Historical Perspectives

A Journal of the German American Museum, Library and Family History Center

Winnebago at Sacred Hill near the Turkey River
Ho-Chunk frequently visited Winneshiek County ca. 1890. In the background is "Sacred Hill" where many of their ancestors were buried.
Photograph courtesy of the Winneshiek County Historical Society.

Issue # 20, Autumn/Winter 2025

German American Museum, Library and Family History Center

Mission Statement: Preserve the Past, Celebrate the Presence, and Embrace the Future

About Historical Perspectives: Historical Perspectives, Historische Betrachtungen, publishes work in fields such as the arts, humanities, history, literature, and social and physical sciences.

German American Museum Theme Areas: geographic features of the landscape, indigenous Peoples removal policies and tribal revival, Europeans and Americans coming to Northeast Iowa, role of religion and the clergy in the community, importance of education and the teaching nuns, development of farming and industrial arts, evolution of family social life, sports such as baseball, basketball, and softball, national defense service, economic change, and preserving and celebrating cultural heritages.

Late Autumn on the Franzen Farm south of St. Lucas.

Massive Red Oak Tree. DNR staff estimate its age at over 250 years. This magnificent tree started growing before our Nation came into existence. It appears to have survived heavy lightning storms, high winds and prairie fires due to its unique location.
It is an absolute natural treasure in our area.

St. Lucas Historical Society
German American Museum, Library and Family History Center

26 January 2026

Dear friends of the Museum:

In this issue we survey the forced removals of the Winnebago people from Wisconsin to Yellow River, Iowa, then to the Turkey River Reserve in Iowa, then to Long Prairie, Minnesota, to Blue Earth, Minnesota, then to the Dakota Territory, then to Nebraska and finally back home to Wisconsin.

Our September 2025 Conference on Ho Chunk Nation Forced Removals of the 1840s and the Rehabilitation of Fort Atkinson, give us some insights into this decades long removal policy. Bill Quackenbush and Jon Greendeer, Tribal chairperson, of the Ho Chunk Nation delivered very insightful remarks.

Museum events included rock hounding and artifact collecting, in August, the daylong Conference on the Ho Chunk Nation forced removals in the 1840s and Fort Atkinson upgrades in September. We had a show and tell of family antiques and a presentation of the lessons of the Holocaust in October.

The Herold's shared their Peace Corps experiences as agricultural advisors in Jamacia and Kenya in October and Dr. Griesheimer explored the influence of Czech composers on the development of German classical music in November.

We hope you find these articles interesting and enjoyable. Please inform us of potential historical topics for future Journal issues, as well as recommendations for speakers for the upcoming year.

Sincerely,

Clair Blong
President

212 East Main Street, P.O. Box 195, St. Lucas, Iowa 52166

Contents of Issue # 20

George Catlin, View of the Wisconsin River, Winnebago Shooting Ducks, 1836-1837. oil on canvas, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Mrs. Joseph Harrison, Jr., 1985. Public Domaine.

In the summer of 1836, George Catlin made his final journey to the West, to visit the sacred Pipestone Quarry in present-day Minnesota, where Plains Indians harvested the red steatite to make their pipe bowls. He journeyed west by steamer from New York through Sault Ste. Marie and Green Bay, paddling down the Wisconsin River, where he sketched this image of Winnebago Indians hunting ducks.

Although familiar with the West's stunning landscape since beginning his travels in 1830, Catlin found the country's beauty---and his enthusiasm for it---inexhaustible. He later described the Wisconsin River as what "the French most appropriately denominate 'La belle riviere,' [it] may certainly vie with any other on the Continent . . . for its beautifully skirted banks and prairie bluffs. It may justly be said to be equal to the Mississippi . . ." (Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, vol. 2, no. 54, 1841, reprint 1973; Truettner, *The Natural Man Observed*, 1979)

A Brief History of the Turkey River Ho-Chunk Agency and School

Edited by Steven Johnson

Sketch of the Outline of Hills on the Turkey River in The Winnebago Reserve, 1847. By David Dale Owens, U.S. Geologist for Wisconsin

When visitors arrive at Fort Atkinson State Reserve they are told the history of the site, but little history is given regarding the Turkey River Agency and School. The opening paragraph in the brochure entitled "The Fort Atkinson Story A Self-Guided Walking Tour of Fort Atkinson," does speak about the Ho-Chunk Nation and briefly of the fort's purpose.

Fort Atkinson was established in 1840 to monitor the Ho-Chunk (Winnebago) Nation who had been forced to move from their traditional homeland in Wisconsin to the Neutral Ground in northeastern Iowa. The fort's founder, Brigadier General Henry Atkinson, promised the Ho-Chunk that the fort would protect them from their traditional enemies who lived all around the Neutral Ground and keep white settlers from moving into the territory. At the same time, the government expected the soldiers to prevent the Ho-Chunk from returning to their homeland. Horse-mounted dragoons were stationed at Fort Atkinson to patrol the Neutral Ground and keep the peace.

There appears to be little history of the Agency and School as part of the interpretation at this historic site. To be fair, Fort Atkinson State Reserve has a very limited annual budget and would likely be closed if it were not for the efforts of the Friends of Fort Atkinson and other residents. The property was dedicated in 1968 as a State Reserve. In 1977, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the Fort Atkinson community organized the Fort

Atkinson Rendezvous, a re-enactment of life in the 1840's. The annual event occurs during the last full weekend in the month of September.

Now for the "rest of the story" regarding the Turkey River Indian Agency and School history. Local residents or tourists to the region know little of the story. This may be due to its brief existence of only nine years, 1840 – 1848, in Winneshiek County. Also, there is only one remaining log building of that may have been built by the government for housing the Ho-Chunk near the Agency. The log structure was moved and restored at its present site on the grounds of St. Anthony of Padua, the "World's Smallest Church", in 1994.

One of the most comprehensive histories of the Agency and School can be found in Sigurd S. Reque's newspaper article, "The Early History of Winneshiek County," published by the Decorah Journal in August of 1938. Professor Reque spent several months in Washington D.C. researching and collecting information on the county's early history. In 1920, Reque became a professor at Decorah's Luther College, served as the Greater Winneshiek County League President for many years (forerunner of the Winneshiek County Historical Society), and from 1940 to 1947, served as Curator (Director) of the Norwegian American Historical Museum.

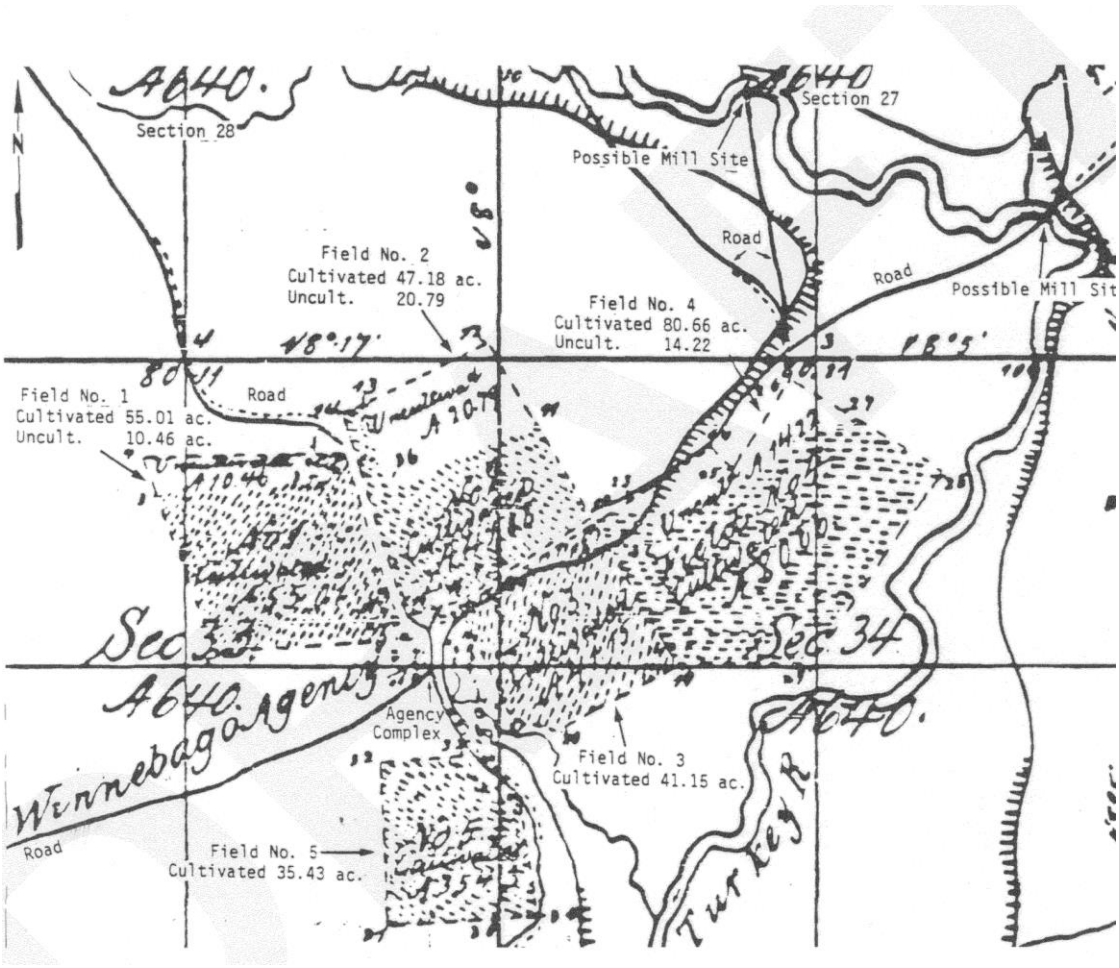
Except for the reprint, A Glimpse of Iowa in 1846, the following information comes from Sigurd Reque's history. The article was edited minimally from its appearance in the newspaper article.

Agree to Removal

In September of 1832, the Winnebago's ceded their remaining rights to land in Wisconsin and agreed to a removal to the west banks of the Mississippi. However, it took some time before the removal was accomplished.

Nathan Boone, who had been interrupted in his survey of the boundaries of the Neutral Ground, after covering two miles of the southern boundary, did not complete the work. It was accomplished by James Craig and his assistants in the early fall of 1833. Nathan Boone was appointed a captain in the famous newly created First Regiment of Dragoons, one of the most efficient regiments ever to serve our country.

As already mentioned, the removal of the Winnebago's was not immediately consummated. The terms made with these Indians were quite liberal in regard payments of annuities and other favors. The Winnebago's, however, feared the Sacs and Foxes south of their new reservation and the Sioux on the northern boundary.



Map of the Neutral Ground

Photograph courtesy of the Allamakee County Conservation Board
Driftless Area Education and Visitors Center

As early as 1834, Indian Agent Street made a beginning of a school and farm some miles from the mouth of the Yellow River in Allamakee County. A school was opened early in 1835, with the Rev. David Lowery and his wife in charge assisted by several teachers, a farm manager, and the necessary number of helpers. The school building was of stone, the other buildings of logs. Col. Zachary Taylor offered the use of the sawmill located not far from the mouth of the river. A school was maintained until the fall of 1840.

But a small portion of the Winnebago's had taken up their residence in the Neutral Ground before 1840. Various bands had spent part time in the western part of the reservation and in the Upper Iowa, under Chief Winneshiek, but all were in constant fear of reprisals on the part of the Sioux and Sacs and Foxes, who were reluctant to see these splendid hunting grounds slip from their group.

Undertake Removal

The settlers in Wisconsin were becoming irritated by the presence of the Winnebago's among them and felt that enough time had elapsed for their removal to Iowa. Congress became impatient and, in the summer of 1840, the final removal was undertaken in earnest. The eastern boundary line was placed twenty miles west of the Mississippi, now the eastern boundary line of Winneshiek County.

Under the command of Gen. Henry Atkinson, Col. Wm. Worth, later famous in the War with Mexico, and with Eighth Infantry, Brig. Gen. George M. Brooke with the Fifth Infantry from Ft. Crawford, and Capt. Edwin V. Sumner, with Company B of the famous Dragoons, the task of bringing the Indians to their new reservation was started in the spring of 1840.

Build Fort Atkinson

To protect the Indians from their tribal foes, the government decided to build a fort on the site of the present Ft. Atkinson, located on the centerline of the Neutral Ground. Capt. Isaac Lynde arrived on the site of Ft. Atkinson with his Co. F of the Fifth infantry, 82 officers and enlisted men, and about 50 workmen on May 31, 1840. On June 2, the work of building the fort was begun. To get necessary supplies from the base at Prairie du Chien, an improved landing and storehouse was constructed at McGregor.

A road was necessary and men were detailed on this project. A short distance north of Marquette a boulder and plaque mark the place where the road left the river and headed west. Further on this road became practically identical with the present highways No. 18 and 52, passing Postville, Castalia, Ossian, Calmar and proceeding on to Ft. Atkinson. For the duration of the reservation period this road became a very busy road indeed. The route of this road from the Mississippi to the prairie will convince anyone who wishes to examine it of the toilsome first leg of the trip westward.

Hundreds of trips were made in stout army wagons in the very first year, hauling the considerable amounts of supplies necessary for the fort. Not all the material necessary for the building of the fort was brought from a distance, however. Stone for buildings was quarried in the immediate neighborhood and a sawmill erected on the Turkey River near the Indian Agency, soon to be erected, furnished black walnut for interior finishing. General Henry Atkinson had selected a beautiful site for the location of the new army post, which later came to bear his name.

Fort Completed in 1842

Work was continued on the fort for a period of two years, and when completed in 1842, presented a formidable appearance. From drawings made by Lt. A. W. Reynolds, at one time stationed there, our own artist, Chas. Philip Hexom has been able to reconstruct an accurate picture of this army post. Four long barracks, two of stone and two logs hewn flat, enclosed a large parade ground.

These buildings all two stories high, all having upper porches along their entire length, the stone building occupied by the commissioned officers being screened in by movable wooden blinds. The non-commissioned officers and their families and the two companies of soldiers stationed there from 1841 and following years occupied the three other buildings. However, in these buildings room was also provided for a hospital, combined chapel and schoolroom for the post children and living rooms.

The gun house, still standing, is located in the southwest corner of the enclosure. Another gun house stood in the northeast corner. Both guarded the various approaches to the fort. The northwest corner was occupied by the quartermaster's storehouse and the sutler's store - in charged of H. M. Rice, later senator from Minnesota.

The guardhouse was also in this corner. The stone powder house, still standing, was erected in the southeast corner. The United States flag flew every day from a lofty flagstaff standing in the center of the parade grounds.

A picket fence of squared logs twelve feet high with loopholes at intervals of four feet enclosed the buildings. The stables erected for the cavalry were about 40 feet wide and 300 feet long, running in a north and south direction. Across the street on the north side of the fort were located the bakery, blacksmith and carpenter shops.

The sentry beat must not be forgotten. It extended nearly the whole length of one side of the stockade, about three feet below the top of the 12-foot picket fence. A small shelter was provided for the sentry during inclement weather.

Lieutenant Alexander Reynold's 1842 Sketch of Fort Atkinson
From the National Archives

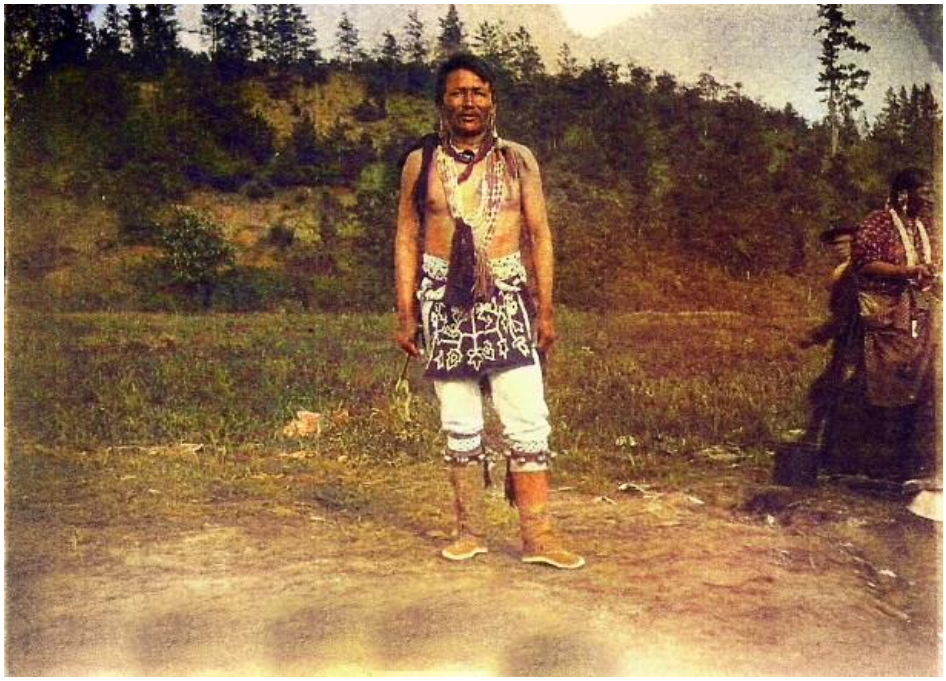
Scene of Many Events

For more than eight years Fort Atkinson was the scene of many eventful happenings. Capt. Lynde and his company remained there until the fall of 1841, when they were relieved by Co. K of the First Infantry, Capt. J. J. Abercrombie in command. A considerable number of Indians had been placed on the reservation in the fall of 1840. Reluctant to leave the immediate Mississippi region, orders were given that the annuities would be paid only at the site of the fort and new Indian Agency. This ruse helped to bring the Indians further inland.

The winter of 1840-41 was full of anxious moments. It was ascertained that many hundred hostile Indian warriors had assembled in the western end of the reservation and had planned to attack the newcomers at the first good opportunity, before the Winnebago's should have really established themselves.

The settled portions of Iowa were equally concerned in what might be the outcome of this situation. Fortunately, an unusually heavy snowstorm prevented the Sacs and Foxes from going through with their plans.

They're being no forage and stables for cavalry as yet; infantry reinforcements were sent out from Ft. Crawford to protect the western part of the reservation. At the earliest opportunity quarters for a company of cavalry were provided, and in June Capt. E. V. Sumner, with Co. B, arrived and remained stationed there until the outbreak of the War with Mexico in 1846. The work of Capt. Sumner and his dragoons was of the highest order and gained the wholesome respect of the whites and Indians alike.



David Good Village ca. 1880's. For following decades after their forced removal, the Ho-Chunk natives would return to the Turkey River Agency and School Site. (Photograph courtesy of the Winneshiek County Historical Society)

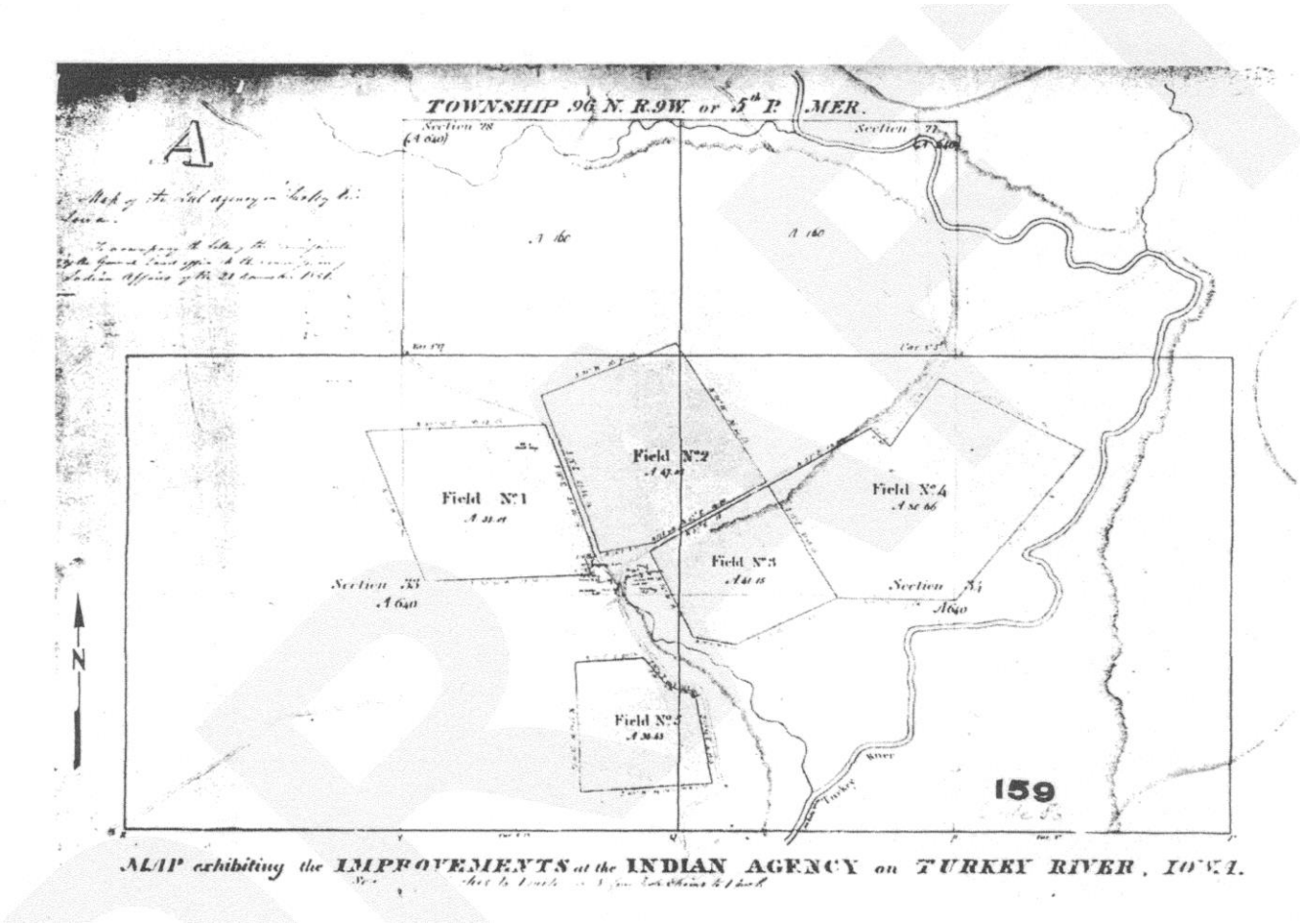
Agency and School

At this time a description of an adjunct of the fort should be inserted, namely the Indian Agency and School established a few miles southeast of the fort and located on the Turkey River. The site of the agency is easily identified, in that it stood near where now stands the Little Cathedral, or Smallest Church.

The Agency and School were moved from its location in Allamakee County and was well established in the fall of 1841. It is interesting to note that the Agency contained a group of about 20 buildings. The first structure was, no doubt, a sawmill, erected a little below the future agency. This sawmill prepared lumber, a great deal of it was black walnut, both for the fort and the agency buildings.

Amongst the buildings recorded was a large school building, attended at one time by 249 Indian pupils, and taught by six white teachers. There was a small church in charge mainly of Rev. David Lowery D. D., who also served for a time as sub-agent. A grist mall was added to the plant in 1843, in charge of John Thomas who served as farm manager from the first

year, 1840, until succeeded by Benjamin Terrill in the fall of 1843. Blacksmith shops and carpenter shops were provided for. A storehouse and the rest of the group in dwellings completed the little village. Besides as many as six teachers, men and women, there often were as many as sixteen white farm hands employed, to look after the nine or more farm plots maintained for the twenty-two bands of Winnebago's that eventually were placed on the reservation.



Map exhibiting improvements at the Indian Agency on the Turkey River, Iowa National Archives and Records Administration 1851.

Importance of Agency

An important adjunct to the military personnel in promoting the welfare of the Winnebago's was the agency establishment, situated a few miles southeast of the fort. Here the annuities were paid, and the sub-agent located there was charged with many responsibilities, such as the care and control of every Indian on the reservation; responsibility for all the property belonging to the government, and for the efficiency and competency of all the employees under him. He acted as judge in criminal cases, and in

minor cases requiring discipline; cooperated with the military in curbing disturbances, kept records of all payments made to the Indians and agency employees and was held responsible for the wise and economical expenditure of funds appropriated by the government for use on the reservation.

It is interesting to note that in 1843 the sub-agent received $750 in salary; the head teacher $500; other teachers $480; the physician $1,000 - Dr. A. Lull; the miller $600; the steward $240; blacksmiths $480; strikers $240; “agriculturists” or helpers $148, a mixed-race helper $96; two interpreters, E. M. Lowery $500; and L. Lequier $300.

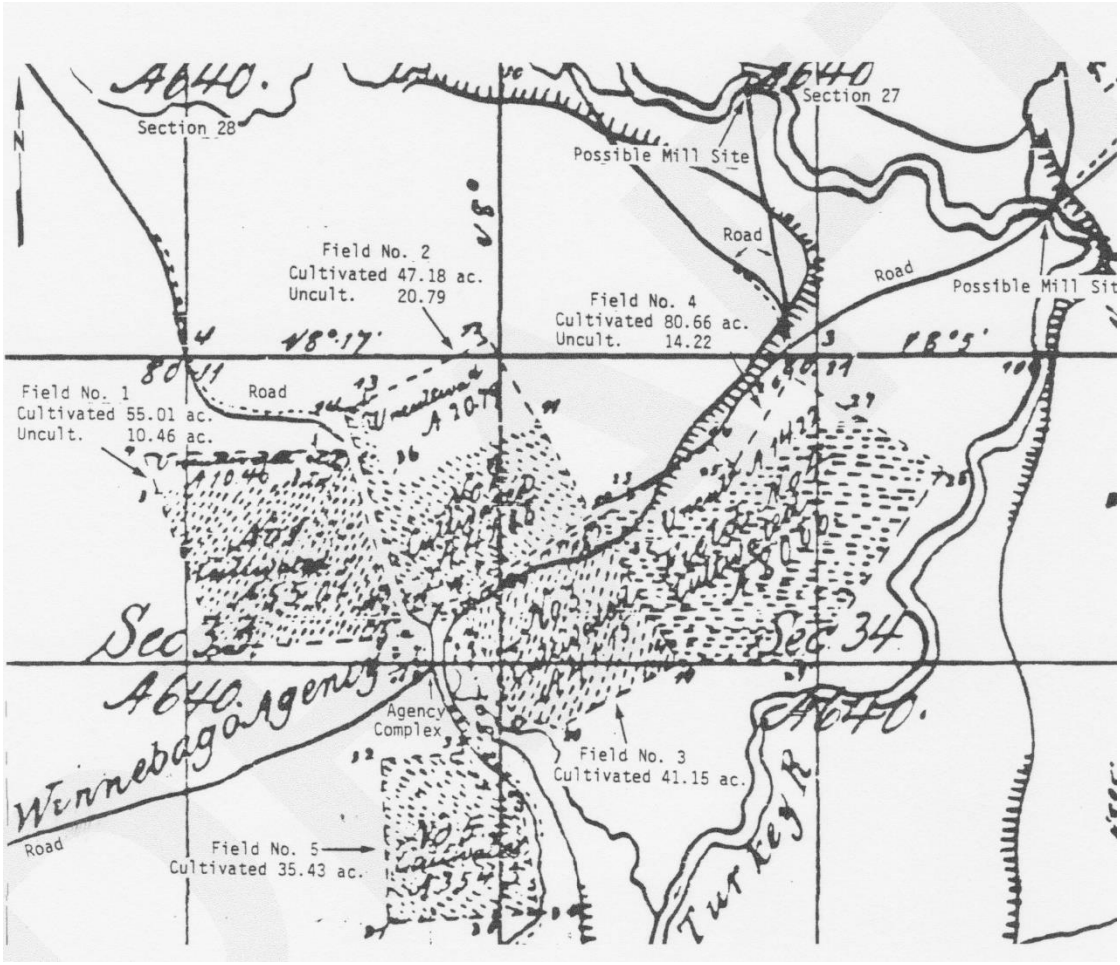
The agency force in 1846 consisted of J. E. Fletcher, sub-agent with Rev. David Lowry, in charge of the school, assisted by two men and three women teachers; a physician was constantly employed; a carpenter, an overseer, six smiths, a steward, a cook, fifteen laborers and one interpreter – a total thirty-four of whom two were mixed-race.

Farm Plots Developed

The first year as many as 1500 acres were plowed up in the vicinity of the Agency. The government land in the vicinity of Ft. Atkinson and the Agency comprised more than 1900 acres. In the first winter 25,000 rails were split to enclose the various farms.

Farm plots were developed as far west as the Red Cedar, and other portions of the reservation, notably at the mouth of Trout Run, near Decorah, where a 50-acres tract was plowed by Ole Valle in 1843 or 44.

Ole Valle along with Ole Tollefson Kittilsland were two Norwegians who arrived at Fort Atkinson in the early spring of 1843. They made the journey from Wisconsin on snowshoes, which caused somewhat of a sensation at the army post. Both were employed as teamsters and helped to plow land for the Indians.



General Land Office Surveyor's 1849 Map of the Turkey River Subagency

Inspectors praised highly the fertility of the Turkey River region, which yielded abundant crops, despite the little interest the Indians took in the main farm work. The giving of prizes to the best farmers amongst them stimulated some interest, however; and the rare sight of Indian chiefs cultivating and plowing fields was noted.

The main crops were wheat, oats, corn, potatoes and turnips. Large crops of hay served as forage not only for the cavalry horses, but also for the large number of Indian ponies. That floods occurred on the Upper Iowa, even before deforestation had begun, is evidenced by the fact that several bands living there lost their crops in the summer of 1843.

In 1846 the Indians on the reservation numbered nearly 2,500. Two companies of soldiers, the Indian Agency and School personnel, their wives and children, a few licensed traders, aggregated about 250 white people. No whites were allowed to remain on the reservation, in any other than in an official capacity

School Superintendent

The Indian school was superintended in turn by Rev. Lowry, who had moved from the school from the Yellow River, and who received an appointment as sub-agent; J. W. Hancock, 1841-42; John L. Seymour and H. M. Thissell, from 1842 – 1846; Rev. Lowery again from 1846 to 1848.

Rev. Lowry was removed by President Tyler as sub-agent in 1844, and his place taken by James McGregor. He was succeeded by John E. Fletcher in 1845 and remained as such until the removal of the Winnebago's to Minnesota in 1848.

The superintendents reported yearly to the government the conditions and results obtained at the school. Interested visitors have left fine accounts of their observations. The instruction was wholly in the English language.

The school year consisted of 236 school days. The Indians were rather slowly won over to the idea of making use of the school. The pupils were reluctant to use the English language outside the schoolrooms – being reproached, no doubt, by the opponents of education in their tribe or being too ready to throw off the Indian traditions.

However, the children seemed to enjoy their surroundings. They were taught reading, writing and arithmetic, singing, and in addition, the boys were instructed in agriculture while the girls received instruction in weaving, spinning, sewing and domestic science – the latter supervised for a time by Mrs. A. Lockwood, once in charge of the culinary department at the "Burlington House," Burlington, Iowa.

Ho-Chunk frequently visited Winneshiek County ca. 1890.
In the background is "Sacred Hill" where many of their ancestors were buried.
Photograph courtesy of the Winneshiek County Historical Society.

Work of Boys and Girls

The older boys worked on the adjoining farm for one or two hours per day. The girls sewed many useful articles and in great amounts – shirts, pantaloons, coats, gowns, aprons, sacks, bags, bed ticks, pillowcases, and numerous other articles. Visitors spoke with surprise of the large number of songs that had been learned,

" a large number of tunes, which they sing with much accuracy and delight." Another said that "it is an interesting spectacle to behold, in the midst of the forest, far beyond the confines of civilization, an assemblage of one hundred children of nature, eschewing the wild excitement of savage life, throwing aside the bow and quiver and bowing to the shrine of learning."

The school had become celebrated throughout the nation and was being watched as an interesting experiment. Some of the children made real sacrifices in walking as far as ten miles and back each day. Several pupils continued their schooling at college, notably Moses Paquette who later attended Transylvania College in Kentucky, and who wrote voluminously on the history of the Winnebago tribe.

Two members of the Friends Society visited the reservation in the fall of 1842 and had this, in part, to say about the living conditions among the Indians located near the Agency: "These Indians lived in rude lodges or wigwams, as they are sometimes called, built in the usual Indian style, by forcing forked sticks into the ground for posts, into the forks of which they lay poles for plates or ribs, preparatory to covering them with oak bark. The sides are either made of bark, mats made of flags, or skins fastened to the plates, and extending to the ground. These wigwams are from ten to twenty-five feet in length and about ten feet wide. The inside of the building is filled up with a sort of frame-work on each side, made of poles about two feet high, and three feet wide, intended as a sort of bedstead, on which they fasten skins or mats, where they lounge and sleep, leaving space through the centre four feet wide. At each end there is an aperture or door. The fire is built in the centre, the smoke escaping through a hole in the top.

There are not unfrequently as many as three or four families amounting to twenty persons or more occupying one of these miserable hovels. (It is known that the Neutral Ground would not long be occupied by the Indians, therefore they were not encouraged to erect more suitable living quarters). When about their homes, they live principally upon soups made from wild fowl, and venison, turnips and potatoes. They also eat an abundance of boiled corn. Some corn bread and a very little wheat flour are used by them.

In the reprint, **A Glimpse of Iowa in 1846,** published by The State Historical Society of Iowa in 1957, it provides information on the school:

> Winnebago School – This excellent institution is at present under the management of the Rev. Mr. Lowery, who was its founder. The zeal evinced in behalf of these untutored children, and the efforts made in imparting instruction, have been attended with the happiest results. Showing conclusively that the "children of the forest" are equally as susceptible of acquiring an education, as the more favored ones of the Anglo-Saxon race. From 60 to 120 scholars are in daily attendance. Their aptness in acquiring a knowledge of geography, and the various branches of learning, is truly astonishing. All the usual branches of education commonly taught in our schools and seminaries are taught here.

Connected with the school is the department of *Domestic Economy*, at present under the superintendence of Mrs. A. Lockwood, late of Bloomington. This lady will be favorably remembered, by many of the citizens of Iowa, as the former attentive hostess of the "Burlington House," Burlington, Iowa. All the females of the establishment devote a portion of each day in acquiring a knowledge of needlework of all descriptions. This branch of the institution, under its present worthy matroness, furnishes all the clothing necessary for the school children. Some 20 or 30 girls spend a considerable portion of each day in this highly useful and excellent department.

It is an interesting spectacle to behold, in the midst of the forest, far beyond the confines of civilization, an assemblage of one hundred children of Nature, eschewing the wild excitement of savage life, throwing aside the bow and quiver, and bowing to the shrine of learning.

Through the kindness of a friend, who has recently visited the "School," I have been favored with a few fugitive scraps of original composition – the production of two little Indian girls, from twelve to thirteen years of age. Although trivial effusions, everyone will be struck with the artlessness and simplicity of description which marks the child of Nature.

Winnebago School

I like to see another Spring come; I love to see all the beautiful flowers growing. I like to take a walk in the woods and hear the birds singing upon the trees. In a little while all the Indians will come back and fix their wigwams with new bark. I like to go and live in a new bark wigwam. When all the children come back from hunting, they are glad to come in school again.

A great many school children have died. When any one dies, they paint their face, then put everything new on; then dress them very fine and bury them. Then they take goods, and put it on the grave; and if it is a woman, the woman gather then together and play games; if it is a boy, the boys gather themselves, and play ball; and if it is a girl, the girls gather themselves together and play. The Indians have a great many things to do.

They say the white people when they die go to one place, and the Indians go to another place. At a medicine feast they have an otter skin, or some other skin, which their medicine is in, and call them medicine bags; they shoot themselves down, and say those that join the feast that God would forget their sins, and those that stay out are sinners; and they must fix themselves very nice if they go to the feast, if they don't fix themselves God would not like them.

Margaret Porter

Winnebago School

I am very glad that Spring is coming, for it is so pleasant to see the flowers when they begin to spring up; then the birds begin to build their nests. I like to roam about the Indian graves. When any of the Indians die, they put on all the best garments they have, then they wrap them up in a new blanket, if they have any; then they dig the grave about two feet deep. As soon as they lay the body into the grave, the friends of the one that died walk over the grave, then they go off mourning; sometimes that fast five days; they carry fire to the grave; they put it at the head of the grave four nights, so that the spirit might keep away from the wigwam, and they carry food to the grave, and put it on the top of the grave, under the boards which they lay over it; then they play the game which the one that died liked the best; they say if they don't prepare things, that the spirit wont keep away from the wigwam; sometimes they say that they see the spirit sitting in the wigwam in the night. They say that our spirits don't go with the white spirits, they go to another place; they go to good hunting grounds, where they have plenty of game and running streams.

Eliza Gleason

Dress of Indians

There is no regular order as to the time or manner of taking their meals. Some are seen eating their soups outside of their wigwams, some are eating while sitting on their beds, while others are engaged in different pursuits, and should any person of another family happen to come into the lodge when he needed food, he would as freely partake, without invitation, as he would of his own. The dress of the men consists mainly of blankets, all of them wearing the waist cloth, some wearing moccasins and leggings, and a few wearing a calico frock or shirt. The head is generally uncovered; a few, however, use turban.

The dress of the women consists of a broadcloth skirt and blanket. Some of them wear moccasins and leggings; the head is entirely uncovered, except that the blanket is sometimes thrown over it for a covering, but they use no other. The dress of the large children is similar to that of the grown persons of the same sex. Most of the small children go naked during the warm seasons; but those that attend school are clothed similarly to the white children on the frontier settlements.

The greater part of the men and women wear ornaments, such as wampum, beads, bells and jewelry. Most of the men paint their faces on special occasions; some part of the face is painted red and some black.

While many of the visiting Ho-Chunk natives to the Turkey River site lived in canvas tents, a few constructed temporary wigwags for lodging. Photograph courtesy of the Winneshiek County Historical Society

Employment of Men

"The principal employment of the men consists of hunting at certain seasons of the year, and when not thus engaged, they do but very little labor of any kind, it being considered disgraceful both by men and women for the man to be seen at work. Much of their time is spent in riding, of which they are exceedingly fond.

They likewise spend a portion of it in ball playing and other sports, and a considerable time is spent in lounging about in idleness. The women are generally industrious, performing the greater part of the manual labor both in the camp and on the land."

Perhaps the greatest single factoring promoting trouble among the Indians was selling to them of large quantities of whisky by unscrupulous white men. A great part of the work of the soldiers was devoted to patrolling the reservation and keeping the liquor vendors off the premises.

About $90,000 per year was paid to these Indians. When the time for the payment was near at hand, these illegal liquor traders would station themselves as near the boundary line as possible, and wait for their victims, and they did not have long to wait, as a rule.

Conditions the first year or two were especially bad. The agent reported 39 murders in drunken brawls in the space of 14 months, and this did not include a number of sudden deaths unaccounted for.

Plan Another Removal

General William Clark and the other commissioners present at the treaties of 1825, 1829, and 1830, had indicated that the whites did not wish to take away the land from the Indians. When the Winnebago's were removed to the Neutral Ground they presumably felt secure in their hope that at least they were to remain here for a longer period of years.

However, they themselves, by frequently going back to Wisconsin, and committing major or minor depredations, and in other ways irritating the whites, brought on a general desire in the rapidly growing settlements, steadily pressing and expanding westward, that these Indians should be removed a considerable distance from their present reservation.

Attempts to bring this about had led to several councils with the Indians at the Indian Agency on the Turkey River.

Governor Chambers of Iowa Territory met with them in the summers of 1843 and 1844, and finally Governor Dodge of Wisconsin Territory, second to none in experience with red men, tried his hand at making the latter agree to a removal.

The three attempts failed. The Winnebago's met up in great numbers on each occasion, necessitating the presence of an extra company of soldiers from Fort Crawford, in addition to the two companies at Fort Atkinson, to help preserve order.

Lengthy Councils

The councils lasted a number of days; the vicinity of the Indian Agency each time presented a colorful scene. Long and persuasive speeches were delivered by the respective governors; oratory flowed from the lips of the chosen Indian spokesmen. A nervous tension pervaded the whole camp, necessitating constant vigilance on the part of Captain Sumer and his cavalry, and the two infantry companies under Captain Osborne Cross and Captain Sidney Burbank.

The Winnebago's, supported it is thought, by certain traders outside the pale of the reservation, refused to entertain the thought of moving, and for this they surely cannot be

blamed. They had now become fairly well established in their restricted reservation of about 1600 square miles.

The respective bands were beginning to feel at home in the various valleys, woods, and prairies they had been permitted to select for their habitat. Already well-worn trails led from all parts of their reservation to the fort and agency. The Neutral Ground seemed to furnish all that the Indians required in the way of hunting, food, entertainment, and the liberal annuities assured them of further comforts. Under efficient officers, rules were strictly, but at the same time judiciously, enforced.

While many of the visiting Ho-Chunk natives to the Turkey River site lived in canvas tents, a few constructed temporary wigwags for lodging. (Photograph courtesy of the Winneshiek County Historical Society)

Iowa became a state late in the year of 1846. It was felt that the removal of all Indians within the new state, to make room for the westward moving immigration, was near at hand. Mention has been made of the efforts of Governors Chamber and Dodge to bring this

about in 1843, 1844 and 1845. Events proved that the Winnebago's were to retain their home for three years more, after the last memorable council with Governor Henry Dodge in 1845.

However, in 1846, twenty-four Winnebago representatives made the trip to Washington D. C. and they signed an agreement to accept 1,500,000 acres of land in Minnesota, in exchange for their rights in the Neutral Ground. The treaty was signed on October 13,1846, was ratified by the United States Senate on February 4, 1847, and was to be effective one year from that date.

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Select New Reservation

A suitable selection for a new reservation was made in the Chippewa country, northwest of St. Paul. The Winnebago's representatives were quite pleased with the possibilities of that region and began to make arrangements for the removal in 1848.

The term of enlistment of Captain Morgan's Company expired in July 1847. However, immediately, practically the whole company reenlisted and together with additional members formed "Morgan's Company of Iowa Mounted Volunteers," 92 strong. Instead of infantry the company now consisted of cavalry, well mounted, and well equipped.

The removal was to be made as soon as possible after the year of grace terminated in February of 1848. It was found that not a few of the Indians were opposed to the idea of moving into Minnesota. They felt that their new reservation would be a buffer between two long-time hostile tribes, the Chippewa and the Sioux.

Early in the spring a number of Winnebago's bands were disappearing from the reservation. Captain Morgan and Lieutenant McKenny were both out rounding up the truants. McKenny went as far east as Madison, Wis., to bring back stray hands, others were found down in Black Hawk County. The need of cavalry can readily be appreciated.

Pr**epare for Removal**

Preparation for the removal went on apace. Early in May the Winnebago school was closed, to be re-opened in Minnesota after an interesting experience of nearly eight years on the Turkey River site. Five men with horses and tools, were sent the same month to the new reservation, to plow and prepare for the arrival of the Indians. The latter had gradually been rounded up as close to Fort Atkinson and the Agency as possible. Delays were inevitable. A great many tribesmen were surly. Morgan's men were out time and again.

One day all but two of the bands were missing. They headed for the southwest. Lieutenant McKenny and a detail of 50 men rode through the night and passed the Indians unobserved by them. The cavalry turned back and met the fugitives. These were so taken by surprise that they sheepishly returned to the Agency.

Wagons, mules and teamsters had assembled at the Agency. After a number of parleys and much bickering about the route and the method of transportation, it was finally agreed by all parties concerned that the Indians were to be brought overland to Wabasha's Prairie, the present Winona, and then to be transported by steamer and barges to Ft. Snelling, and from thence overland to the new reservation.

1885 view of two Ho-Chunk natives walking along Water Street in Decorah, Iowa. Photograph courtesy of Steve Johnson from Dr. H. P. Field's Collection

River Transportation

H. M. Rice held the contract for the river transportation and had engaged the steamboat Dr. Franklin, Captain Blakeslee, for the purpose. The steamboat was leased for $100 per day and was to be on hand on the arrival of the Indians at Winona.

Posterity is indebted to a number of detailed accounts of this memorable journey of more than three hundred miles to Long Prairie, Minn., the new abode of the Winnebago Indians. The Harvey Reid manuscript in the possession of the State Historical Society of Iowa, at Iowa City, contains a detailed narrative of the migration, written by William Reid, who was a

private in Morgan's Company. Dr Bruce Mahan has told the story in a most entertaining and graphic style.

The newspapers of the day, notably in Prairie du Chien, Dubuque and Galena have preserved interesting accounts. Captain Blakeslee of the steamboat Dr. Franklin has left an interesting account in the Minnesota Historical Collections.

Moses Paquette, who had attended the school on the Turkey River, and later attended Transylvania College, and Antoine Grignon, both assisted in the removal to Minnesota, and their narrative are preserved in the Wisconsin Historical Collections. Captain Morgan's reports and those of J. E. Fletcher, in charge of the Agency, give additional authentic information.

Published accusations and investigations about certain phases of the removal, especially about the expense involved, add interesting items to the material available.

Day Set for Removal

Early in June preparations were so far advanced that a day could be set for the start of the journey. While Morgan's men had hoped that Mexico would be the scene of their activities, their hopes of exciting episodes were at least partially to be realized in another field of operations. While comrades in arms were making historic marches in Mexico, the equally valiant, but less acclaimed Fort Atkinson company, was starting on a venture that was to test their mettle and utmost vigilance for a period of three months.

Wednesday morning, June 8,1848, at dawn, the most unique and colorful procession ever witnessed in this region started out from the government establishments on the Turkey River, headed for the new reservation a little more than 300 miles away in Minnesota. At the word of command, the train composed of nearly 3,000 human beings was slowly set in motion.

In the procession were close to 2,500 Indians, 1,600 ponies, 166 army wagons, drawn by two, four and six mule teams, and driven by civilian teamsters. The wagons contained Indians who were not mounted, their movable possessions, supplies of food for the journey, tents for the evening camps, and extra equipment.

The Agency furnished 56 of the wagons to transport the movable equipment for the new establishment in Minnesota, the Agency and Mission helpers, their families, and innumerable odds and ends that had accumulated during the eight years stay near Fort Atkinson. At the rear of this long column a cannon could be seen drawn by slow moving oxen.

To provide fresh meat a herd of about 500 cattle increased the arduous duties of the soldiers and helpers. Morgan's mounted men, armed with rifles, pistols and sabers, were stationed at strategic points in the long cavalcade.

A look of harassed worry seldom left the faces of the more responsible members of the convoying party. Captain Morgan, Agent Fletcher, Reverend Lowery, Lieutenants McKenny and D. S. Wilson, Sergeants Rowell, Dollarhide, Clemmons and Hume, Corporals Cox, Cadwallader, Martin and Hess.

In fact, every one of the upwards of 50 men in uniform, the much larger number of civilian teamsters, and the lesser number of Agency and Mission officials and helpers, were fully aware of the dangers of escorting this train of human dynamite.

1949 View of a Ho-Chunk native taken on front of the Second Old Main at Luther College as part of Decorah's 100th Anniversary.
Photograph courtesy of the Winneshiek County Historical Society

Route Taken

It is hardly necessary to inform the reader that the route taken to Winona followed the Indian trails. The most plausible route taken by this caravan has intrigued the interest of the writer of this article not a little. In his opinion, after considerable investigation of the most frequented Indian trail, and the topography of the territory between Fort Atkinson and Winona, together with meager scraps of information about landmarks obtainable from reports of this first leg of the journey, there seems to be but one route possible.

This route was the well-worn Indian trail branching off from the Old Military Trail a short distance from Fort Atkinson and leading to the main camp of Chief Winneshiek's band in and about the present Decorah. This trail followed substantially No. 52 from Calmar to Decorah, the most direct route, and undoubtedly passed close to the Union Prairie church and quite certainly past the present Wenthold homestead. H. M. Rice, who had the contract for the removal of the Indians, built a trading post in 1849 on this trail, on the site of the former Engebret Haugen – present Wenthold home from which fact corroborating conclusions may be made.

From Decorah the main Indian trail to the north forded the river at the Twin Bridges, went up Cruson's Hollow, now the Skyline Road, passed Locust, farther on, went through the western part of Highland Township, passed west of Spring Grove, Minn., through the Yucatan region, and on to the Root River, and from there to Wabasha's Prairie, the present Winona.

First Day's Stop

The first day's stop was made on the prairie south of Decorah. The two- to three-mile-long procession was contracted into the form of a large square. Five hundred tents for the Indians, and one hundred for the whites, soon covered the camping site, all set up according to the general orders of the commander.

Fires were built, bread was made, meat was prepared over the hot coals; coffee was boiled for the whites. Mules, horses, ponies, and cattle, numbering well over two thousand head, were allowed to feed on the abundant grass.

If only photography had been farther advanced at the time, what a scene it could have perpetuated. Acres and acres of tents, human beings, and grazing animals. It is difficult to

believe in this late day that such scenes took place in this very country, so great have been the changes in one long life span, ninety years. But not many more scenes such as this were to be reenacted in our region.

Fort Vacated

The need for an army post in this region being no longer necessary, it was ordered vacated on Feb. 24, 1849. A lone caretaker, Sergeant Alexander Faulkner, was left in charge of the buildings. He was succeeded a year or so later, by George Cooney Sr., who was in charge until the buildings were sold in 1853, for the sum of $3,521.

Built of a total cost of about $90,000, the people of Iowa, through the legislature, petitioned to have the buildings assigned for the use as an agricultural college, but without success. More than 1,900 acres of land connected with the fort and agency were also sold; the last parcel being disposed of in 1860.

The departure of the Indians and of the last company of soldiers stationed at Fort Atkinson closed an important first chapter in the history of our county. The Indian trail that became the avenue of departure for the last tribe of red men to inhabit the northeastern Iowa area, witnessed the closing scene of an era extending beyond the memory of man.

The Winnebago tribe represented the last members of a proud race that since time immemorial had enjoyed the lavish gifts nature had bestowed upon this region. It had offered them food a thousand springs of cool, delicious water, material for shelter, a happy hunting ground, a final resting place for generations of forbears.

Removal Inevitable

Their removal was the inevitable result of the progress of a higher civilization. But in our reflecting on the momentous occasion, this milestone in history that recorded the passing of the old and the entrance of a new era, we may with due propriety accord our native predecessors, a kindly sympathy and follow their departure from this beautiful region with moisten eyes.

Some day the events that took place in this period of transition will mean more to us than they do today. This period began when the first white men viewed this region. The period unfolds a colorful panorama of explorers, trappers, traders, clerics, council and treaties. Surveyors, infantry, cavalry, barracks, stockades, cannon, sentries, patrolling squads,

brilliant uniforms, distinguished officers, the Agency and School, the teamsters and army wagons, and the Indians themselves.

All this preceded and forms a romantic prologue to the story of the remarkable first century of civilization in our state. It prepared the way for the peaceful and orderly settlement by hardy pioneers, who by their toil developed and left to us as an inheritance, one of the finest, most charming, and well-favored areas of land known to man.

The log house was originally part of the Ho-Chunk Turkey River Reservation, located a mile southwest of its present site.
Photo by Steve Johnson

The log house is the only remnant surviving from the reservation period. It later served as a residence for the Frank Huber family who arrived in 1849 to live on the former reservation grounds. The log house was dismantled in 1993, restored in 1996 and moved to the grounds of St. Anthony of Padua Chapel, the "World's Smallest Church".

As a postscript to this article, the Ho-Chunk forced relocation to the Long Prairie reservation lasted seven years. The military-built Fort Ripley in the central Minnesota

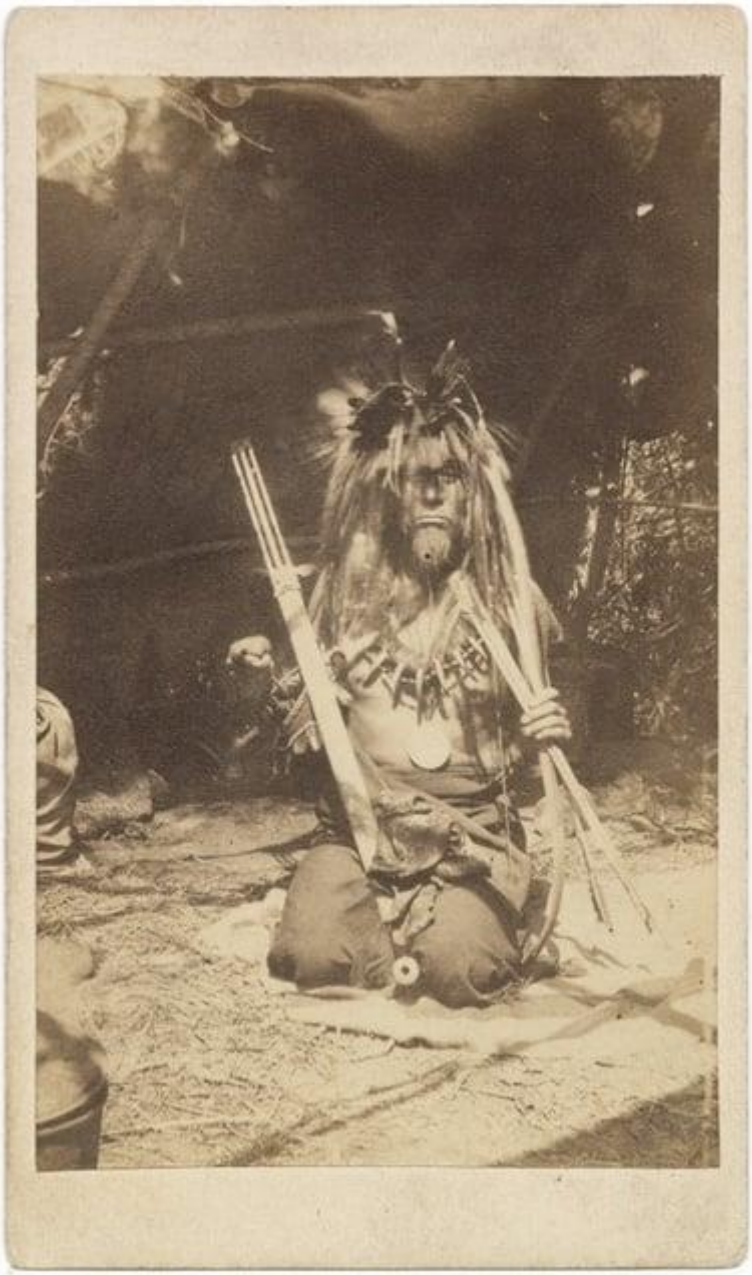
Neutral Ground in 1848. The government hoped the Ho-Chunk and fort would serve as a buffer between the warring Eastern Dakota (Sioux) and Ojibwe (Chippewa) tribes.

Both Fort Atkinson and Fort Ripley were the only two U.S. military forts built to protect one American Indian tribe from other hostile tribes in the United States. Today the remnants of Fort Ripley can be seen only as an archaeological site.

The Long Prairie reservation was poorly situated, and in 1855 the discontented tribe was moved yet again—this time to a more hospitable location in Blue Earth County in south-central Minnesota.

The Ho-Chunk remained at Blue Earth until the aftermath of the Dakota War of 1862 when they were expelled from Minnesota and shipped off to South Dakota. They were eventually resettled on a reservation in Nebraska. Nevertheless, individual Ho-chunks continued to return to northeast Iowa into the early twentieth century.

Ho-Chunk Encampment at the Turkey River taken about 1917 of Mrs. John Whitewater Boy and daughter Louise, wife of Sires Little Ox. Photograph courtesy of the Vera Schneberger Collection.



Winneshiek II, 1865.
Minnesota Historical Society

The School on Yellow River

By Bruce E. Mahan

THE PALIMPSEST, State Historical Society of Iowa
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In the clays when white settlers were swarming into the Black Hawk Purchase and year by year dispossessing the Indians of their land in the Iowa country, the United States government was conducting an experiment in vocational education in what is now Allamakee County, Iowa. With a schoolhouse designed and built to serve both as a home and a school, with a curriculum embracing courses both cultural and practical, and with a corps of devout teachers, a paternal government tried to provide the youths and maidens of its Indian wards with the tools of civilization.

By the terms of the treaty of 1832, made and signed at Bock Island by the United States of America on the one hand and the Winnebago tribe of Indians on the other, the former agreed to erect a suitable building, or buildings, with a garden and a field attached, somewhere near Fort Crawford, and to establish and maintain therein, for a term of twenty-seven years, a boarding school for the education of such Winnebago children as might be sent to it. The school was to be conducted by two or more teachers, male and female, and the children were to be taught, according to their age and sex, reading, writing, arithmetic, gardening, agriculture, carding, spinning, weaving, sewing, and such other branches of useful knowledge as the President of the United States might prescribe. The annual cost of the school was not to exceed three thousand dollars.

To Joseph M. Street, the Winnebago Indian Agent at Prairie du Chien, was entrusted the task of selecting the site for the school. Hoping to draw the Winnebagoes across the Mississippi away from the debauching influence of whisky vendors at Prairie du Chien, Street chose a location on Yellow River about six miles upstream from the Mississippi and approximately ten miles from Fort Craw ford. At this point there was “a small rich prairie, and a spring rising in the adjoining timber near the summit, of the ridge’’. The surrounding country was mostly woodland interspersed with prairie.

In the spring of 1834, Street let the contract for the erection of the school buildings. He had planned for stone buildings, but the Secretary of War refused to approve anything other than “plain, comfortable log structures at small expense”. Street succeeded, however, in securing the main building of stone, a substantial two-story structure with a ‘ ‘ ten- foot chimney up the center and a great fireplace in every room”. Before the work of construction began, however, he was ordered to take charge of the Sauk and Fox Indian Agency at Rock

Island. Consequently, the task of supervising the building operations fell to Colonel Zachary Taylor, then commandant at Fort Crawford.

In the meantime, Reverend David Lowry, a Presbyterian minister, who had been appointed by President Andrew Jackson as a teacher for the Winnebagoes, had arrived at Prairie de Chien. In the spring of 1835, he opened the school, with his wife acting as his assistant. At first the Winnebagoes did not seem to care for school and few children came. When Street inspected the institution on April 30,1835, he found only six pupils attending regularly, but he said that the Indians were visiting the school daily, asking questions, and showing a lively interest in both the schoolwork and the adjoining farm. In May, three more pupils enrolled.

During the next two years attendance grew slowly but steadily. A report in December 1837 showed an enrollment of forty-one pupils — fifteen boys and twenty-six girls. Eleven of these boarded and lodged at the school while the remainder lived in the wigwams of their parents to which they returned at the close of the school day, taking with them rations of pork, salt, and meal which they added to the potatoes and corn of the family larder. The institution furnished clothing to all its pupils, supplying each boy and girl with new garments whenever they were needed.

The increasing enrollment necessitated a larger teaching staff, and accordingly Bradford L. and Patsey Porter of Kentucky were appointed to assist Reverend Lowry and his wife. Superintendent Lowry received $500 as his yearly wage while each of his three assistants drew an annual income of $300 for their services in attempting* to bring the white man's learning to the children of the red men.

But the adult Indians gave only lukewarm support to the project, and some were openly hostile. A year later, in December 1838, the attendance had fallen to thirty-six — fourteen girls and twenty-two boys. This number, however, was as many as the yearly appropriation would adequately care for, and, although the superintendent felt that he could easily secure more pupils, he had neither the room nor the money to provide for them. Of the thirty-six, eleven stayed at the school and the others lived in the lodges of their parents.

Despite the honest endeavors of himself and his assistants, Reverend Lowry felt that the pupils were not making satisfactory progress. He attributed their slow advancement not to lack of intellect, but to ignorance of the English language and to noncooperation on the part of the parents. He asserted that the adult Indians, failing to appreciate the advantages of an education, sent their children to school more to get them clothed and fed than for any other reason. The unsympathetic attitude of the parents, too, made it difficult to enforce discipline in the school. Irregularity of attendance also retarded the progress of the children. Two and a half years after the school was opened, however, several pupils were spelling words of three or four syllables, and they had made some progress in writing, in

translating Indian words into English, and in counting. The girls had learned to sew and the boys to farm.

A granddaughter of Reverend Lowry thus described conditions in the school at this time: "Zachary Taylor, then commandant at Fort Crawford at Prairie du Chien and his wife and daughter used to come over and have dinner at the mission and once Mrs. Taylor brought my grandmother a setting of turkey eggs.

"My grandmother was quite successful in hand ling the little savages and when they got unruly with the other teachers they were sent to her. They all loved her and sometimes her room would be so crowded with Indian children sitting on the floor and everywhere there was scarcely room to walk."

The year 1839 marked the peak of attainment in the history of the school on Yellow River. Increased enrollment necessitated the erection of another building and the addition of more teachers to the staff. In July of that year, when Reverend Lowry became sub-agent for the Winnebagoes, he turned the supervision of the school over to John Thomas. Later in the year Abner McDowell became superintendent of the school while Thomas devoted his time to the supervision of the adjoining farm. Joseph Mills and his wife Evalina taught during a part of the year, and other new teachers were Minerva and Lucy Brownson and Nancy McDowell.

The December report of the school in 1839 showed an enrollment of seventy-nine pupils — forty-three boys and thirty-six girls — but only fifteen of these lived at the school. During the year the girls had made two hundred garments, including shirts, trousers, dresses, skirts, coats, and aprons — all the clothing, in fact, required by the pupils in school. When the girls grew weary of their studies, a piece of sewing would be placed in their hands. This device relieved the monotony of the three "R's" for the girls and, at the same time, served as an aid in discipline. To deprive a girl of the sewing privilege was considered by her a punishment. While the girls sewed, the boys worked by classes in the garden and on the farm. After an hour of work in the fields the boys returned to the classroom in a less mischievous frame of mind.

The maximum accomplishment in scholarship was probably attained during the last year the school on Yellow River was maintained, although there was a decline both in teaching force and attendance. Sub agent Lowry attributed the decrease in attendance not to an unwillingness on the part of the Indians to send their children to school but to the confusion resulting from the proposed removal of the Winnebagoes to their new home on Turkey River. Out of the fifty-eight pupils enrolled in the summer of 1840, fifty-two attended regularly. The teaching force at this time was reduced to the Brownson sisters and Superintendent Thomas, who replaced McDowell.

At this time the school was divided into four classes. In the brightest group were boys and girls who studied geography and arithmetic, read fluently, wrote legibly, and could spell with considerable accuracy. In the next class were pupils who studied geography, read in a first reader, could spell words of two or three syllables, and who were learning to write. In the next group were the boys and girls who could read easy lessons, spell words of two syllables, and write a little. The last class consisted of beginners who were struggling with their ‘ ‘ abbs’

A visit to the school in August 1840, by J. H. Lockwood and B. W. Brisbois, prominent citizens of Prairie du Chien, caused them to exclaim in surprise that they had never seen a more orderly and ambitious school even of white children. They were astonished at the progress made by the pupils during the three-year interval since their previous visit.

The days of the Indian school on Yellow River were fast drawing to a close, however. On October 1, 1840, the teachers were notified that their services would be needed no longer, as Sub-agent Lowry had received orders to sell the agency and school buildings for what they would bring. He proceeded to do this and the government experiment on Yellow River ended. With the Winnebagoes removed from the vicinity of the whisky shops at Prairie du Chien and with the school relocated in their new domain, it was hoped that more could be accomplished with the Indian pupils than had been possible in the school on Yellow River. Superintendent Lowry received $500 as his yearly wage while each

The Ho-Chunk/Winnebago People

By Claudia Tillman

The Ho-Chunk/Winnebago have lived in North America for centuries. They were originally part of the Woodland Civilization. Their oral history traces them to the area of Green Bay, Wisconsin, plus central Wisconsin and northern Illinois. Early on, they were mound builders. Later, they grew maize and wild rice as well as hunted for wild game in the area.

The Ho-Chunk call themselves "Ho-chungra," which means "people of the parent speech" or "people of the Big Voice." "Winnebago" is a misnomer, derived from the Algonkian/Algonquian language. It meant "people of the stinking water" and is thought to refer to the foul-smelling dead fish in Wisconsin's Fox River and Lake Winnebago during the summer. Hocak, the Ho-Chunk language, is the parent language of 15 Siouan languages.

The first encounter with Europeans for the Ho-Chunk/Winnebago people occurred in 1634, when Jean Nicolet, a French explorer, arrived in the area. At that time, the Ho-Chunk were concentrated around Lake Winnebago, and their population was close to 20,000. By the 1650s, their numbers had decreased to only about 500. This was due to several factors: there had been an invasion by the Illinois Confederacy, killing many; several hundred warriors had perished during a storm on the lake; and outbreaks of infectious diseases (including a smallpox epidemic in 1836) following contact with Europeans. The population was slow to grow following those events and by 1806, their numbers had reached almost 3000.

In 1816, the first treaty was signed between the U.S. government and the Ho-Chunks. More cession and boundary treaties were signed in the 1820s and 1830s. That resulted in the loss of most of their tribal land, forcing the Ho-Chunks out of their homeland. Much of the Black Hawk War, in 1832, was fought in Ho-Chunk territory. During this time, 10 million acres of their ancestral land was taken from them. Many Indigenous tribes, including the Ho-Chunks, were forcibly relocated as settlers, mostly of European descent, moved westward.

The Multinational Treaty of Prairie du Chien in 1830, established a strip of neutral ground, which was 40 miles wide. It stretched from LaCrosse, Wisconsin, to north central Iowa. The goal of creating this area was to separate the Sioux (in the north) from the Sauk & Fox (in the south). This encompassed most of Allamakee and Winneshiek counties. In 1840, the Ho-Chunks were removed from their homeland in southwestern Wisconsin, escorted by military troops, and taken to live on this neutral ground.

Between 1840 and 1842, Fort Atkinson was constructed on a hill, west of the Turkey River in Winneshiek County, Iowa. It was named for Brigadier General Henry Atkinson, who had been charged with the dispossession of the Ho-Chunks. This fort was home to the U.S.

Army, whose job it was to monitor and control the movement and activities of the Indigenous people in the area. The Ho-Chunks were taken to a site three miles southeast of the fort. The site was ¾ mile from the Turkey River, near Old Mission, an early church.

Later, 14 buildings were constructed on this site, known as the Turkey River Winnebago Subagency. Doctors were hired to provide health care for the Ho-Chunks. There was a school where white culture was introduced to try to eliminate the long-held beliefs and ways of the Ho-Chunks. Music, religion, and English, as well as sewing skills and farming were presented as part of their "training." In 1846, it was reported that there were approximately 2400 Ho-Chunk/Winnebago living in 22 different groups within the neutral area.

In 1846, the U.S. government decided to remove the Ho-Chunk people from Iowa and send them to Minnesota. This trek took them from Fort Atkinson, Iowa, north to the Long Prairie Reservation, on the Long Prairie River in Todd County, Minnesota. This was a journey of nearly 300 miles. The Ho-Chunks were there from 1846 -1855, but it was a forested area and not good for planting crops.

The Ho-Chunks were removed from Long Prairie Reservation in 1855 and sent to the Blue Earth Reservation, south of Mankato, Minnesota. While there, they were harassed and intimidated by the Knights of the Forest, a secret society of pioneer settlers. This group of armed men would encircle the Ho-Chunks' valuable farms and threaten to shoot anyone who dared to step over the boundary line of the reservation.

After being exiled from the Blue Earth Reservation in 1863, the Ho-Chunks were sent to Crow Creek Reservation. That area was along the Missouri River in southern South Dakota. It's a dry region and difficult to sustain agriculture, so food had to be rationed. Many became ill and some died due to lack of adequate food and medical care.

Two years later, in 1865, the U.S. government gave the Ho-Chunk/Winnebago people a reservation along the Missouri River in eastern Nebraska. This area was established by treaties in 1865 and 1874. By 1913, nearly ⅔ of the reservation had been lost due to the General Allotment Act of 1887. Besides being in Nebraska, small, scattered groups of the Ho-Chunk/Winnebago had remained at various locations in Wisconsin. They had a very strong desire to remain in their homeland.

Today, there are 10,000 citizens (made of 12 clans) of the Ho-Chunk Nation. These people are enrolled in two federally recognized tribes: The Ho-Chunk Nation in Wisconsin and the Winnebago Tribe in Nebraska. They have reclaimed over 2000 acres in 14 Wisconsin counties, plus land in Illinois and Nebraska. In 1975, the Indian Claims Commission awarded the Tribe $4.6 million for their lost land because of the 1837 Land Cession with the U.S. federal government.

There are several places in the Midwest whose names have ties to the Ho-Chunk/Winnebago people. These include: Winnebago, Illinois; Winnebago, Minnesota; Winnebago, Nebraska; Winnebago County, Illinois; Winnebago County, Iowa; Winnebago County, Wisconsin; Winnebago River in Iowa; Lake Winnebago in Missouri; Lake Winnebago in Wisconsin; Winnebago Island in the Mississippi River near Moline, Illinois; Decorah, Iowa and Waukon, Iowa, named for Waukon Decorah, a prominent chief of the Winnebago; Winneshiek County, Iowa, named for a Winnebago chief; and Waucoma, Iowa, named for a Winnebago woman.

Resources:

colesutton11.wordpress.com (Ho-Chunk (Winnebago) Tribe Maps)

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Moving the Winnebago

By Bruce E. Mahan

THE PALIMPSEST, State Historical Society of Iowa
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On Wednesday morning, June 8, 1848, when the first flush of dawn appeared over the hills to the east of Fort Atkinson, Iowa, the clear tones of the bugle awoke the sleeping garrison to face the hardest task of their term of enlistment. To James M. Morgan, "Little Red", and his company of Iowa Mounted Volunteers had fallen the duty of escorting the Winnebago with all their belongings to their new home in the Indian country north of the State of Iowa.

Almost two years before, on October 13, 1846, the United States government had completed a treaty with the Winnebago whereby the Indians agreed to relinquish their claims to the Neutral Ground in Iowa and remove to a reservation to be selected by them or their agent in the upper Mississippi region. Soon after the treaty was concluded Henry M. Rice, acting as their agent, chose for the new home of the Winnebago the country lying in the present State of Minnesota between the Watab River on the south, and the Long' Prairie River and the Crow Wing River on the north, a tract of some 1,557,000 acres. The delay in starting, however, was due partly to dissatisfaction among the Indians created by persons whose business would be affected by their removal, and partly by their fear of being drawn into difficulties with the Sioux and the Chippewa who would be their new neighbors.

For weeks before the departure, detachments from Captain Morgan's company had been kept busy bringing back stragglers who tried to avoid migration by stealing back to Wisconsin. At the same time details from Captain Wiram Knowlton's company from Fort Crawford rounded up bands of Winnebago that had left the reservation for their old hunting grounds in Wisconsin and assembled them at Prairie la Crosse to join the main body en route. Teamsters, wagons, mules, and supplies were brought to Fort Atkinson in preparation for the journey. Arrangements were made for Second Lieutenant Benjamin Fox to move over from Fort Crawford with twenty-five men of Captain Knowlton's company to occupy Fort Atkinson during Morgan's absence; and the day for the departure was set.

On that hot June day, the cavalcade moved slowly north from the post on Turkey River, headed for Wabasha's Prairie on the Mississippi. The government had provided 110 wagons with civilian teamsters to haul the Indians, their goods, and supplies for the trip, while the traders and Mission and Agency folks furnished about 56 more. Four of the supply wagons were hauled by six-mule teams. The Indians, variously estimated from 2100 to 2800, either rode on the 1600 ponies or squatted on the bumpy beds of the army wagons. Squalling papooses rode in "kyaks" or sacks of hides hung over the ponies, helping to swell the volume of sound made by the crawling caravan. Oxen driven by soldiers hauled the two-lumbering cannon, and the handful of mounted volunteers, Iowa boys from farm and shop, rode alongside and behind the train, keeping both the Indians and some 143 cattle from wandering away from the route.

In the late afternoon a halt was made for the night. Five hundred tents erected for the accommodation of the Indians and a hundred more for the soldiers, teamsters, and the Agency and Mission people, made a city of canvas on the prairie. Soon, before hundreds of tiny gleaming campfires, troopers and squaws baked dough and roasted meat on sticks while the aroma of boiling coffee rose above the other smells of the camp.

The travel next day afforded no unusual excitement. The creaking wagons moved slowly north, dipping into valleys of lush prairie grass, fording streams, and crawling over bare hills. On the morning of the third day, however, the Indians refused to move until they had buried with appropriate ceremonies one of their number who had died the night before.

Even when the ceremonial dancing and wailing was ended the soldiers had difficulty in getting their charges to start, for many of them wanted to take their belongings and return to their old haunts about the fort and the mission.

Captain Morgan had instructed his men to be ready for an attack or trouble at any time, day or night, and when camp was pitched guards were posted at regular intervals to prevent the Indians from breaking through the lines. One night a bullet whizzed past the sentinel at post number three, and he yelled the alarm, “Post Number Three, C-O-M-E,” drawing out the last word in a long wail. The word spread that the Indians were trying to break through the lines and soon the soldiers were in full chase, but Morgan halted them fearing that the shot was a ruse to get the troops away from the camp so that the Indians could plunder the wagons. He ordered the men to lie on their arms until morn ing holding their horses in readiness for an attack. Daybreak came with no further alarm and after breakfast the Indians started on, the soldiers following.

One afternoon several days later the advance guard noticed that part of the Indian braves who often pushed on ahead of the main caravan had apparently gone over a hill into a ravine off the trail. Supposing that they had turned aside for water, the guard followed their trail and soon came to a spring. After refreshing themselves and watering their mounts they followed the ravine to the Root River, planning to go down the riverbank to regain the main trail. Before they had gone far they saw through the brush across the river a number of Winnebago warriors in hiding, and one of them behind a clump of bushes in the act of shooting something. A shot rang out, and back across the river came splashing a trader urging his horse at full speed and yelling for help at the top of his voice. Supposing that he had been shot, the advance guard jumped their horses into the river, crossed over and caught the fleeing Winnebago. He declared that he did not shoot at the trader, that, in fact, he did not see him until after he had fired. The soldiers turned him loose and soothed the ruffled feelings of the trader with a liberal gift of venison. Afterwards it was learned that the braves had stationed themselves in the brush planning to shoot the first white man to cross the river, and this was to be the signal for a general onslaught. The unexpected appearance of the advance guard from the ravine had frustrated their plans.

At this point a halt was made for five days for the Indians were restless and at first refused to go farther. This stop permitted the soldiers to wash their clothes, to sew on buttons, and to rest their jaded horses, while it allowed the teamsters to mend broken traces and to

repair the wagons. On Sunday the Reverend David Lowry preached to the soldiers, teamsters, traders, and Agency folks, dwelling upon their dangerous position among merciless Indians and their dependence upon Divine Providence.
That night a band of Indians sneaked away, and a detachment of soldiers dispatched in pursuit took two days to find the runaways and drive them back to camp. After this outbreak the Winnebago travelled along peaceably for several days causing no trouble, although the braves at times would dash madly ahead, then rejoin the train when camping time arrived.

Toward eleven o'clock one night the alarm call rang out from Post Number Four arousing the sleeping soldiers who rushed to the post to assist the guard. He had stopped an Indian who said he was chief Little Hill, and he asked to be conveyed to headquarters for a secret council. At the council he stated that a band of renegade Sioux living on Wabasha's Prairie had entered into a conspiracy with the Winnebago to forbid the passing of the caravan through their land on the ground that the Winnebago were killing all the game of the Sioux. The Winnebago were to pretend to be afraid and to insist on going to the lower end of Wabasha's Prairie, thence up the Mississippi by steamboat. When the caravan had reached the lower end of the Prairie, the Sioux and the Winnebago were to join forces to kill all the whites and appropriate the teams, cattle, government stores, arms, and ammunition. Then they would go back from the river where the Great Father's boys could not find them, form a new tribe and enjoy the spoils of victory.

Captain Morgan decided to send Corporal Thomas Cox with eight men to make their way with all possible haste to the Mississippi and to get word to the commanding officers at Fort Snelling and at Fort Crawford to come at once to the lower end of Wabasha's Prairie with soldiers, cannon, and equipment. The detail was passed through the lines early in the morning and succeeded in eluding the Indians. Ten anxious days passed.

True to Little Hill's warning the Winnebago hunters began to return pretending fear and reporting that the Sioux had ordered them off their hunting grounds and had chased them with murderous intent. Finally, a body of Sioux appeared and forbade further advance through their country, ordering the caravan off their land. During the second night after this occurrence, Corporal Cox and his squad returned with the word that Captain Seth Eastman with a company of regulars from Fort Snelling and Captain Wiram Knowlton with his volunteers from Fort Crawford would reinforce Morgan at the Prairie.

When the cavalcade reached the head of the Prairie a high steep bluff blocked the way to the plain below. To lower the wagons required a detail of sixteen men who, under the command of First Lieutenant John H. McKenny, let down each wagon by tying a rope around the rear axle and then taking a turn around a tree near the edge of the bluff. It took all day long to lower the government wagons and at sunset several wagons belonging to the Agency and Mission people remained at the top. The company had ridden on and gone into camp about five miles away at the foot of Wabasha's Prairie, and when the last government wagon was on its way, Lieutenant McKenny ordered his men to mount and follow. Soon after they started, they met Jonathan Fletcher, the Indian Agent, and a trader by the name of Pratt with an order from Captain Morgan for the detail to help them down with their

wagons. McKenny replied that his men had worked hard all day without any dinner, that they were now going to have something to eat, and that Fletcher and Pratt might go to li—1 with their order. This disobedience of orders might have caused trouble had not difficulties of a more serious nature intervened.

Captain Eastman had already arrived with one nine-pound cannon, sixty northern Sioux, and forty regulars. The soldiers went into camp on the lower end of the prairie, while most of the Indians turned off into a ravine out of sight of the troops. Two of the Winnebago chiefs, Broad-face and Little Hill, did not enter into the conspiracy although some of their men did, and the two chieftains with the remnants of their bands came down the Prairie and camped near the soldiers. Wabasha, the chief of the renegade Sioux, permitted his band to join with the Winnebago, but he himself stayed in his wigwam some four or five miles up the river.

The soldiers posted double guards while they were waiting for Knowlton to arrive, the Indians mean while appearing in small groups on the tops of nearby hills spying on the camp. With the arrival of the contingent from Fort Crawford all hands set to work to prepare for an attack. The steamboat which had brought the troops was tied up to the bank with a full head of steam ready for use. Then the covered wagons were run end to end in a semi-circle enclosing almost an acre, beginning at a point on the river above the boat and swinging back to the river at about the same distance below. The troops barricaded this enclosure by rolling barrels of flour, pork, and beans, against the wagon wheels on the inside, leaving only a small space for entrance. This enclosure they dubbed the “bull pen”.

Inside were placed the Indians brought by Eastman, and they displayed their fighting spirit by dancing furiously around some small flags stuck in the ground. When the barricade was finished Captain Eastman sent a detachment of eight cavalrymen to the Indians commanding them to come down the Prairie and to proceed peaceably up the river. The latter agreed to come and did not offer to molest the messengers, however, they waited until the troopers had returned almost to the camp, when with shouts and cries that made the hills and dales reecho with the sound the braves dashed down the Prairie, armed for battle. They were painted beyond recognition, splattered with red, their hair set up on end and colored red as blood.

When they came within range they were ordered to halt, and seeing three bristling cannons with the aprons off, the gunners standing with lighted fuse, the cavalry with carbines loaded and sabers ready, the infantry in line and prepared to fire, the Indians halted in dismay. The chiefs and officers were dis posed to settle the difficulty without a fight if possible but many of the braves and soldiers wished to see who was master of the situation. A council was called halfway between the two forces, and here the Indians consented to go on up the river. Thus was the incipient revolt crushed by a stern display of force. The officers turned over a number of beeves as a present to the Indians who would take after one on their ponies and riddle it with bullets until they were stopped by the soldiers.

With the one steamboat, chartered by the government at one hundred dollars per day, and two small barges the soldiers set to work to transport the stores, animals, and Indians up the river. First Captain Eastman and his command were returned to Fort Snelling, then Captain Knowlton and his men were taken down stream to Prairie du Chien. Morgan's men sent boatload after boatload upstream as fast as possible, but the Mississippi became so low that the steamboat or barges would run aground on sand bars and the men at Wabasha's Prairie never knew exactly when to have a load ready. Sometimes when one of the boats that made regular trips between St. Louis and St. Paul reached the Prairie, the soldiers would compel the captain to stop for a load of Indians much to the disgust of the passengers.

During the delay at the Prairie the troopers had little to do except to stand guard and to see that the constantly dwindling bands of Indians did not stray away too far. The soldiers celebrated July 4, 1848, by fighting a sham battle in which they fired several rounds of small arms and let the cannon howl a few times. The Indians ran in all directions and hid in the ravines thinking that "Morgan's Braves" were beginning an attack. For amusement the men swam in the Mississippi, or played ball, while the Indians loafed or hunted. A small detachment accompanied each load up the river so that only a handful of soldiers remained to escort the last group.

The encampment had dwindled until only a few goods and part of three tribes of Indians remained. Dandy's band had crossed the river into Wisconsin, Four-Eyes with part of his band had gone about six miles down the river where they camped and Yellow Thunder, becoming disheartened, declared that he was going back home to the burial ground of his fathers, and with the remnant of his followers started home. The "Braves" started after him in a soaking rain, fifteen soldiers against fifty warriors. At nightfall they came upon the band dancing about a campfire. Late at night, when the tired Indians sank down to sleep exhausted from their violent exertions, the soldiers crept up, surrounded the band, seized the guns, and removed the locks. The next morning the crestfallen runaways trailed back to the encampment.

Another small detachment brought back Four- Eyes' band and the soldiers made ready to fire the cannon which was the signal agreed upon for Dandy's followers to return. They loaded the cannon on the barge, pushed over to the east bank of the river and fired one shot. The recoil of the piece surged the barge against the steamboat with such force that the men removed the gun to shore. Here they let it roar a few times, and the Indians came yelling, some afoot, some on ponies, and others up the river in canoes. The soldiers put the cannon and the Indians on board the steamboat, loaded the ponies on the barge and then steamed back across the river for the camp equipment and supplies. In the afternoon of that day the last load started toward Fort Snelling.

From the hurricane deck the soldiers viewed the desolate appearance of the lower Wabasha where recently stood a small city of tents, and the highly colored battle array. Wabasha's village slipped past, and the boat approached the rocky cliff known as the Maiden's Rock. Twilight came and the steamer plowed its way into Lake Pepin. All night long the spray from the prow spattered over the sleeping men till their blankets were as

wet as though they had been dipped in the river. Above the mouth of the St. Croix River the big barge with all the soldiers' horses on board except four which were on the small barge, stuck on a sand bar. With difficulty it was worked off and the soldiers whose horses were on it received orders to get on the barge, cut loose from the steamboat, make for the shore and continue their journey by land. The four soldiers whose horses were on the little barge continued the journey on the steamboat. The rest floated the big barge downstream to Hastings where they landed.

From here they rode through rain and mud to St. Paul arriving several hours after the docking of the steamer. The Indians had gone on out of town and so the cavalrymen camped about a mile below the Falls of St. Anthony to await supplies and orders from Captain Morgan. Word came soon that the supplies for the rear guard were on another steamboat stuck on a sand bar twenty miles below St. Paul. The guard received orders to await the coming of the wagons with these supplies, then to overtake the caravan. Two days later two wagons loaded with barrels of flour, pork, and beans from the stranded boat arrived. With plenty to eat, delightful weather, and good health, the men told their longest yarns, sang their best songs, and rested soundly, lulled to sleep by the roar of the Falls of St. Anthony. The next morning the rear guard set out along the river and followed the Red River trail until they overtook the caravan which had encamped on a beautiful stretch of prairie. Warm were the greetings for a month had elapsed since all had been together. Here they halted from Friday until Monday, spending Saturday washing and mending clothes, horse racing, jumping, hunting, fishing, and gambling. Divine service was held on Sunday.

On Monday the march was resumed. Since the caravan was expected to arrive about two months before it finally came, some traders had stationed themselves along the trail supplied with whiskey to sell on the sly to get the loose change of the soldiers as well as the furs from the Indians. One of these traders had a fat pig of about two hundred pounds which he allowed to run at large near his shanty which was hidden in the woods some distance from the road. The pig, hearing the rattling wagons of the caravan, ambled out to see what was happening. The teamsters seeing him, chased him under the wagons to the other side of the train. The rear guard saw what was happening and one by one they began to drop out of ranks and to slip into the brush. When the wagon hauling the traps of the rear guard came alongside this spot the boys came out carrying the carcass of a fine fat animal and loaded it into the wagon. As they drew near camp, they met a sergeant returning to learn what had happened. To his question as to what was in the wagon, the boys answered "hear meat" as it was not covered. That night officers and men feasted on fresh pork.

At Sauk Rapids a halt was made to hold a council with the Sioux and Chippewa who wanted to hear specifically just how and under what conditions the Winnebago were to occupy the neutral strip between them. Here assembled the Indian agents and helpers, the Mission officers, the teamsters, the engineers detailed to erect buildings for the Mission and Agency, the cavalry, and thousands of Indians.

An armed guard was thrown around the council grove and the rest of the soldiers mingled with the crowd to maintain order. Fletcher, the Agent, called the meeting to order, a

chaplain offered prayer and the Indian chiefs in long speeches presented their views as to what should be the relationship between the tribes. During the second morning of the council a terrific thunderstorm broke up the meeting. The wind tore the tents from their fastenings while almost a continuous roar of deafening thunder followed the dazzling flashes of lightning, and the rain came down in torrents. An unusually fierce flash of lightning struck a Winnebago tent and killed seven Indians. This occurrence ended the council temporarily for the Indians took three days to carry out the funeral ceremonies while the soldiers righted the overturned wagons and tents and dried their clothes.

At the close of the pow-wow where the Indians danced, wailed, and chanted while the throbbing drums kept time, the council reconvened. All parties reached an agreement which was announced by the firing of a cannon. The afternoon was spent in a general jollification, Indians and soldiers competing in footraces, wrestling, dancing, and feasting.

From this point Captain Morgan sent out an advance guard to select the best site for the location of the new Mission and Agency buildings while the main train followed. Both the advance guard and the main caravan halted at a favorable place for a camp at the head of the Long Prairie River. The spot was favored by most of the scouts, but some of the traders felt that a better location could be found farther downstream. The scouts, however, saw no place that equaled the head of Long Prairie and so the men staked out the ground for the new buildings. The engineers erected some sawmills to prepare lumber while part of the force built some shacks to house the supplies. Others hunted and fished or gathered huckleberries to add variety to the regular rations of pork, beans, and hardtack. When the buildings were well under way the guard returned to the encampment at Sauk Rapids.

While part of Morgan's command had escorted the caravan to the head of Long Prairie, another part had scoured the country, raiding the whiskey traders and carrying out the agreement of the Sauk Rapids council. One of these groups had made a trip to the Crow Wing River. Here they found a man living in a shanty, but he denied having any whiskey. However, they started a search and in a little place under the bank like a spring house, they found a keg with four or five gallons of liquor in it.

One of the soldiers searching along the riverbank saw something that looked like a rope tied to a rock out in the river. He called the attention of the others to it, then waded out and pulled it up. Tied to the other end of the rope he found a barrel of whiskey, pure stuff bearing the stamp of W. G. Haun who had a distillery near the Mississippi in the northeast corner of Clinton County, Iowa. The trader denied any knowledge of it, but that night he or some Indians stampeded the horses of the soldiers so that they had to shoulder their saddles and start back to camp on foot. Some of their comrades found and returned the horses to the footsore troopers whom they found lying under trees unable to travel further.

At Sauk Rapids the men heard that the Mexican War was over and the main topic of conversation was when would they get out of the service. Their teamsters came through regularly hauling supplies from St. Paul to the new agency site. One evening as the teams came into camp they had new drivers, the old drivers sitting on the load. Speculation ran rife as to what it meant. When the bugle call sounded the line was filled faster than it ever

had been before. The command “Attention!” rang out, then the order was read for the troops to return to Fort Atkinson, Iowa, to be discharged. “Boom!” went the cannon and the celebration continued until late at night. The next morning the men received word to wash and mend their clothes in preparation for the return trip. By this time the troop presented a ragged appearance; some of the men were entirely bare-footed; some had lost the knees out of their trousers, and others had lost the seats. Jackets were torn and out at the elbows. All day was spent in mending.

Reveille, the next morning, received a prompt response for the men were eager to load the wagons and to set out on the return trip. They made rapid progress in piling tents and equipment in the army transports and mounting their horses. Morgan’s “Braves” fired a parting salute and started for home.

Just before reaching Fort Snelling the troop halted for a day to wash their belts and scour their equipment preparatory to delivering them up at the Fort the next day. The following morning, marching through the Fort in single file they delivered up their arms and accouterments, then rode out the south side of the Fort, thence to the Mississippi to await a steamboat at a landing.

Here, with the horses loaded on a barge, they went on board for the trip down river. One old cook stove on the forward deck proved totally insufficient for use by nearly a hundred men and so when the dinner bell rang several of the soldiers filed in and took seats at the table much to the disgust of the passengers. The steamboat captain remonstrated but the men sat tight.

One of the passengers from St. Louis, straightening up and putting his thumbs in the arm holes of his jacket, asserted that he did not propose to eat with soldiers. At this several troopers started for him and he beat a precipitate retreat, but the interposition of Lieutenant McKenny prevented trouble. He said that the soldiers were as good as he was and that he was good enough to eat with anybody and if they did not stop their fuss and let the soldiers eat, he would take possession of the boat and put all the passengers ashore. The soldiers ate at the table.

The steamboat slipped down stream between the foliage-clad banks of the upper Mississippi until McGregor’s Landing opposite Prairie du Chien was reached. Here the troops rested for two days, and the officers visited Fort Crawford across the river. From this place the men started on the fifty-mile trip along the Military Trail to Fort Atkinson, not in regular formation but each man setting his own pace. As the horses were in poor condition from insufficient food and the hard trip on the barge, the soldiers straggled back to the fort one by one.

Shortly thereafter the Mustering Officer, Major A. S. Hooe, arrived at the Fort and the men prepared to make a hasty departure for home as soon as they were discharged. After breakfast on the morning of September 11, 1848, the company was formed in line on horseback, and as each name was called the Mustering Officer read the charges against the man for supplies purchased at the sutler's store and for equipment lost. When the name of a certain trooper who had returned almost in rags was called, the officer glancing up remarked, "There's nothing against him and not much on him."

When Major Hooe completed the roll call he praised the troops for what they had done, saying that they had gone through hardships and dangers without grumbling and that the name of the company had remained untarnished. He hoped that the men would return home without committing depredations, and there return to work and be good citizens. Both Captain Morgan and Lieutenant Mc- Kenny addressed the men expressing thanks for their obedience to orders and the respect shown them during the time they had been in command.

Then the men of Morgan's Company of Iowa Volunteers dispersed to their respective homes, to Burlington, to Dubuque, to Iowa City and other points, there to resume the labor of farm or store, or to practice again their professions. Although the men had not served on the battle fields of Mexico against their country's enemy they had performed honorably and bravely every task assigned them and had escorted successfully a restless band of Indians over a trail more than three hundred miles in length.

History of Fort Ripley, Minnesota
by Minnesota State Historical Society

Fort Ripley was a nineteenth century army outpost located on the upper Mississippi River in north central Minnesota. It was on the very edge of the nation's northwestern frontier when it was built, providing a government presence in the wilderness and bolstering settlement. Like most frontier army posts during that era, it was geographically remote, on a navigable river and an important supply route, and American Indians lived nearby.

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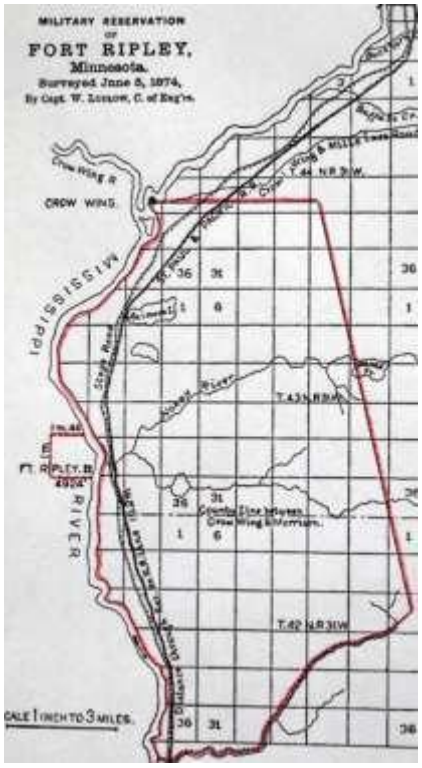
The decision to locate and build Fort Ripley was driven by an 1846 treaty that removed the Ho-chunk (Winnebago) Indians from their lands in northeastern Iowa to a new reservation near Long Prairie. The treaty specified that a military post be established nearby. The chosen site for the new fort also put it in proximity with the trading post and growing settlement of Crow Wing, seven miles upriver at the confluence of the Mississippi and Crow Wing Rivers. The "Woods" ox-cart and wagon trail, which carried fur and supplies between Fort Snelling and Fort Garry (Winnipeg), crossed over the Mississippi at Crow Wing, and Crow Wing was home to the Ojibwe Agency, located a few miles outside of town. The government hoped the Ho-chunk, and the fort, would serve as a buffer between the warring Eastern Dakota (Sioux) and Ojibwe (Chippewa) tribes.

Fort Ripley in 1862. (Minnesota Historical Society)

Construction began in November 1848 on the west side of the Mississippi, opposite the pioneer farm of Baldwin Olmstead, who provided supplies for the soldiers. The buildings were wooden and lined up along three sides of a square open to the river. Four raised blockhouses offered tactical vantage points. A ferry was built to transport men and goods across the river because the Mississippi was not navigable north of St. Cloud and supplies had to be brought north using the wagon trail, which ran along the river's east side. The new post was initially named Fort Marcy, was renamed Fort Gaines the following year, and finally in 1850 named in honor of Brigadier General Eleazar W. Ripley, a Maine congressman who had distinguished himself in the War of 1812.

On April 13, 1849, the post's first garrison—Company A, 6th U.S. Infantry, consisting of two officers, four sergeants, three corporals, and 39 privates—arrived from Fort Snelling under the command of Captain John B. Todd. The post was built to accommodate two companies but, except for 1862-65, never housed more than one.



Map of Fort Ripley as surveyed in 1874. There were ninety square miles of reservation land on the east side of the river and one on the west for the actual fort. (From 46 Congress, 2 session, Senate Reports, no. 196, serial 1893)

Life at Fort Ripley was usually uneventful. The isolation, summer mosquitoes, and long, cold winters challenged everyone at the garrison. Twice each year, the soldiers marched to the Long Prairie Agency to supervise government annuity payments of money and goods to the Ho-chunk, and then did the same for the Ojibwe at their Agency in Crow Wing.

The Ho-chunk reservation was poorly situated, and in 1855 the discontented tribe was moved yet again—this time to a more hospitable location in Blue Earth County in south-central Minnesota. Thinking the post was no longer needed, the army decided to close Fort Ripley. The garrison was withdrawn in July of 1857, but almost immediately, lawlessness broke out among whites and Ojibwe alike, causing the army to reactivate the fort in September.

As was common for frontier posts, Fort Ripley was initially located on a large military reservation. These reserves were vast tracts of land intended to prevent incoming settlers from encroaching upon the fort itself, and to provide ample acreage for gardens, forage,

and lumber needed by the garrison. Because of their size, the reserves were a constant source of friction between the army and squatters and homesteaders who wanted the military lands opened for settlement.

Map of Fort Ripley as surveyed in 1874. There were ninety square miles of reservation land on the east side of the river and one on the west for the actual fort. (From 46 Congress, 2 session, Senate Reports, no. 196, serial 1893)

In the case of Fort Ripley, the initial reserve was huge. Located on the east side of the Mississippi River, it consisted of nearly ninety square miles (over 57,000 acres), with a single square mile (1000 acres) set aside for the fort itself on the west side of the river. After much agitation, the army agreed in 1857 to sell its east side lands in public auction, but local settlers, by mutual pact, underbid the property. The Secretary of War later annulled the sale because the bids were so low, but in the meantime, settlers established homes and farms on the land. The resulting confusion and litigation took twenty years to untangle.

Bagone-giizhig (Hole-in-the-Day II) in 1860. His actions in late summer 1862 put Fort Ripley on the defense and prompted 200 white settlers to take refuge there. (Martin's Gallery, St. Paul/Minnesota Historical Society)

Upon outbreak of the Civil War in April 1861, the army regulars were withdrawn and sent south to fight Confederates. For the remainder of the war, various companies from Minnesota's volunteer regiments manned Fort Ripley.

Trouble came in August 1862 when Dakota Indians under chief Little Crow began fierce attacks against white settlers in southern Minnesota. Seizing upon the moment as an opportunity to gain power and leverage for redress of grievances, Ojibwe chief Bagone-giizhig (Hole-in-the-Day II), who lived in Crow Wing, threatened to launch a simultaneous war against whites in northern Minnesota.

Prisoners were taken and several buildings in the area were destroyed. It was rumored that Bagone- giizhig and Little Crow had entered into a pact. Fearful settlers flocked to Fort Ripley for protection. Additional soldiers were rushed in and the post was readied for battle.

Fortunately, the threat was defused in September, thanks in part to the garrison's strengthened defenses. For the next three years, on the heels of the U.S.-Dakota War, Fort Ripley became a headquarters, supply base, and staging area for military campaigns that extended as far west as the Yellowstone River. Activity reached its peak during the winter of 1863-64, when nearly 400 troops and 500 horses were quartered at the fort. Army regulars returned to garrison the fort in 1866.

By the mid-1870s, the frontier was 500 miles to the west. The village of Crow Wing was becoming a ghost town because the railroad had decided in 1871 to run through Brainerd rather than Crow Wing, and because most of the nearby Ojibwe had moved to a new reservation set aside for them at White Earth.

Fort Ripley in 1871. Minnesota Historical Society

On a sub-zero night in January 1877, an overheated chimney started a fire that consumed three buildings by morning, including the main storehouse. No longer in the wilderness, nor troubled by nearby Indians, the War Department decided to close the post permanently rather than rebuild. In July the flag was lowered for the last time and the garrison moved out.

The buildings stood abandoned until the early 1900s, when local farmers began "harvesting" salvageable lumber and bricks. The ruins of the powder magazine, the post's only stone structure, are all that remain today of this pioneer fort.

One of Fort Ripley's four abandoned blockhouses stands silent vigil, about 1897. Edward A. Bromley/Minnesota Historical Society

When it was decided in 1929 to build a new training site in central Minnesota for the National Guard, the remains of old Fort Ripley were, purely by coincidence, within the proposed boundaries. The new post—Camp Ripley—took its name from the old.

Suggested Readings

Baker, Robert Orr. *The Muster Roll – A Biography of Fort Ripley Minnesota*. St. Paul: H. M. Smyth, 1972.

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Folwell, William Watt. *A History of Minnesota Vol. II*, 374-382. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1924. Viewable online at https://archive.org/stream/historyofminneso02folw#page/n7/mode/2up

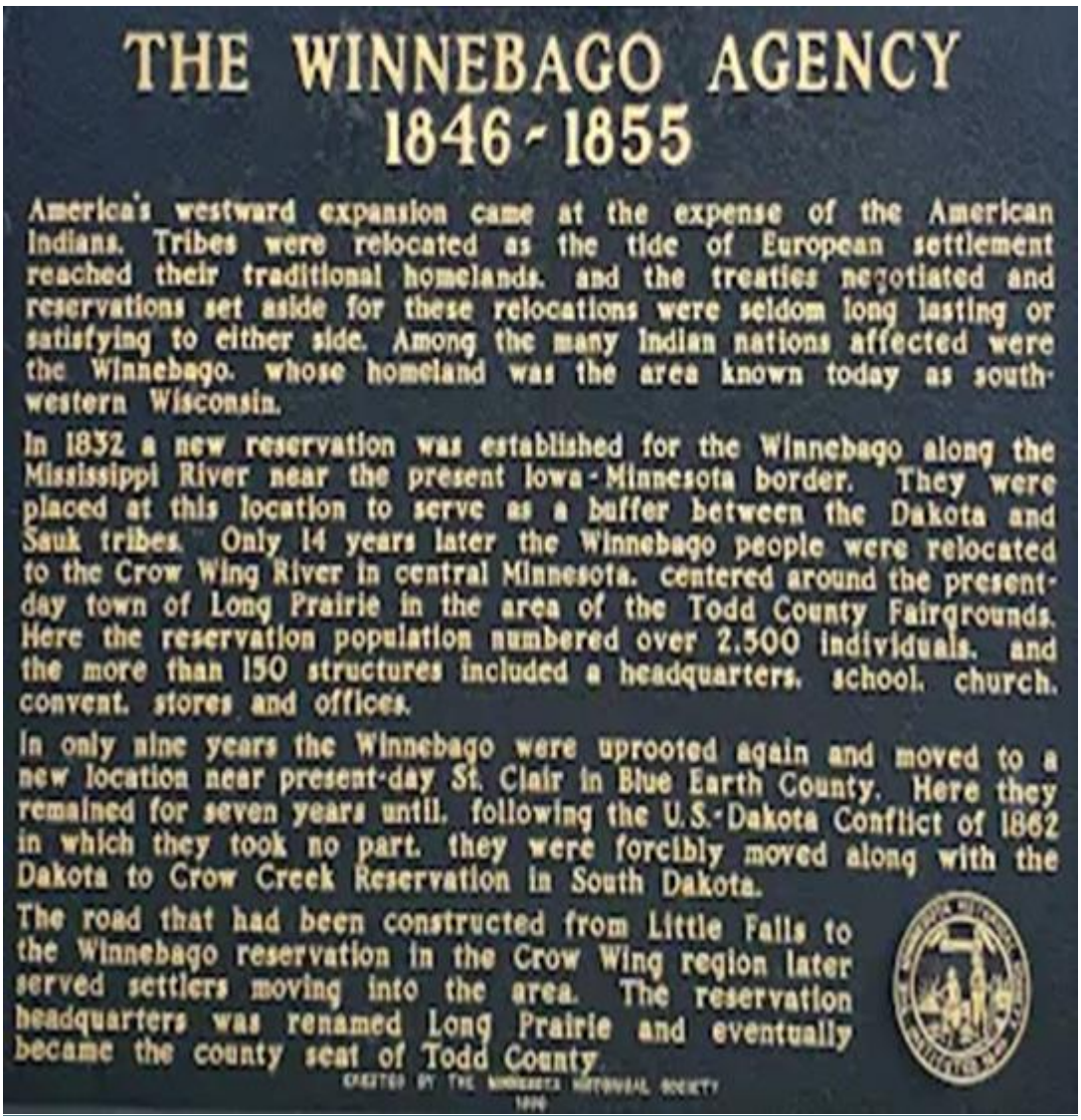
Prucha, F. Paul. "Fort Ripley: The Post and the Military Reservation." *Minnesota History*, September 1947, 205-224. Viewable online at http://www.mnhs.org/market/mhspress/minnesotahistory/xml/v28i03.xml

Prucha, Francis Paul. *Military Post of the United States, 1789-1895*. Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1964. (2nd printing in 1966 includes corrections)

Rickey, Don Jr. *Forty Miles a Day on Beans and Hay*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963.

Treuer, Anton. *The Assassination of Hole in the Day*. St. Paul: Borealis Books, 2011.

Signage in Long Prairie, Minnesota



Winnebago People in North Central Iowa

by Claudia Tillman

According to the book History of Kossuth, Hancock, and Winnebago Counties, written in 1884, there were several bands of Winnebago people who made this area their home. In the 1850s, their numbers varied from as many as 100 people to just a handful. Early white settlers in the area noted that, in the summer, the Winnebago people buried their pots and kettles in the ground, left their tepees standing, then headed north to Minnesota to hunt and trap. They returned in the fall, bringing food, furs, and skins with them.

In 1934, an article titled "Exodus of Indians from Cerro Gordo Is Recalled" appeared in a north Iowa newspaper. (Cerro Gordo County is in northern Iowa.) An older gentleman, Lewis Ebaugh, who came to Iowa as a boy in 1870, was interviewed about his memories of witnessing the departure of a band of 750 Winnebago people. The group had lived along the Winnebago River, southwest of Fertile, Iowa. The village was less than half a mile from where Ebaugh lived with his family. Ebaugh recalled that there were about 80 tents in the encampment - each tent built of "poplar poles covered with coarse slough grass matting, canvas cloth, and ox hides."

Ebaugh remembered that "during the winter of '72 and '73 they (the Winnebago) spent their whole-time hunting and trapping and made a clean sweep of all game. By spring, there was not a deer or wolf left in this part of the state, nor scarcely an otter, mink, or other fur-bearing animal." He recalled other details about life in the camp: "They were a healthy people and lived well on Buckhead hominy, parched corn, and beans. Regardless of the weather, the children were given daily baths through the ice on the river, an ordeal which they appeared not to mind in the least." Ebaugh also noted that the camp had many dogs of every description and scores of ponies that were kept tethered to trees.

Mr. Ebaugh had a vivid memory of his father being visited by a Winnebago man. Ebaugh's father was presented with a dozen fish and muskrat spears. The Winnebago man "announced that the camp was being razed and that they were leaving for Dakota territory in four days." When the entire camp had been dismantled, 12-year-old Lewis Ebaugh watched the entire group make their departure. He recalled that "the tent material was transported on long poles strapped at one end to the horse's shoulders, the other end dragging on the ground and held together with cross ties on which the load was carried. Children rode four to a pony in canvas bags slung across the back of woolly little ponies."

He noticed that the older men rode their mounts, while the older women sat on top of the tent material. Younger women "trudged afoot carrying cumbersome packs" and the young

men walked while carrying guns on their shoulders. Every now and then, one of the young men would shoot a partridge or prairie grouse.

Regarding the Winnebago, Ebaugh stated that "this was the last band in the county. They never returned to the site of their old village. Eight years later, however, in 1881, a band of 50 arrived from Wisconsin and camped one winter just across the Worth County line near Fertile."

The 72-mile-long Winnebago River runs through northern Iowa and is a tributary of the Shell Rock River. When white settlers began populating the area, the river was known as Lime Creek because of the many limestone deposits that characterize the lower sections of the river. During Forest City's 75th Diamond Jubilee in 1930, the river was renamed as the Winnebago River. The rechristening ceremony was held near the dam on the east bank of the river. During the event, Dr. L.H. Pammel represented the State of Iowa and Chief Eagle Neck of the Omaha Winnebago reservation at Decatur, Nebraska, representing the original inhabitants of the land.

The Chief took a small wooden bowl and dipped out water from the river and spoke some words over the water before handing the bowl to Pammel. The bowl of water was then poured into the Winnebago River. W.F. Muse, editor of the Globe Gazette in Mason City, served as spokesman for the North Iowa's lovers of outdoor life and accepted the re-christened stream. At the conclusion of the ceremony, Muse was named an honorary chief of the Winnebago.

29 Winnebago also took part in the renaming ceremony. They dressed in traditional clothing and performed their time-honored dances. Thousands of spectators watched the event from the west bank of the river. Although named after the Winnebago, most of the area was inhabited by the Dakota Sioux, Oto, and Ioway tribes.

Winnebago River History

The **Winnebago River** is a 72-mile-long (116 km)[1] river in northern Iowa. It is a tributary of the Shell Rock River, part of the Cedar River watershed that flows via the Iowa River to the Mississippi River.

The Winnebago River rises in Winnebago County, Iowa, north of Leland and flows south through Forest City, then east and southeast through Mason City on its way to the Shell Rock River at Rockford. Headwater tributaries of the Winnebago River extend north into southern Minnesota.

The Winnebago River measures approximately 330 cubic feet per second at Mason City.[2]

The river was alternately known as **Lime Creek**, but upon the fame of Meredith Willson's *The Music Man*, which has a mythical River City widely known to be based on his native Mason City, the locals felt compelled to promote their creek to a river.[*citation needed*] The U.S. Board on Geographic Names made "Winnebago River" the official name in a 1961 decision.[3] It also runs through Mason City, Iowa.

In 2008, the Winnebago River was subjected to flood waters reaching 18.74 feet.[4] This was the highest flood water stage in recorded history for the Winnebago River. The peak of 18.74 feet was reached on June 8, 2008. The flooding was part-in due to severe rainfall in the river's basin between May 29 and June 12 of that year. Iowa had a state average of 9.03 inches during those fourteen days.[5] The normal statewide average for that time is 2.45 inches.

According to the USGS report, 77 homes were damaged in Cerro Gordo County, where the Winnebago River runs through Mason City and flows into the Shell Rock River. The damages from the flood in Cerro Gordo County reached an estimated $3 million, while the total damage along the Cedar River and Iowa River basin reached over $495 million. The hardest hit counties were Linn and Johnson counties.[5]

Museum Events

Noteworthy 2025 Speakers on:

Art and Science of Bee keeping
Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation Initiatives
European Boundaries and Ethnic Heritage
History of Amana Colonies
Rock Hounding
Czech & Slovak Museum Astronomical Clock
Antiques show and tell
Peace Corps Life Experiences, and
Czech Musical Influences on German Composers

Major Museum 2025 Projects

Organized and Implemented the Conference on Ho Chunk Forced Removal to the Turkey River Reserve and Fort Atkinson Rehabilitation

Iowa DOT highway signage on routes 18, 24, and 150 brings in new visitor streams

Grant from Episcopal Diocese of Iowa for signage on Ho Chunk (Winnebago) historic sites in the former Turkey River Reserve area.

Two interns completed rigorous two-year IMA Museum Management training course
Donations of Ho Chunk baskets, Swiss trunk, display cabinets, fur coats, bibles and photos

Cataloguing of Museum history book collection and genealogies

New supporters volunteering at museum events

Participated in Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage Area Annual Training Program

Journal issues and articles drawing wide interest

Mel Bodensteiner, Bruce Fink, Mark Langreck, Jacob Bruess, Clair Blong at Rock Hounding Event in August 2025.

Conference on the Ho-Chunk Turkey River Reservation and Restoration of Fort Atkinson

On Wednesday, September 17, 2025, from 9:30 AM - 4:00 PM, the Winneshiek County Historic Preservation Commission and the German American Museum are hosting the Conference on the Ho Chunk Turkey River Reservation and the Restoration of Fort Atkinson. The morning keynote speaker will feature William Quackenbush, the Ho-Chunk Nation's tribal cultural preservation officer and cultural resources division manager.

The afternoon speaker will be retired archaeologist and historian Kathy Gourley. Two field trips are planned for the conference. The morning field trip will be to sites on the former Ho-Chunk Turkey River Reservation. The afternoon trip will tour the Fort Atkinson buildings and grounds. Full details of the itinerary is at <stlucasmuseum.org>

The Conference on the Ho-Chunk Turkey River Reservation and Restoration of Fort Atkinson is at the German American Museum in St. Lucas. At 10:00 AM William “Nąąwącekğize” Quackenbush, the Ho-Chunk Nation Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and Cultural Resources Division Manager will present on "T**he Ho-Chunk Nation History: Forced Removals of the 1800s--Turkey River Reservation."**

This series of U.S. Government forced removals of Ho-Chunk people from Wisconsin to Iowa, then Minnesota, then South Dakota and Nebraska; and other Federal Indian policies had devastating consequences for the Ho-Chunk Nation's survival, recovery and long-term well-being.

Mr. Quackenbush previously presented on Ho-Chunk history and culture at the German American Museum's 2018 Workshop on "Native American Presence: Hidden in Plain Sight". Quackenbush's presentation is followed by a field trip to sites on the former Ho-Chunk Turkey River Reserve lands.

These historic sites include: Winnebago Sub-Agency headquarters and Indian School near large spring on Kuennen farm, Winnebago burial sites and reservation log cabin (moved from original site) at St. Anthony de Padua Chapel, view of the Winnebago "Sacred Hill" (a mesa or table like landform), former Winnebago dwelling site at the confluence of the Bass Creek with the Turkey River at Dietzenbach bottom bridge, and former Ho Chunk dwelling site at the confluence of the Sugar Creek with the Bass Creek (near Old Mission Road Bridge) east of St. Lucas.

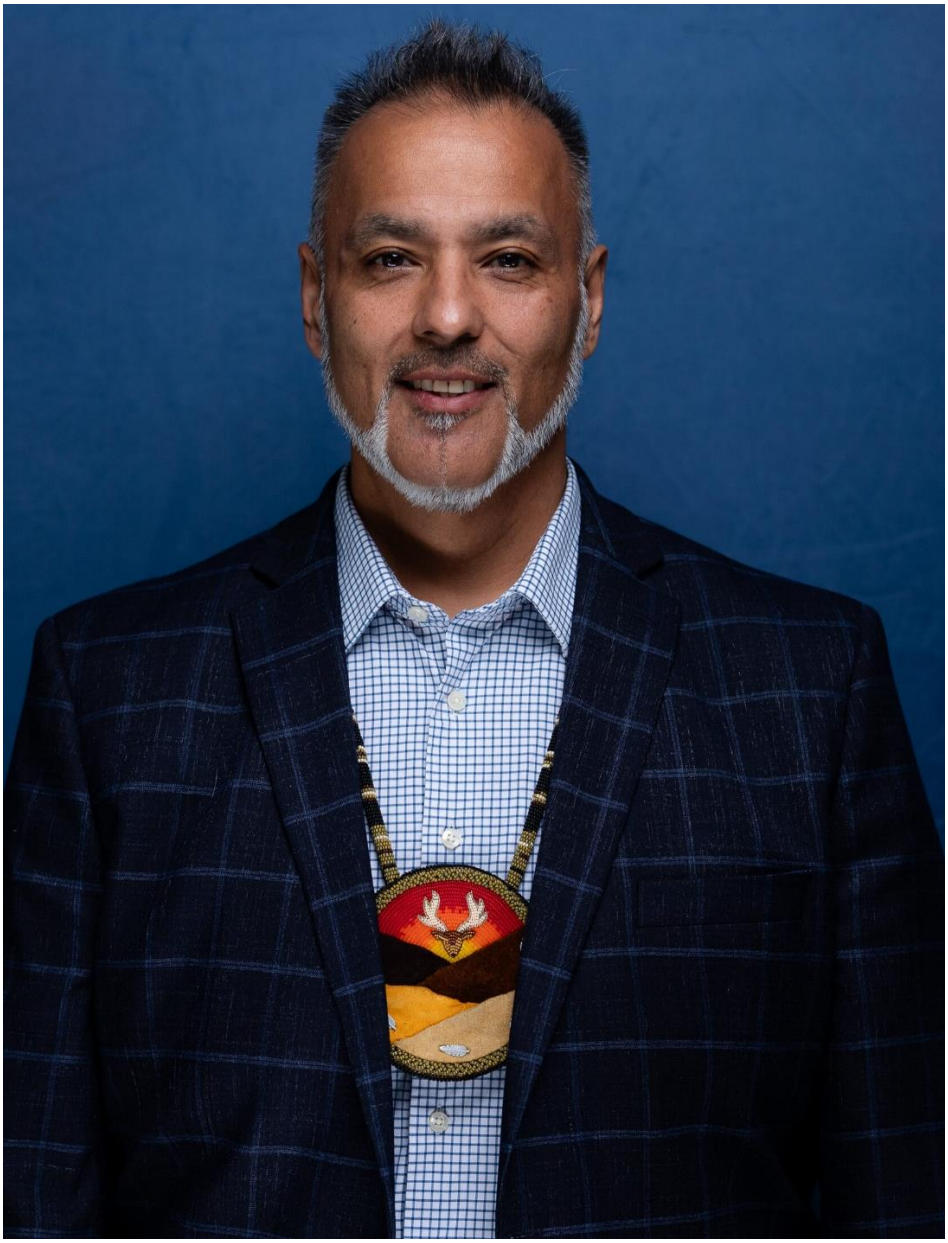
Rt. Rev. Terry Landsgaard was prepared to brief at these tour sites, but we encountered heavy rainstorm that cancelled the event. Lunch was served in the Museum dining room. All participants in the Conference received a copy of the **Field Tour Booklet**.

Bill Quackenbush
Tribal Historical Preservation Officer, Ho Chunk Nation

William Quackenbush is a Ho-Chunk Nation Deer Clan Tribal Member. Bill began a career in the Ho-Chunk Nation Heritage Preservation Department as a Land Specialist focusing on Realty, Land into Trust Applications and Cultural and Natural Resource Management. Bill's role is to preserve, protect, and serve as a cultural resource for the Ho-Chunk Nation.

An example of this preservation work is Bill's tribal partnership with state, local and private organizations to save the thousand-year-old log dugout boats found in Lake Mendota in Madison, Wisconsin. Recent scientific findings indicate some of the hidden dugout canoes are over 3,000 years old.

Jon Greendeer, the Tribal Chairperson took the podium to describe Ho Chunk Nation's difficult encounters with the Europeans and Americans, the five forced removals. Jon highlighted tribal resiliency and buoyancy and its amazing accomplishments over recent decades. Jon also spoke of the future challenges of the Ho Chunk Nation.



Jon Greendeer, Chairperson Ho Chunk Nation

At 2:00 PM in the afternoon the attendees gathered at the German American Museum for Kathy Gourley's presentation **"It Took a Team: Recent Preservation Work at Iowa's Fort Atkinson Historic District."** Kathy Gourley is the author of a $497,500 award from the National Park Service's Save America's Treasures grant program. Kathy's talk is

followed by a field trip to the Fort Atkinson grounds to see the restored Fort Atkinson barracks, built in the early 1840s.

Kathy Gourley grew up in Ames and earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees in anthropology at Iowa State University. Kathy spent more than 30 years as a staff member with the State Historical Society of Iowa, retiring in early 2017. Kathy held a variety of jobs there, including local government coordinator, staff archaeologist, field historian, grants manager, and preservation education and outreach coordinator.

Kathy took the lead in developing the National Park Service's Save America's Treasures grant application. With the aid of many experts including DNR staff, Fort Atkinson citizens, archaeologists, historians, historical architects, stone masons, preservation construction experts, and financial personnel, an application was successfully submitted.

The Conference location is the German American Museum, 212 East Main Street, St. Lucas, Iowa. Registration information includes name, organization (optional), mailing address, email, phone, payment information. Registration cost is $20.00, including lunch, and must be received by September 10, 2025. Please make checks payable to St. Lucas Historical Society. Mail registration form and check to St. Lucas Historical Society, 212 East Main Street, Box 295, St. Lucas, Iowa 52166.

Ron Novak, Janet Bodensteiner, Steve Johnson

Antiques and Artifacts Show and Tell at the Museum

On Wednesday evening, September 24th, from 6:30 to 8:00 PM it was show and talk about your favorite antique, artifact or picture at the German American Museum in St. Lucas. Please bring your favorite antique or artifacts and tell the story about them at an enjoyable informal session with audience participation. Refreshments and cookies follow the session. Everyone resent gave a brief description of one of their favorite antiques. An enjoyable evening for everyone.

Michael Klemish with great grandmother's Czech needlework from 1900.

Gerald Busta's 100-year-old woodcraft from School of the Blind, Milwaukee.

Gordon Tindale explains his metal race car collection.

Val Tindel holds her waxed linen twinned Native American Style Bottle Baskets.

Support for Ho Chunk (Winnebago) Roadway Signage

The German American Museum staff are pleased to share that the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa has provided a $10,000 grant to improve the Ho Chunk Nation exhibit and its signage at the German American Museum in St. Lucas. In addition, the grant provides for road signage for former Winnebago historic sites in both northern Fayette and southern Winneshiek counties and for engagement with the Ho Chunk Nation in Black River Falls, Wisconsin, to ensure their perspective is reflected in all aspects of the exhibit and signage.

Rt. Rev. Terry Landsgaard of West Union and others have been instrumental in building these bridges between the Episcopal Church, the German American Museum, the Elgin Historical Society Museum, the Winneshiek County Historical Preservation Commission and the Ho Chunk Nation.

"We are very excited about strengthening our partnership with the Ho Chunk Nation and really appreciate the strong Episcopal Diocese of Iowa support to examine this early historic period and honor the tremendous struggles of the indigenous peoples as the Western expansion of the United States and Canada occurred nearly two centuries ago," says Clair Blong of the German American Museum. "This financial support will enable us to create appropriate signage that incorporates the Ho Chunk perspective in exhibits and also bring awareness to the former historic sites of the Winnebago Indians in our midst." says Clair.

At the September 17th Workshop on the Ho Chunk Turkey River Reserve and the Restoration of Fort Atkinson held at the German American Museum, Jon Greendeer, Ho Chunk Nation Chairperson, noted the tremendous resiliency of the Ho Chunk people in persevering through many decades of forced removals and economic hardships, to restore and maintain their identity.

Bill Quackenbush, Director of Cultural Preservation for the Ho Chunk Nation expressed similar sentiments and noted their efforts to memorialize the forced journeys of their ancestors across Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska and finally back to Southwest Wisconsin decades later. This history needs to be shared so current and future generations know the real history of the Native American encounter with Europeans.

The work on the identification of the Winnebago historic sites has begun. Many of these sites were identified for the September Workshop. These historic sites are on the former Ho Chunk Turkey River Reserve and nearby dwelling sites near Eldorado, St. Lucas, Auburn, and Waucoma communities. Locals have memories that some of these dwelling sites were actively used by the Ho Chunk up to the World War II period. T

The next steps will involve the development of draft content for the roadway signage, involvement of the Ho Chunk Nation in reviewing the signage materials, creating signage with maps, photos and text to give an awareness of a site's importance, and hopefully increase our understanding of the historic site.

Many sites contain no visible remains. So, it remains for us to envision what happened at these locations in the 1840s and later. In Eastern states many small towns contain numerous historic sites and signage. "We have much history hidden in plain sight in this Turkey River Winnebago Reserve area of Northeast Iowa. We need to unearth it and honor it.' says Ben Kuennen with the St. Lucas Historical Society.

Museum Training Day at the Grout Museum Complex in Waterloo.

Siloa and Smokestacks Annual Training Day, Waterloo, Iowa, November 6, 2025.
Mel Bodensteiner, Kathryn Kuennen, Janet Bodensteiner, Clair Blong

Lessons from the Holocaust

The German American Museum hosted holocaust educator Brad Wilkening as he delivers a compelling presentation, "The Lessons of the Holocaust," on Wednesday, October 22, 2025, from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM. This convocation shed light on the impact of the Holocaust and how its lessons continue to resonate in today's world. As a dedicated educator and a member of the Iowa Holocaust Council, Wilkening's mission is to educate people of all ages about the Holocaust, emphasizing the importance of making informed decisions and recognizing the consequences of inaction.

The Holocaust remains a dark chapter in human history, and this presentation serves as a crucial reminder that its lessons are not confined to the past. Attendees gained insights into how to shape a more humane and caring world for future generations. Wilkening hopes to inspire individuals to become more compassionate, empathetic, and understanding members of society.

The convocation was open to the public, and all were encouraged to attend, including students, educators, and community members. The presentation was followed by informal discussion along with cookies and refreshments. For more information, contact Clair Blong, German American Museum at info@stlucasmuseum.edu.

Clair Blong and Brad Wilkening

Torah scroll from the Broder synagogue, Leipzig, Germany Torah Scroll Saved from Destruction in the Kristal Nacht pogrom in Leipzig, Germany. Yad Vashem's Holocaust History Museum, Jerusalem, Israel.

The Holocaust, known in Hebrew as the Shoah, was the genocide of European Jews during World War II. From 1941 to 1945, Nazi Germany and its collaborators systematically murdered some six million Jews across Herman-occupied Europe, around two-thirds of Europe's Jewish population.

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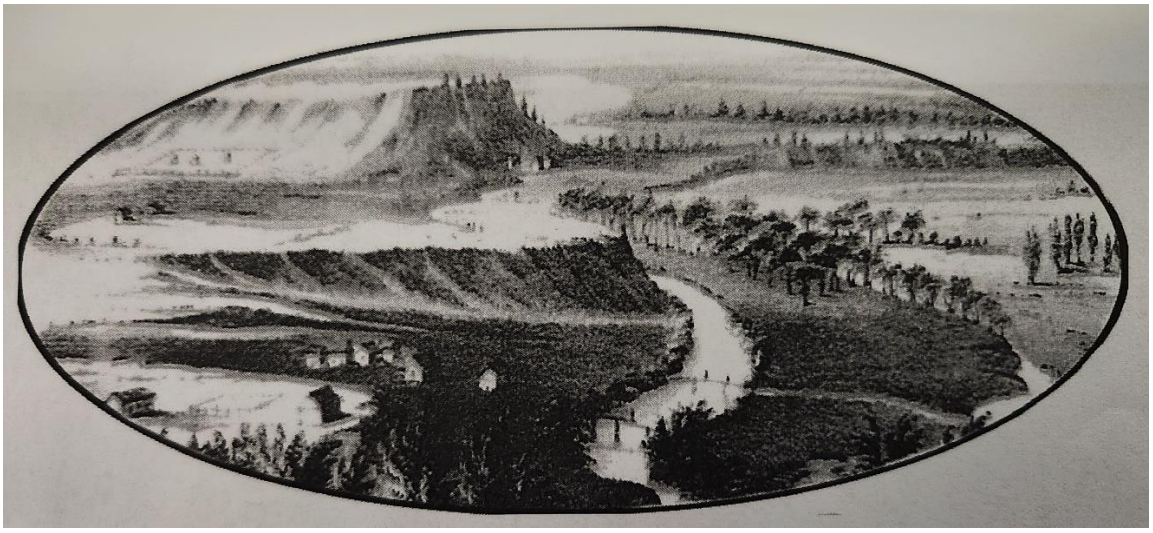
Separate Nazi persecutions killed millions of other non-Jewish civilians and prisoners of war (POWs); the term *Holocaust* is sometimes used to include the murder and persecution of non-Jewish groups.



Winnebago Turkey River Reserve Sketch from 1847.

Area historians starting work on signage to recognize historic Ho-Chunk sites

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Steve Johnson of the Winneshiek County Historical Preservation Commission said he was honored to work with the museum team to create the historical markers commemorating the Ho-Chunk people's presence in Winneshiek County.

"Their spiritual reverence to the land they once called home still lives on today, a story that needs to be told and not forgotten," Johnson said.

During a Sept. 17 Workshop on the Ho-Chunk Turkey River Reserve and the Restoration of Fort Atkinson held at the German American Museum, Ho-Chunk Nation Chairperson Jon Greendeer noted the resiliency of the Ho-Chunk in persevering through many decades of forced removals and economic hardships to restore and maintain their identity. Bill Quackenbush, director of cultural preservation for the Ho-Chunk Nation expressed similar sentiments and noted their efforts to memorialize the forced journeys of their ancestors across Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska and finally back to southwest Wisconsin decades later.

Work on the identification of the Winnebago historic sites has already begun. The selected historic sites are on the former Ho-Chunk Turkey River Reserve and nearby dwelling sites near Eldorado, St. Lucas, Auburn and Waucoma. Museum officials said some locals have memories of these dwelling sites being actively used by the Ho-Chunk up to the World War II period.

Officials will now begin the development of draft content for the roadway signage, while involving representatives of the Ho-Chunk Nation in reviewing the signage materials before creating signage with maps, photos and text to give an awareness of each site's importance. Many sites contain no visible remains.

"We have much history hidden in plain sight in this Turkey River Winnebago Reserve area of northeast Iowa," said Ben Kuennen with the St. Lucas Historical Society. "We need to unearth it and honor it."

COMMUNITY

DECORAH LEADER | THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2025 |

Experiencing Other Worlds: Our Years in the Peace Corps

On Wednesday evening, November 12th, from 6:30 to 8:00 PM, Jack and Ann Herold of Fort Atkinson will share their colorful stories of lessons learned from their years in the Peace Corps in Jamaica and Kenya. The Peace Corps operates in 78 countries today. As Jack said, "They are always looking for volunteers with a sense of curiosity about the world and a keenness for adventure."

Jack helped farm families with growing garden vegetables, grass and fodder crops for animals, while Ann engaged in mushroom growing with the women and taught sewing to young girls. Each country presented unique cross-cultural challenges but also many amazing opportunities for engagement. Jack and Ann learned much about how cultural roles of men and women shape human engagement and behavior.

On many occasions their Peace Corps experience was more about sharing the human condition than passing on various farming techniques and practices. Come and learn about up close cultural encounters like births, deaths, funerals, church going, food preparation, family life, housing, weak transportation, limited electricity, inadequate fresh water, and uneven health care, things we take for granted.

Jack and Ann will share their zest for learning about these cultures and insights into the ups and downs of their decade's long viticulture experiment. Come to Jack and Ann's Peace Corps presentation and experience the distilled fruits of the Summer and Autumn seasons when we serve refreshments, cheese and crackers, the fruits of their winemaking, and of course, cookies and bars.

Ann and Jack Herold describing their work in Kenya.

Czech Influences on German Classical Music

On Wednesday evening, November 19th from 6:30 to 8:00 PM Professor James Griesheimer will present on how the rich Czech music tradition influenced German classical music composers. Dr. Griesheimer will examine these Czech influences over recent centuries.

Czech influence on German Classical music is seen through the adoption of Czech folk music, the career support German musicians gave to Czech composers like Dvořák and Smetana, and the historical context of the Austro-Hungarian Empire where composers were exposed to both German and Czech traditions.

While the influence was largely a dialogue and support network between German and Czech composers, figures like Smetana and Dvořák integrated Czech national identity into the classical tradition, which in turn enriched the broader European musical landscape.

Dr. Griesheimer's presentation was followed by informal dialogue and discussion with refreshments and cookies.

Dr. James Griesheimer

Board Meeting on November 4, 2025.

FR: Virginia Manderfield, Kathryn Kuennen. MR: Janet Bodensteiner, Cathy Ehler, Clair Blong, Otto, the German spitzer, Marie Schneberger, Dan Kuennen. BR: Mel Modensteiner, Ben Kuennen, Ken Ehler, Carl Most.

Christmas Reflections Returns

The traditional Christmas Reflections Open House will be held on Sunday, December 7th, from 11:00 AM to 3:30 PM at the German American Museum, Library and Family History Center in St. Lucas. The Christmas Reflections meal will be served in the attractive Museum dining room decorated for the Christmas holiday season.

This year the abundant meal consists of three all-time favorites: chicken noodle soup, harvest squash with sausage and rice, and hearty chili soup. The meal is topped off with delicious Black Forest ham and turkey salad sandwiches. The meal includes a wide variety of desserts: traditional Christmas cookies with hot apple cider, bottled water, coffee and an adult refreshment. "You will be delighted with the meal and enjoy the many acquaintances and friends", says Kathryn Kuennen who makes beautiful and tasty traditional Christmas cookies. Suggested adult donation is $15, children are $5.

Christmas Reflections also include an awesome Bake Sale. The sale includes pies, bars, Christmas cookies, breads, and many other delights. Stock up for the Christmas season. This Christmas Reflections event is supported by the Melissa Lea Reicks Foundation of Lawler, Iowa, and the 1891 Financial Life (formerly the National Catholic Society of Foresters), St. Lucia Court # 233, St. Lucas, Iowa. Virginia Manderfield is very thankful for the dozens of

ladies who answered her call to provide Christmas cookies and other delights. This Christmas Reflections event will help support the cataloguing of the museum collections.

See what's new at the German American Museum. Check out the extensive Hummel artifact collection, the century old German Zither, the century old Ojibwe Nation beaded handbag, the Ho Chunk woven bass wood and reed baskets, many Christmas displays, new display cases populated with family exhibits, and recent Czech and Native American artifacts.

"We are happy to note that the museum cataloguing project got off to a successful start this past summer and will continue for several summers. The high school and college students did a great job in cataloguing hundreds of German and American history books. We are also thankful to the Iowa DOT for the new highway signage that helps visitors reach the museum from states like Ohio, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Nebraska and Kansas," says Clair Blong. "We now have a very handsome and beautiful building," says Mel Bodensteiner who frequently gives tours to the many out of state guests.

A traditional St. Nicholas will be greeting the children in the museum. St. Nicholas wants to share a holiday goodies gift bag with each child. "The true story of Santa Claus begins with Nicholas." says Janet Bodensteiner. "Nicholas used his whole inheritance to assist the needy, the sick, and the suffering. He dedicated his life to serving God and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. Bishop Nicholas became known throughout the land for his generosity to those in need, his love for children, and his concern for sailors and ships." Hence, the good Saint Nic," says Janet.

Treat yourselves, your children and grandchildren to an enjoyable time exploring the three levels of the Museum and awaken the magic and spirit of Christmas in you.

Children enjoying the Christmas Reflections in the Museum.

Lucas Fankhauser plays Christmas carols on the Lorraine Bodensteiner Kuennen piano. Lucas is the son of Brian and Kristin Kuennen Fankhauser

Duane Wurzer in his colorful jacket made by JoAnn Wurzer, his wife.

Kathryn Kuennen, Val Tindale, Annette Kuennen, Janet Bodensteiner

Outdoor Decorations on Museum Plum Tree.

Ava Kuennen, Kayden Jirak and Kendall Kuennen
Greeters at Christmas Reflections

Raph Steinlage and State Representative Michael Bergan
At Christmas Reflections, December 7th.

Team Building Dinner in Gay Mills, Wisconsin.

FR: Virginia Manderfield, Marie Schneberger, Janet Bodensteiner, Annette Kuennen, Kathryn Kuennen. CR: Clair Blong, Rosemary Most, Ralph Steinlage, Mel Bodensteier. BR: Jim Boeding, Carl Most, Danny Kuennen.

Recent Donations to the Museum

Schaufenbuel Family Trunk from Switzerland

German Music Player

Vintage Philco Radio Console from 1940s. People gathered around these radios to hear Roosevelt address Congress after Pearl Harbor Attack. Kids would gather for old western series like The Lone Ranger.

Ho Chunk basswood basket from the 1950s.

George Catlin, Winnebago Gathering Wild Rice on the Fox River.
Created between 1861-1869.
Ten canoes visible in the Sketch.
Smithsonian Museum Collection.