotans were more concerned with the U.S.-Civil War and expeditions against Dakota fugitives, so Ho-Chunk injustices were at the bottom of their list.

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<sup>18</sup> Robert E. Bieder, *Native American Communities in Wisconsin, 1600-1960: A Study of Tradition and Change* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 171; United States Bureau of Indian Affairs and National Archives (U.S.). *Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-81. Winnebago Agency, 1826-1875.* (Washington, D.C.: The Bureau, 1826-1875) Reel 931-946; *Visions and Voices: Winnebago Elders Speak to the Children* (Independence, WI: Western Dairyland Economic Opportunity Council, 1994).

<sup>19</sup> Henry Sibley to William P. Dole. United States Bureau of Indian Affairs and National Archives (U.S.). *Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-81. Winnebago Agency, 1826-1875.* (Washington, D.C: The Bureau, 1826-1875) Reel 936.

## CHAPTER VI. CONCLUSION

The Knights of the Forest was essentially a grass roots hate group engaged in ethnic cleansing of 1863 Blue Earth County, Minnesota to support America's enthrallment with expansion, which most frontier settlers believed to be the nation's "Manifest Destiny." Many scholars and historians of ethnic cleansing and genocide have documented the function of local elites in advancing the societal goals of a dominant culture. While the nineteenth-century Ku Klux Klan is similar to the Knights of the Forest with its secret society influences and its purpose of racial terror, the Southern hate group did not work toward a goal of ethnic cleansing. They were responsible for thousands of lynchings and terrorized black families in their homes for decades. But the post-Civil War Ku Klux Klan was most concerned with maintaining political and social authority over black Southerners who comprised their indispensable labor force. The Knights of the Forest seemed much more confident of their localized social and political power and Indians served no economic purpose to them. So they focused on physical eradication of "all Indians" from their midst. This is why the Knights of the Forest have much more in common with organizations that effected ethnic cleansing, such as one in nineteenth-century Texas.

Gary Clayton Anderson's analysis of the Texas Rangers in his book, *The Conquest of Texas*, argues that the Rangers were responsible for ethnic cleansing in nineteenth-century Texas. The Rangers are an overly romanticized and celebrated institution in present-day America, but they have their origins in racism, greed, atrocities, and mass death. Anderson writes about a "culture of violence" that existed in mid-nineteenth-century Texas, in which both Indians and

Texans participated. But he points out that whites formed a policy and strategy around “racial violence” that “gradually led to the deliberate ethnic cleansing” of Texas Indians.

Although the Knights certainly never reached the levels of violence committed by the Rangers in Texas, their intentions and results were the same. Just like the Knights, the Rangers simply wanted the local indigenous people gone, regardless of how that happened. Colin Flint’s geographic explanation of hate groups in *Spaces of Hate* shows that the distinctions between such organizations are influenced by local conditions. The important difference for the Knights in Mankato that possibly halted the wholesale massacre of Ho-Chunk people was their almost immediate banishment from the state. Without the relatively quick exile from Minnesota after the U.S.-Dakota War, the Knights of the Forest membership could have enacted the same gradual, deliberate, ethnic cleansing that happened in Texas.

Anderson takes care to differentiate their actions as ethnic cleansing and not genocide because Texans were not committed to extermination. He points out that the early Texans would have been satisfied if the Indians had simply left. But they refused to leave without a fight. And so the Rangers became a paramilitary group who were given complete discretion for what they saw as the protection of Texans. The Rangers were so successful that they were eventually put on the federal payroll.<sup>1</sup> The Knights had the same goal and were willing to use any means necessary to remove the Ho-Chunk from neighboring land under the guise of public safety. The Knights had involvement and support from Minnesota legislators such as John Porter and John

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<sup>1</sup> Gary Clayton Anderson, *The Conquest of Texas: Ethnic Cleansing in the Promised Land, 1820-1875* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005), 7.

Meagher. They also had militia connections through John Meagher and his Mankato Home Guard. The Knights could have easily become a statewide, publicly funded paramilitary hate group like the Rangers had they existed long enough to grow the organization further.

While the Rangers were not a fraternal order or secret society like the Knights, they were similar to the Minnesota men in other, more dangerous ways. Anderson cites studies in Yugoslavia that show “political elites often direct the actions of paramilitary groups involved in ethnic cleansing.” He points out that many politicians had been Rangers and used Indian extermination as political rallying cries. Even though Rangers sometimes acted on their own, all of the Rangers who “forced removal or committed the occasional genocidal act were an extension of the Texas political system.”<sup>2</sup> The Knights were also connected to the state political system, with Sheldon Barney, John Meagher, and John Porter in the legislature before, during, and after the U.S.-Dakota War and also likely members of the Mankato Grand Lodge. The extent to which the Knights functioned as a paramilitary group in a process of ethnic cleansing is still unclear. If Chapman’s allusions to murders during “excursions” were real occurrences, the Knights were well on their way to Texas Rangers-style atrocities.

It remains unknown if any member of the Knights of the Forest ever murdered a Ho-Chunk person under the direction or protection of the organization, but a massacre is not necessary to meet the conditions for ethnic cleansing. Hundreds of Ho-Chunk people died as a result of their removal from Minnesota. By the summer of 1863, Southwestern Minnesota was effectively emptied of all native people who had lived there just one year prior. The white

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

settlers who had been slowly colonizing the area had desired and expected all along that indigenous people would eventually be moved out of the state. The U.S.-Dakota War had given the Knights a racial pretext that allowed them to appear and feel as though they held the moral high ground when they called for “extermination or removal” of a group of people who had done nothing to merit punishment and who had prior rights to the land.

Along with elements of land, profit, and politics, the fundamental component of race cannot be ignored. There is no doubt that racism and prejudice were prevalent throughout all of Minnesota in 1862. Even as Minnesotans sent soldiers to help the Union Army fight to end slavery, they called for a racial extermination at home. Many historians have emphasized the role of the federal government in the removals of indigenous nations across the Midwest. But the average citizens and European immigrants who settled the American West often organized, petitioned, and pushed the federal government into the hasty removals that cost many lives.

The culpability of regular men and women in ethnic cleansing events is just as great as that of the government’s. One scholar of Nazi Germany has found that even the most notorious ethnic cleansing in history was carried out by “ordinary men” who were not necessarily anti-Semitic, nor were they even really Nazi sympathizers and did not really support Hitler. Christopher Browning’s study of German Police Battalion 101 showed that the average men who perpetrated atrocities against Jews during the Holocaust were driven by what amounted to peer pressure, war-time fear, and dehumanization of the victims.<sup>3</sup> In the same way, The Knights of the

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<sup>3</sup> Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992).

Forest took an oath to “prevail on others” to advocate their cause. In the ethnic cleansing of Minnesota, the citizenry exerted every pressure possible to force the federal government toward that end.

Mankato elites also used racial imagery to justify and enlist support from settlers and the federal government for their own political and economic goals. However, settlers who felt they had lost land to the Ho-Chunk, experienced a brutal war with Dakota and saw native people in general as an “annoyance,” did not need much prodding toward racial hatred. The reality of 1862 Blue Earth County was that political elites either projected an anti-Indian stance or they would no longer be politicians. Racism had festered among settlers for years and amplified after the U.S.-Dakota War. The federal government had nothing to gain from Ho-Chunk removal aside from appeasing the settlers, but the war and subsequent removal brought profits to Mankato businessmen. With the Civil War in full swing at the time, the federal government likely viewed the Ho-Chunk in Minnesota as a problem that should be dealt with and forgotten as quickly as possible. Minnesotans felt vehemently the same way.

In the end, it was both the settlers and Mankato business class that benefited from the removal of the Ho-Chunk. Within days of their departure, settlers had moved onto the reservation land, occupying Ho-Chunk houses and taking possession of already-planted fields with a mind to pre-empt claims.<sup>4</sup> The government sold the Blue Earth reservation through a bidding process. Buyers were mostly eastern businessmen and Minnesota elites, who re-sold it to farmers and pre-emptors for a hefty return. It is probable that most Knights of the Forest

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas Hughes, *History of Blue Earth County*, 141.

members profited in some way or another from the removal of the Ho-Chunk from Minnesota. Asa Barney's two older brothers, with whom he shared several business ventures, were said to have closed an existing business because they made "more money in Winnebago lands."<sup>5</sup> In October 1862, the Willard and Barney Law Offices were already advertising in the *Mankato Record* that they would "prosecute war claims [and] procure bounty money...for soldiers and widows..."<sup>6</sup> Charles Chapman was quite likely correct when he suggested that the prosperity of the white settlers in the county was owed to the Knights and the removal of the Ho-Chunk. The entire region benefitted economically from the profits made off the sale of "Winnebago Lands" in Blue Earth County.

The formation of hate groups like the Knights of the Forest usually have their roots in racism, economics and politics. It would be incorrect to place too much emphasis on wartime fear or retaliation for Dakota attacks as reasons for such fervent anti-Indian sentiment because the racial hate for the Ho-Chunk preceded their arrival at the Blue Earth County reservation. People had protested the establishment of the reservation weeks before the boundary lines were drawn and never stopped until the Ho-Chunk people had left the state. These objections began as complaints of "savages" but quickly grew to threats of extermination in the aftermath of the U.S.-Dakota War. At a time when most of the country was bitterly split along regional and partisan lines, Minnesota party politics centered on a cause around which most all could unite. Racism, in the aftermath of war, became a bi-partisan movement toward ethnic cleansing.

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<sup>5</sup> Semi-Centennial Committee on Publications, *Mankato: its first fifty years*, 95.

<sup>6</sup> *Mankato Record*, October 4, 1862.

In the Afterword of *Spaces of Hate*, Daniel M. Welliver writes, “Communities have histories of hate, i.e., their own unique organizational institutions, seminal events, and engrained attitudes and patterns of behavior.”<sup>7</sup> For Mankato and all of Minnesota to take a complete and honest look at their distinctive history of relations with indigenous people, the Knights of the Forest must be recognized in U.S.-Dakota War histories. The Ho-Chunk people and the Knights are barely mentioned, if at all, in most U.S.-Dakota War books, articles, websites, and memorial ceremonies. Yet the story of these two groups of people has much to say about the war with Dakota. What happened to the Ho-Chunk who lived near the Knights of the Forest is a largely unknown dark piece of Minnesota’s past that undoubtedly contributed to the ethnic cleansing of Minnesota.



Figure 33. Citizens National Bank on Front Street, 1881. According to Hughes’ *History of Blue Earth County*, John Meagher became president there shortly after its formation in 1872. (pg. 174) *Image Source: Blue Earth County Historical Society.*

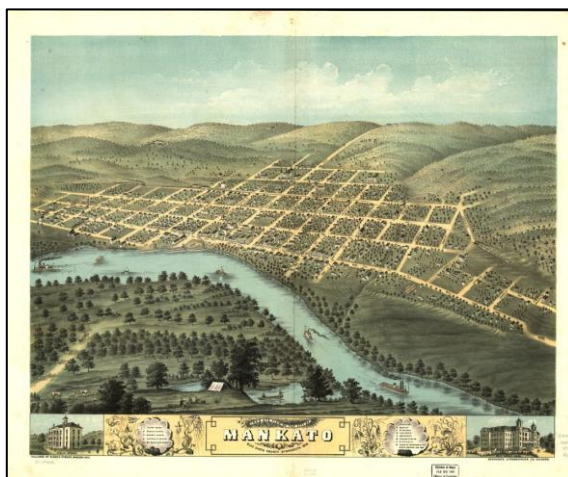


Figure 34. Bird's eye view of the city of Mankato, Blue Earth County, Minnesota, 1870. *Source: Library of Congress.*

<sup>7</sup> Colin Flint, *Spaces of Hate: Geographies of Discrimination and Intolerance in the U.S.A.* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 251.



### **The Legacy of the Knights of the Forest in Mankato**

Although there has been movement toward U.S.-Dakota War reconciliation and commemoration in Mankato, the history of Ho-Chunk people in Blue Earth County is rarely acknowledged. For the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Dakota hangings, a ceremony took place at Reconciliation Park in Mankato, where an installation was added that displayed the names of the thirty-eight Dakota men who had been executed there. But there is no mention anywhere in the park of the Ho-Chunk people who lived there peacefully and were hunted by a secret society of Mankato founders. Every year, people gather at the Reconciliation Park for ceremonies with Dakota people. Meanwhile there has been only one, relatively low-key, public reconciliation program for Ho-Chunk people in Blue Earth County, organized by longtime Mankato reconciliation advocates, Bruce and Sheryl Dowlin, and a few other local people in 2005.<sup>8</sup>

Today, many Mankatoans make an extra effort to recognize the town's wrongdoings during the U.S.-Dakota War. But the Ho-Chunk people and the Knights of the Forest are usually secondary subjects to the hangings and the Dakota prison that was located there. This is somewhat odd, considering the Ho-Chunk were much more a part of everyday life in the town, whereas Dakota people lived farther from Mankato and in another county. Before the war, Mankato newspapers often discussed the Ho-Chunk people, their traders who were part of the business community, and the likelihood or timing of a reservation removal. Blue Earth County residents did not seem very concerned with Dakota people until hostilities commenced. After the war had begun, Mankatoans feared they were in a "precarious situation" sandwiched between the

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<sup>8</sup> *Mankato Free Press*, January 24, 2006.

Ho-Chunk and Dakota reservations.<sup>9</sup> Mankato newspapers covered the battles but also maintained a focus on the Ho-Chunk, whether they would join the Dakota, and if the Ho-Chunk would finally be removed as they had advocated for years.

It is understandable that Mankatoans view the largest mass hanging in U.S. history as their wartime legacy, but it is an incomplete historical image. The Ho-Chunk people were innocent victims of Mankato profiteers' prosperity and "progress" before and after the war. Some Knights of the Forest members lived comfortably in Mankato as lawyers, businessmen, and civic leaders for the rest of their lives. Years later, members would sometimes recognize each other via the group's secret grips, passwords, and hand signs.<sup>10</sup> The Knights of the Forest ritual document was literally built into the foundations of Minnesota State University Mankato by the town's earliest leaders. For some, the unusually large mass hanging might have been the most memorable U.S.-Dakota War moment. But in the shadow of that terrible event, the Knights of the Forest perpetuated a deeper, longer hatred. For this reason, the Knights are a piece of the story that must gain a more prominent place in U.S.-Dakota War history.

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<sup>9</sup> *Mankato Daily Review*, April 18, 1916.

<sup>10</sup> *Mankato Review*, April 27, 1886.

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## APPENDIX A: INITIATION/RITUAL OF THE KNIGHTS OF THE FOREST

## RITUAL.

## OPENING.

[When the hour arrives for opening the Lodge, the Worthy Chancellor (and in his absence the Worthy Vice Chancellor) will take the chair and call the Lodge to order by giving one rap.]

Worthy Chancellor. The officers will take their stations. The Conductor will see that the Lodge is guarded in a proper manner. The Conductor will examine those present, that all may be worthy.

[If any are present without the pass word, they must leave the room.]

C. [Reports to W. C.]

W. C. [The chancellor gives three raps, all the members rise.]

Officers and members: The objects for which we are assembled, are worthy of our cause. It is no less than the preservation of our lives, our families, and our homes. Let us be ever watchful and keep constantly in mind the sacred obligation which binds us together as brothers in one common interest. I sincerely hope this meeting may be profitable to each one of us, and that we may go forth from this Lodge stronger and braver in the determination to banish forever from our beautiful State every Indian who now desecrates our soil.

W. C. The Worthy Vice Chancellor will now open this Lodge.

W. V. C. By direction of our worthy

Chancellor, I declare this Lodge open for the transaction of business and for extending universal opposition to all tribes of Indians in the State of Minnesota.

[The W. C. gives one rap and the members take their seats.]

W. C. The Financial secretary will call the roll of members.

## INITIATION.

[When the Lodge is ready for initiation the F. S. will retire with the Assistant Conductor, to collect the initiation fee, when the A. C. shall propound to the candidate the following questions:]

C. Before you can proceed any further, you must give your assent to the following questions.

Question. Do you promise upon your honor that you will keep all secrets and information which I may here reveal to you?

Answer. I do.

Question. Are you in favor of the removal of all tribes of Indians from the State of Minnesota?

Answer. I am.

Question. Will you sacrifice all political and other preferences to accomplish that object?

Answer. I will.

Question. Will you do all in your

power to elect to office such men only as will favor such removal?

Answer. I will.

Question. Do you desire to become a member of an order having for its object the removal of all Indians from this State, called the Knights of the Forest?

Answer. I do.

[The F. S. collects his fee, and the questions having been answered in the affirmative the officers return to the Lodge room and report.]

F. S. All correct, Worthy Chancellor.

C. The usual questions are answered in the affirmative, Worthy Chancellor.

W. C. The Conductor will introduce the candidate.

[The Conductor, taking the candidate by the arm and leading him to the door, gives three raps. The Conductor introduces the candidate to the Worthy Vice Chancellor.]

C. Worthy Vice Chancellor, permit me to introduce our friend, who wishes to become a member of our order.

W. V. C. My friend: It is with the utmost gratification that we proceed to comply with your wishes. None but those whose honor and integrity are unquestioned, can enter our circle. We have full faith in your integrity. We place implicit confidence in you, that you will never betray the secrets of our order. The atrocious murders visited upon innocent, honest and industrious citizens has proved to us, that our only security is in mutual protection and united action. We have learned, at the cost of many lives, that the white man and the Indian cannot dwell together in peace and harmony. The chief object of this order is to prevent the permanent location of any tribe of Indians in this State. The field open before us is wide and our success will depend in a great measure upon our energy. You have chosen the only path which will give security and safety to the future, and prevent the blow of the glittering knife and merciless tomahawk. In be-

coming a member of this order you will be required to bind yourself to its laws by a solemn obligation—an obligation which will in no wise transcend that inherent right implanted in our natures by a wise Creator. "The right of self-preservation." With these assurances and this warning, we now proceed to inform you further in relation to the duties of our order.

W. V. C. Conductor, take charge of our friend and present him to the Worthy Chancellor for obligation and instruction.

C. Worthy Chancellor, I here present our friend for obligation.

W. C. My friend, before you can become a worthy member of our fraternity, you must give your free and cordial assent to a solemn and binding obligation. That obligation requires that you should use all your influence and power for the removal of all tribes of Indians from the State of Minnesota. We deem it in accordance with the duty which every citizen owes to himself, his neighbors and his country.

#### OBLIGATION.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, of my own free will and accord, in the full belief that every Indian should be removed from the State, by the memory of the inhuman cruelties perpetrated upon defenseless citizens, and in the presence of the members of this order here assembled, do most solemnly promise, without any mental reservation whatever, to use every exertion and influence in my power to cause the removal of all tribes of Indians from the State of Minnesota. I will sacrifice every political and other preference to accomplish that object. I will not aid or assist in any manner to elect to office in this State or the United States any person outside of this order, who will not publicly or privately pledge himself for the permanent removal of all Indians from the State of Min-

nesota. I will protect and defend, at every hazard, all members in carrying out the objects of this order. I will faithfully observe the constitution, rules and by-laws of this Lodge or any Grand or working lodge of Knights of the Forest to which I may be attached. I will never in any manner reveal the name, existence, or secrets of this order to any person not entitled to know the same; and in case I should be expelled or voluntarily withdraw from this order, I will consider this obligation still binding. To all of which I pledge my sacred honor.

The candidate will now sign our constitution and obligation.

W. C. You will now sign our constitution, after which you will be further instructed.

W. C. I will now instruct you in the signs, pass words, grips, and tokens of this order:

1st. I will first instruct you in the signs of recognition and the test word.

2d. The pass-word is to be given only by the Worthy Chancellor in the Lodge room.

3d. The Conductor will now instruct you in the grip.

4th. I will now inform you how to work your way into or out of this or any other Lodge.

I have some further instructions to give you in reference to the acquiring of members to our order.

The P. W. will instruct the candidates upon the constitution in reference to admission of members.

C. Past Worthy Chancellor, I am

directed by the Worthy Chancellor to present this friend to be further instructed in the duties of this order.

P. W. C. I extend to you our heartfelt congratulations on the progress you have made thus far in the order of Knights of the Forest. You are bound by every honorable motive to conduct yourself in such a manner as never to bring reproach upon our order. You will ever keep in mind your sacred obligation, and you will remember that one of the great duties of your life is not only to advocate the banishment of all Indians from this State, but to prevail on others to do so. Every influence in your power should be given to this one great object; and when this accursed race of infuisted demons shall be driven far away towards the setting sun—when these beautiful prairies which are now homeless and desolate shall again bloom into a paradise of industry and wealth—you will have cause to rejoice that you were ever a member of this order.

W. C. The Worthy Vice Chancellor will now make the proclamation.

W. V. C. Worthy associates, our Chancellor is about to proclaim this person a worthy knight. Is such your will and pleasure?

All respond. It is.

W. C. Then in the name of the Grand Lodge of Knights of the Forest, I proclaim this person a worthy knight, and he is entitled to all the rights guaranteed by our Constitution and by-laws. Trusting you may become a worthy knight of our fraternity, I now welcome you to our circle.

**ORDER OF BUSINESS.**

1. Reading minutes of previous meeting.
2. Reception of communications.
3. Reports of permanent committee on candidates.
4. Balloting for candidates.
5. Initiation of candidates.
6. Proposals for membership.
7. Reports of special committees.
8. Unfinished business.
9. Advancement of the order.

APPENDIX B: PETITION FOR "REMOVAL OF THE WINNEBAGO INDIANS"

Removal of the Winnebago Indians.

To the President of the United States and to the Secretary of the Interior—The undersigned, citizens of the State of Minnesota and residents of the country immediately adjacent to the Winnebago Reservation, respectfully represent and petition:

That the terrible events which have just transpired in this neighborhood clearly prove that the rich, productive counties surrounding the reservation must be vacated, and the pleasant homes, which have cost so much privation and sacrifice, must be given up by those who now possess them, or the Indians must vacate their reservation. These people cannot longer remain in close proximity. The reason is apparent. These Indians are

now located upon a small reservation, about eighteen miles in length by nine in breadth; there is but little game upon this tract, and by the terms of the treaty they must remain upon it. The annuity of these Indians, although considerable, is not sufficient to keep them from starvation. Their idle, dissolute habits prevent their performing any useful labor, and hence, for years, they have been in the habit of wandering over the adjacent country, plundering the occupants of the cleared territory, and committing depredations upon the people wherever they went. With a marvellous patience the people have for years submitted to their annoyance, and perhaps they might have longer remained

quiet but for the horrid massacre in their midst, which, from its sudden violence and brutality shocked and alarmed the people of the entire State. Henceforth the Indians cannot be permitted to leave their reservation, and to be confined to it is starvation for they will not work. Hence the removal of the Indians is a necessity. Humanity requires it; the welfare of the Indians as well as the peace of the whites demand it.

Letter of Hon. M. S. Pillsbury to Judge Cass. We therefore most respectfully ask that the Winnebago tribe of Indians be immediately removed beyond the borders of our state.

W.M.

- |                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| J. B. Smith       | M. J. Cronan    |
| William           | Chas. Mann      |
| T. G. Carter      | A. P. Boylston  |
| W. H. Lincoln     | William H. ...  |
| Henry Jones       | ...             |
| W. H. Swift       | ...             |
| John Klein        | ...             |
| Chas. J. Wittmann | D. A. Dorr      |
| W. H. Hardman     | ...             |
| J. E. Williams    | Henry S. Sigley |
| Thomas Litch      | Geo. Whitte     |
| J. M. Wotterton   | ...             |
| A. Delaney        | James ...       |
| Geo. W. Lynn      | Quinn ...       |
| Bert Rogers       | W. L. Prouty    |
| L. J. Patch       | J. D. Boardman  |
| ...               | J. B. Reynolds  |
| U. L. Warner      | W. H. ...       |
| Francis ...       | L. M. Boardman  |
| A. P. McGill      | James ...       |
| Henry B. Walker   | H. M. ...       |
| A. H. ...         | ...             |
| J. ...            | J. K. Moore     |





John LaParsons	John Sawyer
Harold Curtis	W. C. ...
B. C. Winkler	S. ...
J. S. Bacheleler	J. Lange
George Dickert	Wm. ...
Elba Woodward	James Clark
Wm. H. ...	Wm. Hayden
W. H. ...	Wm. ...
Michael ...	John ...
James ...	William ...
A. T. ...	John ...
George ...	J. B. ...
John H. Clark	E. C. Payne
Chas. A. ...	Danl. Buck
John Power	Wm. ...
James ...	James ...
Saml. S. Miller	A. B. ...
William ...	H. P. Case
John ...	Henry ...
John ...	John ...
J. D. ...	John ...
Wm. ...	Davis ...
C. F. ...	A. P. ...
John ...	
Patrick ...	
Dr. G. ...	
James ...	
Wm. ...	
James ...	
Thos. C. Wright	
Geo. Bailey	
Eric Olson	
Francis Clark	



APPENDIX C: MANKATO NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENTS

One Grant Co-operating with Gen. Pope. The new steamer to have reliable information that there are 20 rebel boats on the river...

The same paper expresses the opinion with a show of plausibility, that there is a co-operative relation between Gen. Grant's expedition on the Tennessee river...

It is expected that the operations of one have an intimate connection with the other. It may be developed also, in a day or two, that when it is time to take...

44 kgs of powder was captured from a boat at Philadelphia on Friday, by the revenue officers, who suspected from the motions of the boat that the ammunition was to be used for illegal purposes.

REMAINING IN THE OFFICE at Mankato up to March 31, 1862. Persons calling for all letters will please call for them as advised.

JOHN F. MEACHER, (Successor to Taylor & Horvath), TRADER & DEALER IN STOVES, HARDWARE, Iron, Plows, Agricultural Implements, TIN-WARE, &c., FRONT ST., MANKATO.

I HAVE ON HAND a large and well selected stock of Stoves, Hardware, Plows, Shafted Harness Hardware, Tin Ware, Saddlery, Boots, Shoes, and all other goods...

Sugar Cane Seed for Sale. THE EARLY IMPHEE. The Subscriber having five years past, given serious and practical attention to the culture of Sugar Cane in Minnesota...

A GOOD TOLIN FOR SALE. Particular notice is given of the fact that the subscriber has on hand a large stock of Tolin...

J. W. YER, MANKATO. ATTORNEY AND COUNSELLOR. DEPUTY COUNTY SURVEYOR.

NOTICE TO TAXPAYERS. NOTICE is hereby given that the assessment for the year 1862, has been received...

New Furniture Rooms. THAYER AND BROS. Front st. opposite the Mankato House.

School Notice. Mrs. J. H. Weaver will open a School at the corner of Second and Jackson streets...

Saddlery and Harness Shop! JOHN D. JONES, (ASSET FROM JOHN EAT.)

DISPOSITION NOTICE. NOTICE is hereby given that the partnership of J. D. Jones and J. E. Taylor...

FARMERS, BUY THE BEST! THE Best Cast Steel Clipper ever offered to the Farmer of Minnesota.

NOTICE TO TAXPAYERS. NOTICE is hereby given that the assessment for the year 1862, has been received...

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR. Notice is hereby given that the assessment for the year 1862, has been received...

THE HIGHEST MARKET PRICE PAID IN CASE FOR HIDES AND FURS.

COMMISSIONER'S NOTICE. THE undersigned have been appointed Commissioners to receive, examine, and adjust all claims...

COOK WANTED IMMEDIATELY. AT THE MARKET HOUSE. WANTED to do the household work...

New Millinery Goods!! MILLinery Goods recently received, direct from the eastern cities...

LATEST STYLES. At the winter of 1861, all kinds of hats, ribbons, flowers, laces, &c. of the most fashionable style...

WINTER BONNETS. An assortment in style and finish, and of first quality...

MARGARET POTTS. No. 41 '61-62.

Mankato DRUG STORE. A fresh and complete assortment of Drugs, Medicines, Spices, Perfumery, Fancy Goods, Dye Stuffs, &c.

Perfumery, Fancy Goods, Dye Stuffs, &c. J. R. TRINCOM. Pure Wines, Serravallo's and other Medicines.

THAT "STANDARD SHEET" 1862. Great National Paper of Intelligence. American Hearts and Homes.

NEW YEAR WITH AN OLD FRIEND. On New Year's day of 1862, that world-renowned and appreciated American publication...

FORTY BRILLIANT COLMS. On New Year's day of 1862, that world-renowned and appreciated American publication...

FREE RATTLENAEK. The New York Herald is published by the New York Herald Company...

THE HIGHEST MARKET PRICE PAID IN CASE FOR HIDES AND FURS.

COMMISSIONER'S NOTICE. THE undersigned have been appointed Commissioners to receive, examine, and adjust all claims...

COOK WANTED IMMEDIATELY. AT THE MARKET HOUSE. WANTED to do the household work...

Notice of Final Transfer. Notice is hereby given that whereas the estate of J. H. Weaver, deceased, has been settled...

NOTICE OF FINAL TRANSFER. Notice is hereby given that whereas the estate of J. H. Weaver, deceased, has been settled...

NOTICE OF FINAL TRANSFER. Notice is hereby given that whereas the estate of J. H. Weaver, deceased, has been settled...

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### THE RECORD.

SATURDAY, MARCH 29, 1862.

Messrs. Mather & Abbott, No. 235 Broadway, are our authorized agents in New York city.

#### DEMOCRATIC TOWN TICKET.

*Board of Town Supervisors,*  
**JAMES BROEMAKER, Chairman,**  
**JOHN Q. A. MARSH,**  
**MICHAEL ULMAN.**

*Town Clerk,*  
**WESLEY MAXFIELD.**

*Town Treasurer,*  
**JAMES R. TINKCOM.**

*Assessor,*  
**MATTHIAS ULMAN.**

*Justices of the Peace,*  
**P. K. JOHNSON,**  
**J. WILLIAM HOERR.**

*Constables,*  
**DANIEL HAIRE,**  
**JOSEPH KRAUS.**

**Town Expenses.**  
 The supervisors of Mankato township have audited their labors, and are prepared to make their financial report to the annual town meeting on Tuesday next.—We learn that the total expenditures for the past year were \$396 86—\$91 07 of which was for roads and bridges; \$18 for the purchase of a plow; \$85 50 for support of the poor; \$172 75 for current town expenses; and \$29 54 to pay debts incurred in 1859. There are orders outstanding to the amount of \$346 13, more than two-thirds of which are for road expenses, and which is \$147 less than the amount outstanding at the commencement of the year. There is due the town delinquent taxes for the years 1858 to 1861 inclusive, more than enough of which will be collected within the next three months to pay all outstanding orders. The board has received and destroyed within the past year orders to the amount of \$584 96, which is \$188 10 more than issued during the year.  
 In view of this healthy state of our finances, the board will be justified in

**Something for the People to Remember.**  
 Now that our citizens are invited to join the editor of the *Independent* and his "clique" in opposition to the excellent ticket nominated by the Democracy, it will be well for them to remember that in 1859, under the control of this same class of men, our town expenses amounted to \$649 35. Under Democratic control, in 1860, our town government cost only \$287 80; and in 1861, \$336 36. This includes the entire poor expense of the town for both years, and which in 1859, was paid by the county. Deducting the debts of 1859 paid by subsequent boards, and our town expenses during the past two years, under Democratic rule, are not as great as during the one year of the reign of the model reformers. In 1859 the orders issued for town expenses were greater than the receipts from taxes, and consequently they were depreciated and only worth 75 cents on the dollar. Now the receipts exceed the expenditures, and town orders are worth their face in gold and silver.

**The No-Party Move.**—Last fall, when we advocated a union of all parties for the sake of economy in administering our State and county governments, and thereby to lighten the burdens of taxation, the *Independent* and the persons composing the Republican town committee, ridiculed and bitterly opposed the idea. Now these gentlemen have suddenly become converts to the no-party move, and seek to apply it only to the town offices in Mankato, and where, in a strict party contest, they are in a hopeless minority. A mere statement of the facts is sufficient to show the motives which actuate these new converts to the no-party movement, and we hope Democrats will not be deceived by them.

**"A Card."**  
 To the Editor of the *Mankato Record*:  
 In your paper A. D. Seward appears, in which he announces himself a candidate for some office, and says he has been

**Battle at Winchester.**  
 Gen. Shields' command, on the 22d, achieved a complete victory over General Jackson; having taken two guns and caissons.

The battle was fought within four miles of Winchester, from 10½ in the morning until dark.  
 The enemy numbered about 15,000; our forces not over 8,000.  
 We captured a large number of prisoners.

The ground was covered with their muskets, cast away in flight.  
 Our loss is 80 to 100 killed and 220 wounded. The enemy's loss is nearly 500 killed and wounded, and 300 prisoners.

In 1859, the bills of the overseers of roads in this township amounted to \$209 50—more than the total expenses of the town during the subsequent year, under Democratic officers. Last year the amount paid overseers was only \$46.

The snow has almost disappeared from this vicinity, the ice in the river is quite rotten, and we confidently expect a "break up" in a few days.

Our Dr.—That our neighbor has gone to Washington, as bearer of despatches from the Winnebago agency.

**Remains of Officers Killed at Bull Run.**  
 A party visited the battle field of Bull's Run, last week, to recover the remains of Col. Slocum, Major Ballou, and Captain Tower, of the Third Rhode Island regiment, killed during the fight at that place in July last.

The party was composed of Governor Sprague, Col. Arnold, Mr. Walter Coleman, his Secretary, Tristram Burgess, Lieutenant Col. Roles, and Captain Denton, and Surgeon Greely of the Rhode Island cavalry, accompanied by two of the Rhode Island volunteers who had been taken prisoners at Bull's Run and had noted the place where the officers were buried.

The party arrived on Friday at Dudley's church. Col. Slocum and Major Ballou were buried in the yard of building near by, which was used as a hospital on the day of the battle. This building had been destroyed by the rebels, but the graves were found.

**MISS PORK WANTED.**—Messrs. White & Marks want to buy 50 barrels of mess pork, to be delivered at their warehouse, in Mankato.

**Lectures.**—The next lecture before the Mankato Lyceum will be delivered by Dr. W. W. Clark, on Friday evening, the 4th of April.

Marshal Buck, of this State, has resigned his office. No cause is given.

**JOHN F. MEAGHER.**  
 SUCCESSOR TO TAYLOR & HOTALLING.  
 DEALER IN  
**Stoves, Hardware, Iron, Plows,**  
**Agricultural Implements,**  
 TINWARE, etc..  
 FRONT STREET, MANKATO, MINN.  
 I HAVE on hand a large and well selected assortment of  
**STOVES,**  
 ROCK ISLAND CLIPPER PLOWS,  
 Scythes, Saws, Cradles, Rakes and Forks.  
 A large assortment of  
**Shelf and Harness Hardware.**  
 My stock of IRON will be found complete after the opening of navigation.  
 The following articles comprise a part of my stock always on hand: A full assortment of  
**IRON AND STEEL,**  
**NAILS OF ALL SIZES AND KINDS,**  
**Glass and Building Materials, Grind Stones, Spades, Shovels, Scoops, Hoes and Manure Forks, Chain and Suction Pumps, Well Wheels, Cable, Log, Traces, Breast, Halter, and Jack Chains, Gun Caps, Paint, Horse and Scrubbing Brushes, Hay Knives.**  
 A large assortment of  
**TABLE AND POCKET CUTLERY.**  
 Also, of Tin, Copper, and Sheet Iron Ware of Home Manufacture.

Particular attention given to orders, and ALL WORK WARRANTED.

The subscriber, by strict attention to business and low prices, hopes to receive a share of the patronage of the citizens of Blue Earth and adjoining counties.

**JOHN F. MEAGHER.**  
 Mankato, March 26th, 1862.

**Notice of Mortgage Foreclosure and Sale.**  
 Name of mortgagor—Jeremiah A. McCormick.  
 Name of mortgagee—J. B. Gardner.  
 Date of mortgage—March 11th, 1858.

**MORTGAGE SALE.**

DEFAULT having been made in the conditions of a certain mortgage executed by Fellows D. Pease to Charles Forsythe, date the 7th day of July, 1858, and recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds for the county of Blue Earth, on the 14th day of August, 1858, in book "B" of mortgages, on page 493, which said mortgage was given to secure the payment of one hundred and fifty dollars, and interest according to the conditions of a certain promissory note, made by said Pease to said Forsythe and interest said has been heretofore commenced against said Pease in the District Court of Blue Earth county, and judgment rendered therein against him upon said promissory note, on the 7th day of February, 1860, for the sum of \$320 04, and thereas execution was issued upon said judgment to the Sheriff of said Blue Earth county, which has been by him returned that no property could be found out of which he could collect the same or any part thereof, and the said sum of three hundred and twenty-six dollars and four cents, and interest thereon from and after the 7th day of February, 1860, at twelve per cent per annum, still remains due and unpaid thereon; there is also the sum of thirty dollars as solicitors fees stipulated in said mortgage, to be paid upon foreclosure of said mortgage, and all of which is at the date of this notice actually due and unpaid said mortgage; and no proceeding at law or otherwise having been instituted to recover the said debt except as above stated, therefore, by virtue of a power of sale in said mortgage contained, and in conformity with the statutes in such case made and provided, the premises described in and covered by said mortgage, to wit: The west half of the southwest quarter of section number thirty (30) north of range number twenty-eight (28) west according to the governmental survey and subdivisions of the same, containing eighty acres of land, be the same more or less, and all the appurtenances, and lying and being in the county of Blue Earth and State of Minnesota, will be sold at public auction to the highest bidder as the law directs, at the front door of the office of the Register of Deeds in and for said county of Blue Earth, in Mankato, in said county, on the 10th day of May, A. D. 1862, at 10 o'clock in the forenoon of that day, to satisfy the amount then due on said mortgage, including said sum of thirty dollars as solicitors fees and all taxes due and that has been paid by the mortgagee upon the premises, and the costs and expenses allowed by law. Dated at Mankato, March 22, 1862.  
 CHARLES FORSYTHE, mortgagee.  
 Willard & Barney, attorneys for mortgagee.

**Notice of Mortgage Foreclosure and Sale.**  
 Name of mortgagor—Samuel H. Leg.  
 Name of mortgagee—H. W. Lamberfon.  
 Date of mortgage—February 1st, A. D. 1859.  
 Mortgage recorded—February 1st, A. D. 1859 at one o'clock p. m. in the office of the Register of Deeds in and for the county of Blue Earth and State of Minnesota, in book "C" of mortgages, on pages 293, 294 and 295.  
 Description of mortgaged premises—The northeast quarter of section No. thirty (30)

The *Mankato Record*, March 29, 1862. Pre-war advertising for Meagher's hardware store in Mankato's Democratic newspaper.



WANT TO PAPER.—Messrs. White & Meigs have just received a large and general assortment of superior writing paper—letters, notes, 1 gal. foolscap and patriotic. Also, every variety of envelopes—white and yellow hand-made note, fancy and patriotic. Persons in want of anything in this line will be supplied at reasonable prices.

BARBERS, STOVES, ETC.—Our enterprising friend Meagher has just received the largest assortment of barbers' razors, stoves, and cutlery ever brought to this town. The entire stock was purchased for cash, and Mr. M. thinks that he cannot and will not be underbid by competitors at any point in this valley.

WINTERHOUSES CAPTURED.—A detachment of Captain Ambler's company, on Sunday night last, captured three struggling winter huts near Garden City. They were released after a brief confinement.

FRUIT TREES.—We are pleased to notice that our farmers are this year paying more attention to the planting of fruit trees than during any previous year of our residence here. Mr. Goodyear is selling large quantities of his seedling varieties, and orders from below are received by almost every bar.

SHIPMENTS OF GRAIN.—The shipments of grain during the week has been as follows: E. & W. Bradley, 2,000 bushels; H. P. Christensen, 500; Thos. Ford, 500; Mr. Shepard, 2,000; Fred A. Davidson, 1,000; J. J. Shambolt, 550; Loveland & Harrington, 3,510 bushels—all all 10,550. Of the above, about 2,000 bushels were barley; shipped Messrs Bradley and Loveland & Harrington. The latter firm shipped 1,000 bushels of grain last week, not included in our last report.

DEATH OF A SOLDIER.—Justin E. Loveloy, private in Company I, died in the hospital at this place on Thursday evening, of Typhoid fever. He was from St. Cloud, in this State.

SEEDS AND TREES.—We call attention to the advertisement of J. M. Ford, of the St. Paul Nursery. His seeds, plants, trees and cuttings are all acclimated, and the prices are very reasonable. Orders filled by mail or express at a trifling cost.

CHRISTENSEN IS OUT IN A NEW CARD THIS WEEK, which our readers must not overlook. He has a splendid stock of goods, which he is selling very reasonable.

WOMEN SOLDIERS.—One day this week, Mrs. Finch and Smith erected a wall from the arm of Private Scatter, of Company E, Seventh regiment, wounded in the Indian fight at the north branch of the Watousan. The ball entered near the elbow, and was shot shattered.

The above soldier and the one accidentally wounded at Madelia, are doing well.

The Illinois market is quite dull in consequence of the alarm prospects of making shipments. We have not half enough boats on the Minnesota to accommodate the business of the several points. Our merchants have not succeeded in shipping more than two carloads of wheat in store, and will not be able to send below while supplies on hand, while nearly one half the crop is still in the hands of farmers.

ARRIVAL OF TROOPS.—Company C, of the Seventh, sent below to guard the Sioux prisoners, and companies D and E of the Sixth, arrived here on Thursday evening by the Fargo and Company C will for the present be quartered in the Germania House.

ACCIDENT.—A few days ago, the driver of a Government team at Tioga, was thrown from a mule and the wagon passed over him, breaking his left wrist and several ribs.

FRAGILE.—Quartermaster Thornton, of this place, left by the steamer Tompary on Wednesday, to report for duty in the army of the soldier.

Nathan Powell, formerly a citizen of this county, returns several days ago, on a business visit. He is looking well.

POTATOES.—Mr. Thos. Ford shipped 30 bags of potatoes this week.

MISS ARY PRISON.—The steamer Ariel passed up the river last week with a cargo of arms for the Indian expedition.

DEED.—In Madelia, Man. was county, Min. April 20th, Isaacson, agent, only son of Caleb and Rosa J. Lewis, aged 7 years, 1 month,

LATEST NEWS.

Wednesday's papers report that the rebels have made a raid on the Baltimore and Ohio railroad between Wheeling and Grafton. It is stated that both Wheeling and Pittsburg are threatened in consequence.

Gen. Vandever attacked, routed and pursued the rebels near Cape Girardeau, Missouri. A large number of prisoners, arms, and horses were taken. The private Alabama captured the ship Morning Star, between Galvesta and London, but released her upon giving bonds for \$60,000.

The pilot of the iron-clad Keokuk sunk in Charleston harbor, has been arrested, charged with running her into the hands of the rebels.

We have rumors of another movement on Charleston, with promises of success this time.

The last steamer brings the news that agents sent to Europe succeeded in negotiating large amounts of Government bonds in Hamburg, London and Paris.

A proposition has been made to the authorities at Washington by a U. S. Engineer, to remove the obstructions in Charleston harbor, upon which the telegraph says, Uncle Abe and Luther Wells looks with favor.

One hundred and twelve men of the Texas Legion, and 300 mules, were captured near Franklin, Tennessee.

Charleston is to be attacked on Sunday, the telegraph says, and also intimates that new and formidable obstructions have been placed in the harbor.

In a late engagement with the Poles, the Russians are said to have lost 2,000 killed.

Gen. Banks has opened communication with Commodore Farragut, about Fort Hudson. He has also taken a large number of prisoners, stores and cotton.

The rebels who made a raid into Western Virginia numbered only 800, and have retired.

Baggage of army is moving towards Murfreesboro.

The Press states that the Sioux Indians at Fort Snelling, is removed to Dakota, number about 1,600, only 100 of whom are bucks.

Mrs. Sara Gaup discerns signs of peace in the fact that more female children are born than males. She says she has always noticed it that before every war, boys preponderate, and peaceable times tend to produce girls.

When the National troops held Fort Sumter, we waited until the rebels had (by their own account) 42 guns and 15,000 men against our 80 men, or enough to work siege guns. Now again, at the second battle in Charleston harbor, we have waited until the rebels had 300 guns against which we brought 32.

THE MARKETS. WHEAT, per bushel, 60 cents; Oats, 35; Corn, 30; Rye, 40; Barley, 42; Beans, 1 00 to 1 50; Potatoes, 40; Eggs, per dozen, 12; Butter, 12 1/2 to 15.

W. L. COON, will open a SELECT SCHOOL, on Monday next, May 4th, in the room formerly occupied by J. R. Cleveland's store, on the Corner of Broad and Jackson Street.

ENGLISH BRANCHES. Special attention given to History and Geography. For a term of three weeks. Common and Higher English, \$2 00. Payable at middle of term.

J. H. MANN'S, Dealer of last year's prices for sale by JOHN F. MEAGHER, agent at Madelia.

New Spring and Summer Goods.

At H. P. Christensen's. THANKFUL for the liberal patronage heretofore received, the subscriber begs leave to inform the public that he has received and opened a large stock of Spring and Summer Goods, consisting in part of:

Ladies Dress Goods. Spring and Summer Shawls. Balmoral and Hoop Skirts, Cloths, Cassimeres, Flannels, Blouses, Stripes, Bonnets, Gingham, &c.

NEW STYLES OF PRINTS. Bleached Goods, Hosiery, Gloves, Drawers, Shirts, Slacks, Bonnets, Hats, Caps, and all styles of Boots and Shoes for Gentlemen's and Ladies' wear. Also, all kinds of fancy articles, writing paper, envelopes, prize postage, and in fact all articles usually found in a retail store.

His stock of ready made clothing was selected with a view to this market, and will be sold at astonishingly low prices. His stock of Groceries is new and complete. In cheapness of price and quality of goods, his stock cannot be excelled, and he invites a call and examination.

Highest prices paid for all kinds of country produce and butter. WE will supply any of our new seeds for 25 cents per bushel, and pay postage except corn, per bushel.

Best Seed and Fine Turnip, per pound for 70 cents. Long Orange Carrot, 50 cents. For seed, for the use of our dealer, our choice, many of them selling for 10 cents per bushel.

SEEDS BY MAIL. ONLY THREE CENTS PER PAPER. WE will supply any of our new seeds for 25 cents per bushel, and pay postage except corn, per bushel.

Best Seed and Fine Turnip, per pound for 70 cents. Long Orange Carrot, 50 cents. For seed, for the use of our dealer, our choice, many of them selling for 10 cents per bushel.

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New Millinery Goods.

Mrs. M. Potts. HAS just received direct from the eastern cities a large assortment of the RICHEST AND LATEST STYLES OF MILLINERY GOODS.

such as Hats, Bonnets, Caps, Head Dresses, Ribbons, Flowers, and all kinds of trimmings, to which she invites the attention of the ladies. She is regularly in receipt of the latest New York styles and fashion plates. Satisfaction warranted. Prices moderate.

Henry Fowler. WATCH MAKER AND JEWELER. Has moved to the building formerly occupied by Parry Brothers' Book, above he is prepared to manufacture or repair Clocks, Watches, Jewelry, etc., engraving executed neatly on wood or metal. Charge moderate.

Notice. Take notice to all whom it may concern that the undersigned will be a Judge of Probate Court's office in the town of New Ulm, Minn., on the 18th day of May, 1863 for the purpose of having a final hearing, &c.

List of Delinquent Taxes of Martin County, Minnesota, remaining unpaid for the year 1862. Notice is hereby given that the whole of the several tracts of land contained in the following list, or so much thereof as may be worth selling, will be sold at the County Auditor's office, by the County Treasurer, unless the taxes and costs be paid before that time, commencing on the first Monday of June 1863, at 10 o'clock A. M., and continuing each day from day to day (Sundays excepted), until all shall have been disposed of.

W. W. CARRINGTON, Auditor of Martin County, Minn. Henry.

Description. Section. Range. Township. 1/2 sec 10 and 11 T. 100 N. R. 100 W. 1/2 sec 10 and 11 T. 100 N. R. 100 W. 1/2 sec 10 and 11 T. 100 N. R. 100 W.

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JOHN F. MEAGHER.



Stoves, Iron, Plows, TINWARE, GLASS, SASH, and all kinds of Agricultural Implements, and manufacturers of Copper, Tin, and Brass Ware.

FRONT STREET, MANKATO, MINN. A. L. articles warranted as represented. I have on hand a large and well selected assortment of Stoves and Hardware, Kitchen Furnishing Goods, Table and Pocket Cutlery, a full assortment of Agricultural Implements from a five to a threshing machine. A full assortment of the following Goods always on hand.

Shelf and Harness Hardware, Iron and Steel, Nails, Ricks, Horse Rails, Cuts and Clutch Nails, Glass, Wash, Grid Stoves, Spades, Shovels, Hoes and Manure Forks, Chains, Trunks, Trunks, Log and Cable Chains, White Wash, Paint, Ricks, Scrolling and Stone Breakers, Kerene Lamps and Oil.

W. W. CARRINGTON, Auditor of Martin County, Minn. Henry.

CASH ONLY. Old Bags Copper & Brass tins in exchange for Goods.

Particular attention given to orders and job work in our line. All work warranted. Agent for J. J. Case's threshing Machine, Manny and Kerby, Reapers, and Hayens JOHN F. MEAGHER, April 19th, 1863.

To Consumers. THE ADVERTISER HAVING BEEN RE-STORED to health in a few weeks, by a very simple remedy, after having suffered several years with a severe lung affection, and being anxious to make known to his fellow-sufferers the means of cure.

To all who desire it, he will send a copy of the prescription used (free of charge), with the directions for preparing, and using the same, which they will find in a sure cure for Consumption, Asthma, Rheumatism, &c. The special information is, that the remedy is obtainable, and he hopes every sufferer will try the remedy, as it will cost but a few cents, and may prove a blessing.

Parties wishing the prescription, please address Rev. R. W. ALLEN, M.D., Williamsburgh, Kings County, New York.

NEW ENGLAND FIRE AND MARINE INSURANCE COMPANY. CHARTFORD. CAPITAL \$1,000,000. With a large surplus.

Wanted. 1000 BUSHELS POTATOES. 1000 BUSHELS POTATOES. Any amount of No. 1 wheat, for which I will pay the highest market price.

G. A. STURGES, M. D., PHYSICIAN AND SURGEON, at present at the CLIFTON HOUSE. Town of Mankato.

To F. W. Fisher. You are hereby notified that a writ of attachment has been issued against you, and your property attached, to satisfy the demand of Charles Knuth, amounting to \$1000.00.

NOTICE. All persons indebted to me by book or note, are requested to call at my store on or before the first day of May next, and settle with me. Persons having claims or debts against me are requested to present the same at my store for payment.

Indian Depredations. All persons having claims against the State for damages, or loss sustained by reason of the Indian troubles, will do well by calling on us, as we are paying particular attention to the collection of all such claims. Terms reasonable.

RECORD

MAY 5, 1866.

...We do not desire to learn among our frontier...

...The officers are as follows: President, John...

...The Wisconsin Republic...

...The Kentucky Democratic Convention...

...The bill to which...

...A general order...

...A children's party...

...A further notice...

...A notice...

...A notice...

...A notice...

...A notice...

...A notice...

Bombardment of Valparaiso

The City of Valparaiso, Chile, has been bombarded by the Spanish fleet...

...The officers are as follows: President, John...

...The Wisconsin Republic...

...The Kentucky Democratic Convention...

...The bill to which...

...A general order...

...A children's party...

...A further notice...

...A notice...

...A notice...

...A notice...

...A notice...

...A notice...

Map of the Earth Count

The undersigned offers for sale, at 100 cents the copyright of the Map of the Earth...

...The officers are as follows: President, John...

...The Wisconsin Republic...

...The Kentucky Democratic Convention...

...The bill to which...

...A general order...

...A children's party...

...A further notice...

...A notice...

...A notice...

...A notice...

...A notice...

...A notice...



Meagher's HARDWARE AND Agricultural COLUMN

Large and well selected STOCK OF GOODS in dealer, comprising a full assortment of the following goods:

HEAVY SHELF AND BUILDERS HARDWARE, IRON and STEEL, SASH and GLASS, DOORS, NAILS, Cook stoves, 10 Patterns, HOES, FORKS, REVOLVING AND SULKY HORSE RAKES, 50 BOXES OF AXES, Cast-Steel Plows, SWEETSTAKES, J. CASE & Co's and VIBRATOR THRESHERS—complete, BUCKEYE, J. H. MANNY and KIRBY Reapers and Mowers, SORGHUM MILLS, and every thing else to be found in any house in my line.

NEW STORE All Goods Wanted AS REPRESENTED. I have persons desiring to buy to examine my stock before purchasing elsewhere.

MY GOODS WERE SELECTED WITH CARE AND BOUGHT FOR CASH, AND WILL BE SOLD AT PRICES FOR CASH WHICH CANNOT FAIL TO GIVE SATISFACTION.

FARM MACHINERY, as enumerated above, will be very large, and prices and terms on sale will be equal to those of any dealer in the State.

JOHN F. MEAGHER CITY HALL, MANKATO, MINNESOTA

UNITED STATES PRIZE CONCERT, TO BE DRAWN AT Crosby's Opera House, Chicago, Illinois, MAY 28TH, 1866.

25,000 Valuable Prizes, valued at \$192,215.25 will be presented to Ticket Holders, including \$100,000 in Greenbacks.

Number of Tickets Issued 300,000. Price \$1 Each.

This is the greatest inducement ever offered to the public, one ticket out of every four drawing a prize. The following Prizes are a few among the many to be drawn. (For full list see rules):

- 5000 Greenbacks, \$5000 each
1000 Greenbacks, \$1000 each
500 Greenbacks, \$500 each
250 Greenbacks, \$250 each
100 Greenbacks, \$100 each
50 Greenbacks, \$50 each
25 Greenbacks, \$25 each
10 Greenbacks, \$10 each
5 Greenbacks, \$5 each
2 Greenbacks, \$2 each
1 Greenback, \$1 each

SPECIAL TERMS OR CLUB RATES: Any person procuring a club of five or more names for tickets and forwarding us the money...

WIGGINS, BRADFORD & CO., 33 Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill., P. O. Drawer 5018.

GREEN MOUNTAIN MORGAN, VALLEY FARMING LANDS AND VILLAGE PROPERTY FOR SALE.

THE BLIND MADE TO SEE AND THE DEAF TO HEAR. DR. B. PHELPS, OCUList AND AURIST!

EARLY POTATOES, PROPOSALS INVITED, REMOVAL.

New Clothing Store, FINEST FIRST DAY OF MAY, RANDALL.

The Mankato Record, May 5, 1866. Four years after the war, Meagher's small advertisements had become a "Hardware and Agricultural Column."