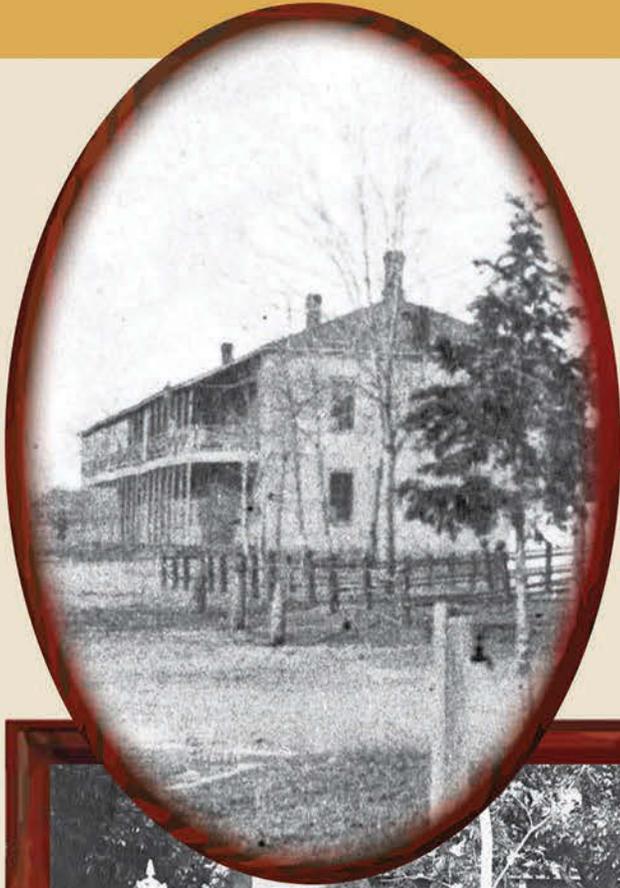


*Historical Sleuthing*

**Solving the Mysteries of Fort Snelling  
through Archaeology**

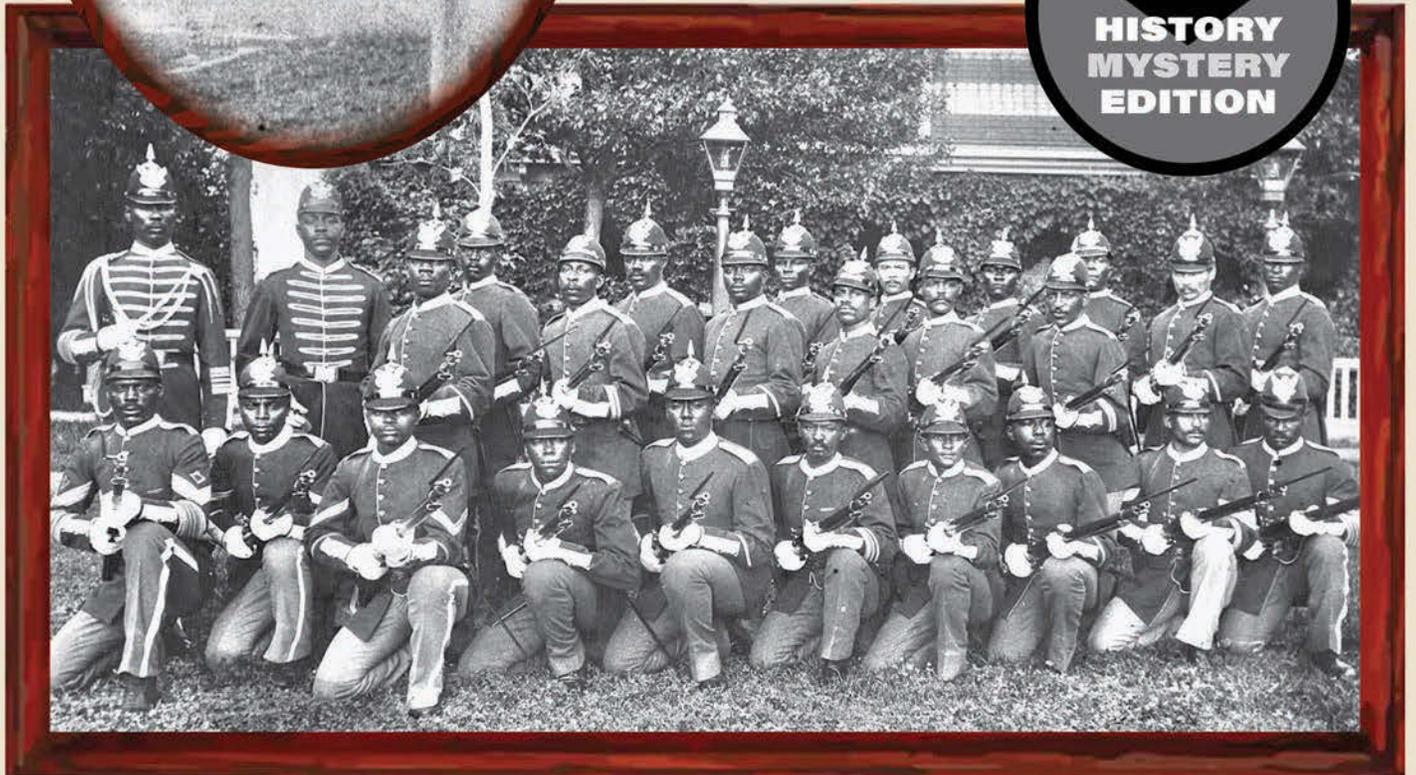
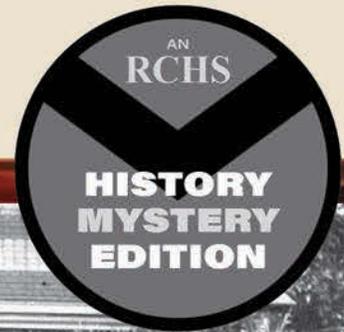
JEREMY L. NIENOW, PAGE 12



*A Fort Snelling History Mystery*

# **The Lost Barracks and the Twenty-Fifth US Infantry Regiment**

MATT FLUEGER, PAGE 1



## By the Numbers . . .

For a few years in the 1880s, the African American Twenty-Fifth US Infantry Regiment was stationed at Fort Snelling:

Number of soldiers from the Twenty-Fifth that arrived in 1882:  
**206**

Number of Twenty-Fifth Infantry companies living at the fort:  
**4**

Number of children born to enlisted men of the Twenty-Fifth in the post hospital (records kept from 1884-88):  
**8**

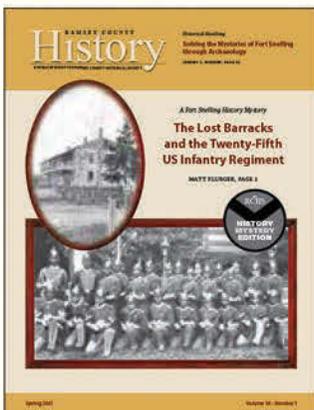
Number of years the Twenty-Fifth spent at the fort:  
**5½**

Number of enlisted men from the Twenty-Fifth buried at Fort Snelling:  
**9**

To learn more about this regiment and the mysterious building in which many of the men lived, see Matt Flueger's article "A Fort Snelling History Mystery: The Lost Barracks and the Twenty-Fifth US Infantry Regiment" on page 1.

SOURCES: John Nankivell, *History of the Twenty-Fifth Regiment, United States Infantry, 1869-1926* and various files at the National Archives. See article endnotes, pages 9-11.

### ON THE COVER



Very few images of the 1878 "lost barracks" at Fort Snelling exist (top left photo). This cropped image is one of three that are known today. To see the original image that includes the trader's shop in the foreground, go to page 1. *Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.*

Company I, Twenty-Fifth US Infantry Regiment at Fort Snelling in front of the Commandant's Quarters (1883). *Courtesy of National Archives, photo no. 111-SC-83638.*

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## Message from the Editorial Board

We are used to addressing history as a set of immutable facts. But in reality, our view of the historical record changes and shifts, depending on who is telling the story and what new information comes to light. Sometimes it takes a fresh perspective and some old-fashioned sleuthing to uncover what really happened and where it occurred. In this issue, Matt Flueger examines the history of the "lost barracks" of Fort Snelling, where the men of the segregated Twenty-Fifth US Infantry Regiment lived in the late 1800s. He presents some of their stories, and through careful research and comparison of plans and photos, he was able to identify a long-forgotten building, which was destroyed after about ten years of use. Jeremy Nienow shares the meticulous process that he and his team of archaeologists used to uncover the barracks, as well as other buildings and discoveries at the old fort. And Matt Goff has unearthed new information that dispels portions of the enduring myth that Pierre "Pig's Eye" Parrant was the first settler in St. Paul.

The Ramsey County Historical Society Editorial Board has some changes, too. On a personal note, this will be my last message as editorial board chair. Over the last fifteen years, I have thoroughly enjoyed working with two great editors and a wonderful editorial team. Their creative ideas and diligent work have done justice to the legacy of our founding editor, Virginia Brainard Kunz, and have helped extend our reach to perspectives that fully address our amazing heritage.

*Anne Cowie*  
Chair, Editorial Board

*The Ramsey County Historical Society thanks Board Member James A. Stolpestad and affiliate AHS Legacy Fund for supporting the updated design of this magazine. Publication of Ramsey County History is also 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.*

# Solving the Mysteries of Fort Snelling through Archaeology



JEREMY L. NIENOW

**A**rchaeology is the process of discovering, documenting, and examining physical objects to understand human activity. These objects or artifacts are a culture-made manifest. A subfield of anthropology, archaeology is intimately intertwined with history. While history is the undisputed arbiter of past human events, it also tends to grow “fuzzy” with time and even change in perception depending on who and what comes next. Archaeology, then, becomes a detective, providing the material “facts of the case”—the evidence in history’s mysteries. Even in times and places that are among the most well-known, such as Historic Fort Snelling, archaeology has the power to bring to light puzzles we never knew existed until exposed by the archaeologist’s trowel.

## A Place Like No Other

Fort Snelling began in 1820 as a military post built at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers in between what would

eventually become Minneapolis and St. Paul. The area is known to the Dakota as Bdote and is recognized as a sacred place. The fort itself has a complex history, its initial purpose meant to secure the lucrative fur trade, prevent tribal conflict, and keep European and American colonizers from encroaching on Native American lands in the Louisiana Territory. It is also inexorably linked to genocidal state and federal policies directed at the Dakota and was a location from which soldiers mustered to fight for the end of slavery, yet also a place where, early on, a small number of enslaved African Americans lived.<sup>1</sup> Fort Snelling is arguably the most well-known historical site in Minnesota. Be this as it may, there are still untouched corners of the fort’s history that call for illumination.<sup>2</sup>

Historic maps, photographs, and official records document buildings that once served as living quarters, defensive structures, and support facilities. Fort Snelling supplied the essential needs of its inhabitants and the defensive



The iconic Fort Snelling round tower, shown here in the 1880s, still stands today. The soldiers on the left are a guard detachment with the Twenty-Fifth Infantry Regiment. *Courtesy of National Archives, no.111-SC-83747.*



Archaeologists excavate portions of a guard tower foundation and wall, with the round tower in the background in 1958. *Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.*

and military functions of a fort. It also provided facilities that would normally have been found in a surrounding community, including a store, school, chapel, library, and playhouse. This military complex was a highly structured microcosm of the larger society that created it. Forts of this period, size, and importance have been found to be places of display, negotiation, disruption, and transformation for both those inhabiting them and those living in their shadow.<sup>3</sup>

During its 125 years of active service, the fort underwent numerous physical changes emblematic of the US Army's growth and transformation through the Civil War, Spanish American War, and two World Wars. First constructed at the very bluff tip over the confluence, the fort spread south and west, encompassing more prairie. As the region's cities, highways, and especially the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport came to the fore, the fort's footprint shrank. Fort Snelling slowly faded into the background under manicured lawns and miles of paved roads, runways, and parking lots.

Historic Fort Snelling was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1960, and calls for a listing on the National Register of Historic Places were made in the register's inaugural year—1966. The federal property was given to the State of Minnesota; afterwards, its administration and development were conveyed to the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) in 1969. The society prepared a nomination, and, in February 1970, the fort was listed on the register. The specific dates of significance are 1819-1858 and 1861-1946. The missing years represent the time between July 19, 1858, when the fort was decommissioned and sold to former fort sutler Franklin Steele, and April 23, 1861, when the US Department of War retook possession and occupancy.<sup>4</sup>

### **Minnesota's Most Investigated Archaeological Site**

Since 1957, Fort Snelling has been the subject of over thirty seasons of archaeological excavation, yielding well over a half million artifacts. Early work was led by John Callender, who sought to discover if foundations remained beneath decades of development. Callender's discoveries spurred MNHS to make Fort Snelling the flagship of a nascent State Historic Sites Network as

they initiated restoration efforts. This decision spurred an intensive research need. Historians traveled to the National Archives, returning with a trove of documents that proved essential in directing more archaeological work.<sup>5</sup>

Between 1965 and 1980, all 1820s structures within the original fort walls, including the walls themselves, were excavated. Excavation documented basements filled with demolition debris but otherwise perfectly intact and often including floor joists, trapdoors, stairs, and thousands of artifacts—each a clue into the fort's unrecorded daily activities. However, as reconstruction was the project's focus, rather than the archaeology itself, archaeological processing and reporting typically took a back seat to recreating spaces for historical interpretation.<sup>6</sup>

As Historic Fort Snelling excavations closed, MNHS planned to construct a visitor center. This space would provide a staging point, staff offices, labs, and collections storage. An archaeological survey recovered a small artifact assemblage interpreted as demolition debris from mostly wood-frame buildings and not considered archaeologically significant. Occasionally during the 1980s and '90s, limited excavations were conducted as building projects required. These included University of Minnesota field schools every other year from 1981 to 1991 and again in 1997. By this time, the original stables, hexagonal tower, hospital, and shops building were explored. Archaeological reports were often short, incomplete, and used as a means to allow other work to continue.<sup>7</sup>

This piecemeal archaeology continued into the new millennium with excavations both inside and outside the original fort. Finally, in 2017, Katherine Hayes with the University of Minnesota conducted limited excavations over the fort's military prison, which was built in 1864 and demolished in 1972. As the breadth of archaeological knowledge grew, authors of these set-piece projects realized the daunting need to better synthesize fort work. Current revitalization efforts would provide this opportunity.<sup>8</sup>

### **Revitalization**

Beginning in 2017, Director Pat Emerson of the MNHS Department of Archaeology began investigations related to now ongoing revitalization efforts. The society has demolished the

1983 visitor center just southwest of the historic fort and will use a 1904 cavalry barracks instead. This construction effort reorients parking, landscaping, and site layout. Based on previous archaeological and historic maps, multiple buildings have existed within the project area, including an early cemetery removed in 1905.<sup>9</sup> Even prior to the presence of buildings, the military undoubtedly used the project area for many activities. Emerson aimed to identify any archaeological materials that lay beneath proposed improvements and, if found, determine whether they contributed significant archaeological information requiring plan modification. She personally oversaw fieldwork before awarding Nienow Cultural Consultants a contract to continue investigations through 2018 and 2019.

The archaeological practices used to delve into Fort Snelling's past included trusted twentieth-century methods as well as twenty-first-century innovations. Overlaying historic maps with ground penetrating radar (GPR) and magnetometry data, archaeologists identified dozens of anomalies crisscrossing beneath the surface—perhaps indicating the presence of guard houses, cavalry stables, and other structures.

Once local contractor Archaeo-Physics completed these surveys, the work of ground truthing<sup>10</sup> began by digging shovel tests. These are circular holes about the size of a fifteen-inch pizza extending three feet below ground surface and placed every thirty feet across picnic areas, along the bluff edge, and around existing

buildings and medians. This grid provided a horizontal and vertical pinhole picture that connected the informational dots into a larger landscape. However, because the fort has seen more than 200 years of construction, use, demolition, and reuse, these tests were physically demanding and time-consuming. Excavators used a large metal bar nicknamed “the Crusher” or “Wesley”<sup>11</sup> to wedge apart compacted rubble layers down to undisturbed soils. Shovel tests took up to two hours for a two-person team to complete, during which time the depths of recovered materials were noted, the test photographed, and its location recorded via a satellite-based, global positioning system (GPS).

Depending on the results, larger three-foot by three-foot excavation units were then placed, often in groups of two, and excavated two inches at a time. Teams of archaeologists worked on these units over several days. The excavators not only completed each level of work but often interrupted their pursuits to answer the questions of bikers, fort visitors, and fourth graders and their teachers. Perhaps the best question came from a young man who inquired, “Are you practicing breaking out of prison?” Excavators became adept at not only working while educating but also at giving directions to the airport, the nearby US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Clinic, and Fort Snelling National Cemetery. Ultimately, archaeologists completed 110 shovel tests and thirty-two excavation units over two seasons.

Once excavation efforts ended, months of artifact processing and identification, additional research, digital map overlays, and deep-thinking led to the production of several reports shared with project and planning stakeholders and used to develop comprehensive treatment and construction management plans.<sup>12</sup> Emerson and the excavators again recognized the need to, for the first time, digitally synthesize all the archaeological efforts at the fort to create a one-stop-shop for MNHS. Although Emerson did not live to see its completion, Jennifer Jones, the archaeology department's associate executive director at the time, took up Emerson's mantle, and, in 2020, the first comprehensive archaeological geodatabase for Fort Snelling was created. This shows the precise locations of previous archaeological investigations and

Archaeologists subcontracting with Nienow Cultural Consultants complete shovel tests near the site of the old visitor center in 2018. Courtesy of Nienow Cultural Consultants, LLC.



provides hundreds of historic fieldwork images converted from photographs and slides, previous reports, detailed artifact information, and overlapping building locations. With just a click of a button, the geodatabase offers the ability to unweave the immense archaeological tapestry woven over the decades.<sup>13</sup>

These reports are filled with dense scientific jargon and preservation arguments. Their target audience is the Minnesota Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service, which ultimately decide if enough archaeological work has been done and to what extent discoveries should be protected and construction plans modified. Packed with methodological details, excavation tables, historical maps, and artifact photographs, they obscure the drama, mystery, and awe Fort Snelling inspired on a near daily basis.

### **Mystery 1: Not The History You Were Looking For**

To examine the enigmas GPR revealed, twenty-two units were placed throughout the visitor center parking lot to expose an expected treasure trove of nineteenth-century foundations and features. After cutting the asphalt and removing large blocks, six inches of gravel were stripped off, exposing two crossing trenches of darker soil. To the excavators' delight, apparent foundations had simply been paved over and lay just below the neatly parked rows of cars and



A completed archaeological unit that exposed internal elements of demolished cavalry stables (Building 28) is being documented using a Matterport 3D camera. *Courtesy of Nienow Cultural Consultants, LLC.*

school buses. The trenches were sharp, clearly hand dug (versus mechanically excavated) and continued deep into the earth. Unlike a normal foundation and trench feature that should have held limestone block or at least rubble, mortar, and brick, these trenches were relatively devoid of artifacts. That didn't make sense.

The mystery persisted as archaeologists encountered a large cast-iron pipe two feet below



A map showing the dark, gridded anomalies identified by ground penetrating radar (GPR) and the series of archaeological excavation units placed to examine them. *Courtesy of Zooarchaeo Consulting, LLC and Archaeo-Physics, LLC.*

The exposed cast-iron sewer pipe likely installed by Works Progress Administration (WPA) workers at Fort Snelling during the Great Depression. Courtesy of Nienow Cultural Consultants, LLC.



the parking lot. After further exposure, they realized the pipe rested on a twelve-inch cinder block. This certainly was *not* the nineteenth-century building the team had hoped to find. Instead, they exposed an array of water, gas, and sewer pipes, perfectly matching the grided anomalies of the GPR survey. Back at MNHS, the archaeologists discovered a series of forgotten 1960s VA utility maps—which confirmed utilities had been added at some point before the maps were made to modernize the buildings.

Dozens of artifacts in the trenches included ammunition, bottle glass, broken concrete, window glass, roofing slate, and the cinder block initially used to hold up the pipe. These artifacts provided clues in the search for further answers. For example, embossing on the bottle glass dictated it had been made in the 1930s. The cinder block also dated to that time when non-rusticated cinder blocks were first standardized for modular construction.

Issues of the *Fort Snelling Bulletin* from the 1930s revealed members of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) had completed a variety of repairs at the fort between 1931 and 1936. This work included converting earlier stables into vehicle repair shops, placing new utilities, as well as repairing windows, sidewalks, roofs, and shooting ranges. Although not the initially

intended target, the discovered features and their specific artifacts perfectly captured the activities of the WPA during a subsequently pivotal period in American history—the Great Depression.<sup>14</sup>

### **Mystery 2: A “Burning” Conspiracy**

Another mystery involved the discovery of an enlisted men’s barracks foundation. In 1863, a single-story wood-frame Civil War Draft Rendezvous barracks was constructed outside of the original fort enclosure along the Mississippi River bluff edge. The structure lacked a proper foundation, was quickly and poorly built, and was nearly destroyed by wind in June 1866. After that, it likely was used for storage until its timber was sold around 1871.<sup>15</sup>

Seven years later in 1878, a two-story, wood-frame barracks, 228½ feet x 30⅓ feet with wooden porches, was built directly upon the spot where the old, single-story barracks once stood. A photo of the post trader’s store by local reporter and photographer E. A. Bromley, inadvertently shows the barracks in the background. (See image in Flueger article, page 1.) The barracks exists on an army map in 1885 but does not appear on an 1888 map, confirming it was torn down prior to that year. In 1905, two large cavalry barracks—Buildings 17 and 18—were constructed, again on the same spot, and still stand. In the mid-1940s, the VA connected the buildings with a long hallway—also present today. Archaeologists wondered if a portion of one of the earlier barracks still existed in the space between the present buildings behind the connecting hallway.<sup>16</sup>

The scientists conducted several shovel tests in an attempt to find what remained of the barracks. Two of these tests were placed between Buildings 17 and 18, fifteen feet north of the connecting hallway. At nearly four feet below ground surface, Shovel Test 68 revealed a mortar layer with a mix of darker soils, charcoal, an 1860s green glass bottle base, a utensil bone handle, slate, and square nails. Shovel Test 69 encountered a dense layer of mortar, charcoal, and burned limestone extending across its base, along with fully burned cut nails. Something definitely existed between the two buildings, so excavation units were laid out with the hope of straddling the barracks foundation.



Two feet below the ground surface, the first burned wood, cut nails, charcoal, and ash appeared. This burned area expanded until a limestone mortar foundation footer was encountered falling roughly between the two units. The archaeologists had perfectly placed their excavation. The foundation footer, at its widest, measured just under three feet, although portions had eroded as it appeared to be resting immediately above limestone bedrock. As water moved between the bedrock and footer, it created a gap where a surprising variety of burned and unburned materials, including military buttons, pressed glass, animal bone, and nails, lay.

The archaeologists had located the 1878 “lost barracks.” However, they still had questions. The burned materials clearly pointed to a partial building fire, yet government records made no mention that the structure had ever burned during its use, nor had it been burned before the current barracks were constructed. What happened?

Researchers were stumped, as nothing fire-related in the historical records provided clues. Finally, they reexamined all available records. This included looking at additional copies of the Bromley photograph (three copies of this same photograph are known to exist) housed at MNHS to see if something had been missed. To



Left: The excavated and partially burned foundation footer for the 1878 infantry barracks. Courtesy of Nienow Cultural Consultants, LLC.

Right: The back of an E. A. Bromley photograph includes a handwritten note that the infantry barracks burned in 1883. Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.

their surprise, one of the photographs included a caption on the back that was not present on the other two. It read, “Barracks burned 1883.”<sup>17</sup>

This discovery only muddied the waters, as researchers knew the building existed until at least 1885 from historic maps, and no mention of a fire was included in the 1883 administrative records. However, with a little more research, the archaeological records’ indication of a partial fire pointed to a possible solution. An 1884 inspection report to the Quartermaster General indicated unsatisfactory conditions for the framed barracks, including the necessity of porch repairs during the year.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps the porch was damaged in a fire, or perhaps it was something else. We just don’t know.

### Mystery 3: Over a Barrel, Archaeologically Speaking

A final mystery from the investigation included the discovery of an entirely unknown building. Although these types of finds are rare at such well-documented sites, they are not impossible, given that maps were only updated every so often. A temporary building could certainly fall between the fort’s cracks. The first evidence for the building was uncovered by Emerson’s 2017 excavations in a small parking lot along the western side of Building 18. Her work revealed wooden floor beams and a barrel.<sup>19</sup> The features were first thought to be the fort’s 1880s butcher shop. However, map overlays and documentation determined the shop was demolished with the construction of Building 18 by 1904 and had been located farther east.

A subsequent 2019 investigation placed four additional units just north of Emerson’s units,

For more information about these barracks, see “A Fort Snelling History Mystery: The Lost Barracks and the Twenty-Fifth US Infantry Regiment by Matt Flueger, beginning on page 1.

Archaeologists excavating and documenting a previously undiscovered building. Courtesy of Nienow Cultural Consultants, LLC.



where archaeologists encountered another barrel, wooden flooring nailed in place against more wooden beams, and a concentration of artifacts, including a ceramic beer bottle shard, a hand-blown green glass wine bottle, window glass, and cut nails. They also found a bullet shell casing dated October 1883, giving a tight initial date range for the floor. This date also falls nicely into a gap between official map releases of the fort.

The structure is an intriguing mystery. What was its purpose? Its lack of a formal foundation, wooden construction, and series of recovered barrels point to possible interpretations as a storage shed or a barn associated with the nearby butcher shop. The building likely had at least one glass-paned window, and the alcohol container fragments could point to illicit activities conducted out of sight. We may never know its exact use, but its discovery and subsequent recommendation for preservation and avoidance during revitalization efforts means future archaeologists may have the opportunity to excavate more and fully finalize its interpretation.

### More Mysteries to Come?

History and archaeology are often thought of as collaborative fields—archaeology provides the

tangible representations, and history provides the context. Together, they produce insight and understanding. Places such as Historic Fort Snelling, where countless hours have been spent researching, recording, and reliving the events of the past, still reveal new mysteries to be solved—even as the fort undergoes revitalization. For many, the simple truth is this: there is always another shovel test to be placed at Fort Snelling.

### Acknowledgments and Dedication

The author thanks the Minnesota Historical Society for the opportunity to work on the archaeological portion of the Historic Fort Snelling revitalization efforts, specifically Marais Bjornburg, Jennifer Jones, and Jennifer Rankin. Thanks also for the outstanding efforts of all archaeologists and historians who work as a part of the Nienow Cultural Consultants team, including Matt Flueger, Alexandra Hedquist, Alison Hruby, Laura Koski, Mike Nowak, Matt Piscitelli, Chris Rico, John Strot, and Fred Sutherland. This article is dedicated to Pat Emerson and all the archaeologists who have devoted their lives to the excavation of the fort.

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# RAMSEY COUNTY History

A PUBLICATION OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Preserving our past, informing our present, inspiring our future.

The Ramsey County Historical Society's vision is to innovate, lead, and partner in preserving the knowledge of our community, delivering inspiring history programming, and incorporating local history in education. Our mission of *preserving our past, informing our present, inspiring our future* guides this vision.

The Society began in 1949 when a group of citizens preserved the Jane and Heman Gibbs Farm in Falcon Heights, which the family acquired in 1849. The original programs at Gibbs Farm (listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974) focused on telling the story of the Gibbs family. In 2000, with the assistance of a Dakota Advisory Council, the site also began interpreting Dakota culture and lifeways. RCHS built additional structures and dedicated outdoor spaces to tell the stories of the remarkable relationship between Jane Gibbs and the Dakota people of *Héyáta Othúnwe* (Cloud Man's Village).

In 1964, the Society began publishing its award-winning magazine, *Ramsey County History*. In 1978, the organization moved its library, archives, and administrative offices to St. Paul's Landmark Center, a restored Federal Courts building on the National Register of Historic Places. An expansion of the Research Center was completed in 2010 to allow greater access to the Society's collection of historical archives and artifacts. In 2016, the Research Center was rededicated as the Mary Livingston Griggs & Mary Griggs Burke Research Center.

RCHS offers a variety of public programming for youth and adults. Visit [www.rchs.com](http://www.rchs.com) for details of upcoming History Revealed programs, summer camps, courthouse and depot tours, and more. RCHS serves 15,000 students annually on field trips or through outreach programs in schools that introduce the Gibbs family and the Dakota people of *Héyáta Othúnwe*. These programs are made possible by donors, members, corporations, and foundations, all of whom we appreciate deeply. If you are not yet a member of RCHS, please join today and help bring history to life for more than 50,000 people every year.

### Equity & Inclusion Statement

History informs us, inspires new choices, brings people together, and builds community. Likewise, it can be misused to inspire fear, create division, and perpetuate racism and other injustices. We resolve to present history in accordance with our values of Authenticity, Innovation, Inspiration, Integrity, and Respect. We believe that by doing so, our community will be more informed, more engaged, and will become stronger.

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



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## *Acknowledging This Sacred Dakota Land*

Mnisóta Makhóche, the land where the waters are so clear they reflect the clouds, extends beyond the modern borders of Minnesota and is the ancestral and contemporary homeland of the Dakhóta (Dakota) people. It is also home to the Anishinaabe and other Indigenous peoples, all who make up a vibrant community in Mnisóta Makhóche. The Ramsey County Historical Society acknowledges that its sites are located on and benefit from these sacred Dakota lands.

Dakota people are the first people of Mnisóta Makhóche and have lived here for thousands of years. In the nineteenth century, Dakota lands were greatly diminished by a series of one-sided treaties that continue to benefit the United States government and the descendants of those who immigrated to Minnesota. These treaties were knowingly mistranslated, and land and annuities promised to the Dakota were stolen and never received. In 1862, war broke out between some Dakota and the Governments of the United States and Minnesota. As a result of that war, Governor Alexander Ramsey (namesake of Ramsey County) called for all Dakota people in Minnesota to “be exterminated or driven forever beyond the borders of Minnesota,” their homeland. This codification of genocidal State policy resulted in the violent and forced removal of Dakota people from their homeland, including offering bounties for killing Dakota men, women, and children and years of exterminatory military campaigns.

Yet the Dakota people have survived this attempted genocide and the ongoing attempts to erase their histories and culture through assimilation practices, including sending Dakota children to boarding schools and erasure by omission of Dakota history in curriculum in educational institutions.

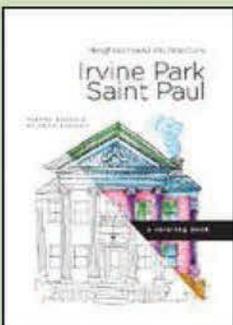
Ramsey County Historical Society is committed to preserving our past, informing our present, and inspiring our future. Part of doing so is acknowledging the painful history and current challenges facing the Dakota people just as we celebrate the contributions of Dakota and other Indigenous peoples.

We pledge to honor the Dakota and other Indigenous peoples of Mnisóta Makhóche by:

- Continuing to share an accurate historical curriculum at Gibbs Farm that covers the seasonal life of the Dakota of Ĥeyáta Othúnwe (Cloud Man’s Village) at Bdé Makhá Ska;
- Developing improved language for signage and curriculum that more accurately describes colonization;
- Providing a platform for Dakota and other Indigenous partners to showcase their work at our physical sites through virtual programming, exhibits, and publications;
- Maintaining relationships with Dakota community members, and organizations;
- Supporting Dakota and other Indigenous-owned businesses;
- Providing space for traditional and contemporary Dakota cultural activities and events;
- And by advocating for the respectful and equitable treatment of Dakota people, culture, and history.

*The staff and board of the Ramsey County Historical Society extend their heartfelt thanks to Teresa Peterson, Dakota & Upper Sioux Community citizen; Chris Pexa, PhD, Spirit Lake Dakota Nation; and Šišóka Dúta (Joe Bendickson), Sisseton Wahpeton Oyáte, University of Minnesota—for their support of RCHS and advice regarding this statement.*

For references for this statement, please see  
<https://www.rchs.com/news/dakota-land-acknowledgement/>



### *Irvine Park Coloring Book*

Jeanne Kosfeld and Richard Kronick have created a unique first book featuring the lovely Irvine Park neighborhood. Color or paint eighteen sketches of homes while learning about the area’s history and architecture.

*To order:*

[www.rchs.com](http://www.rchs.com) / [info@rchs.com](mailto:info@rchs.com)

### *March of the Governors Podcasts*

RCHS has introduced a new series of podcasts: “March of the Governors” examines the lives and careers of the governors of the State of Minnesota, one by one.

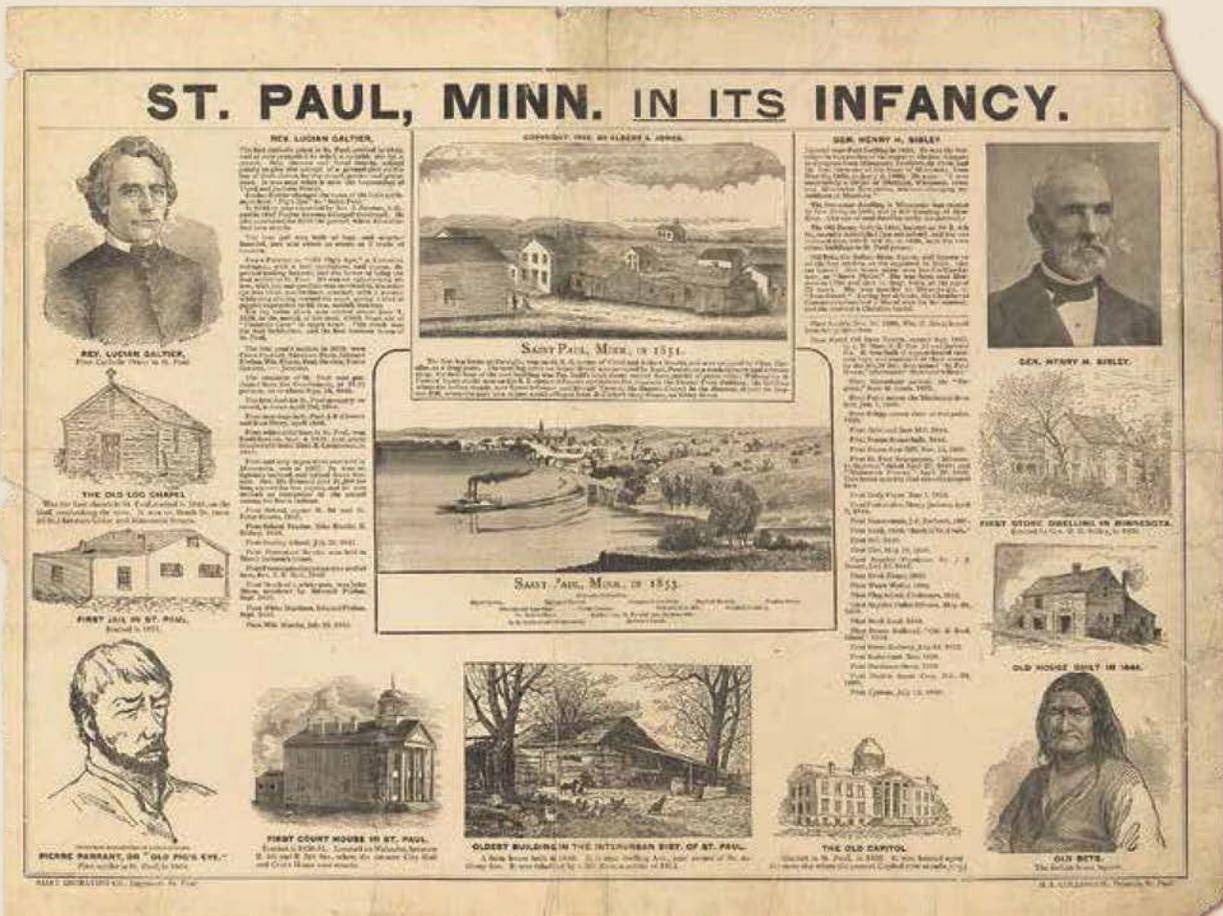
[www.rchs.com/news/rchs-podcasts/](http://www.rchs.com/news/rchs-podcasts/)

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Correcting Mystery and Myth

Not Everything You've Heard about Pig's Eye Parrant is True

MATTHEW GOFF, PAGE 20



This 1892 broadside, copyrighted by Albert A. Jones and printed by H. L. Collins Co., celebrates St. Paul's many "firsts," including the first governor, school teacher, Protestant church, and even the first murderer. Many facts are true. Others have been questioned, including those related to a man named Pierre Parrant, whose image is illustrated in the bottom left-hand corner. Parrant's narrative has shaped this city's history, but author Matt Goff argues that some of these oft-repeated stories are just that—stories—that should be reconsidered and corrected. *Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.*