

RAMSEY COUNTY  
**History**  
*A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society*

Mystic Caverns  
And Their Short-lived  
Days of Glory

Page 21

Spring, 2000

Volume 35, Number 1

*The Two Worlds of Jane Gibbs*  
The Gibbs Farm and the Santee Dakota

—Page 4



"Guarding the Corn Fields," a watercolor by Seth Eastman, ca. 1850. This would have been a familiar scene for the young Jane De Bow Gibbs. Corn was a staple for the Dakota people. As a child, she lived near Cloud Man's village at Lake Calhoun in what is now south Minneapolis. Reprinted by permission from Seth Eastman: A Portfolio of North American Indians, Afton Historical Society Press. See article beginning on page 4.



## RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORY

*Executive Director*

Priscilla Farnham

*Editor*

Virginia Brainard Kunz

## RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Laurie A. Zenner

*Chair*

Howard M. Guthmann

*President*

James Russell

*First Vice President*

Anne Cowie Wilson

*Second Vice President*

Richard A. Wilhoit

*Secretary*

Ronald J. Zweber

*Treasurer*

W. Andrew Boss, Peter K. Butler, Charlotte H. Drake, Mark G. Eisenschenk, Joanne A. Englund, Robert F. Garland, John M. Harens, Judith Frost Lewis, John M. Lindley, George A. Mairs, Marlene Marschall, Richard T. Murphy, Sr., Linda Owen, Marvin J. Pertzik, Vicenta D. Scarlett, Glenn Wiessner.

### EDITORIAL BOARD

John M. Lindley, chair; Thomas H. Boyd, Thomas C. Buckley, Pat Hart, Virginia Brainard Kunz, Thomas J. Kelley, Tom Mega, Laurie Murphy, Vicenta Scarlett, G. Richard Slade, Laurie Zenner.

### HONORARY ADVISORY BOARD

Elmer L. Andersen, Olivia I. Dodge, Charlton Dietz, William Finney, William Fallon, Otis Godfrey, Jr., Robert S. Hess, D. W. "Don" Larson, George Latimer, Frank Marzittelli, Joseph S. Micallef, Robert Mirick, Samuel Morgan, Marvin J. Pertzik, J. Jerome Plunkett, James Reagan, Rosalie E. Wahl, Donald D. Wozniak.

### RAMSEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Rafael Ortega, chairman  
Commissioner Susan Haigh  
Commissioner Tony Bennett  
Commissioner Dino Guerin  
Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt  
Commissioner Janice Rettman  
Commissioner Jan Wiessner

Paul Kirkwold, manager, Ramsey County

*Ramsey County History* is published quarterly by the Ramsey County Historical Society, 323 Landmark Center, 75 W. Fifth Street, St. Paul, Minn. 55102 (651-222-0701). Printed in U.S.A. Copyright, 2000, Ramsey County Historical Society. ISSN Number 0485-9758. **All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reprinted or otherwise reproduced without written permission from the publisher.** The Society assumes no responsibility for statements made by contributors. Fax 651-223-8539; e-mail address admin@rchs.com.; web site address www.rchs.com

# RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 35, Number 1

Spring, 2000

## CONTENTS

### 3 Letters

### 4 The Two Worlds of Jane Gibbs:

The Gibbs Farm and the Santee Dakota

*Julie A. Humann*

### 14 Gummy, Yellow, White Flint Corn

The Dakota Garden at the Gibbs Farm Museum

*Janet Cass*

### 17 The Gibbs Farm, Its Neighbor, the University Farm And How They Influenced Agricultural History

*William R. Hueg, Jr.*

### 21 Growing Up in St. Paul

Mystic Caverns and Their Short-lived Glory Days

*Ray Barton*

### 23 Books, Etc.

Publication of *Ramsey County History* is supported in part by a gift from Clara M. Claussen and Frieda H. Claussen in memory of Henry H. Cowie, Jr. and by a contribution from the late Reuel D. Harmon

## Message from Editorial Board

Most of this issue of *Ramsey County History* focuses on the Gibbs Farm Museum, which the Ramsey County Historical Society owns in Falcon Heights. Over the past several years, the Society has expanded its interpretation of the Gibbs Farm to encompass both the white culture of the original owners, Jane and Heman Gibbs, and the Native American culture of the young Jane's friends, the Santee Dakota, in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Historian Julie Humann begins her article with an analysis of how Jane and the Dakota came to know and understand each other, beginning in 1835 when as a little girl, she lived near the village of the Dakota chief, Cloud Man, in today's south Minneapolis. A key part of their mutually supportive relationship depended upon the genuine reciprocity that these representatives of the two cultures had for each other.

Writer Janet Cass complements Humann's descriptions of Dakota culture with an examination of Dakota gardening at the farm Jane and her husband, Heman Gibbs, later established. Cass writes of the plant species the Dakota commonly used, their gardening techniques, and the relationship their gardening had to other aspects of their culture. Lastly, she explains how the Dakota garden at the farm's site fits in with the museum's expanded interpretation. The Society welcomes any additional information that readers of this magazine can supply about these aspects of Dakota material culture.

This issue next moves to the world of commercial agriculture practiced by the Gibbs family and other Minnesota farmers from the end of the nineteenth century to the present. Retired University of Minnesota agronomist William R. Hueg, Jr., explains how the University acquired the rich farmland that once belonged to the Gibbs family and other early residents of Rose Township and built a world-renowned agricultural experiment station.

*John M. Lindley, Chair, Editorial Board*



---

# *The Two Worlds of Jane Gibbs:*

## The Gibbs Farm and the Santee Dakota

*Julie A. Humann*

In September of 1835, a little girl named Jane DeBow, who was then about six years old, arrived at Lake Harriet, in what is now south Minneapolis. She would live out her childhood there, unaware that she was witness to two historic movements of the pre-Civil War years: the Second Great Awakening, a period of American religious revivalism, and a well-intentioned if misguided effort to teach America's native people the ways of the Europeans who were rapidly moving onto lands of the midwest.

Her arrival on such a distant frontier in the family of a missionary, the Reverend Jedediah Stevens, was a reflection of a larger missionary effort aimed at, among other goals, bringing Christianity to the American Indians living in the western reaches of the country. Stevens, a Presbyterian minister ordained in the 1820s, had been caught up in the fervor of the Second Great Awakening, a largely Protestant response to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century upheavals brought on by the American and French revolutions and the rise of Deism. In 1835 the Boston-based American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) sent three missionaries into the Northwest Territory, then considered a "foreign" mission. Stevens was one of them.<sup>1</sup> Established in 1810, with roots in Puritanism and the Congregational Church, the ABCFM believed that American ideas and beliefs, transplanted into "uncivilized" regions of the world, would reinforce the notions of Puritan piety and community, which the Board saw as fast disappearing in New England.<sup>2</sup>

Also caught up in the missionary fervor of that time were two remarkable young men whose descriptions of the Dakota living near the frontier post of Fort Snelling and whose creation of the first dictionary of the Dakota language, would leave a lasting imprint on history's knowledge of the Native American bands of the region. Samuel and Gideon Pond, both Congregationalists, arrived at Fort

Snelling from Connecticut some months earlier than Stevens. They probably, as historian Gary Anderson has written, "shared the belief, prevalent in the East, that the indigenous peoples were diminishing in numbers and soon would disappear from North America; naturally, missionaries should save as many of them as possible before that happened."<sup>3</sup>

Gideon and Samuel Pond brought with them, in addition to their religious convictions, some practical skills that were sorely needed on the frontier. Before their own conversions as born-again Christians, both had been educated in eastern academies. Moreover, Samuel had taught school and was an excellent farmer, while Gideon was a trained carpenter. It was perhaps inevitable that they would attract the attention of Major Lawrence Taliaferro, the Indian agent at Fort Snelling, who was desperately attempting to convince the Dakota to turn to European methods of agriculture. He proposed to the Ponds that they settle at Lake Calhoun, some twelve miles northwest of the fort, and teach farming to the Dakota in the village of *Mahpiya Wicasta* or Cloud Man, which lay between Lake Calhoun and nearby Lake Harriet.

Cloud Man, Taliaferro, and Samuel and Gideon Pond thus became part of the second historic movement the young Jane DeBow would encounter at the prairie mission. This was an agricultural experiment that had been devised by Taliaferro in an effort to teach Cloud Man's people

the farming methods of the white settlers. Taliaferro hoped to wean the Dakota from their hunting and gathering lifestyle and become more dependent on farming. For their part, the Pond brothers and Stevens were imbued with a desire to convert the "heathen," Stevens through preaching, the Ponds through teaching the Dakota a new style of farming and translating their unwritten language into English. Although the two efforts that came together there did not succeed, the lessons of that brief moment in history reverberate still as both cultures continue their reach toward an understanding with each other. Jane DeBow Gibbs's own story, and her long friendship with the Santee Dakota is reflected today in the Gibbs Farm Museum in Falcon Heights that later was her home as a wife and mother.

Minnesota territory was not yet organized when the still very-young Jane came to Fort Snelling with the Stevens family. A year earlier, as a child of five and with a desperately ill mother, she had been turned over to the Stevens family who were passing through her home in upper New York state on their way west. It would be many years before she saw her own family again, but during those years she would leave Minnesota for Illinois, meet there a young teacher named Heman Gibbs, marry him, and return to the newly-created territory of Minnesota where they would establish the farm that is now the Gibbs Farm Museum.

In the meantime, in the summer of 1835, Gideon and Samuel Pond built a cabin for themselves on a bluff above the eastern shore of Lake Calhoun. When Stevens arrived a few months later with his family and Jane DeBow, the Ponds helped him build a schoolhouse and a mission house on the northwest shore of nearby Lake Harriet. Jane would come to know well Gideon and Samuel Pond and





*Jane and Heman Gibbs at the time of their marriage in 1848. Ramsey County Historical Society photograph.*

the dwellers in Cloud Man's village during her brief years at the mission. She had little trouble learning the language of her new neighbors and making friends with the other children. Those friendships endured as long as the Indians remained in the area. As her Dakota friends traveled to the rice lakes to the north of Ramsey County, they followed an old Indian trail that wound through the Gibbse's farm and they would stop for a visit with Jane that sometimes lasted several weeks. What she learned of their lifestyle—their bark lodges, their tipis, their gardens—would remain with her the rest of her life. That special lifestyle is now replicated at the museum where a tipi is in place, a

Dakota garden is planted, and a bark lodge replicated

### **The Santee Before Jane Knew Them**

Jane first encountered the Santee at a transitional time in their society. In 1851 they would relinquish their lands in Minnesota and were forced to live on reservations. Before that, just as Jane DeBow was brought west, forced to give up the only life she ever had known, the Santee were gradually relinquishing their own traditional lifestyle. The Santee are part of the large Dakota, or Sioux, nation that at one time occupied territory from eastern Minnesota to the western Dakotas.

They were a woodlands culture, hunting small game and gathering wild rice from the Minnesota lakes. Gradually, sometime during the last 300 years, the Dakota bands dispersed west, making the transition to a life on the Great Plains. By the time Jane arrived in Minnesota, the Dakota comprised a large nation of three different tribes who spoke three different dialects of the same language.

Following the buffalo herds, the Western Dakota, or Tetons, lived on the western plains of Dakota Territory and were the most numerous of the three tribes. They spoke the Lakota dialect. The Middle Dakota also followed the buffalo, but settled in eastern Dakota Territory. Two bands, the Yanktons and Yanktonais, comprised the Middle Dakota. They spoke the Nakota dialect and served as trade liaisons between the Western and the Eastern Dakota, often called the Santee, which comes from the word "*Isanyati*" meaning "dwellers at Knife Lake," a reference to the availability of flint for knives at the Santees' traditional home base of Mille Lacs.

Choosing to remain in Minnesota, the Eastern Dakota continued to live as a woodlands culture, hunting small game and harvesting wild rice. The Santee are made up of four bands. The Wahpetons and Sissetons, often referred to as the Upper Sioux, lived along the Red River Valley and traded at Traverse des Sioux and Lac Qui Parle. The Mdewakantons and Wahpekutes, known as the Lower Sioux, lived in the area of present-day St. Paul at the junction of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers. These are the Santee that Jane Gibbs knew both as a child and as an adult. While she no doubt interacted with several villages or members of villages, her closest friends were part of Cloud Man's Mdewakanton village, also known as Eatonville.<sup>4</sup>

Throughout their history, until and after their removal to reservations in 1851, the Santee were a migratory society, traveling seasonally to look for different hunting or gathering resources. As a young girl, Jane Gibbs knew the Santee during the summer cycle of their migrations. For part of the spring and early summer, they lived in permanent bark lodge villages where they planted and





"Dacotah Village," a watercolor by Seth Eastman, ca. 1853. Cloud Man's village at Lake Calhoun must have looked much like this during Jane Gibbs's childhood in Minnesota. A Dakota bark lodge, similar to those shown here, has been replicated at the Gibbs Farm Museum. Reproduced courtesy of W. Duncan MacMillan, Afton Historical Society Press.

harvested small crops of corn, fished, hunted small game, and gathered berries and other roots within the area of their villages located primarily along the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers. The present-day cities of Red Wing and Shakopee bear the names of former Santee villages located in that area.<sup>5</sup>

After harvesting the corn, most of the village men left for the fall muskrat hunt while the women and the other men left for the rice lakes of northeast Minnesota to gather wild rice, a staple of the Santee diet. The next season, usually beginning in October, was the winter deer hunt in which the entire village accompanied the hunting parties. On these trips, the Santee lived in skin tipis, which were easily transportable and quickly demolished or assembled. In January, they returned to their bark lodge villages where they lived off venison from the deer hunt and what-

ever corn and wild rice had been preserved. At this time, they likely still lived in skin tipis, which were warmer than bark lodges. In March, the men left for the spring muskrat hunt while the women left to make sugar from maple trees. By June, they all had returned once more to the bark lodge villages and the yearly cycle began anew.<sup>6</sup>

For generations, the Santee enjoyed their lifestyle. With the introduction and expansion of the fur trade, beginning with the French in the seventeenth century, the Santee became more familiar with materials available from the traders. Muskrats became the currency of the Santee. As planned, the traders extended credit for food and supplies to the Santee until after the spring muskrat hunt. In this way, the traders were able to keep the Santee perpetually in debt to them. The following speech from another Santee,

recorded by Lawrence Taliaferro in 1827, illustrates this relationship:

You know that the Medwakantongs [*sic*] cannot live without the Traders[.] [I]f they are stopped we must starve to death [for want of ammunition—the Sioux of the plains say they can jump on their horses and with their Bows and arrows can kill what they want and do not want your assistance. We my Father cannot do this.<sup>4</sup>

Taliaferro also noted a request from a Santee in connection to their growing need for fur trade materials. This was from *Marc-pee-ah-mu-ne* (Walking Cloud) in 1821:

If my Father could furnish me with one of his strong Bows (meaning a gun) a Brass Kettle for my Family to cook in some of his stroud [strong?] cloth a few pieces—something to cover our children a little powder







Cloud Man in his decision to work with Taliaferro and learn the agriculture of white society.

The winter of 1828–1829 was especially harsh; members of almost thirty hunting lodges starved to death on the open plains for lack of supplies. Cloud Man also was trapped on the prairie and faced starvation. He made a pact that if he survived, he would learn new methods of agriculture. Taliaferro's later journal entries indicated Cloud Man's wish to do so. He wrote, "Wednesday 15th [April 1829]—*Marpeueechastark* at the agency this day—requested to be furnished with a Plough & Harness . . ." and "Saturday 2d [May 1829]—*Marcpee we chastark*—I was this day employed in breaking this Chiefs Horse to the Plough which I had given him with a set of harness complete & in shewing him how to plough the ground." Taliaferro continued to help Cloud Man, "Tuesday 19th [May 1829] . . . Engaged also this day with two men at the Black Dog's village learned the War Chief [Cloud Man] and his family the use of the Plough."

Of all the Dakota living in the St. Paul area, only Cloud Man and *Kee-e-he-ie*, or He that Flies, requested help from Taliaferro to learn the agricultural style of white society. In the spring of 1829, Taliaferro established Cloud Man and He That Flies on the banks of Lake Calhoun and appointed Philander Prescott, fur trader and He That Flies's son-in-law, to teach the Dakota how to use the plough. Prescott described in detail the first few years of this agricultural experiment and the reluctance of the Santee to join Cloud Man and He That Flies:

In the spring of the year Major L Taliaferro wan[te]d to set some of the Indians to farming and selected Lake Calhoon [sic] for the place and told me he wanted me to go and stay there and take as many Indians as would go and settle down[.] . . . No Indians would go at first except my old father inlaw and another man by the name of *Mockpu wechustuh man of the clouds*. We did not do much the first year[;] still we raised some corn. The Indian agent furnished us with some provisions once in [a] while and with my gun and fish line made out to live[.] The next summer several families moved out to the



Cloud Man. Frank B. Mayer papers, Sketch Box #41, Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois.

lake and we had to plough about 80 acres that year in order that all might get a piece plowed. . . . This season the Indians raised very good corn[.] This year about enough to keep them through the winter but by spring the corn was nearly all eat up.<sup>9</sup>

At Eatonville, as the village was known, corn, potatoes, melons, pumpkins, and other vegetables were grown. By the time Jane DeBow arrived there as a child in 1835, Eatonville had grown from the two original families to forty-five families, all led by Cloud Man.<sup>10</sup>

The Eatonville experiment ultimately failed due to repeated raids by the Ojibwa. In addition, Taliaferro had difficulty securing funding from the federal government to continue his agricultural efforts with the Santee. These efforts were meant to "civilize" the Santee. Taliaferro had log houses built for the village and persuaded the men to take up plowing, thereby removing the women from their traditional roles as agriculturists. Many men scorned fieldwork in favor of their traditional roles as hunters and warriors. Santee women and the white farmers hired by Taliaferro to "teach" the men plowing actually performed the majority of the fieldwork in the agricultural village.

Cloud Man left Eatonville in 1839, eventually settling at the Oak Grove (now Bloomington) mission established by Gideon Pond in 1842. Another indica-

tor of the failure of the agricultural experiment was that the Santee remained migratory. Even though they planted and harvested crops at the agricultural village, they did not remain on farms year-long as white farmers did. The Santee still left on their hunting and gathering cycle searching for muskrat furs, deer, wild rice, and maple sugar.<sup>11</sup>

Cloud Man represents the Santee at a transitional place in their history by accepting new agricultural methods yet maintaining a migratory society. He also represents the Santee through his family connections. Kinship ties were sacred among the Santee and served as the main source of laws for the society. Fur traders learned early that by marrying into Santee or Dakota families they could receive added benefits from the kinship ties formed with a Santee wife's family. Kinship banded different tribes or villages together in an intricate web. Cloud Man forged kinship ties with the federal government through the marriage of two of his daughters: One daughter married Taliaferro, which was possibly another reason he turned to Taliaferro after the harsh winter of 1829; the other daughter married Lieutenant Seth Eastman, who was stationed at Fort Snelling in 1830.<sup>12</sup>

Eastman and his Santee bride, Stands Sacred Woman, had a daughter named *Wakantankawin*, or Great Spirit Woman. *Wakantankawin* also went by her Christian name, Nancy Eastman. Like many white-Dakota relationships, when the soldier or fur trader left the region, he left behind his Indian wife as well and both parties knew that the union would not be continued. Seth Eastman left Fort Snelling as well as his wife and daughter. He returned to the Fort in the late 1830s and early 1840s with a new wife who was white. A gifted artist, Eastman's illustrations of the Dakota living near Fort Snelling are some of the best pictorial resources available on the Dakota. Stands Sacred Woman moved to Lake Calhoun and her father's agricultural village. She never remarried and, in an 1850 census, was still listed in her father's village at Oak Grove. Of Seth Eastman and Stands Sacred Woman's grandchildren, the great-grandchildren of Cloud Man, two became ministers and





Lawrence Taliaferro. Minnesota Historical Society photo.

one a doctor, all playing a large role among the Dakota on reservations.<sup>13</sup>

### Acculturation and Cloud Man's People

The mission of Stevens and Gideon and Samuel Pond was largely unsuccessful. While the Pond brothers established a rapport with the Dakota, they never ceased believing that the Dakota would ultimately develop into a society modeled on that of New England. Cloud Man was one of the few Dakota willing to accept a new lifestyle. Pond wrote that "He did not hesitate to tell the Dakotas that the time had come when nothing but a change in their mode of life could save them from ruin, yet they were very slow to adopt his new notions."<sup>14</sup> Stevens had difficulty mastering the language, and due to personal differences, he and the Pond brothers eventually separated. Stevens left the mission in 1839.<sup>15</sup>

Another reason for this failure was the acculturation efforts of the United States. The government, through Taliaferro's work, also believed that the Dakota eventually would become "civilized." However, the government provided food and supplies for those Dakota willing to learn new methods of farming. Taliaferro finally resigned as Indian agent in 1839

after nearly twenty years of service to the Dakota; he was disillusioned about developing a sedentary, agricultural Dakota society. The missionaries also realized the futility of teaching the Dakota to depend on farming when the land would soon be taken away from them. As Gary Anderson wrote, "... by 1849 about fifty acres of land [were] plowed each year per village, all by whites."<sup>16</sup> The acculturation efforts of the government only succeeded in making the Dakota more dependent on the government for food, unwilling to learn a method of farming contradictory to their traditional female-based agricultural system, and gradually forced to abandon hunting as their primary food source. When Jane DeBow Gibbs returned to Minnesota with her husband in 1849, they were witnesses to the end of Dakota society. The acculturation efforts of missionaries and the government culminated in the treaties of 1851, which permanently moved the Dakota to reservations in southern Minnesota. Although they still migrated, their freedom of mobility drastically decreased as white settlers claimed more land.

### The Dakota at the Gibbs Farm

The relationship between Jane Gibbs and the Santee Dakota has changed the interpretation at the Gibbs Farm Museum. The focus date is now 1850, which allows museum interpreters to discuss the beginnings of Heman and Jane's life there as well as their continual connection to the Dakota. The visits of the Dakota as they followed the trail that crossed their land continued for more than a decade. Frank Gibbs, Jane and Heman's son, recalled that the last time the Dakota crossed the farm was in June, 1862.<sup>17</sup> In August, 1862, the Dakota Conflict began as a war-like response to ill treatment from the federal government. Almost 500 white settlers, soldiers, and Dakota died in southwestern Minnesota; thirty-eight Dakota were hanged in Mankato as criminals and almost 1,200 were transported to reservations in Dakota Territory and Nebraska. Other Dakota escaped to relatives living in the Dakotas or settled in Canada near Winnipeg.

The Gibbs Farm Museum has welcomed some new buildings, which detail the history of the Santee. A tipi is there, a Dakota garden has been planted, reconstruction of a bark lodge is underway, and a new interpretation of the site has begun.

### The Old Trail

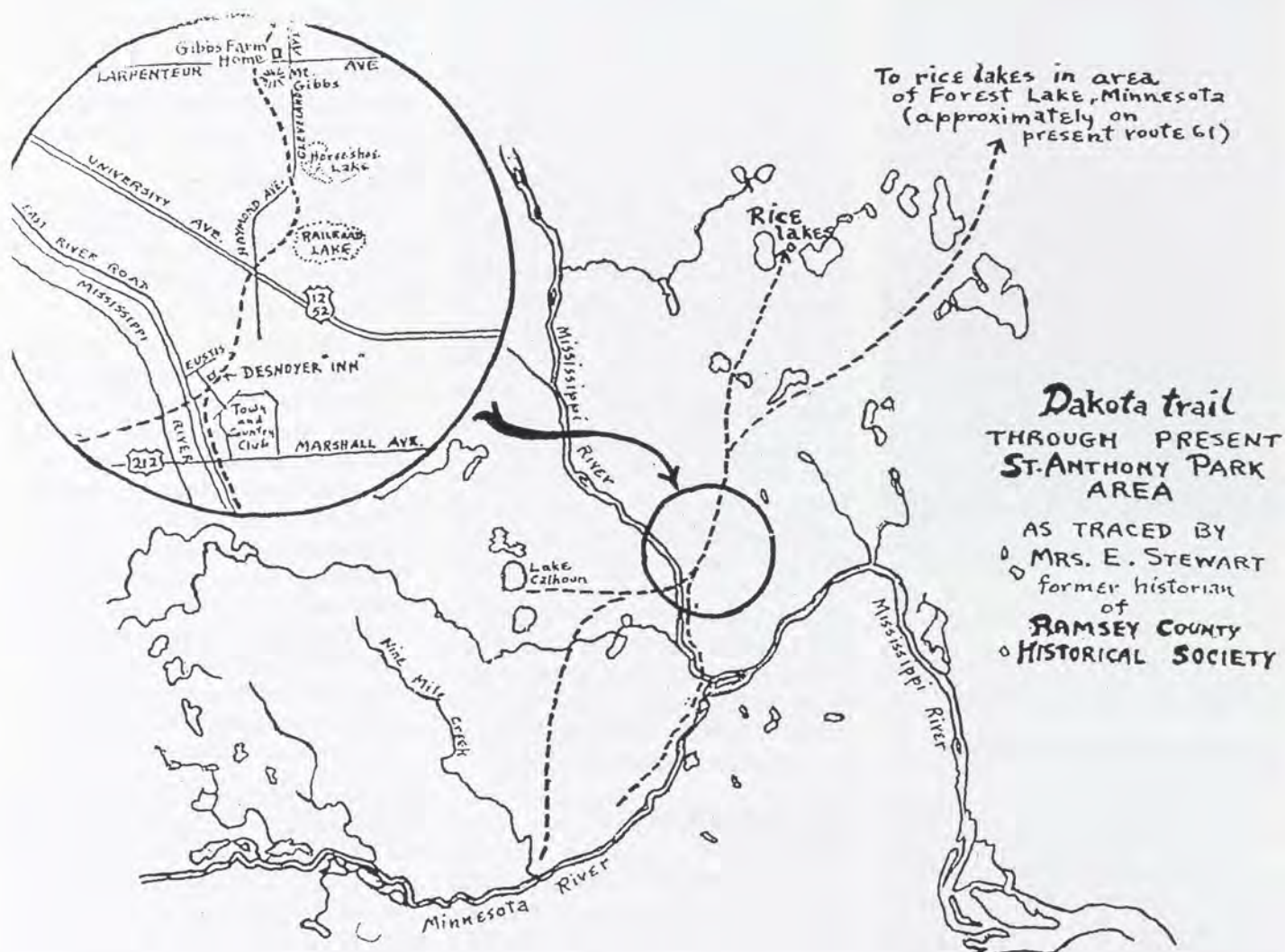
Frank Gibbs once described the trail the Dakota used on their migration to the wild rice lakes and its connections to his parents,

When my parents first came here they went to explore to find out what there was and where it was. They found the Indian trail coming across their homestead, running north and south, and it was distinguished ... by the trail. They had the pony trail and the drag poles which made the three marks that made the trail. They knew it was an Indian trail. Then when they had been here a while, the Indians came thorough and they [Jane and Heman] discovered that some of them [the Dakota] had been the children at the Indian Mission School at Lake Harriet when Mother was a little girl. ... And for that reason they became very well acquainted.<sup>18</sup>

This quote says several things about the Dakota and their migrations. First, it reveals that they traveled the same paths year after year. Second, in describing the trail and its marks in the ground, Frank is referring to the method of transporting goods used by the Dakota. They fashioned a travois, or two poles attached to either side of a pony or a dog, and they placed belongings across the two poles. Tipis also were transported in this way. Finally, Frank mentions a kinship tie between his mother and the Dakota. They had all known each other at the Lake Harriet Mission where Jane had lived with the Reverend Stevens and his family. Even though it had been some years since Jane had seen her childhood friends, the ties of friendship still existed.

The old trail is represented and marked at the Gibbs Farm Museum. A physical historical rendering, it reveals the migratory culture of the Dakota as well as their method for transporting goods and equipment. Coupled with the accounts of the Gibbs family, the trail marks the bond of friendship between Jane and her Dakota childhood friends.





The Indian trail that led from Fort Snelling to the rice lakes near present-day Forest Lake, as traced by Ethel Stewart, former historian for the Ramsey County Historical Society, and sketched by Edward J. Lettermann, former curator for the Society. Encircled is the portion of the trail that passed near the present Town and Country Club and continued on to the Gibbs farm home, now the Gibbs Farm Museum on Larpenteur and Cleveland avenues in Falcon Heights. Ramsey County Historical Society archives.

The Dakota knew they could camp at the farm and that they always would be greeted as friends.

### The Bark Lodge

Although a bark lodge probably never stood on the site of the museum, a reconstruction is reminiscent of Jane's experiences as a young girl at Lake Harriet where she would have seen several bark lodge villages, including those at Cloud Man's village. The bark lodge was used only during the summer months when the villages were located along the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers. Women were

engaged in planting corn, vegetables, and melons while men were busy preparing for the winter hunt and hunting small game in the area. Women built the bark lodge and were therefore the owners of the lodge.

Samuel Pond observed that the builder would set small posts in the ground, approximately one or two feet apart, that outlined the size of the house. The lodge would be five to six feet high from the ground to the eaves. The roof was gabled, or peaked, and because of its height, men often helped build it. The bark was taken from elm trees, in single strips, and at-

tached to the posts with basswood bark. The roof pieces were lapped like shingles. Most houses had one door under the peak of the roof, although some larger houses were known to have two doors.

Inside the house, a low bench ran around the perimeter of the lodge on three sides. This bench was about two to three feet off the ground and about three feet wide. It was used as a bench and a bed, and personal belongings were stored underneath it. The bench was covered with woven bark mats and buffalo robes. A fire was built on the ground in the center of the lodge with a smoke hole left in



the roof. A scaffold outside the lodge typically was used for drying fur, meat, and vegetables, but young men would sleep on the scaffold on hot summer nights.<sup>19</sup>

The bark lodge was used during the summer for coolness, but, once the Dakota were restricted to reservations, this housing form ceased to exist. Historian James Howard observed that among the Canadian Dakota bands

... the Santees [apparently] gave up building their gable-roofed bark summer lodges when they left Minnesota. The *wak'éya* or tent [the structures termed "tipis" by whites] or the *t'úktan* or domed lodge [called "wickiups" by whites] became the year round dwellings for the Santees during their first years on Canadian soil.<sup>20</sup>

Historian Gary Anderson wrote that the existence of the bark lodge as an additional style of housing exhibits a growing dependence upon agriculture. The extent of the history of their agriculture is unknown, but it is probable that agriculture for the Santee was a more recent addition to their economy and was introduced in the mid-to-late seventeenth century. However, it is correct to say that the Santee used the bark lodge as dwellings only during the agricultural season. Many white visitors to Minnesota made note of these agricultural villages. In addition to the detailed descriptions given by missionary Samuel Pond, explorer Steven Long (1817), explorer William Keating (1823), Captain Frederick Marryat (1838), missionary wife Mary Riggs (1832), and settler Sarah Wakefield (1862) all described the bark lodges.

### The Skin Tipis

Their western relatives, the Western and Middle Dakotas, also used the skin tipis of the Santee. Tipis are useful for their ease of transportation, an essential element for a migratory society. In 1720, a French writer described the tipis of the Santee:

Their lodges are made sugar-loaf shape, covered with skins dressed and smoothed, painted with various designs, such as the sun, calumets, arrows, etc. The fire is in the middle of the lodge, which is twelve to fifteen feet high and sixty to eighty feet in cir-

cumference; generally there are twelve to fifteen people in one lodge; there is only one doorway, over which they hang a bear skin to close it.<sup>21</sup>

Samuel Pond also details the building of the skin lodge. The skin lodge, like the bark lodge, was built and owned by the women. Three poles were tied together at the top while nine other poles were set in a circle leaning against the three tied together. A covering, made of eight dressed buffalo skins and sewed together with sinews, was laid on the ground and raised to the top by a pole. Pins running through the loops fastened the covering. Three- to four-foot square fences with sticks of wood were placed in the center of the tipi. The ground inside the tent was covered first with hay and then with buffalo robes.<sup>22</sup>

For defense purposes, tipis were set close together with the chief's near the center back of the formation. Relatives and neighbors arranged their lodges according to established custom. This arrangement also facilitated announcements which could be made in the evening or early morning. While most villages were arranged in a partial or semicircle, the location dictated the formation more than did tradition, and some villages were also arranged in a straight line.<sup>23</sup> Sociologist Ella Deloria observed that the Santee formation of tipis was scattered because they were woods-dwellers. She writes, "They were only careful to have their council tent in the middle of a group of tipis placed in a cluster whenever there was space among the trees."<sup>24</sup>

### The Dakota Garden and the Prairie Renewal Project

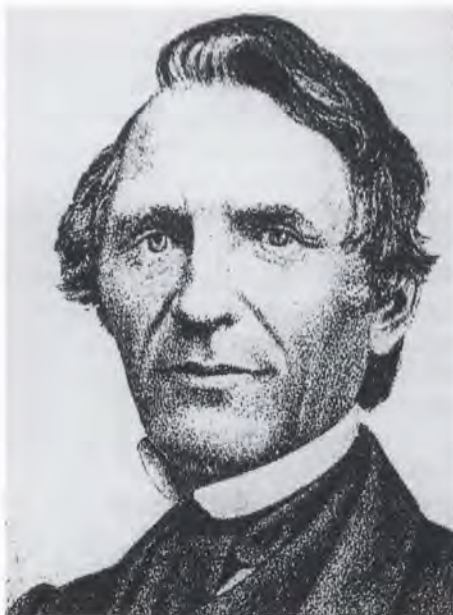
The remaining two sections at the Gibbs Farm Museum that are relevant to the Santee are the Dakota Garden and the Prairie Renewal Project. These areas represent the Santee economy. They also speak to the migratory society of the Santee, as well as to the efforts of the United States government to use agriculture to make Santee society more like that of the white culture. Agriculture had been part of the Santee economy for several decades, but it was not their primary means of subsistence and provided only enough food

for several weeks during the summer months. Little corn was preserved for winter use. Chaska, a Mdewakanton born around 1780, wrote that "the quantity raised was so small that they ate it up as soon as it was fit to roast. . . . They, the Mdewakantons, depended chiefly on the rice lakes and the deer and other game."<sup>25</sup> Just as men were the primary hunters in Santee society, women were the primary agriculturists. They planted three main crops—corn, pumpkins, and beans. These three crops would be planted collectively; the beans would climb the corn stalks and the pumpkin vines would be intermingled with the beans and corn, although the research is unclear as to when this particular practice began.

This illustrates one way in which the Santee resembled woodlands, or eastern cultures, like the Ojibwa and other Algonquian tribes. But the Santee also exhibited characteristics of plains societies like their relatives, the Western and Middle Dakota. According to Angela Cavendar Wilson, a descendent of Cloud Man, the Santee planted each mound of corn with four kernels, reflecting their observance of the number four as sacred among Dakotas. The number four also corresponds to the "circle of life" concept present among the Dakota and related to their yearly cycle of migration. Four colors (black, red, yellow, and white), four directions (west, north, east, and south), and four elements (thunder and lightning, air and buffalo, sun and fire, and the earth) are all necessary for life, they believe. Four kernels planted in each mound illustrates their belief in the sacred number four and the circle of life.<sup>26</sup>

Minnesota was at one time primarily a land of lakes and forests intersected by large tracts of grassland and prairie. The Santee were historically a culture that stayed within a landscape of the lakes and forests while the Middle and Western Dakota lived primarily on the prairies, first, of Minnesota and later the Dakotas, Montana, and Wyoming. As time went on and the Santee were slowly driven away from their traditional hunting and gathering places (first by the Ojibwa and later by white settlers), the prairie played an important part in the livelihood of the Santee. By 1853, all the Santee had





The Pond brothers; Gideon, top, and Samuel. Minnesota Historical Society photos.

agreed to move to reservations in southwestern Minnesota along the Minnesota River. They were expected to give up their migratory lifestyle and become farmers. However, most Santee stayed on the reservation only to receive their annuity payment (an annual payment in money and goods as part of the treaty agreement with the federal government) and then returned to the prairies and lakes to collect furs and wild rice.<sup>27</sup>

The prairie is more than a symbol; it also serves as a reminder of the end of a

culture. The Dakota agreed to a treaty in 1851, which placed them on a strip of land ten miles wide on either side of the Minnesota River. In return, the government agreed to pay a sum of money annually for the "sale" of the remainder of their land in Minnesota. A predominately woodland culture was now forced to live yearlong on the open prairies. The government saw this reservation as another attempt to acculturate the Dakota to white society and prevent clashes with new settlers. The Dakota probably saw this treaty as inevitable and agreed to the move. However, they refused to give up their migratory lifestyle. They continued to roam the prairies for deer and buffalo and to gather wild rice and berries from the Minnesota woods. Despite their efforts, the government was unable to force the Dakota to remain within the reservation boundaries.<sup>28</sup>

When Jane Gibbs and her family settled in Minnesota, she retained her kinship ties with the Dakota and her knowledge of Dakota society. She understood that kinship for the Dakota required reciprocity and the Dakota knew they could find food and lodging at the Gibbs Farm. Other settlers did not understand Dakota society and drew the mistrust of their Dakota neighbors. As Anderson writes:

The close proximity of the white settlers increasingly taxed the patience of most Sioux warriors. . . . Most of these settlers were foreigners who knew nothing about the Indians and did not understand the importance of reciprocity in Sioux society. If they aided a passing hunting party, it was usually out of fear rather than from a willingness to share. . . . Their failure to adopt reciprocal patterns made it impossible for them ever to become a part of the Sioux kinship system. The Indians came to see them as intruders.<sup>29</sup>

Former customs of fur traders and early military residents of adopting Dakota kinship law and marrying into Dakota families were no longer continued. In addition, the missionaries who followed the Dakota to the reservations believed that the only way to truly acculturate and convert the Dakota was to remove the Dakota communal structure of living. Children were sent to boarding schools and taught white ideals and life-

styles. Those Dakota who expressed an interest in Christianity were forced to adopt white clothing styles and men were forced to cut their hair. Finally, in 1862 the tensions between the Dakota, the U.S. government, and white settlers culminated in the U.S.-Dakota Conflict and the Dakota were forced to leave their Minnesota homeland.

The new interpretation at Gibbs Farm Museum does not aim to magnify the conflicts of the final years for the Dakota in Minnesota. Rather, it celebrates a friendship that developed between two separate and unique cultures. Jane Gibbs's friendship with Cloud Man's people reflects an acceptance of differences in societies. She did not impose her beliefs or lifestyle on them and the Dakota in turn trusted her as a friend. The relationship between the Dakota and the American nation is long and complicated. To understand this relationship, it is necessary to study both Dakota society and white society of the time. Bringing the history of the Dakota to the public through the interpretation at Gibbs Farm Museum is one step toward this understanding.

*Julie Humann grew up in Inver Grove Heights and worked at the Gibbs Farm Museum during high school. She completed internships toward her master's degree at the Ramsey County and Minnesota Historical societies and is finishing her master's in public history at Northeastern University in Boston.*

## END NOTES

1. Gary Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind: Dakota-White Relations in the Upper Mississippi Valley, 1650-1862* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1997): 167.
2. John A. Andrew III, *Rebuilding the Christian Commonwealth: New England Congregationalists and Foreign Missionaries, 1800-1830* (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1976): 2-23.
3. Gary C. Anderson's introduction to Samuel Pond, *The Dakota or Sioux*, pg. viii.
4. *Ehanna Woyakapi: History and Culture of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Tribe*, available at <http://swcc.cc.sd.us/culture2.html>; Raymond Wilson, *Ohiyesa*; Charles Eastman, *Santee Sioux* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1983): 3-4; James H. Howard, *The Canadian Sioux* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1984): 3-5.





A traditional style of Dakota doll, ca. 1830. All photographs on this page are of artifacts that have been replicated for display at the Gibbs Farm Museum. Ramsey County Historical Society collections.



A trade-era sewing kit, ca. 1835, another of the replicated artifacts at the Gibbs Farm Museum.

5. Roy W. Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1993): 21–22; Willoughby Babcock, “The Taliaferro Map of the St. Peters Indian Agency,” *Curator of Museum* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1945): 129.

6. Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux*, pg. 22.

7. Quote recorded in Carolyn R. Anderson, *Dakota Identity in Minnesota, 1820–1995* (Dissertation, Indiana University, 1997): 105.

8. Lawrence Taliaferro, Journal entry 10 September 1821, from the manuscript collections of the Minnesota Historical Society.

9. Lawrence Taliaferro, Journal entry 28 January 1826.

10. Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux*, pg. 45.

11. *Ibid.*, Journal entry 26 September 1821.

12. Philander Prescott, *Reminiscences*, Minnesota Historical Society Manuscripts Collections, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1861: pg. 123.

13. Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux*, 45–49; Taliaferro, journal entries as noted in text.

14. Pond, *The Dakota or Sioux*, pp. 10–11.

15. Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind*, pp. 167–178.

16. *Ibid.*, pg. 166.

17. Interview with Frank Gibbs, Folder #79, Gibbs papers, Box 2, RCHS collections, pg. 2; Carol Chomsky, “The United States–Dakota War Trials: A Study in Military Justice,” *Stanford Law Review* Vol. 43:1, pg. 21.

18. Interview with Frank Gibbs, pg. 2.

19. Pond, *The Dakota or Sioux*, pp. 37ff; Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux*, pg. 45.

20. James H. Howard, *The Canadian Sioux* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1984): 68–69.

21. This quote was translated by the Rev. John P. Williamson and is recorded in Rev. Edward D. Neill “The ‘Sioux or Nadouesis’ copied from the original manuscript in ‘Department de la Marine,’ Paris, translated by John H. Ames,” *The Minnesota Archaeologist* 39, no. 4 (1980): 204.

22. Pond, *The Dakota or Sioux*, pg. 38ff.

23. Ruth Landes, *Mystic Lake Sioux: Sociology of the Mdewakantonwan Santee* (Milwaukee: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1968): 31–34.

24. Ella Cara Deloria, Notes found among the Franz Boaz papers in the collection of the American Philosophical Society, microfilm 31.

25. Stephen Riggs, “Dakota Portraits,” *Minnesota History Bulletin* Vol. 2, no. 8 (November, 1918): 535.

26. Howard, *The Canadian Sioux*, pg. 4, 67; Interview by author with Angela Cavendar Wilson, 10 November, 1999; “Dakota Culture,” available at <http://www.esu1.k12ne.us/~santewww/>.

27. Allen, *History of the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe*, pp. 13–24.

28. Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind*, pp. 203–210.

29. *Ibid.*, pg. 242.



A woman's wool leggings with jingle cones.



Replica of a Dakota bow, arrows, and quiver.



A sewing kit with bone needles, awl and buttons, dating from the era before Dakota contact with Europeans.





"Sioux Indians," an 1851 watercolor by Johann Baptist Wengler, Oberösterreichisches Landesmuseum, Linz, Austria. Wengler painted this at a time of transition for the Dakota people. The dress of the man suggests a ceremonial costume and the lance probably was for parade use, but the women's dress reflects their gradual adoption of the clothing of the white community. Photo by F. Gangl and reproduced by permission of the museum. See article beginning on page 4

**R.C.H.S.**  
RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Published by the Ramsey County Historical Society  
323 Landmark Center  
75 West Fifth Street  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

Address Service Requested

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION

U.S. Postage  
PAID  
St. Paul, MN  
Permit #3989