

# Lines on the Land: How Dakota Homeland Became Private Property

A History of the South Loop District to 1900

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By: Peter DeCarlo

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## **Executive Summary**

The impetus for this report began in January 2019 when Rachel Daly, Director of Visual Arts at Artistry contacted the author. Daly and the City of Bloomington's Creative Placemaking Director, Alejandra Pelinka felt there was a need to understand the history of the South Loop District as the Creative Placemaking Commission moved forward in its work. Daly and the author met and concluded the Commission most needed education about the indigenous history of the South Loop and any violent history that had occurred there. The author attended Commission meetings in February and December of 2019 and presented on the deep indigenous history of the South Loop, Dakota History, the fur trade, and the history of European American settlement. These histories were contextualized within the theoretical framework of settler colonialism. After these presentations it was discussed that the author might write a scholarly history of the South Loop that would be useful to the commission and others involved in the placemaking project. The author developed a research proposal which the commission approved in April 2020, with research beginning in June of that year. The timeline for this research report was extended multiple times due to the COVID 19 Pandemic. The scope and format were also amended to better fulfill the needs of the Placemaking Commission.

## Introduction

This report is a history of the South Loop District from its geologic formation and first human habitation dating to roughly 12000 years ago, up until the year 1900 when the colonization of the land by the United States was completed. In this report three primary modes of analysis are used to tell the story of the South Loop. First, following the goal of the Creative Placemaking in the South Loop initiative, this report examines the South Loop as a specifically bounded geographic place. The present-day boundaries of the South Loop District were extended back through time, limiting in many ways the history examined in this report. The South Loop is a twenty-first century construction of human geography and would not have been recognized by the people discussed in this history. However, the term “South Loop District” is used throughout to reinforce the geographic space being analyzed and the overall purpose of this work. Using this term also creates a common understanding for readers. While limited by geography, this report tells stories far outside the South Loop by following the experiences of people who lived there. The second mode of analysis used is the “life and times” approach to history. This focus follows the stories of certain individuals, and through them, illuminates broader geographic, social, political, and economic histories that the South Loop has been a part of throughout time. Historical narratives of this nature are also inherently relatable which could lead contemporary residents of the district to feel connected to the past. Telling the story of the land as well as its people allows the South Loop to teach wider histories and richer stories. The third lens used to analyze the history of the South Loop District is the theoretical framework of Settler Colonialism. Settler Colonialism is a distinct form of colonialism studied by scholars of indigenous history and imperialism and is explained in further detail below. Throughout the historical narrative contained in this report are sidebars that apply aspects of settler colonial theory to events, places, and people. Using this lens, we can tell the history of European American settlement of the South Loop more accurately and connect it to a global phenomenon that is ongoing: the colonization of indigenous lands.

The main purpose of this report, beyond a general history, is to explain how the indigenous homeland of the Dakota became United States property, and then the private property of US citizens. Contrary to the myths of rugged individualism and heroic pioneers settling an untamed wilderness the colonization of the land was a deliberate and violent process supported by the policies of the US government. Through a chronological narrative and the stories of specific historical actors this paper traces eight, often overlapping steps, in this process: 1) Indigenous Homelands 2) Establishment of colonial relationships 3) Treaties and forced removal of Native Americans 4) Illegal squatting on Native lands 5) Public Land Survey 6) Sale of public lands 7) Settlement and establishment of settler sovereignty 8) Erasure of Native American History. The history of this land transfer process is vital to the placemaking project in the South Loop because it provides the foundation for its existence as a place—politically and geographically.

The report begins by describing the geologic formation of the South Loop and the deep indigenous history of the area. It then narrates the origins and cultural life of the Dakota people,

establishing their homeland prior to European arrival. This is then followed by the beginning of European arrival in the region and the fur trade through the French, British, and United States eras. The period of United States colonization that followed dramatically changed life in the South Loop, eventually leading to the first treaties. The establishment of Fort Snelling was especially pivotal to the South Loop because it existed for decades as part of the military reservation which barred any habitation of the site. In the mid-1800s this report diverges to follow the stories of two people and their families who illuminate the forces that shaped the settlement of the South Loop. The story of Jeremiah Mahoney, who would come to settle in the South Loop, connects the place to larger national histories, showing that it is not only the land, but the people who lived there that can tell compelling stories. The second story is of a locally known founder of Bloomington, Martin McLeod. McLeod lived just outside the bounds of the South Loop, but his story, reinterpreted in this paper, is vital to the district's existence. McLeod, along with his Dakota wife Mary Elizabeth, and their children, provide a lens for understanding the seismic changes that occurred within society in the South Loop through the eras of the fur trade, treaties, and settlement.

Within these stories, this report focuses specifically on the decade of the 1850s, the most pivotal to the South Loop in the nineteenth century and perhaps the most pivotal in the history of Bloomington. During this decade the treaties, Dakota removal, land surveys, land sales, reduction of the Fort Snelling Military Reservation, and the founding of Bloomington all took place. This decade encompassed a blistering pace of change and completely redefined the land of the South Loop turning it from Dakota Homeland into property. The title of this paper, *Lines on the Land*, is a reference to this period when lines were drawn on the land through treaties and surveys, incorporating the South Loop into the modernist property regime. In the 1860s the district continued to develop as part of the City of Bloomington, but the land also witnessed one of the most heartrending events in Minnesota History. Dakota noncombatants who had surrendered to US Military forces during the US-Dakota War of 1862 were force marched through the South Loop on their way to a concentration camp at Fort Snelling. After this time of war, the South Loop was settled further. The Fort Snelling Military Reservation was reduced again, opening up the eastern half of the South Loop to settlement. A farming community took root, establishing its sovereignty where the Dakota had once lived. This period is animated by the existence of the Grange in Bloomington and the agrarian populism that existed in the later decades of the nineteenth century. The final section of the report describes the solidification of settler sovereignty, the growing complexity of land ownership, and how the Native American presence in the South Loop was almost totally erased. Throughout this report the often-absent narratives of Dakota people, women, and families are deliberately brought forward whenever possible.

## **Settler Colonialism: A Brief Overview**

Beginning in the 1990s Australian and Canadian scholars developed settler colonial frameworks to describe a specific type of colonialism that had shaped the history of their nations. This type of colonialism did not result in overseas empires wherein colonists invaded indigenous lands, extracted resources, and left. Rather, it involved Europeans permanently settling on indigenous lands, establishing their own sovereignty, separating from imperial centers in Europe, and attempting to eliminate native peoples. Scholars of genocide have added to this framework arguing that settler colonialism can be considered inherently genocidal because it depends on the elimination of Indigenous Peoples and removal from their homelands—the very thing that makes them indigenous. Importantly, scholars of settler colonialism concluded that it was inaccurate to think of settler colonialism as having occurred as an event in the past. Settler colonialism is an ongoing, present-day phenomenon, not a past event that is over.

Native American scholars and other historians of the United States adopted this paradigm and with increasing success have used it to describe the history of North America. While the entire theoretical framework of settler colonialism applies to United States History, scholars have focused on four main aspects. First, the need for settler societies to eliminate Native Americans. Scholars have pointed to Indian Removal, manipulative treaties, warfare, boarding schools, forced adoption, and blood quantum as examples of this. Second, the frantic and almost insatiable drive to repopulate conquered lands with a settler population. The almost complete conquest and settlement of North America in the nineteenth century vividly illustrates this point. Third, a triangular relationship between Native Americans, settlers, and what have been called “exogeneous others.” These others in American history are recently arrived immigrants and enslaved people. Settler societies attempt to control these populations and determine their fate. For instance, an Irish immigrant of the mid 1800s would have faced bigotry from settlers upon their arrival. But as decades passed, they would have been admitted to the dominant settler society and be able to settle on Native lands. And fourth, scholars have examined the gray areas of this phenomenon that has always occurred within resistance and tensions, such as the unique culture of the fur trade which saw the blending of European and Native American culture.

Settler colonial theory often creates powerful questions for present-day settler colonial societies like the United States. If much of this history was violent, and we are now still living within it, what now? These questions can be answered with the framework of decolonization, which is often offered up as a solution. In its most basic sense decolonizing work seeks to reverse or provide solutions to the detrimental impacts of settler colonialism on Indigenous Peoples. This work can take many forms, such as collaborating with Native people, returning cultural and sacred objects to them, partnering in the protection of their sacred sites, reconciliation efforts, reparations, and even returning land to Native tribes.

The story of the South Loop District narrated in this report fits perfectly within the theoretical framework of settler colonialism. This theory allows for an accurate reinterpretation of the district’s history during the period of Native American contact with Europeans and forward. Throughout this report, sidebars apply aspects of settler colonial theory to the historical

narrative in order to set the history of the South Loop within a scholarly framework that is being used to create positive change across the country.<sup>1</sup>

## The Geological Formation of the South Loop

Four major glaciations covered Minnesota and then retreated during the Ice Age. The most recent, called the Wisconsin Glaciation existed 100,000 to 10,000 years ago. The landscape of Minnesota—its lakes, ridges, rivers, and open spaces, were all formed by the glaciers. Approximately 12,000 years ago the last glaciers retreated to the north and in their wake the vast Lake Agassiz formed. It stretched from the far north of present-day Canada, south to the Dakotas and Minnesota, reaching up the Red River Valley to present-day Lake Traverse. Larger than all of the Great Lakes combined, Lake Agassiz had an immense drainage. Its major outlet was Glacial River Warren which carved out and shaped the Minnesota River Valley. Warren, like the lake that fed it, was vast: five miles across in some places. The immense river flowed for several



Figure 1: Glacial River Warren compared to the present-day Minnesota River. Minnesota River Basin Data Center.

thousand years until the glacial retreat to the north opened up lower outlets for Lake Agassiz. By 9,000 years ago Warren had been reduced to a trickle. Glacial River Warren stopped flowing and in its place the Minnesota River was established. The contemporary Minnesota River that flows past the South Loop District is tiny compared to the glacial river that left a broad valley in its wake. The river also featured an immense waterfall that retreated, split at the confluence of the

Minnesota, and continued to recede leaving exposed limestone bluffs behind. On the Mississippi it became St. Anthony Falls and on the Minnesota River it shaped the Valley and eventually diminished into rapids. The South Loop District sits on the bank of this ancient river and it now overlooks the Minnesota River—a river that has drawn people to the present-day location of the district for thousands of years.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Essential readings in Settler Colonial Theory are: Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, No. 4 (2006), 387-409; Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*, (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Lorenzo Veracini, *The Settler Colonial Present*, (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Walter L. Hixson, *American Settler Colonialism: A History*, (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Jurgen Osterhammel, *Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*, (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1997); A. Dirk Moses, ed., *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History*, (New York, NY: Berghahn Books, 2008), Susan Sleeper-Smith, et. al, eds., *Why You Can't Teach United States History without American Indians*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015); Wazyatawin, Ph.D., *What Does Justice Look Like?: The Struggle for Liberation in Dakota Homeland*, (St. Paul, MN: Living Justice Press, 2008). The sidebars in this report are written by the author but based upon these readings.

<sup>2</sup> Ojakangas and Matsch, *Minnesota's Geology*, 109-110, 113; Minnesota River Basin Data Center, Minnesota River Valley Formation. <https://mrbdc.mnsu.edu/minnesota-river-valley-formation>; Minnesota River Basin Glaciation, [https://mrbdc.mnsu.edu/mnbasin/fact\\_sheets/glaciers](https://mrbdc.mnsu.edu/mnbasin/fact_sheets/glaciers); National Park Service, River Warren Falls, <https://www.nps.gov/miss/planyourvisit/rivewarr.htm>



## The First People of the South Loop District

The first people to live in Minnesota, whom archaeologists call “Paleo Indians” may have seen the last glaciers retreat to the north. They likely entered the region about 12,000 years ago. They lived in a world filled with megafauna such as mammoths, mastodons, musk-ox, and giant beaver. Reindeer, bison, moose, and elk lived in the area as well. Yet at this time the extinction of the largest megafauna animals began and was almost complete by 10,000 years ago. Climate and hunting by humans may have led to this extinction.<sup>3</sup>

Near the South Loop the earliest evidence of human habitation dates conservatively to 8,000 years ago. Lithic and artifact scatters found along Long Meadow Lake may date human habitation as far back as 12,000 years. The first people of the region would have lived in small groups in a sparsely populated landscape of pine and deciduous forests. They were mobile people, hunting and gathering where opportunity arose. The environment which was cool but rapidly warming would have determined much of their lives. Bears, wolves, coyotes, moose, and deer likely inhabited the land. Subsistence and survival ruled their lives but trade networks connected them to the rest of the continent. A burial from this period in present-day Minnesota contained conch-shell from the coast of Florida—an example of the trade that occurred at the time.<sup>4</sup>

Around 8000 BCE the climate warmed and became drier, allowing tallgrass prairie to enter Minnesota from the Southwest. By 6800 BCE it reached the South Loop and pushed to the east. Trees remained in the river valleys as Glacial River Warren began to ebb. The prairie dominated the region until 4000 BCE when cooler temperatures ushered in Oak forests. In this period the people who lived in the region of the South Loop continued to be mobile hunters and gatherers. They made projectile points and used atlatls for hunting.<sup>5</sup>

Between 3000 and 500 BCE the climate and vegetation began to stabilize, reaching the positions they would occupy into the 1600s. Native people began practicing more sophisticated crafts. Using copper they created tools, harpoons, awls, adzes, and spears. People began planting crops and harvesting wild rice. It is during this period that the first pottery was developed as well. Native Americans started burying their dead, of all ages, in burial mounds around 200 BCE during what is called the Woodland Era. These mounds were constructed most commonly on high banks or along bluffs overlooking water. As centuries passed the indigenous burial mounds came to line the Minnesota River, including where the South Loop now exists. More than 10,000

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<sup>3</sup> Ojakangas and Matsch, *Minnesota's Geology*, 15, 116-118.

<sup>4</sup> Peter DeCarlo, *Fort Snelling at Bdote: A Brief History; Newly Annotated*, (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2020), 10-11; Portions of this report are based upon the author's previous work, *Fort Snelling at Bdote*, to which he owns copyright. Gibbon, *Archaeology of Minnesota*, ix, 38–47; Minnesota Department of Administration, Office of the State Archaeologist, Site Record, July 12, 2021; In order to protect these archaeological sites their specific locations and site numbers are not included in this report. Other sites, such as mound groups, that have been documented in the public record are discussed in greater detail.

<sup>5</sup> Peter DeCarlo, *Fort Snelling at Bdote*, 11; Gibbon, *Archaeology of Minnesota*, 13, 54–57, 59, 61; O'Connell, Jones, and Thomas, *The Minnesota Ancients*; Center for the Study of the First Americans, [http://csfa.tamu.edu/odsy\\_posters/256.pdf](http://csfa.tamu.edu/odsy_posters/256.pdf)

burial mounds were constructed in Minnesota, with the highest concentration on the banks of the Minnesota River. Some were located along the ridge that separated what would be called Long Meadow Lake from marshland closer to shore. There were hundreds of them of varying sizes on both sides of the river. Native Americans used different methods to construct the mounds; sometimes digging into the earth, piling it up, or building a mound over a burial pit lined with rock. The burials were done with ceremony and offerings were included in the graves. Beads made of shells, perhaps from the Atlantic or Gulf coasts, were found by archaeologists in a South Loop burial mounds. The shells are possible proof that these people were connected to continental trade networks.

Archaeologists theorize that the practice of mound building may have traveled up the Mississippi River from Cahokia, a major American Indian cultural center in present-day East St. Louis, Illinois. A community at Red Wing, Minnesota was a hub for this tradition and it likely spread north up the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers from there. Alongside the burial mounds came the tradition of effigy mound construction. Native people would build mounds in the shape of humans, symbols, and animals. New forms of pottery came too and traditions were transmitted through migration and seasonal movements. People living in the South Loop made pottery out of clay, ground shells, and crushed rock, which they shaped and baked over open fires. Archaeologists have also found evidence of human habitation around these mound sites: lithic scatters from stone tool making, fire cracked rocks, and other artifacts. Native Americans of this period not only buried their dead within the current bounds of the South Loop, they lived there as well.<sup>6</sup>

Around 900 to 1100 BCE Native American society around the South Loop changed suddenly. As food sources became plentiful and corn harvests reliable, the population increased. People began living together in larger groups and it is at this time that archeologists argue the first Native American tribes emerged. Some archeologists contend that this is when the ancestral Dakota came into existence near present-day Lake Mille Lacs. Other theories place the ancestral Dakota near the Arctic Ocean and the American Southeast. But wherever the Dakota came from, one thing is clear: their connection to the land called Minnesota, and the South Loop, goes back beyond memory.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Peter DeCarlo, *Fort Snelling at Bdote*, 11-12; Gibbon, *Archaeology of Minnesota*, 74, 76–84, 88, 93; City of Bloomington, *Minnesota River Valley Natural & Cultural Systems Plan*, “Appendix H: Known Cultural Resources,” July 5, 2018; Email with Jennifer Rankin, Director of Archaeology, Minnesota Historical Society, July 12, 2021; Office of the State Archaeologist, Minnesota State Archaeologist Site Form, Hanson Mounds, July 6, 1981; Ken Bakken, et. Al, *Mitakuye Owas, Al My Relations: Authentication, Recover and Reburial at the Lincoln Mounds for the Bloomington Central Station Project*, Bloomington, Minnesota, April, 2006, 14, 41, 72, 75

<sup>7</sup> Peter DeCarlo, *Fort Snelling at Bdote*, 12; Gibbon, *Archaeology of Minnesota*, 99, 144–45, 154–55.

## Dakota Origin Stories and Way of Life

The Dakota people are part of the Oceti Sakowin, or Seven Council Fires, commonly called the Sioux, or Great Sioux Nation. Dakota, Nakota, and Lakota comprise the three major divisions of the Oceti Sakowin. The Dakota include four of the Oceti Sakowin's seven council fires: the Bdewakantunwan (the spiritual people who live by the water), the Wahpetunwan (the people who live in the forest), the Sisitunwan (the medicine people who live by the water), and the Wahpekute (the warriors who protect the medicine people and could shoot from among the leaves). The Nakota, also known as the western Dakota, traveled west to present-day North and South Dakota. They include the Ihanktunwan (the people who live at the edge of the great forest) and the Ihanktunwanna (those scattered at the edge of the forest). Further west in what today is South Dakota and Montana live the Lakota, who made up the seventh council fire. They are called the Titunwan (dwellers of the plains). These seven groups are the Oyate—the People, the Nation—related by blood, language, beliefs, and customs.<sup>8</sup>

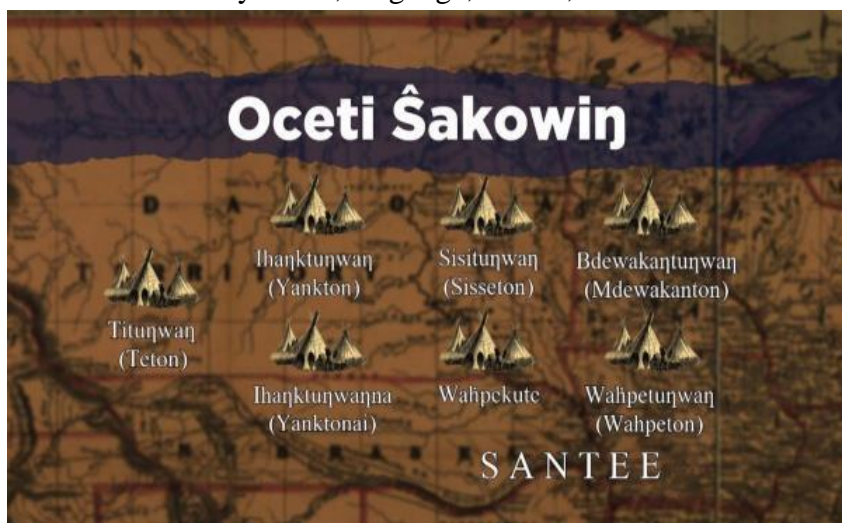


Figure 2: The Oceti Sakowin or Seven Council Fires. Minnesota Historical Society.

Among the Oceti Sakowin, as with virtually every other people, there are many stories and beliefs. These traditions tell the Oyate how they came to be, how all land is sacred, and what their responsibilities are to one another and to the land. Some creation stories involve powerful spirits, and many teach lessons. While there is no single creation story that compels belief, one account is widely held in the region of

the South Loop. The spirits of the people came down from Canku Wanagi, “the spirit road,” made up of the stars of the Milky Way, and when they arrived on earth, the Creator shaped the first people from the clay of Maka Ina, “mother earth.” The people were the Oceti Sakowin, a society that reflected their cosmic origin.<sup>9</sup>

The center of Dakota homeland is Mni Sota Makoce (Minnesota), “the land where the waters reflect the clouds.” Many Dakota people believe that they and the Oyate originated at the confluence of the Mni Sota Wakpa (Minnesota) and Haha Wakpa (Mississippi) rivers. The mouth of Mni Sota Wakpa is called Bdote Mni Sota, and the district around it is generally called

<sup>8</sup> Peter DeCarlo, *Fort Snelling at Bdote*, 6; *Sota Makoce*, 22; Minnesota Historical Society, “Oceti Šakowin—The Seven Council Fires”; Sprecher, *Oceti Šakowin; Mni Sota Makoce* is an indispensable and unique resource for early Dakota history, spirituality, and information on sacred sites. I relied heavily on this text, especially in the early portions of this report.

<sup>9</sup> Peter DeCarlo, *Fort Snelling at Bdote*, 6-7; Jahner, “Lakota Genesis: The Oral Tradition.”

Bdote. At the heart of Bdote is Wita Tanjka (Pike Island), which some believe is the center of Dakota creation, where people were first made. At the confluence and everywhere, mni—water—is sacred. All water was pure at the time of creation and, like the land, was part of the people. The area around Bdote Mni Sota includes several sacred Dakota sites and at times the entire region is referred to as Bdote. There are no known sacred Dakota sites within the present-day boundaries of the South Loop, but as mother earth is a relative to the Dakota, the land of the South Loop is sacred Dakota homeland. Historically the Dakota who lived within the current boundaries of Bloomington were roughly five to fifteen miles from Bdote and it certainly was a nexus in their spiritual, cultural, and social life. The existence of Old Shakopee Road, originally a trail connecting Dakota villages to the prairie and bluffs above Bdote is evidence of that connection.<sup>10</sup>

The ultimate aim of Dakota life, stripped of accessories, was quite simple,” wrote Ella Deloria, a Dakota anthropologist of the early twentieth century. “One must obey kinship rules; one must be a good relative.” This identity was absolute. “Every other consideration was secondary—property, personal ambition, glory, good times, life itself. Without that aim and the constant struggle to attain it, the people would no longer be Dakotas in truth.” The Dakota phrase “Mitakuye owasin”—“We are all related”—extended to visitors from far away, to animals and plants, and to the land itself.<sup>11</sup>

The Dakota existed within the bounty of that land, in relationship with all that is, and they lived according to the rhythms of the seasons. They lived throughout Mni Sota Makoce, from the northern woods to the southern plains. Their largest communities, summer planting villages, were located on lakes and rivers. The network of waterways near Bdote held several villages: along Mni Sota Wakpa and Haha Wakpa from what is now Wabasha, upstream to Owamniyomni (St. Anthony Falls), up the Wakpa Wakan (Rum River) to Bde Wakan (Lake Mille Lacs), along the Hogan Wanke Kin (St. Croix River), and along Mni Sota Wakpa west to



Figure 3: A Dakota summer lodge. Painting by Seth Eastman, 1846-1848. Minnesota Historical Society.

the present Minnesota–South Dakota border. The Dakota traveled these rivers to trade and gather for ceremonies.<sup>12</sup>

Dakota families made different choices about how and where to live, but most followed the annual movements of their communities. Bdoketu (summer) villages, made of semipermanent wooden

<sup>10</sup> Peter DeCarlo, *Fort Snelling at Bdote*, 6-7; Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 18–20 26, 92, 213; Minnesota Humanities Center, “Bdote Memory Map.”

<sup>11</sup> Minnesota Historical Society, “Tiospaye: Kinship.”

<sup>12</sup> Peter DeCarlo, *Fort Snelling at Bdote*, 12-13; Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 126.

lodges, were used for at least several years. Dakota women cultivated plots of corn, and they gathered and preserved berries, nuts, wild turnips, and other foods and medicinal plants while men hunted. In late summer, after harvesting corn, Dakota families packed up their belongings and moved to wild rice harvesting camps. Corn and rice were stored in underground pits for future use. Harvest was a time of abundance and ceremony for the Dakota people.

In Ptanyetu (fall), large groups dispersed to hunt deer. As game was depleted in one area, the group moved to another camp. Men did the hunting, while women moved supplies from camp to camp. Loads were kept light as more and more meat was gathered for wintertime. Hunters who were successful shared their meat, so that all would eat.

During Waniyetu (winter), smaller family groups made camp in wooded areas near summer village sites. Men hunted, fished, and trapped, while women maintained the encampments, dressed skins, and made clothing. Food stored during the summer harvest sustained the Dakota people through the harsh winters of Mni Sota Makece.

As the air warmed in Wetu (spring), Dakota winter camps broke up and the people moved to maple sugaring camps. These sites usually had a semipermanent bark sugarhouse. Dakota women and children did most of the sugaring work, while men continued to hunt and trap. The Dakota brought their maple sugar harvest to the summer planting village sites, where the people gathered in their largest numbers and began the seasonal cycle again.<sup>13</sup>

## **Dakota and Ioway**

Prior to 1700 evidence suggests that the primary group of Native Americans living in the area of the South Loop District were the Ioway or Iowa. Archaeology and oral history indicate the Ioway who lived on the Minnesota River were descendants of the mound builders. Many of the secondary burials within the mounds in present-day Bloomington are likely Ioway people. The Ioway's territory included much of present-day southern Minnesota, where they built fortified villages along the rivers, and mined from the sacred Pipestone Quarry.<sup>14</sup> Missionary Samuel Pond recorded a tradition held by some Dakota concerning their interaction with the Ioway:

...but [the Dakota] often spoke of having driven the Iowas from Southern Minnesota. They did not speak of this as some ancient tradition, but as a well known event of comparatively recent occurrence, though it must have taken place more than two hundred years ago. ... The small mounds, which may be seen on the left bank of the Minnesota at Eden Prairie and Bloomington, and perhaps at other places, are, the Dakotas say, the

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makece*, 14; Spector, *What this Awl Means*, 11, 66–77.

<sup>14</sup> Lance M. Foster, *The Indians of Iowa*, (Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 2009), 6-7.

ruins of dwelling houses built by the Iowas. These mounds are in rows or groups, on the bluff of the northwest side of the river.<sup>15</sup>

More Dakota traditions recorded by Gideon Pond provide additional evidence that the Ioway dwelled on the north side of the Minnesota River in present-day Bloomington from the 1600s to the mid-1700s. Their main village was said to have been located at what became Oak Grove and what is now the South Loop District was within the territory of these people. Pressured by the fur trade and the Ojibwe, the Dakota moved south and inter-tribal warfare with the Ioway began. In a series of battles, the first in present-day Bloomington, the second on Pilot Knob across Minnesota, and the third at the mouth of the Iowa River, the Dakota pushed the Iowa southwards. Another Dakota tradition places the Ho-Chunk at the mouth of the Minnesota River at this same time. While this is certainly possible the majority of the historical record supports the presence of the Ioway in the region and the migration of the Dakota southward.<sup>16</sup>

### **The French and the Fur Trade**

The first European Americans to enter the homeland of the Dakota and travel to the area of the South Loop District were French. The French came from French Canada and the Great Lakes Region as fur traders, missionaries, and military officers on exploratory expeditions. They first made contact with the Ojibwe from whom they learned of the Dakota. French fur traders Pierre Radisson and Medard Chouart des Groseilliers are the first documented Europeans to interact with Dakota people. They wintered with them in 1659-1660 in northern Wisconsin and may have traveled to a Dakota village on Lake Mille Lacs. Five years later Nicolas Perrot made contact with the Dakota and traded with them along the Upper Mississippi. The first French missionaries—Jesuit Priests—entered the homeland of the Dakota in 1666.<sup>17</sup>

As the French traded with Dakota people and were welcomed into their homeland, they were also participating in European imperial contests with the British and Spanish. These European empires were rushing to lay claim to the Americas and colonize the land. As European countries expanded their reach, they claimed new lands through a ceremony that historians have called the “Doctrine of Discovery.” In June of 1671 the French assembled representatives of the tribes from the Western Great Lakes for a performance in which they took “possession” of the region, including in the most nominal way the present-day South Loop District. With speeches claiming the land in the name of the French monarch, blessings from priests, the firing of muskets, and sometimes the placing of an iron cross, the French claimed the lands of present-day Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Tribal representatives added their pictographic signatures

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<sup>15</sup> Samuel W. Pond, *The Dakota or Sioux in Minnesota As They Were In 1834*, (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1986), 174-175.

<sup>16</sup> Gideon H. Pond, “Ancient Mounds and Monuments,” (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society, 1872), 144-145.

<sup>17</sup> Westerman and White, *Minnesota Makoce*, 37-39.

to a document but it appears no Dakota were among them. It is unknown how the Native leaders perceived this event, but it is highly unlikely they consented to any form of transferring their lands or their sovereignty to the French. Most likely they simply viewed it as a cultural ceremony they should attend to improve relations with French traders. In 1682, another Frenchman named La Salle, traveled down the Mississippi River and in another ceremony laid claim to the drainage of the river. These were the first of many instances in which European American powers would lay claim to Dakota homelands, including the area of the South Loop. But, for the next two hundred years the Dakota people would control their homelands and remain more powerful than any foreign power they allowed into the area<sup>18</sup>

Nicolas Perrot returned to the land of the Dakota in 1685 and spent most of his time trading on the Mississippi. His writings make it clear that by this time the French had reached the mouth of the Minnesota River which they named the St. Peter or St. Pierre River. In another land

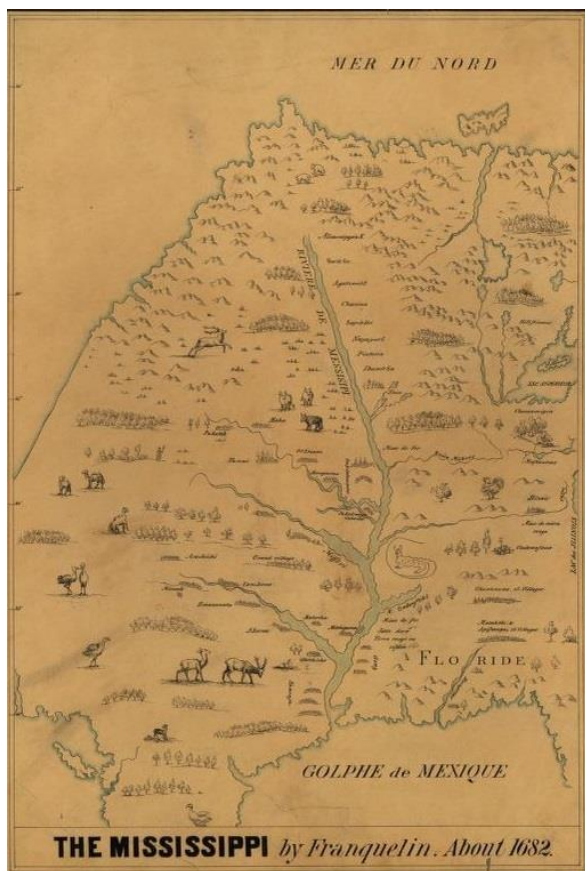


Figure 4: While crude, this map represents the first time the South Loop was mapped in a general way. The junction of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers may be represented at center. Map by Jean Baptiste Louis Franquetin, 1682. Library of Congress.

claim Perrot referenced “the country of the Nadouesioux [Sioux or Dakota] on the banks of the River St. Croix and the entry of the River St. Peter, on the bank of which were the Mantantaun[.]” Historians speculate that the “Mantantaun” were a band of Dakota who preceded the bands that existed in the 1800s and are well known today. They were likely related to the Bdewakantunwan. While the exact location of the Mantantaun is unclear in Perrot’s writings it may be the first written evidence of Dakota people living in what is today the South Loop District.<sup>19</sup>

A member of Perrot’s expeditions was Pierre-Charles Le Sueur. Le Sueur spent many subsequent years trading with the Dakota and living with them. His knowledge led to the first European American maps of the region and the first instances of the land that is now the South Loop being mapped. While Le Sueur likely entered the Minnesota River in the mid-1680s and paddled past present-day Bloomington, his first documented entry into the river comes from 1695. Le Sueur recorded a phonetic translation of the Dakota name for the river, Outebaminisoute (Mni Sota Wakpa), and wrote how the French

<sup>18</sup> Westerman and White, *Minnesota Makoce*, 39-40, 44.

<sup>19</sup> Westerman and White, *Minnesota Makoce*, 45.

had named it. “It was discovered some time ago on St. Peter’s Day and because of the five of us at the time, a Jes & 4 adventurers, there were 3 named Peter.”<sup>20</sup>

The Dakota system of kinship and reciprocity was integral to the fur trade. Family bonds created trust and required people to share resources. Individuals did not need to be related by blood to be kin. French traders married into Dakota families, calling these unions *a la facon du pays*, or “according to the custom of the country”—essentially, Native marriage ceremonies adapted to the fur trade. Native women, who were always central to Indigenous society and governance, became pivotal figures in the trade. Their acceptance of European husbands extended kinship networks and created political and economic ties, as well. Without Native women, the structures that governed the fur trade would not have functioned.<sup>21</sup>

As families blended, so did the material culture of Europeans and Dakota. Dakota people began using iron cookware and implements; firearms were highly valued. The Dakota incorporated the fur trade business into their seasonal cycles—trapping in the winter, when pelts were thickest and most valuable, and selling furs in the spring. European traders adopted Dakota foods and goods, such as clothing and canoes, and learned how to access Mni Sota Makoce’s resources from their Dakota relatives. European-Dakota marriages created families of mixed ancestry, forming the basis of a borderland culture that existed for nearly two hundred years. Governed by native kinship networks, the diverse fur trade culture influenced politics and economics at Bdote and beyond until the 1860s.<sup>22</sup>

The fur trade era was a time of economic interaction and cultural blending, but it was also destructive to Indigenous culture, and it began European colonization of the South Loop. At the state level, the French were practicing extractive colonialism. The government was interested in extracting furs from the region and used native people to access the land’s resources. French occupation of the

Colonialism is a state policy of acquiring partial or full control over another country and exploiting it. During the Fur Trade Era, European powers sought to extend their control into the interior of North America. However, the agents of these imperial powers were interested in extracting resources from the region, mainly furs. They were not motivated to remove Native Americans from the land. On the contrary, they formed a colonial relationship with Native people and depended on them to help extract resources from the land. This differentiates colonialism from settler colonialism. A fur trader may live on indigenous land, but frequently leaves to bring furs back to an imperial metropole. If a fur trader lives on indigenous land for a considerable length of time they do so within Native political and social structures. Settlers on the other hand desire to eliminate Native Americans in order to assert their sovereignty over the land and occupy it.

<sup>20</sup> Westerman and White, *Minnesota Makoce*, 51.

<sup>21</sup> For a discussion of fur trade marriages and the centrality of Native American women see, Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society, 1670–1870*, (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 4–5, 28–52.

<sup>22</sup> Wingerd, *North Country*, 14, 40; Walker, *Lakota Religion and Belief*, 198–99.



region was not always permanent and the land itself was not a key resource. But French incursions into native land paved the way for other colonists.<sup>23</sup>

As the fur trade became more entrenched, it destabilized relations between Indigenous peoples. The Ojibwe, growing in population, fleeing eastern conflicts, and following a prophecy that they would travel to where food grows on the water (wild rice), began moving into Minnesota with permission from the Dakota. The Dakota and Ojibwe were more often allies than enemies, and sometimes they became family. The Dakota valued the Ojibwe as middlemen in the fur trade, but when the Dakota gained direct access to French traders, they became less willing to tolerate the Ojibwe incursions. Although trading, alliances, and familial ties continued, a series of sporadic, complex, and sometimes violent conflicts between the Dakota and Ojibwe began in 1736 and lasted more than a century. Drawn by the buffalo and new trading posts, the Dakota had already begun moving south, but the violence hastened their departure from the northern portion of Minnesota.<sup>24</sup>



Figure 5: This map is the first to record with any accuracy the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers along with the South Loop to its east. Map by Guillaume de L'Isle, 1702. Library of Congress.

<sup>23</sup> Lucy Eldersveld Murphy, *Great Lakes Creoles: A French-Indian Community on the Northern Borderlands, Prairie Du Chien, 1750–1860*, (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 26.

<sup>24</sup> Wingerd, *North Country*, 33–36; Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 29.

## The British Era of the Fur Trade

For nearly a century, the French claimed possession of the South Loop through the Doctrine of Discovery. That changed after 1754, at the beginning of the Seven Years' War, an imperial contest spanning five continents and involving several European nations. In Britain's North American colonies, people called the conflict the French and Indian War, and it pitted the colonies of France and Britain against one another. The French were defeated in 1760 and forced to cede their North American possessions to Great Britain in 1763. The Dakota, now players in an imperial world, sent envoys to Montreal, where they described the Oceti Sakowin to the British and asked that traders be sent to their land.<sup>25</sup>

In 1766 the British government sent explorer Jonathan Carver to the headwaters of the Mississippi. At Lake Pepin he met a group of Dakota who allowed him to enter Bdote. Carver visited some sacred sites at Bdote and observed large burial mounds. The explorer moved upstream and ascended a height—Oheyawahe (Pilot Knob)—that provided a view of The Minnesota River. It is likely that from this vantage point he was the first Englishman to lay eyes on the South Loop. Carver wrote:

Ten miles below the falls of St. Anthony the River St. Pierre, called by the natives Waddapawmenesotor [Wakpa Mni Sota], falls into the Mississippi from the left. It is not mentioned by Father Hennipin [sic], although a large fair river: this omission, I conclude, must have proceeded from a small island that is situated exactly at its entrance, by which the sight of it is intercepted. I should not have discovered this river myself, had I not taken a view, when I was searching for it, from the high lands opposite, which rise to a great height.

Afterward Carver traveled to more sacred sites around Bdote and described the surrounding countryside, a description that could be applied to the oak grove prairie of the South Loop:

The country...is extremely beautiful. It is not an uninterrupted plain where the eye finds no relief, but composed of many gentle accents, which in the summer are covered with the finest verdure, and interspersed with little groves, that give a pleasing variety to the prospect.

Carver continued to describe the area later in his journal with an eye towards resources that could support future European settlement:

[This is] a most delightful country, abounding with all the necessaries of life, that grow spontaneously; and with little cultivation it might be made to produce even the luxuries of life. Wild rice grows here in great abundance; and every part is filled with trees bending under their loads of fruits...the meadows are covered with hops, and many forts of vegetables; whilst the ground is stored with useful roots[.] At a little distance from the

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<sup>25</sup> Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 72.

sides of the river are eminences, from which you have views that cannot be exceeded...amidst these are delightful groves, and such amazing quantities of maples, that they would produce sugar sufficient for any number of inhabitants.

He went on to describe the presence of eagles, deer, elk, beavers, and otters stating that “the hunter never fails of returning loaded beyond his expectations.” Clearly the land was very abundant with plants and animals. After exploring the region of the confluence, Carver traveled up the Minnesota River. He does not describe his passage in detail, but he did pass by the South Loop.<sup>26</sup>

After wintering with the Dakota on western regions of the Minnesota River, in April of 1767, Carver returned to the South Loop area with a large group of Dakota who were bringing the remains of their relatives to Bdote for burial. The Englishman passed by the South Loop again, along with nearly three hundred Dakota from the west. When they reached Bdote, they conducted ceremonies and placed the remains in the mounds. The Dakota held a “grand council” at the cave and allowed Carver to attend. According to Carver’s account, it seems representatives of several Dakota communities were present to “settle their operations for the ensuing year.” Carver stated that he was adopted as a Dakota chief, but more likely the Dakota adopted him as kin to cement their ties with Britain. The Dakota committed to peace with the English and again asked that traders be sent to them.<sup>27</sup>

British traders followed in Carver’s wake and brought dramatic changes to the fur trade as they made their way up the Minnesota River. Unlike the French, the British did not operate under government monopolies. In 1767 the fur trade was opened to any businessman who could raise the money to begin trading. For the British, capitalism, not kinship, guided the trade. While French traders had advanced goods against furs, they frequently forgave debt to preserve kinship ties and military alliances. The British made the credit system a purely economic one, rarely forgiving debt. Some traders purposefully kept their Dakota and Ojibwe customers in a state of indebtedness by marking up the price of goods. Anglo traders didn’t interact with Indigenous culture as much as the French, but generations of Native-European people continued to be central to the trade.

For the rest of the eighteenth century, the fur trade between the Dakota and the British stabilized. However, the United States won its independence from Great Britain in 1783, and with the signing of Jay’s Treaty in 1794, the British lost control of the Northwest. British and French traders formed their own companies or joined companies from the United States. After the War of 1812, British influence in the region waned and the United States moved to take over the fur trade among the Dakota.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Carver, *Travels Through the Interior Parts of North America*, 63–73. 100.

<sup>27</sup> Carver, *Travels Through the Interior Parts of North America*, 84–91.

<sup>28</sup> Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 82; Wingerd, *North Country*, 52–55.

## The Oceti Sakowin at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century

Dakota village sites were traditionally inhabited on a semi-permanent basis. The most well-known sites were summer villages that existed along the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers. Dakota people lived at these villages generation after generation, stretching back into the early 1700s, while others came into existence during the 1800s. In order to set the stage for an understanding of the United States' invasion and colonization of the land it is necessary to locate these villages in relation to the South Loop in a general way. No known Dakota village site existed within the bounds of the South Loop. However, Dakota people certainly inhabited the district: hunting, gathering, interacting with each other, traveling along their trade routes, and generally living life there. The Dakota people who lived in the area were the Bdewakantunwan of the Santee Dakota. The closest



Figure 6: Ohanska “the village of the long avenue,” also known as the Black Dog Village. Image is from “Harper’s New Monthly Magazine,” 1853. Minnesota Historical Society.

Dakota village to the South Loop was actually across the river and was known as Ohanska “the village of the long avenue,” or Black Dog’s Village. The Dakota name for the village referenced the view from the village of Bdote. The first documentation of a leader named Black Dog is in 1742. Subsequent leaders of the village were known as “the Black Dog chief” but had their own names. The people of the Black Dog village were also known as Maga yute sni “those who do not eat geese” a possible reference to the abundance of water fowl in the area. Downriver on the Bloomington side at the mouth of Nine Mile Creek was the village of Titanka Tannina, also known as the village of Penichon (Penishon, Penetion). The Dakota name Titanka Tannina means “the old village” and suggests it was the first Dakota community on the Minnesota River. The name of “Penichon” was said to have come from an early leader of the village, Fils du Penishon (son of Penishon), whose ancestor was a French fur trader. During the late 1700s and early 1800s Wanyaga Inazin (He Sees Standing Up) was the leader of the village. He was followed by Takuni Phephe Sni (He That Fears Nothing) who died in 1833. Afterward, Tacanku Waste (Good Road) was the leader of the village. East of this village was the community of Kahboka (The Drifter), a possible off-shoot from the Black Dog village. In 1843 another Dakota village, that of Mahpiya Wicasta (Cloud Man) was established in present-day Bloomington near

Oak Grove, on the bluff above Long Meadow Lake. Mahpiya Wicasta had lived at the Penichon village and then led a group of Dakota north to Bde Maka Ska (Lake Calhoun) to try European American farming. After attacks from Ojibwe, he and his people moved back south into the lands that would become Bloomington.



Figure 7: Dakota people playing takapsicapi or lacrosse. Painting by Seth Eastman, 1850. Minnesota Historical Society.

were of the Bdewakantunwan band of the Seven Council Fires and existed in the Bloomington area up until 1852-1853. At times the Bdewakantunwan of these villages gathered together in present-day Bloomington to play takapsicapi or lacrosse. Other Dakota villages existed southeast, down the Mississippi River from the South Loop, and west up the Minnesota River.<sup>29</sup>

A village outside the bounds of present-day Bloomington, but important to the history of the South Loop District, was Tinta Otonwe, “village of the prairie” also known as Shakopee’s Village.” or “Village of the Six.” The hereditary leaders of this village went by the name Sakpe (The Six) with one being called Sakpedan (Little Six). Today’s Old Shakopee Road takes its name from this line of Dakota leaders. The road was originally a trail created by the Dakota (and perhaps earlier residents) that led from Bdote, across the plains of the South Loop, to Nine Mile Creek and a ford across the Minnesota River. From there it reached Tinta Otonwe. As Europeans arrived the fur traders began using the route. All of these villages

### The First Lines Are Drawn on the Land

With the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the United States claimed the western portion of the Mississippi River drainage, including the homeland of the Dakota. In 1805 an expedition led by US Army Lieutenant Zebulon Pike departed St. Louis, intent on exploring the headwaters of the Mississippi River. Unlike famous explorers Lewis and Clark, Pike did not set out under the US government’s authority. Instead, the commander of the Missouri Territory, General James Wilkinson, who would be exposed after his death as a paid Spanish agent, ordered Pike’s exploration. Pike’s expedition was unique in its militaristic and colonial aims. The French and British had constructed posts in Minnesota, but they were meant for trade, not military

<sup>29</sup> City of Bloomington, *Minnesota River Valley Natural & Cultural Systems Plan*, “Appendix H: Known Cultural Resources,” July 5, 2018; Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 83; 99, 122-127, 140; Hendricks, *Bloomington On The Minnesota*, 6-8, 15.

occupation. Wilkinson ordered Pike to find commanding spots to establish military posts and to obtain permission for their construction from the local Indigenous people.

Pike entered the Dakota homeland from the south by way of the Mississippi River. The first Dakota to meet him were Wabasha's people at the mouth of the Iowa River. Wabasha (The Leaf, also known as La Feuille) hosted Pike in his lodge and presented the lieutenant with a pipe to ensure he would "be treated with friendship and respect" as he met other Dakota on his journey north. Pike gave Wabasha gifts before departing and told the Dakota leader that the United States intended to establish posts in the region to trade with the Dakota.<sup>30</sup>

Afterward, the people who lived at He Mni Can (Barn Bluff at Red Wing, also called Caske Tanka) welcomed Pike. Their leader Tatankamani (Walking Buffalo, also called Red Wing) presented Pike with another pipe and accompanied him to Bdote, which they reached on September 21, 1805. Pike noted Dakota villages near Wakan Tipi and Wita Tanka, and he observed the Dakota bringing their dead to Bdote and placing them on scaffolds. The US expedition made camp on the northeast point of Wita Tanka, at the very center of Bdote.<sup>31</sup>

After arriving at the confluence Pike was escorted by a guide named Frazer to a village up the Minnesota River, likely the Dakota community at Black Dog's village or Nine Mile Creek. The Dakota leaders and warriors were not at the villages. But when word was sent to them of Pike's arrival, they agreed to meet him the next day. Back at Bdote, Cetan Wakuwa Mani (Hawk that Hunts While Walking, also called Petit Corbeau or Little Crow; his grandson, also known as Little Crow, would be even more widely known to European Americans) arrived at Bdote with 150 men. The Bdewakantunwan climbed the bluff between the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers and saluted Pike by firing their weapons. Cetan Wakuwa Mani and Pike agreed to a council the next day.

On September 23, 1805, Wanyaga Inazin (the hereditary Fils du Penishon)—the Dakota leader who represented the Bdewakantunwan who lived in and around the present site of the South Loop—made his way to Bdote for a council with the American military officer. He likely slipped his canoe into the water with some anticipation with his people watching and the burial mounds along the bluffs overlooking him. Wanyaga Inazin was probably a skillful diplomat of the fur trade, used to dealing with the French and British. The Americans were simply the new power looking to cement trading ties with the Dakota. The idea that the Americans were interested in establishing a presence near his village would have been an exciting economic prospect. Indigenous people had been advising European Americans on where to construct their fur trading posts for over a hundred years and used them to political and economic advantage. Leaving his village at the mouth of Nine Mile Creek he made his way to the confluence accompanied by other village leaders and warriors. As Bdote came into view, Wanyaga Inazin saw a bower made of Pike's ship sail stretched out on the beach of Wita Tanka. Dozens, if not hundreds of Dakota leaders and warriors, along with fur traders and Pike's soldiers assembled on

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<sup>30</sup> Pike, *The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike*, 44–47.

<sup>31</sup> Pike, *The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike*, 68–69, 74–81; Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 82.

the beach. Wanyaga Inazin joined with six other principal leaders of the Dakota, including Cetan Wakuwa Mani under the bower with Pike and some traders. Pike wrote,

I then addressed them in a speech, which, though long and touching on many points, had for its principal object the granting of land at this place, falls of St. Anthony, and St. Croix [river], and making peace with the Chipeways [Ojibwe]. I was replied to by Le Fils de Pinchow [Wanyaga Inazin], Le Petit Corbeau, and l'Original Leve. They gave me the land required, about 100,000 acres, equal to \$200,000, and promised me a safe passport for myself and any [Chippewa] chief I might bring down; but spoke doubtfully with respect to the peace. I gave them presents to the amount of about \$200, and as soon as the council was over, I allowed the traders to present them with some liquor, which, with what I myself gave, was equal to 60 gallons. In one half-hour they were all embarked for their respective villages.

Pike drew up a document with three articles. The first granted the United States land for military posts at the mouth of the St. Croix River and at Bdote, up the Mississippi River to St. Anthony Falls. The land grant included “nine miles on each side of the [Mississippi] River.” This sentence brought the South Loop within the bounds of the agreement. The United States would have “full sovereignty and power” over the land forever. The second article stated the United States would pay the Dakota for the land, but Pike left the amount blank. The final article promised the Dakota the right to travel across the land and use it as they always had. In his journal, Pike recounted, “It was somewhat difficult to get them to sign the grant, as they conceived their word of honor should be taken for the grant without any mark; but I convinced them it was not on their account, but my own, that I wished them to sign it.” Of the seven Dakota leaders, only Cetan Wakuwa Mani and Wanyaga Inazin, who Pike recorded as “Le Fils de Pinchow,” signed the document.<sup>32</sup>

Dakota and US views about the land were very different. The United States saw the land as a commodity; the Dakota believed that the land could not be owned. Translating terms like “grant” and “sovereignty” would thus have been difficult. It is unlikely the Dakota leaders and US representatives understood the treaty provisions on the same terms. It is notable that the two Dakota leaders who signed the agreement lived closest to the area in question. It would make some sense that other Dakota leaders would defer to them. It is also quite possible that the Dakota believed they were granting land for a fur trade post—not a permanent fortification and occupation of their lands.

There were several other problems with the agreement. The president of the United States had not authorized Pike’s expedition, and therefore the army lieutenant had no legal authority to negotiate a treaty with any Indigenous people. Cetan Wakuwa Mani and Wanyaga Inazin’s people lived near Bdote, but the two men did not have the power to represent thousands of

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<sup>32</sup> Pike, *The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike*, 82–84; Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 83; Kappler, “Treaty with the Sioux, 1805,” Kappler, *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*.

Dakota. The Dakota people made important decisions through consensus, and most of their leaders were not present.

The US Senate did not discuss the agreement until 1808. The Senate unilaterally set the amount of land granted by the treaty at over fifty-one thousand acres at the St. Croix River and over one hundred thousand at Bdote, extending north up the Mississippi. Once the acreage was defined, the Senate set payment for the land at \$2,000, though Pike had estimated its value at \$200,000. No Dakota were present to agree to these terms. After the Senate ratified the treaty, President Thomas Jefferson did not proclaim it, which was standard procedure at the time. For these reasons, the “treaty” that set the legal groundwork for US ownership of the South Loop was, in many ways, invalid. Even so, the US government continued to act as though it was a legally binding document. Thus Wanyaga Inazin, a Dakota leader who generally represented the lands of the South Loop played a pivotal role in the first unofficial negotiations with the US Government.<sup>33</sup>

After Pike left, the Dakota continued trading with the British and had little or no contact with the United States. During the War of 1812, some Dakota supported the British and helped them regain territory in the Northwest, but the fledgling United States defeated the British in 1815, and the two nations agreed to reestablish their prewar borders. In 1815 and 1816 leaders of the Bdewakantunwan, Wahpetunwan, and Wahpekute signed peace treaties stating that they were under the protection of the United States. The United States now claimed any land the Dakota people had ceded to other European powers, and any previous agreement made with the United States was confirmed.<sup>34</sup>

## **The United States Comes to the Confluence**

US Secretary of War John C. Calhoun drafted a plan in 1818 to build forts in the Upper Mississippi Valley that would extend US power westward, fulfill the government’s economic and colonial ambitions, and ultimately play a pivotal role in taking control of Indigenous peoples’ land. Calhoun wrote, “When these posts are all established and occupied . . . our northwestern frontier will be rendered much more secure than heretofore, and . . . the most valuable fur trade in the world will be thrown into our hands.” It was not until 1818, thirteen years after the Dakota negotiated with Pike on that the United States returned to Mni Sota Makoce. US Army Major Stephen Long traveled to Bdote, surveyed the place Pike had claimed, and reported that the confluence was the perfect location to construct a fort.<sup>35</sup>

In 1819 two arms of US colonialism converged on Bdote, one diplomatic and one military. In June Indian Agent Major Thomas Forsyth began traveling up the Mississippi from St. Louis. His instructions were to distribute approximately \$2,000 in goods to Dakota leaders

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<sup>33</sup> Case, “Pike’s Treaty”; Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 140–42.

<sup>34</sup> “Treaty with the Sioux of the St. Peter’s River, 1815,” and “Treaty with the Sioux, 1816,” Kappler, *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*.

<sup>35</sup> “Letter from the secretary of war, to the chairman of the military committee, Department of War, December 29, 1819,” In, Niles, ed., *Niles Weekly Register*, January 15, 1820, 330.



due to them under the terms of Pike’s “treaty.” That same summer, Lieutenant Colonel Henry Leavenworth, commanding the Fifth US Infantry Regiment in Detroit, was ordered to move the majority of his command to the confluence of the rivers. Leavenworth and ninety-eight men traveled across what is now Wisconsin and met Forsyth at Prairie du Chien. The two US government representatives set out for Bdote on August 8.

Forsyth arrived at Bdote on August 23, and Leavenworth, with his men, the next day. Wanyaga Inazin and his people heard of their arrival and on the twenty-fifth of August the Dakota leader came down river to speak with Forsyth. Forsyth wrote,

Yesterday evening Pinichon and the White Bustard arrived with many followers, and wished me to go to work immediately; but it being late, and I being very unwell, I put business off until to-day, when after a long talk I gave them a very handsome present, and they returned home apparently satisfied.

Forsyth then made payments to Wabasha, Tatankamani, Cetan Wakuwa Mani, and Sakpe, among others. The military command established itself “on a place immediately at the mouth of [the] St. Peter’s river, on its right bank.”<sup>36</sup>

After completing his mission, Forsyth returned south. When 120 recruits joined Leavenworth’s force in September, the total number of US soldiers at Bdote rose to just over two hundred. The command wintered in a wooden cantonment called New Hope, below the bluff, where the soldiers suffered from scurvy, dysentery, and cold. Over thirty of them died during the winter of 1819–20. Leavenworth moved his men to a new camp near Mni Sni (Coldwater Spring) in the spring. The soldiers established Camp Coldwater at the ancient Native American meeting ground. In the midst of the winter, as the men of the Fifth Infantry suffered, Calhoun reported to Congress that the post at the confluence would serve a vital purpose: “The post at the mouth of the St. Peter’s is at the head of navigation on the Mississippi, and in addition to its commanding positions [*sic*] in relation to the Indians, it possesses great advantages, either to protect our trade, or prevent that of foreigners.”<sup>37</sup>

Fort Snelling, the US Indian Agency, and the American Fur Company Headquarters at Mendota constituted a US colony. This colony was a new political organization in the region, created by invaders. It was geographically remote from the US imperial center at Washington, D.C. but the US Government claimed possession of it. More specifically, this was an exploitation colony meant to police the region so US economic interests, mainly in the fur trade, were protected. Residents of the colony—soldiers, diplomats, and fur traders—usually left the area after completing their assignments. With the establishment of this colony, the South Loop came under the direct influence of US colonization.

<sup>36</sup> Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 143; Hall, *Fort Snelling*, 5, 189.

<sup>37</sup> Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 143; Hall, *Fort Snelling*, 8; Sibley, *Memoir of Jean Baptiste Faribault*, 176; Thomas Forsyth, “Journal of a Voyage from St. Louis to the Falls of St. Anthony, in 1819,” in *Collections of*

The next summer Leavenworth asked the Dakota to meet with him in council to discuss the land agreement. On August 9, 1820, Leavenworth and traders Duncan Campbell and Jean Baptiste Faribault met with twenty-two Dakota leaders from local bands at Mni Sni. Newly arrived Indian agent Lawrence Taliaferro, representing the president of the United States, was also present. The Dakota signed another agreement, this one granting land at the confluence of the rivers to the US government. According to the agreement, the Dakota gave the land to the US government “in consideration of many acts of kindness received by said Indians from said Leavenworth.” Payment for the land was alluded to, but not required. Locally, the treaty accomplished essentially the same goals as Pike’s “treaty,” but the US government never officially adopted the 1820 agreement. This agreement was for a smaller parcel of land and did not include the South Loop though Dakota leaders from that area signed it.<sup>38</sup>

Shortly after the council at Mni Sni, Leavenworth was replaced by Colonel Josiah Snelling. Snelling oversaw the design of a diamond-shaped limestone fortification with the help of Lieutenant Robert McCabe. Construction of Fort St. Anthony began on September 10, 1820. Fort St. Anthony was renamed Fort Snelling by General Winfield Scott in 1825, after he inspected the post.<sup>39</sup>

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*the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, 6, edited by Lyman Copeland Draper, (Madison, WI: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1908), 205-206 188–89, 200–208; Folwell, *History of Minnesota*, Vol. 1, 136.

<sup>38</sup> Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 143; Denial, “Pelagie Faribault’s Island”; Deloria and DeMallie, *Documents of American Indian Diplomacy*, 1:1246.

<sup>39</sup> Hall, *Fort Snelling*, 10-11,15–16.



Figure 8: Map of the region by Lawrence Taliaferro, 1835. Across from the South Loop is the Black Dog Village. Further up the Minnesota River is the village of Penishon. Minnesota Historical Society.

The US government’s goals for the fort reflected its colonial aspirations. The post was intended to dissuade the British from any further incursions into the Northwest and to stamp out Anglo influence in the booming fur trade. The United States intended to exploit the region’s resources for economic gain. Rather than protecting European American newcomers, the soldiers at Fort St. Anthony were tasked with keeping unauthorized people off Dakota and Ojibwe land so the fur trade could continue—until the land could be acquired through treaties. Finally, the United States sought to mediate the complex relationship between the sometimes-clashing Dakota and Ojibwe. Peace between

the two peoples would mean an uninterrupted flow of furs and tax revenue for the US government. The confluence of the rivers, which was important as a spiritual place and a meeting ground for Dakota people, was also the perfect strategic location for a nation with colonial aims. From the confluence of the rivers, the US military could control fur trade traffic in area. The Dakota were far more powerful than the small garrison at Fort Snelling, but construction of the fort marked a seminal moment in the invasion of Dakota lands.<sup>40</sup>

The US government established the St. Peters Indian Agency on the fort’s military reservation, and for the majority of its existence, from 1820 to 1839, it was administered by Lawrence Taliaferro. His main duties were to negotiate treaties, settle disputes between Indians

<sup>40</sup> Wingerd, *North Country*, 82–83.

and European Americans, enforce fur trade laws, and establish a good relationship with the Dakota and Ojibwe. For decades if Dakota leaders from the South Loop area wished to treat with the US Government they met with Taliaferro. Taliaferro also tried to end violence between the Dakota and Ojibwe, which was destructive to the trade. However, the region was Indian country, and the United States had little real power.<sup>41</sup>

Motivated by expansionist goals, paternalism, and a belief that acculturation was the only way for Dakota and Ojibwe people to survive, Taliaferro and his successors encouraged Indigenous people to give up hunting and gathering and adopt European American agricultural methods. He also hoped to Christianize them, educate them according to European American standards, and end their traditional lifeways. After narrowly surviving a blizzard, Mahpiya Wicasta (Cloud Man), a Dakota leader from the Black Dog Village, decided to try the new ways. He and about two hundred men, women, and children made up the Dakota community that was established in 1829 under Taliaferro's oversight at Bde Maka Ska (Lake White Earth, renamed Lake Calhoun by colonists). Following Dakota tradition, they shared their crops with other Dakota—thus earning criticism from Taliaferro, who wanted them to be more self-interested, like European American farmers.<sup>42</sup>

In 1825 the US government called for a multinational gathering of American Indian tribes at Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, which would codify peace and borders among the region's people: Dakota, Ojibwe, Ho-Chunk, Ioway, Sauk, Meskwaki, and Menominee. Dakota and Ojibwe delegates gathered at Fort Snelling, and a party of 385 people traveled to Prairie du Chien with Taliaferro. At the council, Indigenous leaders from several nations expressed dismay at defining the borders of their land, declaring that they held it in common, but in the spirit of peace they agreed. Dakota leaders who represented the South Loop who signed were "Wa-made-tun-ka, Black Dog," "Pe-ni-si-on," and "Sha-co-pe, The Sixth." The South Loop was solidly within acknowledged Dakota territory, and it remained part of Dakota lands. For the first time, imaginary borders between Indigenous peoples were drawn through the land. Signing the treaty incorporated the Dakota, Ojibwe, and others in the region into the United States' colonial endeavors. With "legal" boundaries, the land was prepared for future acquisition by the United States. Five years later, the Wahpetunwan, Sisitunwan Wahpekute, and Bdewakantunwan

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41 Treuer, *The Assassination of Hole in the Day*, 47–49.

42 Minnesota Historical Society, Historic Fort Snelling, "The US Indian Agency (1820–1853)"; Cassady, "St. Peter's Indian Agency"; Katherine Beane, "Bde Maka Ska / Lake Calhoun, Minneapolis," in Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 104–7.



Figure 9: Figure 9: "View of the Great Treaty Held at Prarie [sic] du Chien, September 1825." Painting by J.O. Lewis. Library of Congress.

returned to Prairie du Chien for another multinational gathering. In the ensuing treaty they ceded a strip of land between the Mississippi and Des Moines rivers, which when added to the lands ceded by the other nations, created a neutral ground. Dakota signers of this treaty who were sovereign over the South Loop were, "Taco-coqui-pishnee, He That Feels Nothing," and "Tachaw-cooash-tay, The Good

Road." The treaty set aside a tract of land for people of European-Dakota ancestry along the Mississippi near Lake Pepin. For the first time the Dakota received annual payments, or annuities, of \$2,000, for ten years. The US government also promised that a blacksmith would work for the Dakota and agricultural tools would be supplied to them.<sup>43</sup>

### The Dakota and the First European Americans in the South Loop

During the 1830s and 1840s the Dakota were secure in their power, but steadily they grew concerned as more European Americans arrived putting pressure on the land and natural resources. On the ground Dakota leaders debated the land cession portion of the agreement Wanyaga Inazin and others had made with Pike in 1805. When Forsyth made payments for the agreement in 1819 only one Dakota leader had acknowledged the goods were given in exchange for the land. The subsequent agreement with Leavenworth added to the confusion. Whether the South Loop was part of the land cession or not hung in the balance. The Dakota met with Indian Agent Lawrence Taliaferro and argued that the land cession was only two miles square and did not include the South Loop. Taliaferro argued to enforce the agreement made with Pike. This debate heightened over the years as more settlers arrived and more timber was cut down near Dakota villages. Confusion over the cession also divided the Dakota. The position of the hereditary Penishon leaders is not known, but the opinion of Kahboka, who may have led a

<sup>43</sup> Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 148–55; Kappler, "Treaty with the Sioux, etc., August 19, 1825;" "Treaty With the Sauk and Foxes, etc., [July 15,] 1830."

village in present-day Bloomington was recorded. He reaffirmed that the land had indeed been ceded to the United States.<sup>44</sup>

As the debate reached a fever pitch, the United States government moved to quash the issue by drawing more lines on the land. In 1837 the bands of Bdewakantunwan Dakota who lived on the east side of the Mississippi River ceded their lands to the United States. Among the treaty signers was “Tah-chunk-wash-taa, Good Road.” The Dakota did so due to the loss of fur bearing animals important to the fur trade and because settlers and lumberman were pressing on their lands. The United States, aided by local fur traders, pursued the treaty as part of its policy of Indian Removal that was then taking place across the eastern United States. That same year the US War Department ordered that the Fort Snelling Military Reservation be mapped and surveyed so that its borders could be enforced.

The survey was based on the agreement signed in 1805 and completed in 1839. According to the map of the reservation the South Loop was entirely within the bounds of the military’s jurisdiction and no longer belonged to the Dakota. In practice, the Dakota likely came and went across the line, but the military did enforce its borders. In order to live on the land, settlers,

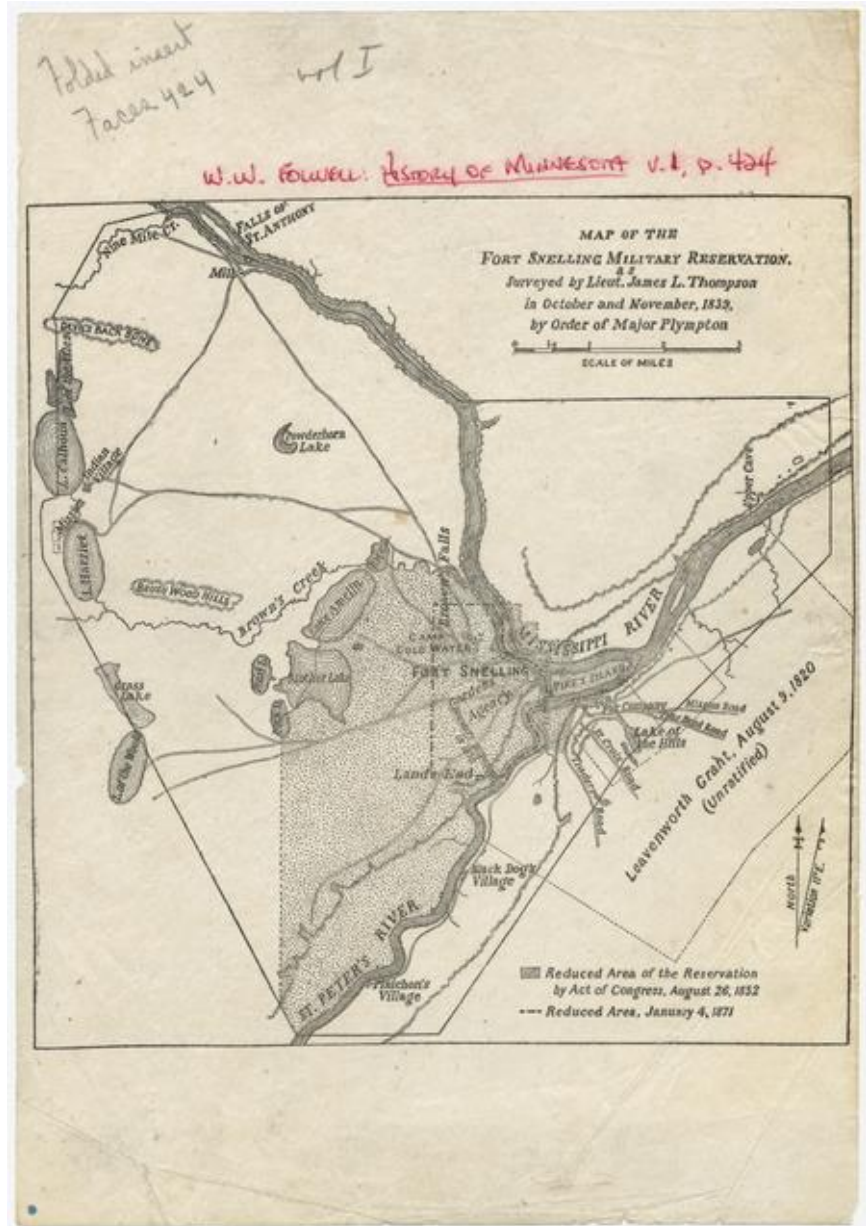


Figure 10: Map of the Fort Snelling Military Reservation, surveyed in 1839. The diagonal western boundary cuts through present-day Bloomington with the South Loop falling just within the bounds of the military reserve. Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>44</sup> Folwell, *History of Minnesota*, 446-447; Westerman and White, *Minnesota Makoce*, 143.

missionaries, and traders had to obtain permission from the commander at Fort Snelling. This led the lands of the South Loop to be officially uninhabited and under the control of the US Government for the next twenty years.<sup>45</sup>

After the US Government established itself at Bdote, more American settlers, traders, and missionaries entered the region. Though more and more European Americans arrived, it was actually interaction between the Dakota and Ojibwe that prompted the settlement of the area that would become Bloomington. The first non-Native person to live where Bloomington would exist was Peter Quinn. Quinn was born in Ireland and went to British Canada as a servant, eventually becoming a trapper for the Hudson's Bay Company. Like many men of the fur trade, he married a Native American woman of mixed Native and European American ancestry. After working along the shores of Lake Superior and Fort Garry (later Winnipeg) he traveled south along the Red River, then east along the Minnesota River, eventually making his way to Fort Snelling. There he was hired as an interpreter and his wife joined him around 1824. The couple built a cabin near St. Anthony Falls and lived there for over a decade. However, in 1842 the area became a violent borderland between the Dakota and Ojibwe which prompted them to move further south. They established themselves on land that would become present-day Bloomington where Quinn continued to work as an interpreter and farmer. The Quinns lived just outside the bounds of the South Loop and were given permission to do so because Peter worked as a government farmer.<sup>46</sup>

Among the missionaries were two brothers who would become touchstones in Bloomington History: Samuel William and Gideon Hollister Pond. The two came from Connecticut and were converted to Protestantism during the Second Great Awakening, a religious revival that was sweeping the country. They devoted themselves to going west and bringing their faith with them. Samuel traveled to Galena, Illinois and there a liquor dealer described the land of the Dakota to him. Samuel wrote his brother and the two journeyed to Fort Snelling, arriving there aboard the steamer *Warrior* on May 6, 1834.<sup>47</sup>

The Pond brothers had no license to do missionary work in the territory but Major Bliss who commanded the Fort Snelling garrison and Agent Taliaferro, who represented the president in diplomatic work with Native Americans, both approved their work. Taliaferro had been partnering with Mahyipa Wicasta (Cloud Man) on a Dakota agricultural village at Bde Maka Ska. He sent the brothers there where Maypiya Wicasta helped them select a site to build their cabin. The brothers began aiding the Dakota in plowing and the work of western agriculture.<sup>48</sup>

Unlike the majority of missionaries in United States History the Ponds took a significant interest in the lives and culture of the people they attempted to proselytize to. While the Ponds certainly felt white men were superior and that the Dakota way of life would disappear, they

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<sup>45</sup> Folwell, *History of Minnesota*, 422-425; Westerman and White, *Minnesota Makoce*, 144-145; Stephen E. Osman, *Fort Snelling and the Civil War*, (St. Paul, MN: Ramsey County Historical Society, 2017), 4; "Treaty with the Sioux, September 29, 1837."

<sup>46</sup> Henricks, *Bloomington on the Minnesota*, 27.

<sup>47</sup> William Watts Folwell, *A History of Minnesota*, Vol. 1, 183-184.

<sup>48</sup> Folwell, 186-187.

believed Dakota culture should be respected and studied. When they arrived, the Ponds began the ethnographic linguistic work they would become famous for and created a written dictionary of the Dakota language. The two brothers worked diligently and by living among the Dakota came to learn their language in a way no other missionaries would. This first-ever orthography of the Dakota language has come to be known as the “Pond Alphabet.” They wrote a grammar book with three thousand Dakota words and translated portions of the Bible into the Dakota language. Later, from 1850-1852 the Pond Brothers published *Dakota Tawaxitku Kind or The Dakota Friend*, a newspaper written in both Dakota and English. It was the second newspaper to be published in an Indigenous language in United States History.<sup>49</sup>

The next year two more missionaries with official licenses arrived: the Reverend Thomas Smith Williamson and the Reverend Jedediah Stevens. Licenses in hand, these men displaced the Ponds in their authority setting the brothers to mostly manual labor work. Unhappy, Gideon went west to Lac qui Parle and Samuel east to be ordained. When Samuel returned, he worked at Lake Harriet and his brother continued to work to the west. Eventually the Pond families moved to the area that would become Bloomington in 1843. The Dakota of Mahpiya Wicasta’s village had moved there in 1839, fearing conflict with Ojibwe people who had been raiding south. The family built a log house by a Dakota village overlooking the Minnesota River and would stay in the area for decades. They established the Oak Grove Mission and in the ensuing years they preached, and conducted a school. Gideon Pond lived in the house until his death in 1878 and during his time there he acquired land along the Minnesota River. Tracts of it extended into the current location of the South Loop District and were held by his family in subsequent years. There is little doubt that the Ponds spent time in the area of the South Loop given their landholdings and the existence of the Dakota trail that led to Bdote and Fort Snelling that crossed the area. In addition to the Quinns and Ponds, another well-known European American to settle in the Bloomington area was Martin McLeod, but his story will be told in a later section of this report in order to illuminate the pivotal events of the 1850s.<sup>50</sup>

For the Dakota the influx of Americans during the mid-1800s into the region had a great impact on their way of life and access to the land. Unratified agreements were made and the US Government had moved to enforce them, excluding the Dakota from the South Loop, at least in US law. The trail that had existed prior to US settlement between the village of Sakpe and Bdote had changed, a symbol of the forces swirling around it. The trail had become more of an established dirt road due to the use of fur traders, the military, and missionaries working to acculturate the Dakota. Two anecdotes, described by the Pond Brothers, illustrate the changing times well. Wayaga Inazin, leader of the Dakota around present-day Bloomington had died sometime in the 1820s or early 1830s. His successor was Tacanku Waste, also known as Good Road who signed treaties in the 1830s. Samuel Pond described him: “Good Road, chief of the Pinisha village, located near the mouth of Nine Mile creek, about nine miles above Fort Snelling, was an intelligent man and often appeared well in conversation.” But in Pond’s opinion, Tacanku

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<sup>49</sup> Folwell, 188; Henricks, *Bloomington on the Minnesota*, 28.

<sup>50</sup> Folwell, 193-197; Judith A. Henricks, ed., *Bloomington on the Minnesota*, 65.



Waste was not very influential and not necessarily a good leader. He often insulted people and was not as careful of his words in council as other Dakota leaders. In 1844 some men of the Penishon Village insulted a trader's wife and the captain in command of Fort Snelling, extended



Figure 11: "The Prairie Back of Fort Snelling," By Seth Eastman, 1846-1848. The road to the left is likely the Old Shakopee Road. The lands of the South Loop and Bloomington are seen in the distance. It is likely Tacanku Waste (Good Road) was marched down this road. Minnesota Historical Society.

his authority into Dakota lands, ordering Tacanku Waste to bring the offenders to the Fort. Tacanku Waste insulted the captain via his messengers and soon after a company of soldiers marched down the trail through the South Loop to arrest him. The military wished to make an example of him but Tacanku Waste apparently turned the tables on his captors.

...Good Road, who was then probably between fifty and sixty years of age, walking in advance of his captors, a

litter faster than his ordinary pace, but apparently with no great exertion, while his guard, both officers and men, were all panting like over-driven oxen. The offense for which he was arrested was not a very aggravated one, and he was discharged from custody soon after reaching the fort.

While somewhat comical, this anecdote reveals the situation of the South Loop between competing Dakota and US sovereignty. The Dakota leader was taken into custody by a rising American power that was straining to enforce its borders and sense of pride. And yet the image of Tacanku Waste, technically being brought to justice by a company of US soldiers, marching across a trail that had likely been used by his ancestors for hundreds of years, is symbolic of the waning of Dakota power.<sup>51</sup>

Another Dakota leader who found his life impacted by the changing times was Kahboka. In 1834 he and his followers joined the farming community of Mahpiya Wicasta near Bde Maka Ska and Lake Harriet. When the Fort Snelling Military Reservation was surveyed in 1839 the commander, Major Plympton ordered the Dakota to move off of their lands. Kahboka "an old man who claimed to be chief...had quite a following of Indians...with him" and split off from Mahpiya Wicasta who had become his rival. Kahboka and his people were forced to relocate to

<sup>51</sup> Samuel Pond, *The Dakota or Sioux in Minnesota As They Were in 1834*, 11-12.

the south side of the Minnesota River, first near Shakopee, but were finally allowed to settle west of the Black Dog Village across from present-day Bloomington in Burnsville. In the following years some evidence suggests that Kahboka and his people moved across the river and lived near the South Loop, but still outside the bounds of the military reserve. In 1841, Kahboka and his son were shot by an Ojibwe war party near Fort Snelling and Coldwater Spring. The son died at the scene of the violence but Kahboka was brought to the Fort Snelling hospital. He seemed to be healing but a few days later Kahboka, a Dakota leader with connections to Bloomington and the South Loop, died.<sup>52</sup>

The changes occurring to the land and the people inhabiting it in the region of the South Loop were not occurring in isolation. The South Loop was connected to a larger national story of American Empire and Native American resistance. Increasingly, the South Loop was a place defined by competing sovereignties: Dakota and American. Pursuing a policy of Indian removal via treaties and, if needed, war, the United States was an expansionist nation. It was also a nation increasing by the day in population as immigrants began to arrive on its shores. Some of these immigrants eventually found their way to the South Loop beginning in the pivotal decade of the 1850s, a decade that would completely reshape the future of the South Loop. The story of this dramatic transformation can be illuminated through the stories of two families: the Mahoneys and the McLeods. The story of Jeremiah Mahoney and his family links the South Loop to greater political, economic, and social processes taking place across the continent. The narrative of Martin McLeod's family sheds light on the deliberate efforts of US traders and politicians to wrest the South Loop from the possession of the Dakota and the transformation those efforts wrought on the lives of people in the region. First our story leaps from the 1839 survey of the military reservation to an Irish immigrant's arrival in America that same year.

### **Jeremiah Mahoney and Manifest Destiny**

In 1839, over one thousand miles to the east of what would become Minnesota, Jeremiah Mahoney stepped off of the ship *Portice* and planted his feet on American soil in Boston, Massachusetts. Little could he have known that his life would lead him to the far northwest. His experience and that of his family is an emblematic one that can be told in the South Loop District, linking it to larger stories and placing it in national context.

Twenty-three years old, when Mahoney reached Boston on October 1, 1839 he left behind a life in Ireland. He had been born in Carrignacurra, in the farm country outside Inchigeelagh, County Cork, Ireland in May 1817 to Timothy Mahoney and Ellen Murane. The parents had their son baptized into the Catholic faith at the Inchigeelagh Parish shortly after his birth. His godparents were Richard Taylor and Mary Mahony—likely a relation. Little is known about his life there or his reasons for emigration. However, it is probable Mahoney was not

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<sup>52</sup> Samuel Pond, *Two Volunteer Missionaries Among the Dakotas: Or, The Story of the Labors of Samuel W. and Gideon H. Pond*, (Boston, MA: Congregational Sunday-School and Publishing Society, 1893), 150-153.

unlike other Irish immigrants of the time. Throughout the nineteenth century millions of Irish people left their homeland. At the time of Mahoney's arrival in the US immigrants from Ireland accounted for over one third of all new arrivals and most of them were men. Carrignacurra, his home, was farming country and most Irish farming families had small landholdings, with property often being subdivided for each son. This made the land that could be farmed smaller and smaller upon each generation. It is also possible Mahoney's family were tenants, farming on the lands of a local lord. Whatever the case, he was likely motivated by the same forces that drew many people to America: poverty and lack of opportunity in their homeland, and the promise of something better in America. It seems he had no family in America and no real idea of where he intended to go when he arrived. On his immigration card no occupation is given and his destination is simply listed as "US." If all Mahoney had in mind was making a life in the United States, he would do so, and see perhaps more of the North American continent and the great changes sweeping over it than he bargained for.<sup>53</sup>

After arriving in the United States, Mahoney made his way north to New York City in search of opportunity. New York was a city of immigrants with hundreds of thousands arriving there in the 1820s and 1830s. Millions more would follow. Other than working as a laborer, nothing is known of his time there. Coming from a rural life in Ireland, and destitute by American standards, he probably found the modern and industrial city bewildering as his fellow Irish immigrants did. At the time Irish immigrants were forced to take jobs at the bottom of the economic ladder, laboring in dangerous industries or working as servants. Mahoney also faced religious bigotry and what some historians have called "soft racism." Anti-Catholic nativist movements were on the rise in America and Irish people, were not seen as fully "white" within the Anglo-Saxon racial hierarchy of the time. The Irish were frequently pitted against other poor immigrant groups and African Americans in a fight for low-paying jobs and basic respect in American Society.<sup>54</sup>

Within the framework of Settler Colonialism, when Mahoney arrived in the United States, he was a migrant and not yet a settler. The difference being that he was joining a society that was not his own. Settlers are made by conquering land, not by immigration. However, migrants like Mahoney are often co-opted by settler states, function as its agents, and eventually become settlers themselves.

He must have struggled and found few opportunities, for on September 7, 1840, he joined the United States Army. This pivotal decision would eventually lead him to live on the land that

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<sup>53</sup> Edward D. Neill and J. Fletcher Williams, *History of Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis, Including the Explorers and Pioneers of Minnesota; and Outlines of the History of Minnesota*, (Minneapolis, MN: North Star Publishing Company, 1881), 229; "Old Settler Dead," *Saint Paul Globe*, December 1, 1899; "Irish-Catholic Immigration to America," *Library of Congress* (accessed 7/21/2021); Immigration Record of J. Mahoney, October 1, 1839, United States Index to Passenger Arrivals, Atlantic and Gulf Ports, 1820-1874, Familysearch.org; Baptism Record of Jerh. Mahoney, May 27, 1817, "Ireland Births and Baptisms, 1620-1881" database, Familysearch.org; Though a church is not specified in Mahoney's baptism record, the ceremony almost certainly took place at Holy Trinity Church in the town of Inchigeelagh. The church was rebuilt in 1814 and its ruins still exist today.

<sup>54</sup> Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 526-527; "Immigration and Relocation in U.S. History: Irish," *Library of Congress*, (accessed 7/21/2021).

became the South Loop District. His enlisting officer, Captain Green, took down Mahoney's basic information and described him as a blue-eyed man with dark hair and a florid complexion, standing five feet, nine inches tall. Mahoney was one of nearly twenty recruits gathered up by the army from the streets of New York that month. Several were Irish like him, others were German, and some US citizens. The batch of recruits reflected the general trend in the service: an estimated two thirds of enlistees were recent immigrants, something that native-born army officers detested. Laborers, waiters, sailors, painters, and candy makers. From various backgrounds and differing professions, they all likely had one thing in common: they were down on their luck. Soldiers were underpaid and not valued by US Society, which was always skeptical of a standing army. Americans generally preferred the idea of volunteer soldiers or militiamen to that of regular soldiers. Many critics wondered why anyone would join the undemocratic army in a democratic nation. People called soldiers "idle vagabonds," the "scum of society," and "hirelings." Even so, men enlisted in the army to avoid problems at home or with the law, or most commonly out of economic necessity. It is possible that steady pay, room, and board drew Mahoney into the Regular Army.<sup>55</sup>

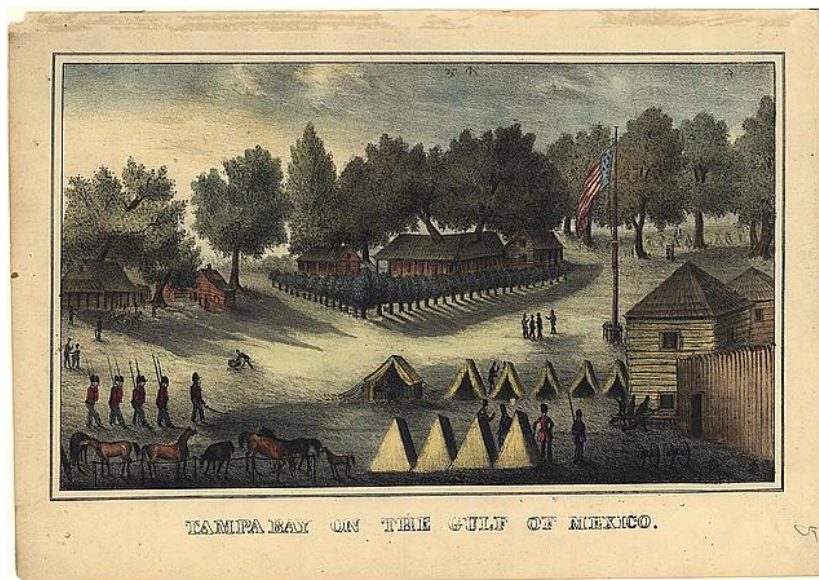


Figure 12: Fort Brooke, at present-day Tampa Bay. Lithograph by Gray & James, 1840s. Mahoney was stationed at Fort Brooke during his deployment to Florida. Library of Congress.

Mahoney's enlistment was for five years and he was assigned to Company H of the Sixth United States Infantry. When he joined Mahoney must have been aware that the US Army was engaged in a desperate and brutal war with the Seminole people in Florida Territory. The Second Seminole War had commenced in 1835 and would become the costliest war the US Government ever waged against Native Americans. By late October of 1840, Mahoney and dozens of other new

recruits had joined the Sixth Infantry at Fort Brooke (present-day Tampa) at the center of the US war effort in Florida Territory. They were among nearly 230 new soldiers recruited into the regiment to replace men whose enlistments had ended. Two months later he marched with his company to Fort Clinch. The change in his life must have been breathtaking: from the farm

<sup>55</sup> Enlistment Record of Jeremiah Mahony, "United States Registers of Enlistments in the U.S. Army, 1798-1914," database, Familysearch.org; Richard Bruce Winters, *Mr. Polk's Army: The American Military Experience in the Mexican War*, (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1997), 51.

country of Ireland, to the streets of New York City, to a brutal theater of war in a tropical climate deep in the homeland of the Seminole. In almost exactly a year, Mahoney had gone from a newly arrived immigrant on American shores to a soldier participating in the violent dispossession of Native Americans and the colonization of their land.<sup>56</sup>

The war Mahoney entered was part of the US government's policy of Indian Removal begun by President Andrew Jackson and carried out by his successor, President Martin Van Buren. The Seminole people refused to leave their homeland and remove to Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma. Many of them had surpassed US citizens in the region in their wealth. In addition, hundreds of formerly enslaved African Americans had found refuge with the Seminole and lived among them. Some former slaves intermarried with the Seminole and held prominent positions as interpreters. The combination of resistant, sophisticated Native Americans, and free—especially armed—African Americans, was too much for white elites to abide. Champions of slavery and Indian Removal were determined to crush the Seminoles, which led to the longest and most costly Indian war in American History. The five years of war prior to Mahoney's arrival had been horrendous, beginning with the Seminole raiding US settlements and eliminating entire US commands. As more US troops arrived the Seminole waged a war of defensive guerrilla tactics, deep in the Cyprus forests, swamplands, and everglades of the territory. Soldiers faced disease, poisonous insects and animals, water up to their waists, and dangerous sawgrass. The guerilla war led to failed campaigns by the US army and by the time Mahoney arrived, the army was on its sixth commander. For a new immigrant from Ireland, who had likely never seen a Native American person before, the war must have been

As a soldier in the Second Seminole War, Mahoney acted as an agent of Settler Colonialism, carrying out its main goal of territory acquisition. But as an Irish immigrant and non-landholder he was not a settler himself—his incorporation into the settler polity was pending. To acquire land, settler states must eliminate Native Americans from the landscape. This is sometimes done through war. The Seminole Wars are a perfect example of the lengths the settler state will go to, to achieve its goal. Settler States also attempt to control the population within the lands they claim. In settler colonial theory, enslaved African Americans were “degraded exogeneous others.” They were not settlers or Native Americans, but needed to be controlled to further the conquest of North America. Indeed, Indian Removal in the American south was pursued in order to clear land for the slave-plantation economy. Settler states also focus on the sorting of these three main population categories: settlers, the indigenous, and exogeneous others. Often racial categories are constructed to do so.

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<sup>56</sup> Returns of the Sixth Regiment of Infantry, October 6, 1840 and December, 1840; Annual Return of the Alterations and Casualties Incident to the Sixth Regiment of Infantry, January 9, 1841; For a map of the Second Seminole War and many of the place where Mahoney was stationed see, United States Army Corps of Topographical Engineers, *Map of the Seat of War in Florida*, (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Topographical Engineers, 1838).

bewildering. But the expansion of the US Empire and Indian Removal would be part of Mahoney's life for the next twenty years, leading him to Minnesota.<sup>57</sup>

The man in command of the army for most of Mahoney's service in Florida was Colonel William Jenkins Worth who took over in May of 1841. He devised a strategy of martial and economic warfare against the Seminole to be carried out in the summer, the season all previous commanders had avoided campaigning in. He not only targeted their leaders and centers of power but their food stores, herds, and farms. By destroying their livelihood, he believed he could force many to surrender and submit to removal. One of his main targets was the Cove of the Withlacoochee River, a powerful position of the Seminole where several US armies had met defeat. The Sixth Infantry was ordered from its post at Fort Harrison, where the regiment had been concentrated, to the cove under the sweltering heat of Florida's summer. Several companies marched into the field, attacked Seminole villages and burned their crops. Mahoney and Company H stayed behind at the fort to secure it as a base of operation. Tracing the fledgling soldier through the regimental records is difficult but it is at this time that he may have started working in the commissary and quartermaster departments, which dealt with food, supplies, and logistics.<sup>58</sup>

After the summer campaign, Mahoney and his company were sent north to outposts near present-day Tallahassee, Florida. The company was stationed there from July of 1841 until January of 1842. Throughout this period several soldiers served in the commissary and quartermaster departments. Though they are not identified, it is possible one of them was Mahoney as he would one day have the skills to be a sergeant in those departments. Seven years of war and some devastating attacks by the US Army led many Seminoles to begin surrendering. Though the war hadn't stopped in reality, army commanders petitioned the government to declare the war to be over. With the war winding down the Sixth Regiment departed Florida. As more Seminole surrendered the US government formally declared the war over in August of 1842. Six hundred Seminoles never submitted to US authority and remained in their homeland.

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<sup>57</sup> Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 516-517; Joe Knetsch, *Florida's Seminole Wars, 1817-1858*, (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2003), 7-8.

<sup>58</sup> Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 516-517; Knetsch, *Florida's Seminole Wars*, 125-126, 131; Returns of the Sixth Regiment of Infantry, April, May, and June 1841.

The African American Seminoles agreed to removal with the promise they would not be enslaved. Hundreds did remove to the west but many, perhaps 400, were re-enslaved.<sup>59</sup>

By mid-march of 1842 Mahoney was likely with his regiment at Jefferson Barracks outside St. Louis Missouri, the army's first permanent installation on the west side of the Mississippi River. The army base was a rest and supply depot for the western military departments of the country. There the regiment was resupplied and recuperated from its service in Florida Territory. Some evidence suggests that Mahoney was on detached service from his regiment, working for the quartermaster department and was directly involved in coordinating the removal of the Seminole people from their homeland to Indian Territory. If this is true, he would have been a part of organizing the logistics of the removal,

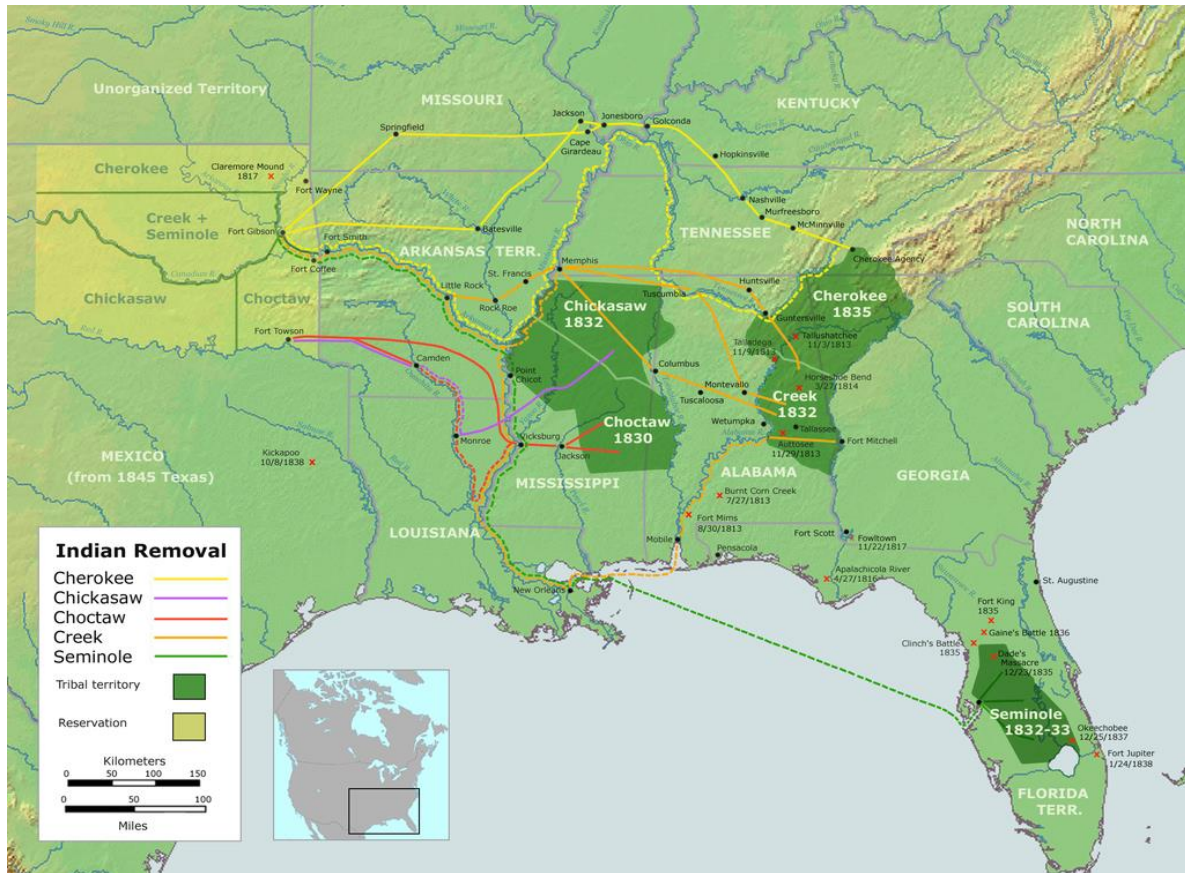


Figure 13: Map of Indian Removal campaigns in the Southern United States that Mahoney participated in. While commonly associated with tribes in the south, this policy impacted Native Americans to the North as well, including the Dakota. Wikimedia Commons.

<sup>59</sup> Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 517; Returns of the Sixth Regiment of Infantry, July 1841 to February 1842.

rounding up the Seminoles, transporting them by boat from the western shore of Florida to New Orleans, and then up the Mississippi River. This removal was a traumatic event in the history of the Seminole People and many died along the way.<sup>60</sup>

The entire Sixth Regiment soon became deeply involved in another chapter of Indian Removal and US Imperialism. Two months after arriving at Jefferson Barracks the regiment went south to the newly formed Indian Territory and garrisoned Fort Lawson among the Choctaw Nation and then Fort Gibson among the Cherokee. The fort and several others were meant to police the newly formed territory granted to removed Native Americans by the US government. The removal of the Dakota from east of the Mississippi in 1837 (very near to where Mahoney would eventually live) was part of a wider Indian Removal policy championed by President Andrew Jackson and carried out by his successor Martin Van Buren. The policy was a major goal of both presidents and while the Dakota and many other tribes were targeted by it, the government focused most on the five “civilized tribes” of the Southeast—the Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole. The objective, as made clear by the story of Mahoney in Florida, was to remove all Native people west of the Mississippi River to open their land for settlement by US citizens. Mahoney served at Fort Gibson until 1846 where his regiment helped administer the territory, protected the western border of US settlement, and supported military expeditions into the west.<sup>61</sup>

Two important things happened in the year 1845 when Mahoney was at Fort Gibson. At some point he was promoted to corporal and reenlisted on September 1, 1845 for another five years. His reenlistment is evidence of his commitment to his profession as a soldier and that despite the danger and challenges, the army life suited him. Nationally, the term “Manifest Destiny” swept the nation and would propel Mahoney to the South Loop District. The President at the time, James K. Polk was an ardent imperialist who linked the acquisition of land to the acquisition of wealth and power, both for the nation and its individual citizens. His main goal was the territorial expansion of the US. A popular New York magazine, the *Democratic Review*, argued that it was “our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.” The term entered the American consciousness and was used to justify the settler colonial policies of the United States. US citizens saw the conquest of North America (and eventually any lands in the western hemisphere) as their inherent right. The dispossession of Native Americans, war with other countries, and the spreading of US territory and sovereignty, were all seen as ordained and right. But while the idea of Manifest Destiny undergirded the ethics of US imperialism, the actual

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<sup>60</sup> Edward D. Neill and J. Fletcher Williams, *History of Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis, Including the Explorers and Pioneers of Minnesota; and Outlines of the History of Minnesota*, (Minneapolis, MN: North Star Publishing Company, 1881), 229; Returns of the Sixth Regiment of Infantry, March 1842.

<sup>61</sup> Returns of the Sixth Regiment of Infantry, April to November 1842 and September 1845; Oklahoma Historical Society, Fort Gibson Historic Site, website (accessed 7/22/21); For an overview of US Indian removal policy see, Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 414-423.



expansion of the country took deliberate government policies like Indian removal, treaties, land annexation, land sales, and war.<sup>62</sup>

Before his arrival in Minnesota Territory, Manifest Destiny thrust Mahoney into another war of imperial land acquisition. Beginning in the 1820s the US and Mexican governments had been at odds over the border between their two nations. The conflict intensified when Texas established itself as an independent republic on land claimed by Mexico, and then was annexed by the United States. President Polk and his administration desired a war with Mexico in order to justify the taking of its territory in present-day Texas, Arizona, and California. After essentially forcing Mexico into war, hostilities broke out on April 25, 1846. The call to arms went out across the United States and Mahoney was deployed south to the border as a member of what has been called an “Army of Manifest Destiny.”<sup>63</sup>

Company H of the Sixth Infantry left Fort Gibson in June of 1846 and arrived at Camp Loomis on the Sabine River, on the border between Louisiana and Texas. There, Mahony was promoted to sergeant and took on extra duties in the Subsistence Department of the Army. In this role he oversaw the bulk purchase and distribution of rations to his company. The food mainly consisted of hard bread, flour, pork, and beef. His promotion to sergeant and the assignment of extra duties are likely evidence of his leadership and organizational abilities. From the Sabine the company marched to Camp Crockett at San Antonio Texas and joined the army of Brigadier General Wool, one of several American armies that would invade the lands claimed by Mexico. Under General Wool Mahoney and his fellow soldiers marched over 900 miles on a mission to capture the City of Chihuahua. This mission was aborted however, so Wool’s army could support that of Zachary Taylor (the future president of the United States and former commander of Mahoney’s regiment as well as Fort Snelling) which was fighting the Mexican army to the east. Months more of marching finally found Company H of the Sixth Regiment at Palo Alto, near present-day Corpus Christi, Texas, on the Gulf of Mexico.<sup>64</sup>

General Wool’s Army was mostly made up of volunteers and being regulars, the men of the Sixth Regiment were detached from it for participation in the most famous campaign of the Mexican War. While the armies of Wool, Taylor, and others had secured the northern provinces of Mexico and taken present-day Texas (other armies were invading California and New Mexico), President Polk and the leadership in Washington quickly came to believe that the war could not be won decisively without invading the heartland of Mexico. A large army was assembled under the command of Major General Winfield S. Scott, the highest-ranking officer in the US military, to invade central Mexico and take the capital city. The invasion was to begin

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<sup>62</sup> Returns of the Sixth Regiment of Infantry, September 1845; Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 702-707; Amy S. Greenberg, *Manifest Destiny and American Territorial Expansion: A Brief History with Documents*, (New York, NY: Bedford/St. Martins, 2018), 10-14.

<sup>63</sup> James M. McCaffrey, *Army of Manifest Destiny*, (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1992), 1-7.

<sup>64</sup> Returns of the Sixth Regiment of Infantry, June 1846 to January 1847; Monthly Returns of Company H, Sixth Regiment of Infantry, June 1846 to December 1846, see the return of June 1846 for Mahoney’s listing as a sergeant with extra duties in the Subsistence Department; Richard Bruce Winders, *Mr. Polk’s Army*, 20; A Continent Divided: The U.S.-Mexico War, “Biographies: John Ellis Wool,” Center for Greater Southwestern Studies, University of Texas, Arlington (accessed 7/23/2021).

with an amphibious assault at Vera Cruz, Mexico. The US government gathered up ships at New Orleans, Louisiana to transport the army across the waters of the Gulf of Mexico to its target. A ship typically used to bring immigrants to New Orleans named the Elizabeth Dennison was assigned to Company H and the men boarded it in February of 1847. They joined Scott's army at Matamoros—an army made up of a majority of immigrants, a fourth of them Irish like Mahoney.<sup>65</sup>

On March 9, 1847 ten thousand US troops arrived at Vera Cruz aboard over one hundred ships. Specially designed boats ferried the men toward the shore. The brigade (a military unit made up of several regiments) that Mahoney served in was the first ashore as part of the most successful amphibious operation the US Army would conduct until D-Day during World War II. Scott's entire army landed without a fight and then settled in for a siege of Vera Cruz, widely regarded as one of the strongest fortresses in the western hemisphere at the time. Scott's army then besieged Vera Cruz. After the Mexican commander refused to surrender the US Army began a

bombardment of the city day and night for four days. Thousands of explosive shells landed in the city killing many civilians. Aside from perhaps a few undocumented skirmishes during his time in Florida, this was Sergeant Mahoney's baptism of fire and his first real experience of warfare on a large

scale. Twenty days after the US Army landed on Mexican soil the city of Vera Cruz surrendered. The captain of Mahoney's company summarized their part in the campaign: "Landed on the 9th 2 ½ miles below Vera Cruz, and was actively employed in the operations of the siege and taking of the city."<sup>66</sup>

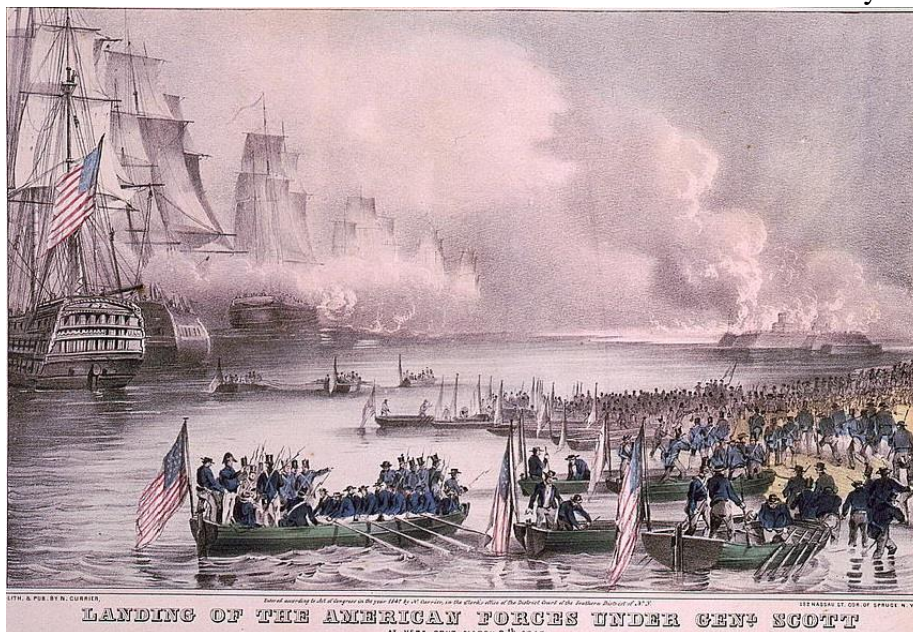


Figure 14: "Landing of the American Forces Under Genl. Scott, at Vera Cruz, March 9th, 1847. Lithograph by N. Currier, 1847. Jeremiah Mahoney would have been among the first soldiers to land on the beach. Library of Congress.

<sup>65</sup> Return of the Sixth Regiment of Infantry, February 1847; Monthly Return of Company H, Sixth Regiment of Infantry, January and February 1847; Richard Bruce Winders, *Mr. Polk's Army*, 187; Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 751.

<sup>66</sup> Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 778-781; Monthly Return of Company H, Sixth Regiment of Infantry, March 1847.

The next month Scott's army moved inland towards the capital, Mexico City. The Sixth Regiment took part in the capture of Fort San Carlos while the main body of the army defeated another Mexican force at the Battle of Cerro Gordo. The advance continued from May to August. Mahoney then fought in a series of desperate battles in August and September. First was the Battle of Churobusco fought on August 20th just south of Mexico City. The Mexicans had dug trenches, occupied a convent, and fortified a vital bridge that crossed the Churubusco River. During the battle the Sixth Infantry assaulted the fortified bridge and was repulsed twice in heavy fighting. Eventually the overall American assault succeeded and resulted in victory. Scott's army settled in south of the city but when peace talks broke down the fighting resumed.



Figure 15: *The Battle of Chapultepec, 1847. Painting by Adolphe Jean-Baptiste Bayot, 1851. Wikimedia Commons.*

On September 8 Mahoney fought in one of the deadliest battles of the war at Molino del Rey. He took part in frontal assaults against well entrenched Mexican positions and in close combat, clearing buildings. He saw many of his comrades killed and wounded, but he luckily survived the pyrrhic victory. In the final major battle to take Mexico City, Scott's

army assaulted the stone mansion (sometimes referred to as a castle) of Chapultepec which sat atop a hill. After a day of bombarding the Mexican defenses the US troops assaulted the hill on September 13. Mahoney's company brought ladders forward during the attack and helped take the position. After taking Chapultepec the American army turned towards the gates of Mexico City. For the rest of the afternoon Mahoney was part of the advance, fighting off Mexican resistance and by 5pm he was within the gates of Mexico's capital. The Mexican Army withdrew from the city but urban fighting took place for two days before the US Army was able to secure the streets. The army occupied the city for several months engaging in guerilla warfare with the populace until a peace treaty was signed in February 1848.<sup>67</sup>

For the first six months of 1848 the Sixth Regiment along with the rest of the US Army withdrew from Mexico. The Sixth marched back towards the Gulf coast and boarded a ship for

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<sup>67</sup> Return of the Sixth Regiment of Infantry, August and September 1847; Annual Return of the Alterations and Casualties Incident to the Sixth Regiment of Infantry, Commanded by Colonel Norman S. Clarke, During the Year 1847; Peter Guardino, *The Dead March: A History of the Mexican-American War*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 267-274.

New Orleans. From there they returned to their old post, Jefferson Barracks to recuperate and reorganize, just as they did after the Second Seminole War. But this time was different for Jeremiah. He met and married Eliza St. Clair in St. Louis, Missouri on September 14, 1848. Eliza had two children, William and Marion, from a previous relationship with Army Surgeon William Sloan. The nature of their relationship—whether married and divorced, or not—is unknown. The same month of their marriage the Sixth Regiment took on new recruits, reorganized and split up with companies marching off to garrison different US posts in the trans-Mississippi West. Mahoney was transferred to Fort Snelling. Relying on the skills he acquired as a sergeant in the subsistence department while in Mexico, he was made the ordinance sergeant at the post, organizing the distribution of weapons and ammunition instead of food. By August of 1849 Mahoney had finally found his way to Minnesota Territory along with his wife and two step-children. The family lived at the post for several years. Women living at the post had to work for the army just as their husbands did. Eliza may have worked as a laundress or hospital assistant. In September of 1850, Jeremiah’s enlistment was once again ended. After two wars, army life still suited him and he enlisted for a third stint of five years.<sup>68</sup>

The land that Mahoney came to in 1849 (including the future South Loop District just a few miles west of the fort’s gate) was likely different and yet familiar to him. He was familiar with Native American peoples having fought the Seminoles in Florida and policed the “civilized tribes” in Indian Territory for several years. At his new post in Minnesota, he likely encountered Dakota people almost immediately. As the steamer brought him, Eliza, and the children up the Mississippi River they could not have missed



*Figure 16: Fort Snelling, about 1850. Painting by Henry Lewis. This painting illustrates the world Mahoney and the Dakota lived in during the 1850s. The US colonization is clear, but so is the Dakota presence. Minnesota Historical Society.*

<sup>68</sup> Marriage record of Jeremiah Mahoney and Eliza St. Clair, St. Louis County, Missouri, September 14, 1848; Return of the Sixth Regiment of Infantry, August 1848; Post Return of Fort Snelling, Minnesota Territory, October 1849; Bobbie Scott, “European American at Fort Snelling, 1819-1858,” MNopedia, November 17, 2020; Richard Bruce Winders, *Mr. Polk’s Army*, 21; 1850 United States Census; Enlistment Record of Sergeant Jeremiah Mahoney, United States Register of Enlistments in the US Army, 1798-1914; “Old Men, Old Days,” *St. Paul Daily Globe*, June 2, 1895.

the Bdewakantunwan villages along the banks. There were several Dakota villages within ten miles of the fort including two in present-day Bloomington. The road that led west from the fort eventually connected with another that followed the path of a Dakota trail across the land that would become the South Loop District. And with Fort Snelling being located on the sacred ground of Bdote, the ordinance sergeant would have seen Dakota people coming and going frequently. Mahoney was used to interacting with Native Americans as a violent agent of American Empire. And after serving in Mexico he intimately understood the deadly force the US government would use to conquer the continent. But Minnesota Territory was different from the other places he had been, at least for a time. The Dakota still held power in the region and much of their ancestral homelands. Warfare between the US government and Dakota people had not occurred. But after two quiet years serving as the ordinance sergeant at Fort Snelling all of that started to change. It began with a Company of US Dragoons riding out of the fort and for Mahoney and others it would end with land ownership. To learn how power shifted from the Dakota to settlers, we turn to the story of the McLeod family.

### **Martin McLeod and the Treaties of 1851**

A man that would be pivotal in creating the State of Minnesota and turning the Dakota Homeland on the Minnesota River into US property—setting the stage for the South Loop District to be created—was future chairman of Bloomington, Martin McLeod. He had arrived in the region of Bdote and St. Peters a few months prior to the signing of the Treaty of 1837. Like Mahoney, he took a long route on his way to inhabiting the future town of Bloomington. McLeod’s journey was regional, not trans-Atlantic and continental like Mahoney’s, but he would leverage much more power than the sergeant in changing the land of the South Loop.

McLeod’s journey to the homeland of the Dakota was bizarre and harrowing but it ended with something quite illustrative of the period: the generosity and agency of Dakota women. Living in Montreal in 1836, then a British possession, McLeod joined a filibustering campaign intent on creating an “Indian Kingdom” in the American West. The effort fell apart near the Red River Colony (what is now Pembina and Winnipeg) after which McLeod and some companions made their way south along the Red River. At Traverse des Sioux, McLeod decided to make his way to Fort Snelling. Near the end of his journey and likely tired, McLeod hoped to take to the Minnesota River to increase his pace. He came upon a group of Dakota people on their way to Bdote to bury their dead and negotiated his passage with a Dakota woman. The woman was the widow of fur trader Henry K. Ortleby and had her children with her. One of those children, thirteen-year-old Mary Elizabeth Ortleby would become pivotal in McLeod’s life and come to symbolize the dramatic changes to come.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> The Diary of Martin McLeod 418; Carroll Jane Lamm, “‘This Higgledy-piggledy Assembly:’ The McLeods, and Anglo-Dakota Family in Early Minnesota,” *Minnesota History* 60, no. 6 (Summer 2007), 220.

McLeod began working in the fur trade and was first employed by a trader near Fort Snelling for two years. He then spent the next several years traveling the region and learning about the trade. He navigated the waterways to Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, and Wisconsin stopping at important sites of the fur trade: St. Louis, La Pointe, and the St. Croix River. The desire for more favorable employment and the lure of the profitable Minnesota River Valley drew him back to the confluence of the rivers. Henry H. Sibley, leader of the American Fur Company in the Upper Mississippi and Missouri River region, hired McLeod as a trader. The American Fur Company had been founded in 1808 by John Jacob Astor with the goal of dominating the fur trade in America. By the time McLeod joined the company, Astor had succeeded and ruled the fur trade through the Great Lakes, trans-Mississippi West, and further west onto the Great Plains,



Figure 17: "The Trapper's Bride" by Alfred Jacob Miller, 1850. This painting shows a marriage, "a la facon du pays." Joslyn Art Museum.

over the Rockies to the Pacific. It was one of the largest and most profitable businesses in the United States. American Fur had posts along the rivers, including one near Nine Mile Creek in present-day Bloomington that was established by trader Roswell Russell in 1845 to serve the Dakota people living there. Sibley sent McLeod west to the trading post at Traverse des Sioux. In 1843 he was posted further west at Big Stone Lake and from 1846 to 1849 he ran a trading post at Lac qui Parle. He spent these years among the Sisitunwan and Wahpetunwan Dakota, gathering furs and running a profitable trade. He competed tirelessly with other fur traders and paddled up and down the Minnesota River many times between his western assignments and Sibley's headquarters at Mendota. He became known for his physical endurance and introspective bearing. At some point he married Mary Elizabeth Ortle, now an Anglo-Dakota teenager *a la facon du pays*. Mary was pivotal to her husband's success in the fur trade and held a great deal of power in their relationship. Native women were political mediators, made economic connections, transmitted culture, and knew the land. Most importantly, when Mary took Martin as her husband, she incorporated him into Dakota kinship networks. Mary also benefited from the marriage. Her spouse being a European American trader would have given her status in Dakota communities. Henry Sibley gave Mary and Martin a wedding gift of

Mahogany furniture, showing their acceptance in fur trade society. The couple had five children between 1841 and 1851 who were all born along the Minnesota River as Martin and Mary traveled between the trading posts in the west and Mendota in the east. They continued working in the fur trade full-time until territorial politics drove them to settle on land that would become Bloomington.<sup>70</sup>

Throughout the 1840s, even though Martin was in his prime years as a trader, the fur trade business began to struggle due to the depletion of fur-bearing animals in the region. In 1842 the American Fur Company hit dire straits and went bankrupt. Because he traded further to the west, Martin and his family were able to keep business going for a few more years. As the fur trade failed Sibley and the traders supported the idea of a treaty proposed by the Governor of Wisconsin Territory, James Doty. Just like Indian removal policies used against the “civilized tribes” in the southeastern United States, the Doty treaty argued for the removal of the Ho-Chunk, Sauk, and Meskwaki west of the Mississippi River. These tribes were to be given lands within the Dakotas’ territory and it was thought that US settlers would not need lands west of the Mississippi for generations. The South Loop District would likely have been part of this Territory as it is just west of the Mississippi River. Sibley and the traders hoped this would create a northern version of the Indian Territory where Mahoney had been stationed in the 1840s. With multiple tribes gathered in one territory along rivers and routes people like McLeod knew well, it was hoped the economy and trade around the new reservation could replace the fur trade. While Dakota leaders of all four bands signed the treaty because it would permanently protect their ancestral lands, it died in congress. The fur



*Figure 18: A Dakota woman and her child near Bdote and St. Paul. Sketched by Frank Blackwell Mayer, 1851. Newberry Library. It is unknown what Mary McLeod looked like, but this image is representative. She likely wore a mix of Dakota and European clothing.*

<sup>70</sup> Charles J. Ritchey, “Martin McLeod and the Minnesota Valley,” 390-391; The Diary of Martin McLeod 434; Carroll Jane Lamm, “‘This Higgledy-piggledy Assembly:’ The McLeods, and Anglo-Dakota Family in Early Minnesota,” 220, 222-227; Roswell P. Russell Papers, 1849-1893, Manuscript Collection, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota; Grace Lee Nute, “Posts in the Minnesota Fur-Trading Area, 1660-1855,” *Minnesota History* 11, No. 4 (Dec. 1930), 353-385; David Lavender, “Some American Characteristics of the American Fur Company,” *Minnesota History* 40, No.4 (Winter 1966): 178-187; Michael Lansing, “Plains Indian Women and Interracial Marriage in the Upper Missouri Trade, 1804-1868,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 31, No. 4 (Winter 2000), 414; Lucy Leavenworth Wilder Morris, ed., *Old Rail Fence Corners: Frontier Tales Told By Minnesota Pioneers*, (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1976), 10.

trade struggled on as the Dakota and traders fought to keep their economies afloat. Martin began to lose money and extend credit to his Dakota partners<sup>71</sup>

As the McLeods traded at Lac qui Parle in the late 1840s talk of a “Minnesota Territory” began. Wisconsin became a state in 1848 and leaders in the region met at Stillwater to ensure “Minnesota” was not incorporated into Wisconsin, but formed into a new territory. As usual the traders were at the fore. The sixty-one delegates nominated Henry Sibley to petition Congress for the creation of the new territory. He succeeded and on March 3, 1849 Minnesota Territory was founded. As an ambitious man, growing in prominence, McLeod had come back east from his post at Lac qui Parle to take advantage of the territorial transition. On August 1, 1849 he was elected a delegate to the Territorial Council as a Democrat, a position he would hold until 1854. The South Loop District became part of Dakota County, Minnesota Territory, and McLeod was its representative.<sup>72</sup>

After serving at the first Territorial Council in St. Paul during the fall of 1849, Martin and Mary McLeod with their children settled on land that would become part of Bloomington. They settled near the Ponds Presbyterian Ministry and the Dakota community at Oak Grove along what would come to be known as Old Shakopee Road. What would become Bloomington and



Figure 19: "Prairie Near the Mouth of the St. Peter's- Buffalo Hunt." Painting by Seth Eastman, 1846-1848. This painting shows a scene that could easily represent the South Loop around the time Minnesota Territory was created. Minnesota Historical Society.

the South Loop District was still land controlled by the Dakota, but the just over eighty recorded inhabitants of the area were representative of the cultural transition that was occurring. Some were living there legally, as government farmers to the Dakota, while the others were technically squatters on the military reservation and Dakota land. The 1850 census taker recorded a diverse community. Their last names and occupations reflect their origins. Fur trade families of French, British, and Native descent (Faribua, Martin, Laframboise). There were hunters and laborers (Laclour, LaProvençal, Kelley). Missionaries such as the Ponds, Stephen R. Riggs, and Robert Hopkins were featured

<sup>71</sup> Peter DeCarlo, *Fort Snelling at Bdote*, 41; William Watts Folwell, *A History of Minnesota*, Vol. 1, 457-459; Journal of the Senate of the United States of America, September 3, 1841; Ritchey, "Martin McLeod and the Minnesota Valley," 392.

<sup>72</sup> Peter DeCarlo, *Fort Snelling at Bdote*, 45, William Watts Folwell, *A History of Minnesota*, Vol. 1, 236-247; Minnesota Legislative Reference Library, McLeod, Martin (accessed, 7/28/21); For a map of the original counties, which stretched long and thin from the St. Croix River west to the Missouri River, see Folwell, 247. The counties changed as the population grew in the territorial period, but the lands of the South Loop District remained in Dakota County until 1854.



prominently. Notably, there were farmers (Mott, Huggins), as well, people who had already begun to occupy the land in a permanent way. Among the farmers was Peter Quinn and his family, who had been in the fur trade a generation before the McLeods. He had obviously gotten out of the business as he aged and, likely seeing the trade fail, moved onto farming. Dakota people were not noted on the census, except for one hunter who had an “Ind wife,” even though the much of the land belonged to them—not the United States. Another reference to their presence was the occupation of Moses Peters as “Ind Farmer,”—a government employee hired to teach Native people European American farming methods. In reality there were hundreds of Dakota living in the area and their traditional village still existed along the Minnesota River. But since the establishment of Fort Snelling and the Treaty of 1837, things had started to change rapidly. The Dakota trail between the village of Sakpe and Bdote had come to be used by more than Native Americans. Traders, government agents, travelers, and soldiers had been using the trail since the 1820s. Much of the South Loop was tall prairie grass, dotted with Oak trees. This changing landscape was strategic for the McLeods: close enough to the budding settlements of St. Paul and St. Anthony to participate in the affairs of the territory, and still on the banks of the Minnesota with access to the west and the Dakota communities they had lived among for years. It's as if they had planted themselves on land that allowed them to pivot within dramatic changes.<sup>73</sup>

The entry for Martin McLeod on the 1850 Census reveals a great deal about the political and cultural change occurring on the land of the South Loop at the time, and the shift in power from the society of the fur trade to the racialized society of the United States. At first glance he appears to live alone as nobody else in his household is listed. However, the omission of the Dakota living in the community was not a mistake. The 1850 Census workers were instructed not to record Native Americans (not taxable ones) on the census. While it is possible McLeod's entire family was not there, it is more likely the census taker omitted them because of their Dakota ancestry. This was the power of the US settler state made intimate: Martin was a free white person; the rest of his family were not. But what makes the 1850 Census of the community that would morph into Bloomington so ironic is that the vast majority of people recorded as US citizens were not even living within the bounds of the United States, they were living on Dakota land.<sup>74</sup>

Though he had served in the territorial council, the entry for McLeod in the 1850 census records his occupation as a trader. But McLeod, Henry Sibley, and the other traders had been working out a plan to recoup their losses and extricate themselves from the ailing fur trade economy all while moving the territory toward statehood. In 1849 traders and politicians began planning for a treaty with the Dakota that would extinguish their occupation of almost all their ancestral lands. The traders plotted to force their way into the treaty making and erase their losses from the government payment to the Dakota for their lands. Sibley wrote McLeod that

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<sup>73</sup> Grace Lee Nute, “Dairy of Martin McLeod,” 434; United States Census, 1850; Henricks, *Bloomington on the Minnesota*, 36.

<sup>74</sup> United States Census, 1850.

they needed to, “bring about such a state of things when the treaty is made as to recompense us at least in a measure for the sacrifices we have made.” He also wrote that a treaty was “our sole chance to secure our claims and to place the poor Indians in such a position as they should occupy[.]” McLeod agreed that a treaty needed to be made and he devised the strategy to do so. As a trader who had worked up and down the Minnesota River Valley, he knew each band of the Dakota quite well. The western bands whom McLeod had traded among during the 1840s were in a more dire economic situation than the Bdewakantunwan and he noted they would sell “a large portion of their country if liberally dealt with.” The western bands had no annuity payments from previous treaties, while the Bdewakantunwan did, from the treaty of 1837. McLeod reasoned that the Bdewakantunwan would be the least likely to give up their homes and had to be pressured into doing so. He advised Sibley to make sure the treaty negotiators first concluded a treaty with the upper bands and then the lower. McLeod put it succinctly: the “lower fellows” would only negotiate if the upper Dakota “who are friendly to us” agreed to a treaty first. He went on writing that the Sisitunwan and Wahpetunwan “would sign almost anything.” By doing so, the Bdewakantunwan would be faced with the fact that their western kin had already ceded their lands, essentially creating a future where they would be surrounded by settlers. Sibley, McLeod, and Territorial Governor Alexander Ramsey worked to make sure the US treaty commissioners that were selected to negotiate with the Dakota would be sympathetic to their cause.<sup>75</sup>

Sibley and Ramsey working in Washington, D.C. secured permission to negotiate a treaty with the Dakota in 1851. In late June of that year, Mahoney may have watched as a detachment



Figure 20: Martin McLeod at the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux. Sketch by Frank Blackwell Mayer, July 7, 1851. Newberry Library.

of US Army dragoons rode out of the gate at Fort Snelling. They joined with a party consisting of Ramsey, Sibley and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs Luke Lea. They all traveled west, up the Minnesota River to negotiate with the Sisitunwan and Wahpetunwan bands of Dakota. McLeod, who had gone west previously to trade, brought Dakota people and traders from Lac qui Parle. People from various points began arriving at Traverse des Sioux on June 30, 1851. The treaty negotiation brought together many groups in a culmination of fur trade society: Dakota men, women, and children; fur traders of French, English, and American descent; métis people, and

<sup>75</sup> United States Census, 1850; DeCarlo, *Fort Snelling at Bdote*, 44; Ritchey, “Martin McLeod and the Minnesota River Valley,” 392; Folwell, *History of Minnesota*, Vol. 1, 277-278.

US citizens, government officials, and soldiers. Ramsey and Lea pressured the Dakota to come to a decision quickly, and from the beginning the Dakota resisted, wishing to wait for more of their relatives to arrive. Dakota communities reached decisions by consensus, and the treaty commissioners deliberately tried to disrupt that process. Talks lasted several days, and at points the discussions nearly broke down. Henry Sibley, representing the traders, negotiated with the Dakota off the record. Martin McLeod took charge of the claims committee which organized the claims traders were making against the Dakota. They hoped to receive payment from the Dakota via the treaty.<sup>76</sup>

On July 23, the Dakota leaders reluctantly signed the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux. Like previous treaties, it provided annuities and funds for farming equipment and building materials—all meant to facilitate the Dakota’s acculturation and pressure them to give up their traditions and become like European Americans. The treaty confined the Dakota to a reservation on the upper reaches of the Minnesota River. Dakota leaders were then directed to sign another document, which came to be known as the “traders’ paper.” It authorized direct payments to the traders from the US government, completely bypassing the Dakota. The document was not explained, and many European American observers had never seen it before. Its provisions went against the wishes of the Dakota, who intended to pay the traders themselves. These payments to the traders were due in part to the work McLeod did as chairman of the claims committee at the treaty negotiations. He helped tabulate the claims of the traders and draw up a list of them. Though he himself received payment, McLeod lamented that the Dakota had been done “a great wrong and injustice” and that they had essentially been bribed into signing. After concluding the treaty, Ramsey and the commissioners traveled down the Minnesota River where the final piece of the puzzle would be put in place to begin transforming the lands of the South Loop District from Dakota homeland to United States property.<sup>77</sup>

The stage was set for one of the most consequential events that ever took place at the confluence. The Bdewakantunwan and some Wahpekute had already begun to gather at Bdote when the US representatives arrived at Mendota on July 25, 1851. The treaty commissioners were intent on replicating the terms the western Dakota had agreed to. Negotiations started on

In Settler Colonialism the primary motivation of the settler is always land acquisition which requires the removal of Native Americans. In US History one of the primary means of achieving this removal was through treaties that recognized Native title to the land on their face. However, in practice treaty making was always premised on the US right to buy land and not on Indigenous Peoples’ right to not sell it. Frequently, Native people surrendered their ancestral homelands due to the pressures of colonization: settlers already on their lands, indebtedness to traders, and depletion of resources. Often the tactics used by US treaty commissioners were manipulative. More often than not, Native Americans like the Dakota signed treaties as a last, best resort to help their people.

<sup>76</sup> Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 167; Wingerd, *North Country*, 188-190.

<sup>77</sup> Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 181–182; Gilman, *Henry Hastings Sibley*, 121; Ritchey, “Martin McLeod and the Minnesota Valley,” 393; Wingerd, *North Country*, 197; Folwell, *History of Minnesota*, Vol. 1, 280, 283.

July 29 in a warehouse at Mendota. Ramsey and Lea began by saying it was time for the Bdewakantunwan and Wahpekute to give up their lands so immigrants would have room to live. Ramsey stated, “For at the same time, these lands have ceased to be of much value to you, from the rapid disappearance of the game, they have become more valuable to [the president’s] white children.” He then delivered the blow of Traverse des Sioux: “And besides, the question of sale has assumed a more interesting aspect to you, since your brothers, the Sissitons and Wahpetons, have disposed of their lands to the rear of you. So that hereafter you would not only have the whites along the river front, but all around you.”<sup>78</sup>

The next day talks reconvened under an arbor on the north slope of Pilot Knob just above the riverboat landing at Mendota. The site provided a commanding view of the river confluence. Ramsey, Lea, and the other commissioners sat at tables, surrounded by a semicircle of Dakota

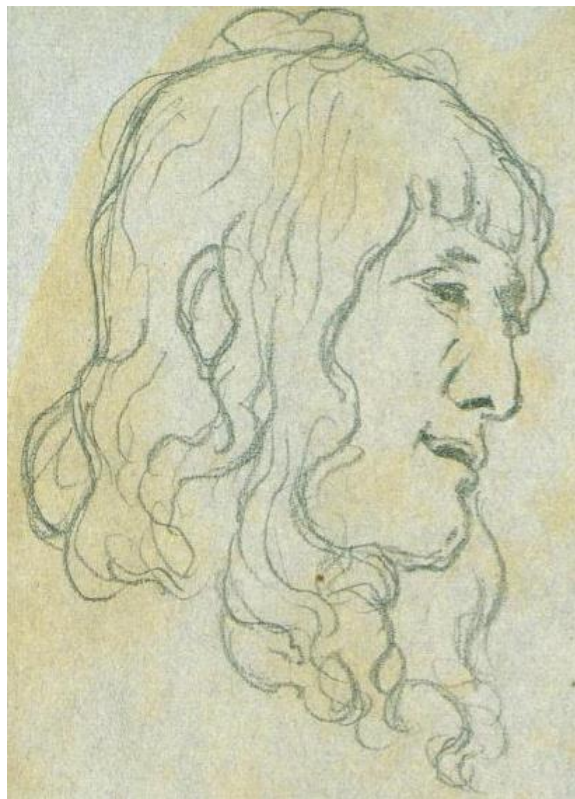


Figure 21: Mahpiya Wicasta. Sketch by Frank Blackwell Mayer, 1851. Newberry Library.

leaders. Some Dakota rejected the treaty outright while others raised the issue of payments from the 1837 Treaty having not been dispersed. They all argued they needed more time to consider but the US commissioners continued to pressure them. The talks continued and then broke down on August 1 Commissioner Lea scolded the Dakota, “Sensible men among you must know that your Great Father is disposed to treat you fairly; but there are perhaps some bad and foolish men among you who advise you to pursue a different course. You ought to have sense enough to know what is for your good, and sense enough to act accordingly. But if you are not prepared to do so, we have nothing more to say.”<sup>79</sup> As at Traverse des Sioux, it appears Henry Sibley was instrumental in negotiating treaty terms off the record, possibly utilizing his kinship ties and connections within the Dakota community. Somehow, the representatives signed a treaty almost identical to the Traverse des Sioux agreement on August 5, 1851. Under unrelenting pressure from the treaty

commissioners, the Dakota finally signed. Several leaders of the Bdewakantunwan who represented the land that would become Bloomington and the South Loop signed the treaty. Mahpiya Wicasta signed the treaty along with two other leaders from his village, “Weetchanhpee, (The Star)” and “Tataynazheena, (Little Standing Wind).” Tacanku Waste

<sup>78</sup> Rebecca Snyder, ed., *The 1851 Treaty of Mendota*, (South St. Paul, MN: Dakota County Historical Society, 2002), 8–11.

<sup>79</sup> Snyder, *The 1851 Treaty of Mendota*, 12–17.

(Good Road) also signed the treaty along with three of his headmen, “Tatayowoteenmanee, (Roaring Wind that walks),” “Oyaytchanmanee, (Track Maker),” and “Tashkoarkay, (His Dog).” With the signing of the Treaties of Traverse des Sioux and Mendota the political basis for the very existence of the South Loop District was formed. But many steps were yet to be taken before US citizens actually came to own land in the South Loop. All of these steps took place within the remainder of the 1850s—a tumultuous decade, that along with the treaties drew lines on the land and gave birth to the City of Bloomington.<sup>80</sup>

The treaty impacted the land that would become Bloomington, but also the people living there. In early 1851 after the census worker had come through, and as the plans for the treaties were being formed, it is clear Martin McLeod felt anxiety about his family’s place in the new order that was coming. Other traders who had married Native women had begun to abandon them for white women. The mixed-race children of these Native-European marriages were also sometimes abandoned by their white fathers, or cared for from a distance. But Martin was different from most of the other traders and his family’s move to Oak Grove was likely a signal of his dedication to his wife Mary and she to him. One can imagine the couple speaking about the matter for Martin wrote his mother a letter, which he never sent, in February of 1851 revealing the existence of his wife and children—something he had kept from her for nearly ten years. He wrote in a defensive tone and while he did not mention the Dakota ancestry of his wife and children, the letter makes it clear. He told his mother “My family do not live with me when I am in the Indian country, which is only about half the year, but in a cottage on the Minnesota River not far from where it joins the Mississippi.” Martin admitted that his son Walter spoke Dakota but that he planned to send him away to school “where he will not hear the Indians.” Meanwhile Mary Elizabeth McLeod joined the Pond’s church at Oak Grove. The two were married there just after the signing of the treaties on September 1, 1851. Mary may have pressed to be married there as a member of the congregation, but the couple also likely wanted to legitimize their marriage in European American society as Dakota homelands were about to become part of the United States.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Westerman and White, *Mni Sota Makoce*, 182–85, 188–90; White and Woolworth, *Oheyawhe or Pilot Knob*, 14–16; Snyder, *The 1851 Treaty of Mendota*, 21–23; Kappler, *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, Vol. 2, 592-593.

<sup>81</sup> Marriage Record of Martin McLeod and Mary Elizabeth Ortly, Ramsey, Minnesota, September 1, 1851; Carroll Jane Lamm, “‘This Higgledy-piggledy Assembly:’ The McLeods, and Anglo-Dakota Family in Early Minnesota,” 222-228.

## Squatters and Settlers

*Behind the red squaw's birch canoe  
The steam smokes and raves,  
And city lots are staked for sale  
Above old Indian graves.*

*I hear the tread of pioneers,  
Of Nations yet to be—  
The first low wash of human waves, where soon  
Shall roll a human sea.*

—John GreenLeaf Whittier.<sup>82</sup>

As soon as the treaties of 1851 were signed settler colonists began streaming into the lands of the Dakota. The settlers began cutting timber, staking claims to land, and plotting out roads. The Minnesota River, a well-known transportation route by this time, became a conduit for settlement. A passenger aboard a steamboat observed, “she turned her bow into the mouth of the Saint Peter, to explore that rich valley in the Southwest, along which the covetous eye of the white man has long gazed with prying curiosity[.]” The settlers’ and speculators’ desire for land can hardly be exaggerated. In nineteenth century America land was viewed as the primary means to acquire wealth. Westerners wanted cheap land they could buy from the government. To be on the land first, even illegally, meant you could choose the best location for a homestead and capitalize on speculative land markets, selling for a profit at a later date. But, all of this squatting on the land was illegal as the treaties had not been ratified or proclaimed by the United States Government. At the behest of the Dakota, the Indian Agent for the territory, Nathaniel McLean tried in vain to prevent thousands of settlers from entering the land. He asked for assistance from the commander at Fort Snelling, but help never came. Territorial leaders such as Alexander Ramsey and Henry Rice supported the illegal settlement but realized that it had to be legalized at the federal level if settlers were not to lose

The acquisition of land is usually begun by land-crazed settlers who have no intention of allowing federal law to stop them from occupying Native lands. While government officials know such invasion is illegal, they frequently hold themselves aloof, do not attempt to stop it, or even support it. This was the case with the South Loop District: settlers occupied the land before the treaties of 1851 were ratified while government officials supported their right to the land over that of the Dakota. To explain the invasion of indigenous lands settlers often use a narrative that invokes inevitability and even regret at the vanishing of Native Americans. The short poem quoted here is a prime example: the “human sea” cannot be stopped while steamships and city land surveys push a female Native American (a more sympathetic figure than a man) and burial mounds into the distant past.

<sup>82</sup> A poem used in the community of Bloomington in the late nineteenth century. Quoted in, Kent Bakken, et. al, *Mitakuye Owas, All My Relations*, 81.

their homesteads once the land was officially surveyed. Even preemption laws, passed in 1841, only protected squatters on surveyed lands. Ramsey and Minnesota's territorial delegates began working in earnest to have preemption laws extended to the squatters in Minnesota. In his appeal Ramsey described Dakota land as empty and the "hardy pioneers" as a "great army of peaceful progress."

They bring with them to the wilderness, which they embellish and advance, maxims of civil liberty, not engrossed on parchments, but inscribed in their hearts—not as barren abstractions, but as living principles and practical rules of conduct...Extension to them of the preemption privilege would be an act of peace [sic] and repose.

If the preemption laws were applied to the Minnesota squatters, they would be able to buy the land they occupied at a minimum price and not have to compete at an auction when it was sold by the federal government. This privilege applied to men over twenty-one, heads of households, and widowed women. Territorial leaders were also interested in attaining the preemption privilege because the proceeds of any eventual land sale could possibly go to the territorial government.<sup>83</sup>

The land that became the South Loop District was part of this frenzied occupation, but due to its proximity to Fort Snelling, its circumstances were unique. The boundary of the Fort Snelling Military Reservation, surveyed in 1839 encompassed the land and no civilians were allowed to occupy the military land without permission. The illegal land rush of 1851 came right up to the western boundary of the military reservation, but stopped there. However, this situation was not to last very long, federal survey or not.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Folwell, *History of Minnesota*, Vol I, 353, 354-355; Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007), 367,592-593; Gary Clayton Anderson, *Little Crow: Spokesman for the Sioux*, (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1986), 65; Henricks, *Bloomington on the Minnesota*, 22.

<sup>84</sup> Folwell, *History of Minnesota*, Vol. I, 425.

The tide of settlers, the push for preemption laws, and the treaty ratification process all produced an immense pressure on the Fort Snelling Military Reservation. Territorial business leaders, politicians, land speculators, and prospective settlers all saw the land as extremely valuable. It seemed to many that the settlement of the territory, treaty ratifications, and statehood were a forgone conclusion—legal technicalities aside. The Fort, first established to police the territory seemed more and more obsolete as Native Americans lands were taken through treaties

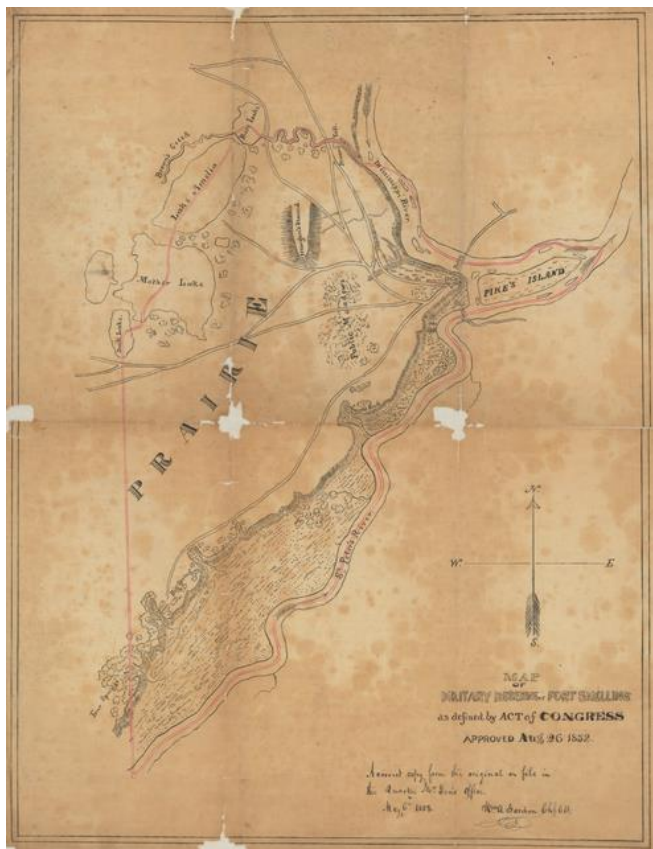


Figure 22: Map of the reduced Fort Snelling Military Reserve, 1852. Map by William A. Gordon. The red line at left runs directly through the South Loop District. Minnesota Historical Society.

and settlers entered the region. In 1849, before he helped negotiate the treaties, Martin McLeod asked Henry Sibley, then a territorial delegate in Washington, D.C., to work for the reduction of the military reservation. McLeod also wanted those who had previously been removed from the reservation to have their lands returned through preemption. Sibley began the effort in 1850 and settler colonists, anticipating the reduction or total abandonment of the military reservation, began staking out illegal claims by marking their names on trees and placing signs in the snow. The lands of the South Loop undoubtedly swarmed with enterprising would-be landowners.<sup>85</sup>

On June 22, 1852, the Fort Snelling Military Reservation was reduced. As with the treaty lands, squatters moved onto the land before it was publicly surveyed. St. Anthony (what would become Minneapolis), technically began as a town of squatters. Hennepin County itself, with St. Anthony as it's nucleus and including the South Loop Area, was created in 1852 by the territorial legislature, much of it based in unsurveyed lands opened

by the Treaties of 1851 and the reduction of the military reserve. Now, whether they had made their claims on land opened by the treaties, or by the reduction of the military reserve all the inhabitants of the South Loop were there illegally and eagerly awaiting the granting of preemption privileges, the federal survey of the land, the passage of treaties, and the eventual sale of the land. This would all take time as the United States Congress had only begun debating the treaties in the Spring of 1852.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Folwell, *History of Minnesota*, 423-426.

<sup>86</sup> Folwell, *History of Minnesota*, 427-432; Gary Clayton Anderson, *Little Crow: Spokesman for the Sioux*, 65; Stephen E. Osman, *Fort Snelling and the Civil War*, 4.



Over the course of two years the furious settlement of the unsurveyed lands continued, but eventually the legality of the settlement was resolved. The Treaties of 1851 were consented to by the Dakota in the fall of 1852 and proclaimed by the president on February 24, 1853. As winter ended the Bdewakantunwan were reluctant to leave their lands, including the South Loop, as their new reservation on the Minnesota River was not ready for occupation. Dakota leaders argued they would starve without food or fields that were ready to harvest. The new territorial governor, Willis A. Gorman acceded to their request. Yet, with the treaties verified more and more settlers crossed the river, taking over Dakota village sites which led to clashes. Finally, unable to resist any longer the well-known Dakota leader, Taoyateduta (His Red Nation, also known as Little Crow) departed for the Minnesota River Reservation. Along the way more Dakota joined him and perhaps those who lived in present-day Bloomington did so. By late June of 1853 nearly all of the Bdewakantunwan had removed to the reservation. For the first time in hundreds of years—perhaps time immemorial—there were no Dakota living in the area of the South Loop.<sup>87</sup>

### **Land Survey, Land Sale, Land Boom**

The United States Public Land Survey (on which all land ownership still rests) was imagined as the government of the early republic was forming and would create a structure of land ownership that had never been seen before in the history of humankind. It was unique in establishing individual land ownership by private citizens and transforming land into a commodity like any other that could be bought, sold, borrowed against, traded, and speculated in. The survey was the brainchild of several people, working together, and sometimes at odds. Among them was Thomas Jefferson. The basic process, laid out in the Northwest ordinance followed: First the acquisition of Indigenous lands, either through treaties or war. Second, the formation of a territory that could then petition for statehood once a threshold of 20,000 white male inhabitants was reached. The third step was statehood. At any time after the Native lands were acquired and the territory formed, the survey could come through to lay a grid on the land so it could be sold. This process was formalized in the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. Under this law the Northwest was organized for treaty-making, territories, states, and the sale of public land.<sup>88</sup>

The “immaculate grid” of the survey was ambitious and almost audacious. The basis of the survey was the meridians that run north to south. A baseline was then measured, running perpendicular to the meridians. From there the squares of the survey were numbered. From north to south they were called townships and from east to west, ranges. The land was then divided into sections, one mile square or 640 acres. Finally, the sections were divided into lots of 160 acres that could be sold. As time went on the smallest lot that could be sold was reduced to forty

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<sup>87</sup>Gary Clayton Anderson, *Little Crow Spokesman for the Sioux*, 69, 74-75.

<sup>88</sup>Andro Linklater, *Measuring America: How the United States Was Shaped By the Greatest Land Sale in History*, (New York, NY: Penguin Group, 2002), 5, 70; Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 369.

acres. Thus, an original lot of the South Loop District owned by an individual might be legally called, “Lot 1, Section 12, Township 27 North, Range 24 West, 4th Prime Meridian, Minnesota/Wisconsin Baseline, 1831.” The survey was meant to occur before settlement but across the country that was rarely the case. Surveyors rushed to layout land for sale but as in Minnesota it frequently was not fast enough for the press of settlers. What makes the public land survey all the more astounding was that millions of square acres were measured by small teams of people and their main tools were chains and links. The chain was twenty-two yards long and known as a Gunter’s chain, named after the seventeenth century English mathematician, Edmund Gunter. The survey was overseen by the surveyor general who administered the land office and had regional surveyors working throughout the continent. Begun in 1785 on the banks of the Ohio River, just west of the Pennsylvania border, the survey marched west and the United States government took Indigenous lands through treaties, removal, and war. The vast geopolitical and economic project, unlike anything the world had seen, reached the future South Loop District in 1853. Just like everywhere else a team had to walk the land and create the grid.<sup>89</sup>

The survey of the reduced Fort Snelling Military Reservation and the lands that became the South Loop began with breathtaking speed after the Dakota were forced to leave the area. Frequently surveying recently seized Native lands did not occur for years after a treaty was signed. But in Minnesota Territory it occurred about six months after the treaties were verified and perhaps two months after most of the Dakota had left. The *Minnesota Pioneer* exclaimed,

...when we see the land to which the Indian title can scarcely be called extinct being put under survey, and the only great impediment to the onward prosperity of our young and flourishing territory being removed, we have certainly great reason to be thankful.

The *Minnesota Pioneer* commented that the survey of the former military land would “doubtless prove gratifying to many who occupy that tract.”<sup>90</sup>

The General Land Office in Washington, D.C. sent instructions to the Surveyor General of Iowa and Minnesota to survey the lands. The reduced land of the military reservation and the land ceded by the Dakota were treated differently and had different sets of instructions. The land was to be surveyed based off of meridians run up from Iowa. The first to strike the Mississippi east of Fort Snelling and one east of it, on which additional lands, including the majority of what would become Bloomington, would be surveyed. The land that was once part of the Fort Snelling Military Reserve on both sides of the Mississippi River, including the South Loop, was to be surveyed based off the grid in Wisconsin, which had been completed up to the east side of the river. This was for several reasons, among them that the squatters already living on the land

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<sup>89</sup> Andro Linklater, *Measuring America*, 1-5, 161, 163; Rod Squires, “The Public Land Survey in Minnesota Territory, 1847-1852,” *Disclosures*, No. 1 (Winter 1993), 10-17; Rod Squires, “The Public Land Survey in Minnesota, 1857-1860,” *Minnesota Surveyor* 1, (Spring 1993), 16-20; David A. Smith, “Preparing the Arkansas Wilderness for Settlement: Public Land Survey Administration, 1803-1806,” *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 71, No. 4 (Winter 2012), 382.

<sup>90</sup>“Minnesota Affairs: Survey of Lands West of the Mississippi,” *The Minnesota Pioneer*, July 14, 1853.

had attempted to stake their claims on that line of survey. The land office wanted to support the squatters and align with “their views and expectations.” The Fort Snelling lands were to be surveyed immediately and the survey of the rest of the lands was to follow as quickly as possible with a concentration on squatter settlements and river valleys. All of this to facilitate the fast colonization of the country. The future lands of the South Loop fell entirely within the area that had been the Fort Snelling Military reservation, and therefore they were some of the first to be surveyed.<sup>91</sup>

The man chosen by the Surveyor General of Minnesota and Iowa to survey the new federal property was Jesse T. Jarret, a thirty-five-year-old Pennsylvanian and deputy surveyor. He led a surveying team of three other men. The chainmen were Andrew F. Wiley and George Webb. John Hoyt was the axeman, charged with clearing away any brush and marking trees when needed. Under an August sun, Jesse T. Jarret peered at his Burt’s Solar Compass, used his circumferenter to measure angles, and scrawled his observations of the land in his field notebook. Ahead of him were Andrew F. Wiley and George Webb twenty-two yards apart, a chain stretched between them. The two men were well trained to measure the land, Wiley was an experienced carpenter and from Pennsylvania like Jarret. Webb too was from Pennsylvania and an engineer. Beyond them was John Hoyt, a laborer employed to clear a path with an axe and marking trees. The men made five dollars for every mile they surveyed. Surveying land was hard work. The lines of the grid did not bow to geography and they ran straight through swamps, forests, dense brush, across creeks and ponds. The surveying party had to traverse the terrain no matter what it was. As they went, they marked section corners using trees, posts, and sometimes they piled up mounds of soil and added a post on top. From August 17 to 27, 1853, Deputy Surveyor Jarrett and his colleagues “ran the line” and measured out Township 27 North, Ranges Number 23 and 24 West, 4th Meridian. Jarrett called the area “Meanders of Minnesota Rivers & Lakes” and a portion of it comprised the land now called the South Loop District of the City of Bloomington. The ten days of surveying completed by Jarret and his crew were the pivot point, within the pivotal decade of the 1850s, that laid the foundation for the eventual creation of the South Loop District.<sup>92</sup>

Jarret was meticulous in his work and as part of it he was required to take field notes describing the land. He recorded basic geographic features, trees, vegetation, and prospective resources for settlers: minerals and soil quality. His notes present a visual record of the City of Bloomington as it was before colonization. He noted that the area was “upland...mostly level” with “good 2nd rate” soil and “timber very scarce.” The trees he did record in his notes were Bur Oak, Black Oak, Aspen, Linden, Ash, Elm, Maple, and Willows along the river. The “bottoms [were] extra 1st rate” with vegetation that was “unequaled.” Some areas had grapes and cucumbers growing. Jarret noted that the bottom land grass was as much as eight feet tall and the

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<sup>91</sup>General Land Office to Warner Lewis, Esq., Surveyor General Dubuque Iowa, May 6, 13, and 16, 1853, Quoted in, “Minnesota Affairs: Survey of Lands West of the Mississippi,” *The Minnesota Pioneer*, July 14, 1853; Henricks *Bloomington on the Minnesota*, 36.

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*; United States Census, 1850; United States Census of 1860.

“reeds at least 16 feet in height.” Some areas were subject to flooding and others unfit for cultivation. At times he noted the land became “hilly” near the banks of the river, a likely reference to Native American mounds. As the survey came up against the eastern border of the township Jarret noted the border of the reduced military reservation. This line essentially ran directly through the center of the future South Loop District, so half of the lands remained federal property. The last thing he noted in his summary was evidence of the land rush occurring in the South Loop area: “There are too great a number of claims and improvements in this township to designate their location in this description.” After the survey, back in Dubuque, Iowa, Jarret wrote out an affidavit swearing the survey was accurate and completed per his contract and United States Law. Jarret, Wiley, Webb, and Hoyt all scrawled their names at the bottom in the presence of Warner Lewis, Surveyor General of Iowa and Minnesota. The notes and accompanying survey map were sent to the General Land Office in Washington, D.C. and were approved on February 27, 1854. The work Jarret and his team did—trudging through marshland, walking across sunbaked prairie, describing the land, carrying an axe, a chain, and a compass—had turned Dakota Homeland into United States property, ready to be sold. They had redrawn the geographies of land and power: whoever came to own the land would be able to exclude others from it, something Dakota people had never conceived of.<sup>93</sup>

The land had been surveyed but the squatters were still on it illegally and hoped that preemption rights would be extended to them. As the public sale of the land neared, the squatters formed The Equal Rights and Impartial Protection Claim Association of Hennepin Co., M.T.” and the “Military Reserve Claim Association.” Hundreds of squatters signed their names on the rolls of these associations, some intent on keeping their lands in present-day Bloomington were among them. Their goal was to hold onto their land claims against any other buyers, especially land speculators, whom they viewed as intruders. They also didn’t wish to actually bid for the land they occupied. They wanted preemption rights immediately along with the privilege of purchasing the land from the federal government at the rock bottom price of \$1.25 an acre. Though they were on the land illegally, they believed their rights as Americans were being threatened. According to its constitution the Military Reserve Claim Association was formed

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<sup>93</sup>Nicholas Blomley, “Law, Property, and the Geography of Violence: The Frontier, the Survey, and the Grid,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 93, No. 1 (March 2003), 129-130. Original Survey of Sub Divisional Meanders, Twp 27 N, Ranges 24 and 23 W, 4th Principal Meridian, February 2, 1854 US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records; A study by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources notes that at the time of the public land survey the area of the South Loop District existed on the border of two major biomes: the Tallgrass Prairie and the Eastern Deciduous Forest. These biomes included vegetation types such as Upland Prairie and Prairie Wetland, Aspen Parkland, Oak Woodland and Brushland, Floodplain Forest, and Maple-Basswood Forest. The original survey notes bear out the MNDNR’s general descriptions of what the land was like in the 1850s. It has been substantially altered since due to colonization and development. For the study see, Keith M. Wendt and Barbara A Coffin, “Natural Vegetation of Minnesota At the Time of the Public Land Survey, 1847-1907,” Natural Heritage Program, Section of Wildlife, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, December, 1988. The sections of the original survey that made up the South Loop District were sections 1, 12, and one lot of section 13. The western border of these sections ran on a north-south line that is now Highway 77 and Old Cedar Avenue. The eastern border of the sections and the border of the Fort Snelling Military Reservation ran north-south along 24th Avenue. At its intersection with Killebrew Drive the border continued directly south to the Minnesota River.



Figure 23: Original Survey of the South Loop, 1853. The eastern boundary (Highway 77) runs north south through the small lake. To the east is the military reserve boundary (24<sup>th</sup> Ave S, south to the Minnesota River). Bureau of Land Management.

...for the protection of our rights as claimants to, and settlers upon the lands known as the Military Reserve...and whereas by the existing laws of the United States in regard to the public lands in the Military Reserve, it becomes necessary for the claimants or actual settlers upon said Military Reserve, in order to secure their united and individual interests to adopt a system by which they may procure titles to their claims and the improvement thereon when they shall be offered for sale.

Local public opinion was with them, so much so that the militia hinted it would support the squatters if violence broke out at the land sales. The expected confrontation at the land sale never occurred, however, as the plats from Washington, D.C. were late in arriving. The squatters then sent a delegation to the national capital to add their desire for preemption to those of the other squatters on non-military reservation land.<sup>94</sup>

Congress, having granted preemption to squatters in other territories, extended the privilege to those in Minnesota on August 4, 1854. Those squatting on the old military reservation land, including much of the South Loop District, were successful in their efforts and preemption was extended to them on March 2, 1855. By that time 162 preemptors claimed land in the area that would become Bloomington. Private individuals did not purchase the lands of the South Loop from the federal government until 1856. The original land owners as recorded in the first land sale records were Milo Burdick Tainter, a former member of the Military Claim Association and land speculator with parcels in Washington and Hennepin County. Peter Tierney and Alexander R. Crawley of whom nothing is known. William Blair a resident of St. Anthony. Benjamin Cooley, a New Yorker who apparently sold his South Loop land quickly and moved to Wright County. Solomon Walters, another migrant from New York. And John Kohl, a German immigrant. Just outside the South Loop District lands, where the Historic Pond House is located the Quinns, McLeods, and Ponds lived along the river. Martin and Mary's family had also grown since they settled in the area in 1849. Martin's brothers, Norman and John, and Mary's brother Henry, all bought public lands in present-day Bloomington. Even the remaining Fort Snelling Military Reservation was sold to New York investors represented by Franklin Steele, a well-known territorial businessman who intended to plat out a town, on July 2, 1857.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Military Reserve Claim Association, Association Record Book, 1853-1854, Manuscript Collection, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota; Edward D. Neill and J. Fletcher Williams, *History of Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis, Including the Explorers and Pioneers of Minnesota; and Outlines of the History of Minnesota*, (Minneapolis, MN: North Star Publishing Company, 1881), 174-175.

<sup>95</sup> United States Land Patent Record of Sale to Milo Burdick Tainter, March 10, 1856; Military Reserve Claim Association, Association Record Book, 1853-1854, Manuscript Collection, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota; United States Land Patent Record of Sale to Peter Tierney, March 10, 1856; United States Land Patent Record of Sale to William Blair, April 2, 1857; United States Land Patent Record of Sale to Benjamin Cooley, July 17, 1857; United States Land Patent Record of Sale to John Kohl, April 2, 1857; United States Land Patent Record of Sale to Alexander R. Crawley, March 10, 1856; United States Land Patent Record of Sale to Martin McLeod, March 10, 1856; United States Land Patent Record of Sale to John M. McLeod, April 2, 1857; United States Land Patent Record of Sale to Norman McLeod, April 2, 1857; United States Land Patent Record of Sale to Gideon H. Pond, March 10, 1856; United States Land Patent Record of Sale to Henry F. Ortleby, April 2, 1857; United States

The sale of the South Loop land coincided with a land boom in Minnesota. The boom had begun with the signing of the treaties and settlers squatting on the land. With preemption extended to the territory squatters purchased the land at the rock bottom price of \$1.25 per acre which only added to the land fever. Thus, with a flurry of preemptive settlement, actions by the United States Congress, and the survey of the land, the settlement of millions of acres, including the South Loop became legal and those already on the land were mostly able to keep the property they had been squatting on. A tidal wave of settler colonists entered the state. The land boom began. Steamboats brought newcomers up the Minnesota River and the South Loop District would have seen crowded river boats passing by frequently. St. Paul became overcrowded with new arrivals, land speculators, and investors. Along the Minnesota River, wherever a steamboat could land, enterprising people began platting out townsites and publishing maps to draw immigrants. Town-sites, many of them totally fictitious and not surveyed were drawn up to attract settlers. This is how the first map of a fictitious Bloomington was created. Nearby Franklin Steele followed the trend and mapped out the City of Fort Snelling. The settlement of Minnesota Territory raced ahead with twenty-three counties and 32,000 settlers in 1854 to sixty-three counties and 150,037 newcomers in 1857. All of the land occupation was supported by the sale of over 5 million acres of public lands. John Fletcher Williams, historian and resident of St. Paul described the situation:

Everybody seemed inoculated with the mania, from the money capitalist to the humble laborer who could merely squat on a quarter section and hold it for a rise. The buying of

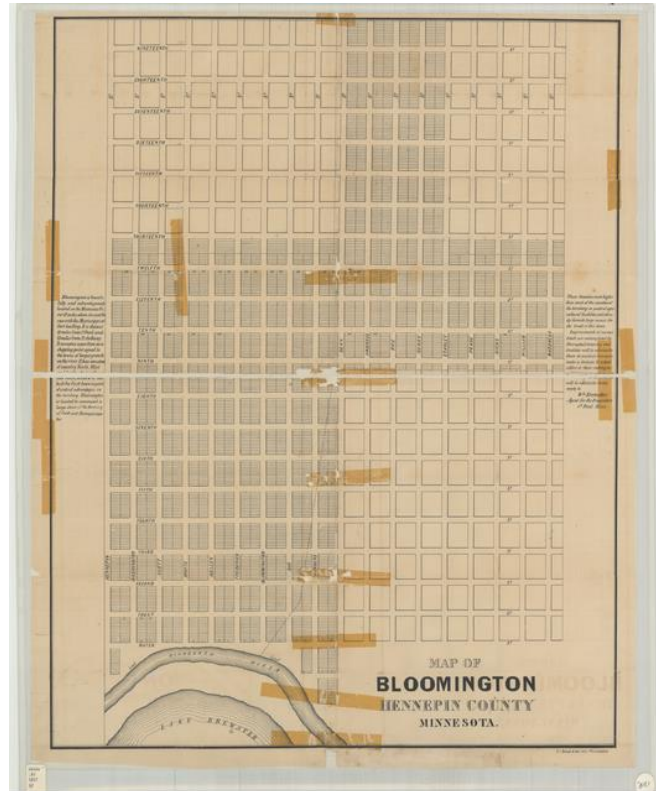


Figure 24: *Map of Bloomington, Hennepin County, Minnesota. Map by P.S. Duval & Son, 1857. This map, made by a land speculator, advertised a fictitious version of Bloomington, which never existed but was meant to attract settlers. Minnesota Historical Society.*

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Land Patent Record of Sale to Peter Quinn, March 10, 1856. Original Survey of Sub Divisional Meanders, Twp 27 N, Range 24 W, 4th Principal Meridian, February 2, 1854 US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records; Original Survey of Sub Divisional Meanders, Twp 27 N, Ranges 24 and 23 W, 4th Principal Meridian, February 2, 1854 US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records; Minnesota Territorial Census, 1857; Folwell, *History of Minnesota*, 353, 356, 432-433; Stephen E. Osman, *Fort Snelling and the Civil War*, (St. Paul, MN: Ramsey County Historical Society, 2017), 5; Miller Dunwiddie, Architects, Inc., *Bloomington: A Community Survey of Historic Sites*, undated, 2.

real estate, often at the most insane prices, and without regard to its real value, infected all classes and almost absorbed every other passion and pursuit. ...Honest labor was thrown aside for more rapid means of wealth. Farmers, mechanics, laborers, even, forsook their occupations to become operators in real estate, and grow suddenly rich, as they supposed.<sup>96</sup>

This was the economic environment in which the South Loop was turned into property and the land sold to people like Milo Tainter, Solomon Walter, and others. What makes the sale of the South Loop lands even more dramatic is it occurred just before the land boom went bust and Minnesota Territory was rocked by an economic crisis.<sup>97</sup>

The land boom finally went bust in the summer of 1857. Land speculation and profiteering, all fueled by credit and debt destabilized the land market as settlers continued to pour in at an unrelenting rate. A resident recounted that 1857 was the year settlers in the territory “went land crazy” and that “the entire population gave up every other thought except one of making money.” Never before was there a boom like the one in 1857 that went so violently bust. In August of 1857 eastern banks began to fail and loans were called in across the country, hitting the booming markets of Minnesota in dramatic fashion. Many, having purchased land on credit, had no hard cash. Currency of the day mostly took the form of paper notes issued by banks. The paper notes were notoriously difficult to redeem for cash in good times and their creditworthiness was frequently in question. With so many different bank notes in circulation, from five cents to ten thousand dollars, counterfeiting was common. Still paper notes were convenient, and metal specie was hard to come by in Minnesota. The land craze drove people to take risks with paper money. When the panic hit, gold and silver currency that existed in the territory quickly vanished as people paid off their loans. Local businesses and banks closed their doors. Land prices plummeted and properties were foreclosed on. Land speculators and those who could not pay their debts fled the territory. John Fletcher Williams recalled the bursting of the real estate bubble in Minnesota Territory:

Everything had been so inflated and unreal—values purely fictitious, all classes in debt, with but little real wealth, honest industry neglected, and everything speculative and feverish—that the blow fell with ruinous force. Business was paralyzed, real estate actually valueless and unsaleable at any price, and but little good money in circulation. Ruin stared all classes in the face. The notes secured by mortgages must be paid, but all values were destroyed. No device would raise money, for no one had any to lend. Everybody was struggling to save himself.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> John Fletcher Williams, *A History of Saint Paul and the County of Ramsey, Minnesota*, (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society, 1876), 379.

<sup>97</sup> Folwell, *History of Minnesota*, 359-362.

<sup>98</sup> John Fletcher Williams, *A History of Saint Paul and the County of Ramsey*, 380-381.



The land boom and bust cycle of settlement occurred in almost every western state throughout the nineteenth century, but in Minnesota the rush to settle the land illegally and then legally, accompanied by a financial panic, made the colonization of the land particularly tumultuous and violent. It is during this feverish period that land ownership in what would become the South Loop District began, creating the basis for all subsequent land sales and the homes and business that exist there today.<sup>99</sup>

The Panic of 1857 threw many Americans into financial hardship and bankruptcy. Having purchased the lands of the South Loop at the peak of the market, there is little doubt all of the landowners immediately lost money on their investments. Martin McLeod, who had worked to make the public land sale possible, and now had an extended family gathered around him, was devastated by the Panic. He had bought up land in the area of present-day Bloomington and had also purchased land west in Glencoe as a speculative venture. He had bought the land almost entirely with borrowed money and after 1857 he struggled to sell it. Martin wrote his brother John about his troubles:

I am almost disheartened about my own affairs—have borrowed and have continued to borrow...debt is hanging over me like the Sword of Damocles. No property can be sold for money now. I only hope for the spring...<sup>100</sup>

Though deeply in debt, Martin and Mary McLeod were able to hold onto their home and one piece of land near the South Loop District. Gideon Pond and Peter Quinn also weathered the land rush, perhaps better than McLeod because they did not overextend themselves in land speculation. But, by 1860 the records make clear the vast majority of original land owners who had bought during the panic were gone. The land bust upended dreams and finances. At the same time, it created opportunity. As the market stabilized, Ordinance Sergeant Jeremiah Mahoney was able to make his move to the South Loop.

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<sup>99</sup> Folwell, *History of Minnesota*, 363-364; Ronald M. Hubbs, "No Cash, No Credit, No Jobs: St. Paul and the Panic of 1857," *Ramsey County History* 25, no. 3 (Fall 1990), 21; Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 382, 394.

<sup>100</sup> "Items from the St. Anthony Express," *St. Paul Weekly Minnesotan*, December 15, 1855; Carroll Jane Lamm, "'This Higgledey-piggledey Assembly:' The McLeods, and Anglo-Dakota Family in Early Minnesota," 230.

## Creating a State, Creating a Town

From his post at Fort Snelling Jeremiah Mahoney had a front row seat to the events that transformed Minnesota Territory. He likely watched mounted soldiers ride out of the gate in 1851 to attend treaty negotiations with the Dakota. He may have gazed across the Minnesota River from the fort's walls as the Treaty of Mendota was negotiated on the slopes of Pilot Knob. After the treaties were signed and through the granting of preemption in 1855 there is little doubt, he was aware of the rush on the former lands of the military reservation. As an early history of Hennepin County observed:

There existed, too, a tacit agreement between the squatters and the officers of the fort, that, on the one side, there should be no interference with their occupation, and, on the other there should be a division of spoils, in case the final decision [of preemption] should be in their favor.<sup>101</sup>

As a veteran sergeant, there is a chance Mahoney had enough influence to be in on some land scheme and perhaps had discussions with squatters. But he was not necessarily a man of influence and being a soldier in the army meant he had to stay at Fort Snelling. To leave it without permission in order to claim land would have been desertion. But Mahoney did obtain land in Minnesota after the surveys, just by reliable means. In 1847 the US Congress passed an act further organizing the army during the Mexican-American War. The act also provided for land warrants good for 160 acres as a reward for soldiers who served honorably during the conflict. Land grants as payment for military service was a tradition that went back to the American Revolution. Taking advantage of the recent public land survey, and probably itching to buy up a good piece of land while he could, Mahoney submitted his warrant to the land office in Stillwater, Minnesota. Unable to leave his post, a man named Alonzo Gates represented him in the matter and secured Mahoney 160 acres in Sherburne County. On January 3, 1854 after fifteen years in the country and fourteen in the army, the Irish immigrant became a landowner.<sup>102</sup>

But as the land of the Dakota became property and the Mahoneys worked to capitalize on it, their personal life fell apart. As soon as Jeremiah and Eliza Mahoney reached Fort Snelling in August of 1849 (a year before Jeremiah would decide whether to reenlist or not) the couple began having troubles. Eliza's father lived in California and she wanted her family to move there but Jeremiah disagreed saying he liked where he was. Determined to go, Eliza took \$423 in gold from Jeremiah's quarters. She gave the money and her jewelry to an officer in the dragoons at the Fort, as the unit was about to be transferred to Santa Fe, New Mexico and she hoped to travel with them. However, Jeremiah discovered her plan. The two argued but Jeremiah realized his

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<sup>101</sup> Edward D. Neill and J. Fletcher Williams, *History of Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis, Including the Explorers and Pioneers of Minnesota; and Outlines of the History of Minnesota*, (Minneapolis, MN: North Star Publishing Company, 1881), 174.

<sup>102</sup> "An Act to raise for a limited time an additional military force and other purposes," Twenty-Ninth Congress, Second Session, Ch. 8, February 11, 1847; Land Patent of Jeremiah Mahoney, General Land Office, Stillwater, Minnesota, January 3, 1854.

wife intended to leave for California and there was nothing he could do to stop her. According to a fellow soldier who testified on Jeremiah's behalf, she refused to live with him and was determined to leave him, though Sergeant Mahoney provided for her better than almost any other wife in the garrison. What may have really occurred between the couple is not known. Jeremiah gave her two hundred dollars and the spouses stopped living as husband and wife. Eliza boarded a steamer and left Jeremiah on April 11, 1851, presumably taking her children with her. Before leaving she publicly gave up all claims on him as her husband and released him from their marriage.<sup>103</sup>

After not hearing anything from Eliza for nearly two years, Jeremiah filed for divorce on February 9, 1853 on grounds of abandonment and willful desertion. He and a fellow soldier first made affidavits of what had happened. The court then drew up a summons for Eliza and had the sheriff search Ramsey County for her. As a final formality, he paid to run a summons in the *Minnesota Pioneer*, and mailed a copy, along with his complaint to Santa Fe. After these efforts failed and Eliza did not appear, the court legally divorced the Mahoneys on May 2, 1853.<sup>104</sup>

Eliza's voice is mostly silent in the historical record, only appearing through intermediaries and those opposed to her actions. It is clear that she was a bold and resourceful woman. Marriage at the time was conceived of in two primary ways: a union of two unique persons and a power relationship where men were dominant. As American society and particularly women began to think of marriage as a more egalitarian arrangement, the two concepts were often in conflict. Overall men were seen as the ultimate authority and breadwinner while women were expected to run the home and provide a moral grounding for their husbands. Social expectations gave men the power to make most important decisions in a marriage, including the place of residence, which was at issue between Eliza and Jeremiah. Eliza must have known that such a disagreement would never be grounds for divorce in a court. Her decision to stop living with Jeremiah was likely because of their disagreement, but it was also strategic. By separating from him but continuing in the marriage she was entitled to alimony payments for her and her children. The social pressure for a man to provide for his wife, even an estranged one, was immense. Jeremiah felt it so strongly he even gave Eliza a large sum of money when she left because they were still married. Her decision to verbally relieve Jeremiah of his duties of a husband and head west was likely an intentional one. In the American West, civil laws around marriage were looser, and she likely knew that a Ramsey County court would never be able to find her if she did not want to be found. Eliza's leaving of Jeremiah outside the bounds of divorce law and social customs is an example of female resistance and agency at a time when patriarchy reigned.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Jeremiah Mahoney vs. Eliza Mahoney, Territorial Ramsey County District Court, Registers of Action and District Court Case Files, Boxes 128.B.14.8F and 106.K.16.2F, State Records Collection, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., "Territory of Minnesota; District Court, First Judicial District, Ramsey County; Jeremiah Mahoney against Eliza Mahoney," *Minnesota Pioneer*, February 24, 1853.

<sup>105</sup> Anthony Rotundo, "Men, Women, and Marriage in the Nineteenth-Century North," in *Major Problems in the History of American Families and Children*, edited by Anya Jabour, (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company,

The court records make clear why Sergeant Mahoney decided to formally divorce his wife. He wanted to sever his ties to Eliza economically, be cleared of his responsibility to her children, and be able to marry again. But on a personal level the situation he faced with Eliza must have threatened his manhood. Fort Snelling was a closed-in community, and the army a very masculine institution. As a veteran of two wars and a sergeant, Mahoney embodied a dominant form of military manhood within his community. Eliza's direct resistance on an issue men usually decided must have upended Jeremiah's sense of hierarchy and structure. Her plot to take some of his money and leave with another military officer for the west certainly had hints of adultery. The whole situation would have disgraced him within the Fort's community and humiliated him in front of his male military peers.<sup>106</sup>

Why the veteran sergeant waited two years to formally divorce Eliza is unknown. But it is clear why he did so in 1853: he had fallen in love again. A woman named Anna (sometimes listed as Ann) came to the territory in 1853. She was ten years younger than Mahoney and like him, an Irish Immigrant. How the two met is unknown, but many Irish immigrants were coming to Minnesota in search of land and opportunity. Anna may have worked as a servant at the fort, or may have met Sergeant Mahoney in one of the settlements nearby. Shortly after Jeremiah secured his divorce from Eliza, he and Anna were married. Anna became pregnant within a year of their marriage and it may have been these changes in his life that prompted the sergeant to use his military land warrant to secure a future home for his wife and future child. It appears they were able to improve the land by building on it. They could not live there due to Mahoney's enlistment, but it seems they rented it out to tenants. However, something went amiss with the family's plans for the land in Sherburne County. On May 30, 1854, less than six months after purchasing the land, Ordinance Sergeant Mahoney was arrested and court martialed along with two other soldiers. What offense he committed is not known, but it was related to his land. As punishment Mahoney was demoted to hospital steward for several months and the rent of his farm was turned over to the subsistence department of the US Army. Given the tumultuous nature of land acquisition in Minnesota at the time it is possible Mahoney became involved in some unsavory endeavor, or perhaps he left his post at the fort to check on his family's land when he was not supposed to. Possibly due to this setback and needing stability, after the birth of their daughter Martha, the Mahoneys decided to continue in the army life. Jeremiah re-enlisted for a final time in July of 1855.<sup>107</sup>

As the land boom intensified, the Mahoneys were not able to purchase lands the way the McLeods did, likely due to the complications of their previous efforts. Still, it was certainly on their minds as many soldiers of the garrison were deserting "to hold land claims for parties in the territory." The commander of the fort reported, "It is said that \$200 and \$250 have been offered

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2005), 115-120; Norma Basch, *Framing American Divorce: From the Revolutionary Generation to the Victorians*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 109-110.

<sup>106</sup>Norma Basch, *Framing American Divorce*, 123-126.

<sup>107</sup>"Died: Mahoney," *St. Paul Daily Globe*, February 19, 1893; Minnesota Territorial Census, 1857; United States Census, 1860; Post Return of Fort Snelling Minnesota Territory, May to November, 1854; Enlistment of Ordinance Sergeant Jeremiah Mahoney, July 1855, United States Register of Enlistments in the U.S. Army, 1798-1914.

soldiers for such a purpose.” As previously noted, the white population of the territory grew and as residents brought up lands in the South Loop and the financial panic of 1857 hit, the territory was moving towards statehood. As part of the push to statehood a territorial census was conducted in 1857, just after the panic, in order to determine how many representatives Minnesota would have in Washington, D.C. The higher the population of free white people the more political power Minnesota would have. With the categories of race being constructed and ever-shifting, census takers were instructed to define “white” broadly in order to create the highest population possible. This made Mary McLeod and her four children of Dakota-Scottish Ancestry visible on the census, living with Martin just outside the bounds of the South Loop near the Ponds and Quinns. Anna and Jeremiah Mahoney were living with their three-year-old daughter, Martha, on the Old Military Reserve when the census was taken.<sup>108</sup>

Caught up in the national politics of slavery, Minnesota Statehood did not occur until May 11, 1858. The residents of Township 116, as it was then called, had moved to organize alongside the effort for statehood. The Town of Bloomington, which roughly means “flowering field,” was organized the same day Minnesota became a state. Bloomington was founded as a town—not as a township—because it did not conform to the typical thirty-six square mile, six by six section plan of a standard township. This was due to its southern border being shortened by the Minnesota River. Land was added to the west and the east, including the South Loop District to make up for the lost land base. The meeting to organize the town was held at the home of R.B. Gibson. There it was voted to divide the town into three districts with Nine Mile Creek and the county road (Old Shakopee Road) as the main borders. The South Loop fell into two districts, divided by the road. A small fund was voted to support town expenses. Notably it was “voted that a lawful fence be a fence 4 ½ feet high and sufficiently strong to resist the...pushing of cattle and horses,” proof that settlers were moving to enclose their lands with fences in order to mark off their property. No known residents of the future South Loop District were present at the meeting, but Martin McLeod was there. Afterward town meetings were held every April.<sup>109</sup>

By founding the State of Minnesota and the City of Bloomington, the settlers fulfilled a key aspect of settler colonialism: they founded their own political order and established sovereignty over *their* land. Townships, cities, counties, and states all constitute the establishment of a settler society. The land survey, building of roads, sowing of crops, and renaming of the landscape are all products of this desire to create a new society. By doing this and owning the land, settlers are able to see themselves as indigenous and having an inherent right to occupancy as Native Americans are willfully forgotten.

<sup>108</sup>Minnesota Territorial Census, 1857; Lt. Col. C.F. Smith to the Adjutant General, Headquarters, Fort Snelling, Minnesota Territory, June 2, 1857; Lucy Leavenworth Wilder Morris, ed., *Old Rail Fence Corners*, 257.

<sup>109</sup> Hennepin County, Bloomington Records, 1858-1964, Manuscript Collection on Microfilm, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota; Judith A. Hendricks, *Bloomington on the Minnesota*, (Bloomington, MN: Bloomington Bicentennial Committee, 1976), 27, 38.

The founding of Bloomington in 1858 helped save the McLeod family from losing everything. Fortunately, Martin had invested heavily in land in and around Bloomington. He was able to sell the land to support his family. Despite being virtually bankrupt, the family avoided disaster and was able to live comfortably on the bluffs on the Minnesota River. By 1860, McLeod had morphed himself from fur trader, territorial politician, and land speculator into an “agriculturalist,” as he was listed in the 1860 census. He seemed to embrace the life of a country gentleman and joined the Minnesota State Agricultural Society in 1855 exiting the “Indian trade” that same year. Instead of arranging treaty-making strategies that shaped a state, he now entered some of his crops for judging at the first state fair, held at Fort Snelling. Still respected by his community he was one of Hennepin County’s representatives at state Democratic Party functions. Mary too had changed, from a pivotal player in the kinship of the fur trade, to being erased by the US census, to being visible again as a founder of the Town of Bloomington. But they were a family haunted by the past and immense change they had witnessed. Accounts state Martin was despondent and struggled with alcoholism. He died on November 20, 1860 at the age of forty-seven. Mary Elizabeth lived for eleven more years and died at forty-six years old.<sup>110</sup>

Just as Martin McLeod died, settlers began living on the land of the South Loop District as legal landowners. Land prices had been volatile in the wake of the Panic of 1857, but by 1860 the economy had stabilized and began to grow. Those who settled in Bloomington were from three main groups. The American settlers came from other Midwestern states and New England. The immigrants were from England, Ireland, and Germany. Though there were many newcomers, older families with their origins in Canada, the Red River Valley, and Minnesota still made up a sizable amount of the population. In the summer or fall of 1860 Sergeant Mahoney decided not to reenlist in the army. After twenty years of service, he was discharged and became a civilian. By the winter of 1860 he and his wife were landowners in the South Loop District. Their land bordered the Fort Snelling Military Reservation along a line that ran directly through what would be the South Loop. On the west side, the Mahoneys started a farm, on the east side the land was still owned by the United States Government. The Mahoney family owned

From the time he arrived in America until 1860, Jeremiah Mahoney was an agent of Settler Colonialism. He fought Native Americans, removed them from their land, and helped conquer large swaths of the Southwest. He was part of the US colony at Fort Snelling, but like all the soldiers before him, he could have possibly left the region when his assignment was over. Once he became a civilian and occupied former indigenous land in the South Loop, he became a settler colonist.

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<sup>110</sup> United States Census, 1860; “Death of Hon. Martin McLeod,” *St. Paul Weekly Pioneer and Democrat*, November 30, 1860; “Minnesota State Agricultural Society,” *St. Paul Weekly Pioneer and Democrat*, October 12, 1860; “Democratic State Convention,” *St. Paul Weekly Pioneer and Democrat*, August 24, 1860; “Territorial Fair,” *St. Paul Weekly Minnesotan*, October 20, 1855; “The St. Anthony Express Learns...” *St. Paul Minnesota Weekly Times*, June 12, 1855; Carroll Jane Lamm, “‘This Higgledy-piggledy Assembly:’ The McLeods, and Anglo-Dakota Family in Early Minnesota,” 230-231.

lots 1 through 4 of section 12 of the town, a total of 320 acres. Today their land makes up the area bordered by E 86th St. to the north, Old Cedar Ave S to the west, and on a line running south from roughly where E 86th St. meets Old Shakopee Road. The Minnesota River makes up the southern border. They built their home between the bluffs and Long Meadow Lake, roughly where the Hogback Ridge Trail splits just north of Highway 77. In 1860 Jeremiah was forty-two, Anna, ten years younger, and their daughter Martha was seven. Their farm was sizable enough that they hired a farm hand named John Banker, a German immigrant. Their property was also located along both sides of the main road through the area, what is today Old Shakopee Road.<sup>111</sup>

### **War Comes to the South Loop**

In 1860 everything seemed set for the continued settlement of the South Loop District. Although the eastern half of it was unoccupied because it was part of the military reservation, the land had been sold to Franklin Steele. The “gentleman” as he called himself had made a large payment on the land, and like every other enterprising land speculator, planned to plat out a new town. When the American Civil War began on April 12, 1861, Minnesota governor Alexander Ramsey was lobbying in Washington, DC. He immediately pledged a thousand Minnesota volunteer soldiers to the war effort—the first troops offered to the federal government during the war. The Minnesota adjutant general gained use of Fort Snelling from Franklin Steele, putting any further settlement of the eastern half of the South Loop on hold. Forty-two men from Bloomington served in the Civil War. The only known resident of the future South Loop who enlisted was the forty-four-year-old veteran, Sergeant Jeremiah Mahoney. Why he decided to volunteer is not known, but can be guessed at. Like most Minnesotans who volunteered, Mahoney likely felt a sense of duty to his nation and enlisted to preserve the union. But knowing that he had been a soldier for twenty years, and had been out of the army for only six months, one gets the sense there is no way Mahoney could not join. His family had bought land on the border of the military reservation so their former life was never far away. All he had to do was march six miles up the road to Fort Snelling and volunteer. Clearly, he was still attached to a military life; it was the only way he had experienced America.<sup>112</sup>

The first Minnesotans to volunteer were enlisted on April 29, 1861 and among them was Jeremiah Mahoney. He was commissioned a commissary Sergeant in the famous First Minnesota Volunteer Infantry Regiment. Throughout the war, Minnesota recruited twenty-one military units totaling about twenty-five thousand soldiers. Minnesota troops played important roles in many major battles of the American Civil War. The First Minnesota Infantry served in the eastern theater of the war, fighting in famous battles like the first battle of Bull Run, Antietam, and Gettysburg. Most of Minnesota’s Civil War units, including infantry, artillery, and cavalry, campaigned in the western theater. Minnesotans fought in the western theater battles of Shiloh,

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<sup>111</sup> United States Census of 1860, George Burdick Wright, *Map of Hennepin County Minnesota*, 1873.

<sup>112</sup> Judith A. Henricks, *Bloomington on the Minnesota*, 42; Stephen E. Osman, *Fort Snelling and the Civil War*, (St. Paul, MN: Ramsey County Historical Society, 2017), 4-7.

Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge, Nashville, and others. Bloomington soldiers enlisted in various regiments and served in the Eastern and Western Theaters of the War. Thirteen Bloomington men died in the war.<sup>113</sup>

Mahoney had an important but somewhat unusual military experience during the Civil War. He went east with the First Minnesota Volunteers and arrived at Alexandria, Virginia on July 3, 1861. No doubt due to his experience as a sergeant in charge of supplies of every kind, the commander of the military depot at Alexandria requested that Mahoney be transferred to the quartermaster service and work there. It is not clear, but Mahoney may have fought with the First Minnesota at the First Battle of Bull Run on July 21, 1861. If so, he would have experienced heavy combat. The next month he was discharged from his regiment and “obtained a permanent situation as clerk and cashier at [the Alexandria] Depot.” He worked there as a government employee contracting with businesses and individuals to purchase supplies for the US Army. Alexandria was occupied by US forces for the entire war and turned into a military city governed by martial law. It was a railroad center, a port, a nexus for supplies, and an important location of military hospitals. Mahoney having been an enlisted man now worked in the heart of the logistical bureaucracy that supported the massive war effort. He was caught up in a scandal when some of his superiors were accused of stealing government funds. He was imprisoned. In his defense Mahoney stated,

I have spent eighteen years in the United States service as an enlisted man—nine years of which I have been stationed at Fort Snelling, Minnesota as an ordinance sergeant. During my servitude I always had charge of public property under the supervision of various officers of the army, which confidence and trust I have never betrayed, but always stood high in the estimation of all officers under whom I had to perform my duty.

The details are unclear, but he was eventually released in January of 1864. Whether Mahoney stayed in the east working for the government until the end of the war seems likely, but is not known. He was home by the summer of 1865 with most of Minnesota's volunteers.<sup>114</sup>

While Mahoney and other Bloomington settlers were off fighting in the Civil War, the US-Dakota War of 1862 broke out in Minnesota. The war would lead to one of the most solemn scenes in the history of the South Loop land. The causes of the US–Dakota War were varied and complex and are beyond the scope of this report. But taking a broad perspective shows that the onslaught of settler colonialism ignited the war. Across the globe and throughout history, many

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<sup>113</sup> Board of Commissioners, *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars, 1861-1865*, (St. Paul, MN: Pioneer Press Company, 1890), 49; Osman, *Fort Snelling and the Civil War*, 63-67; Kenneth Carly, *Minnesota In The Civil War*, (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2000), 187; Judith A. Henricks, *Bloomington on the Minnesota*, 42-43.

<sup>114</sup> Board of Commissioners, *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars, 1861-1865*, 49; Civil War Subversion Investigations, Case Files of Investigations by Levi C. Turner and Lafayette C. Baker, 1861-1865, National Archives Record, 656620, US National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.; Minnesota State Census, 1865; City of Alexandria, Virginia, “Voices from the Past, Alexandria, Virginia, 1861-1865,” June, 5, 2017 (accessed August 1, 2021).



peoples, facing colonization and the loss of their very identity—pushed to the brink—have made one last desperate attempt to resist. The US–Dakota War of 1862 is a dramatic example of this. Many of the Dakota combatants moved westward into Dakota Territory, while others went north to Canada. But many of the men who had fought stayed with their families, who could not move swiftly enough to escape. General Pope who was in overall command, ordering Sibley (who was in charge of the US military response) to press his advance, declared, “It is my purpose utterly to exterminate the Sioux if I have the power to do so and even if it requires a campaign lasting the whole of next year.” Sibley, however, sent messengers letting the peaceful Dakota know that his army was advancing and that he did not intend to make war on all the Dakota. He stated that his troops would not harm the peaceful Dakota and those who met his advancing army would be safe. Numerous Dakota who had not participated in the war, as well as some who had, met Sibley’s army at a place that came to be called Camp Release. When he arrived, Sibley took the Dakota into the custody of the US military<sup>115</sup>

Over the course of three weeks, a military commission tried 392 Dakota men for their participation in the war and sentenced 303 of them to death. Based on the bands that prosecuted the war it is almost certain that Dakota residents of the Bloomington area were among them those sentenced. Some of the trials lasted no longer than five minutes. At the time and ever since, the legal authority of the commission and the procedures it followed have been questioned. As weeks passed, more Dakota voluntarily came to Camp Release, and US patrols captured others.

While the Dakota and US soldiers were gathered at Camp Release and the later camp at Lower Agency, measles slowly began to spread through the troops and likely infected the Dakota.<sup>116</sup>

The situation for the Dakota was dire: many settler colonists wanted revenge on all Dakota, regardless of whether they had participated in the war. Winter was approaching, food was scarce, and they were away from their homes on the reservation. On October 7, 1862, General Pope sent orders to Sibley: “I desire you to disarm and send down to Fort Snelling all

The US-Dakota War of 1862 was a colonial war. Frequently, indigenous people pushed to the brink of losing everything, decide to fight back with brutal and total violence. At times this violence is directed at the settler society in its entirety, including innocent civilians, as it was during the US-Dakota War. For the settler this resistance seems to be surprising and unwarranted. The settler reaction is frequently one of genocidal intent meant to completely extinguish the existence of indigenous people within the settler polity. The response to Dakota resistance by the US Government (total war for three years, forced removal of non-combatants from the state, mass execution, bounties on Dakota scalps) represents a common and devastating chapter in settler colonialism.

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<sup>115</sup> Board of Commissioners, *Minnesota in the Civil and Indian Wars*, 2: 250, 254–55, 257; Vogel, “Rethinking the Effect of the Abrogation of the Dakota Treaties,” 548; For a history of the Dakota movements into the Canadian borderlands see, David G. McCrady, *Living with Strangers: The Nineteenth-Century Sioux and the Canadian-American Borderlands*, (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 17–30.

<sup>116</sup> Osman, “Sibley’s Army in November 1862,” 19, 21; Monjuea-Marz, *The Dakota Indian Internment at Fort Snelling*, 53–54.

the Indians, men, women and children, of the Sioux tribe upon whom you can lay your hands. I shall keep and feed for the winter such as are not hung and shot for their crimes, so that with the sanction of Congress obtained this winter they can all be removed beyond the limits of the State, in the spring.” Later in October, Pope modified his plans regarding the Dakota and ordered Sibley to send the convicted Dakota to Mankato and the noncombatants to Fort Snelling.<sup>117</sup>

Sibley put Lieutenant Colonel William R. Marshall and three hundred troops of the Eighth and Fifth Minnesota Infantry Regiments in charge of the forced removal of the Dakota from the Minnesota River Valley to Fort Snelling. The Dakota who traveled to Fort Snelling beginning November 7, 1862, numbered 1,658. The vast majority were children, women, and elderly. They followed a northern route, cutting directly east from Lower Sioux across areas with relatively few towns, but the efforts of Colonel Marshall and the military escort could not protect the women and children from a fatal attack in Henderson. US Army scout Samuel J. Brown, son of John R. Brown, stated, “I saw an enraged white woman rush up to one of the wagons and snatch a nursing babe from its mother’s breast and dash it violently upon the ground. The soldier’s [*sic*] instantly seized her and led or rather dragged the woman away, and restored the papoose to its mother—limp and almost dead. Although the child was not killed outright, it died a few hours later.” Dakota participants recorded other deaths in the oral histories that Dakota families carry to this day. One Dakota family holds the memory of a little girl who witnessed a soldier stab her grandmother on the march. The girl was forced to leave her grandmother behind, and her family never discovered what happened to the elderly woman’s body.<sup>118</sup>

On a November day in 1862, likely the thirteenth, the land of the South Loop—the homeland of the Dakota—bore witness to a chapter in the violent removal of a Native people from their home. After the attack at Henderson the non-combatants and their military escort continued east on a stage and mail route that led to Fort Snelling. Following the north side of the Minnesota River they passed through Faxon, Chaska, Eden Prairie Township and entered Hennepin County, directly across the river from Shakopee. Continuing east they walked along what is now Pioneer Trail and entered present-day Bloomington at the junction of that road with highway 169. The march through Bloomington was along a route that was likely familiar to some of the Dakota. The Dakota trail between the village of Tinta Otonwe and Bdote had been turned into a mail and stage route after the Dakota were removed in 1853. Today it is called Old Shakopee Road, and the Dakota who were forced marched along the route in 1862 were returning to Bdote—a sacred place—for a terrible reason. The march stopped and camped in Bloomington, perhaps somewhere near Nine Mile Creek. The next day they marched past the residences of the McLeod’s, Gideon Pond, and the Quinns who many of them undoubtedly knew. There would have been sadness in the Quinn household as the Dakota passed. The head of

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<sup>117</sup> Pope to Sibley, Oct. 7, 1862 quoted in Bakeman and Woolworth, “The Family Caravan” in *Trail of Tears: Minnesota’s Dakota Exile Begins*, eds. Mary Hawker Bakeman and Antona M. Richardson (Roseville, MN: Prairie Echoes, 2008), 53.

<sup>118</sup> Bakeman and Woolworth, “The Family Caravan,” in Bakeman and Richardson, eds., *Trails of Tears*, 52–54; Monjeau-Marz, *The Dakota Indian Internment at Fort Snelling*, 37, 40; Wilson, “Grandmother to Granddaughter”; Anderson and Woolworth., *Through Dakota Eyes*, 227.

the family and one of the first fur trading residents of Bloomington, Peter Quinn, had been killed in the early days of the war trying to negotiate between Dakota warriors and US troops. The



Figure 25: Plat map of the South Loop, 1860. The South loop constitutes sections 1, 12, 6, and parts of 13. Old Shakopee Road, which the Dakota were marched down, cuts through sections 12 and 1. Note the eastern half of the South Loop was still unoccupied. Hennepin County Library.

innocent Dakota entered the future land of the South Loop roughly where Old Shakopee Road intersects with Highway 77 and marched through the Mahoneys' farmland on their way to Fort Snelling.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>119</sup> Bakeman and Woolworth, "The Family Caravan," in Bakeman and Richardson, eds., *Trails of Tears*, 68-70; Lisa Elbert, "Tracing Their Footsteps: The Dakota Marches of 1862," in *In The Footsteps of Our Ancestors: The Dakota Commemorative Marches of the 21st Century*, edited by Waziyatawin Angela Wilson, (St. Paul, MN: Living Justice Press, 1006), 196-211; R. Cook, *Sectional Map of Hennepin Co. Minnesota Showing Cities, Townships, Townsites Roads & RailRoads, 1860*, (R. and F. Cook, N.P: 1860), James K. Hosmer Special Collections, Hennepin County Library, Minneapolis, MN; Anderson and Woolworth, *Through Dakota Eyes: Narrative Accounts of the Minnesota Inidan War 1862*, (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 988), 84.

Nearly 70 percent of the Dakota who marched through the South Loop District were Bdewakantunwan. For them the Bloomington area was their home and seeing the settlement that



*Figure 26: A Dakota woman and her baby in the concentration camp below Fort Snelling. Photograph by Joel Emmons Whitney, 1862-1863. This woman and her child represent hundreds of others who marched through the South Loop in November of 1862. Minnesota Historical Society.*

had occurred may have been difficult. The rest belonged to the Wahpetunwan and Wahpekute council fires of the Oceti Sakowin. The final group were métis people who were kin to the Dakota. Among the Bdewakantunwan were bands that had lived in or near Bloomington. Members of Black Dog's Band were on the march. Tacanku Waste's band were also among the innocent marching to Fort Snelling. Mahpiya Wicasta, now an elderly man, and his people also trudged along the road. The vast majority of the Dakota, perhaps as high as 90 percent, were women and children.<sup>120</sup>

It is possible that Anna Mahoney and her daughter Martha were at home as the column passed by. Anna may have kept Martha safe in their home below the bluff on Long Meadow Lake. Or perhaps they and other Bloomington residents made their way to the road and watched the column move by. They would have seen three companies, about three hundred men, of the Eighth Minnesota Volunteer Regiment escorting the column. After the previous attacks they were on the lookout from more angry settlers, especially as they neared St. Paul.

Lieutenant Colonel Marshall, was probably eager to reach the fort, and vigilant as they took the road that ran closest to the Minnesota River. The Dakota would have been desperate and tired. Some were in wagons pulled by oxen or on horseback, but many

had lost most of their possessions in the war and were forced to walk. The children would have been tired as their mothers held them close and hurried them along. The Dakota men, by far the minority on the march, may have been hoping they had made the right choice to surrender.

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<sup>120</sup> Peter DeCarlo, *Who Were the Dakota Detainees in the Fort Snelling Concentration Camp?* Internal Research Report, Minnesota Historical Society, July 12, 2021; Alan R. Woolworth Papers, 1774-2008 (bulk 1839-2000), Manuscript Collection, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota; McKusick, Lieutenant, Superintendent of Indian Camp, *Indian Camp Census &c* December 2, 1862, enclosed in R.C. Olin to Col. Charles E. Mix, Headquarters District of Minnesota, Department of the Northwest, St. Paul, Minn., May 26, 1863, 313-316.

Anxiety, fear, determination, and heartbreak must have been felt as they returned to their traditional homeland at the confluence.

Moving on from the Mahoney's farm the Dakota arrived at Fort Snelling on November 13, 1862. In December the US Army constructed a stockade and moved the Dakota inside. While in the concentration camp over the winter of 1862-1863, and estimated 130 to 300 Dakota people died, mainly due to measles and other diseases. Among them was Mahpiya Wicasta, who had known the lands of Bloomington well. Throughout the winter, the US Congress considered bills to remove the Dakota from their homeland. On February 16, 1863, Congress passed an act that "abrogated and annulled" all treaties with the Dakota people. The act also stated that all lands held by the Dakota, and all annuities due to them, were forfeited to the US government. A second bill, providing for the removal of the Dakota from their ancestral homelands, passed on March 3, 1863. In early May the army put the Dakota captives from the Fort Snelling camp aboard steamers and took them to a desolate reservation at Crow Creek, Dakota Territory. Some Dakota people who were connected with traders and missionaries, or able to find work with the army, managed to stay in Minnesota. A group of Dakota men who entered the US Army as scouts served in western Minnesota, while their families stayed on at Fort Snelling, Fort Ridgely, and Camp Pope. A second group of just over thirty Dakota went to Faribault. A final group of fifteen went to Mendota, where Sibley provided them with town lots. These events would have been out of sight from the banks of the South Loop, a few miles downriver.<sup>121</sup>

After the US government forcibly removed the noncombatant Dakota from Minnesota, the war against the Dakota entered a second phase, that the South Loop has a connection to as well. In the summers of 1863-64 the US Army launched the Punitive Expeditions into Dakota Territory, intent on carrying war to the Dakota. In 1863 many still wanted revenge on the Dakota and believed they had not yet been defeated. The 1863 expedition was ordered to protect the western borders of Minnesota and Iowa, to establish military posts in Dakota Territory, and to push the Dakota further west. The 1864 expedition was meant to subdue the "Sioux" who lived

BLACK DOG'S BAND.					
Napesni	5	1	2	2	1
Mazaiojinejanwin	2				
Aupetuiyotaukwin	2				
Ptanhiyewin	1				
Tokuhewin	3				
Hotow	5	1			
Winona	3				
Kamdecamwin	1	1			
Mahpiyazuwin	2				
Saleyopahdwin	4				
Hapan	4				
Sasinawakan	3				
Wicauhpututawin	4			1	
Ihawayakupin	4	1		1	
Owankatowin	5				
Aupu	1		2	1	1
Iciyahupewin	2				
Cajeyatawin	5		2	1	1
Total	61	4	6	6	3
GOOD ROAD'S BAND.					
Wamanonsa	7	1	2	2	1
Tateavatomnau	9				
Muhtiyadizinin	3				
Tateyapawastewin	3				
Ahdatewin	7				
Ptandutawin	8	1			
Makatokicawin	6	1			
Hinhewin	4				
Cepaahdewin	4				
Hohepetekicawin	5				
Kampiska	5				
Hotedan	4		2	1	1
Mmaskatewin	7				
Winode	2				
Itesuna	3	2			
Mahpiyatowin	4				
Hupecutankawin	6		2	1	1
Oyenakismanin	3		1		
Muza	3	1		1	
William Adams	2				
Yucauniwin	3				
Total	98	6	7	5	3

Figure 27: Excerpt from the December 1862 census of the concentration camp. Black Dog's Band, and especially Good Road's would have included people who lived on the land settlers established Bloomington on. The census records heads of families.

<sup>121</sup> Peter DeCarlo, *Fort Snelling at Bdote*, 52-59.

around the Missouri River—any remaining Dakota, the Lakota who resisted, and the Ihanktunwanna who had been drawn into the conflicts—and, in particular, to protect an overland route to recently found western gold fields. The expeditions did not locate many Dakota who had participated in the US–Dakota War. Instead, the armies attacked mostly Lakota villages, composed of Hunkpapa, Sans Arcs, Miniconjous, and Amskapi Pikuni (Blackfeet). These expeditions ushered in the era of the Plains Indian Wars that culminated in the massacre at Wounded Knee almost thirty years later.<sup>122</sup>

A future resident of the South Loop land, John Le Borius was with the US army that marched into Dakota Territory in 1863. Le Borius was born in Germany in 1844 and came to Minnesota in 1854 in the midst of the land rush. He worked as a waiter and cook, accompanying parties that were in search of land claims. He then found work as a government wagon master and blacksmith. When General Sibley marshalled his army in June 1863, Le Borius was employed by the military, likely as a wagoner. The expedition moved up the Minnesota River Valley from Fort Ridgely, entered Dakota Territory, and marched northwest across the northern plains searching for Dakota people. Three battles were fought: Big Mound, Dead Buffalo Lake, and Stony Lake. Working in the logistics of the expedition, Le Borius probably stayed in the rear during these engagements. He worked for the army two more times in 1868 and 1869, accompanying expeditions into the west. In 1870 he returned to Minnesota and ran the Fort Snelling Ferry for four seasons. At some point during this time, he acquired land in the future South Loop. The story of John Le Borius on the western plains is another way in which the South Loop and the people who have called it home are connected to settler colonialism.<sup>123</sup>

Many scholars have argued that settler colonialism is inherently genocidal. Land is the key to life and therefore contests over land are contests for life. This is especially true for Indigenous Peoples: “Native” and “Indigenous” are descriptors that mean the people come from, and are a part of, a particular place. Their identities and ways of life are defined by the very land they live upon. When settler societies remove Native Americans from their homes, they are committing genocide. In addition, the extreme violence committed against the Dakota, and Native Americans generally, fits definitions of genocide. Scholars have easily argued that settlers purging Native Americans from their lands, prosecuting wars and irregular violence against them, and attacking Native culture and society all fit within the concept of genocide.

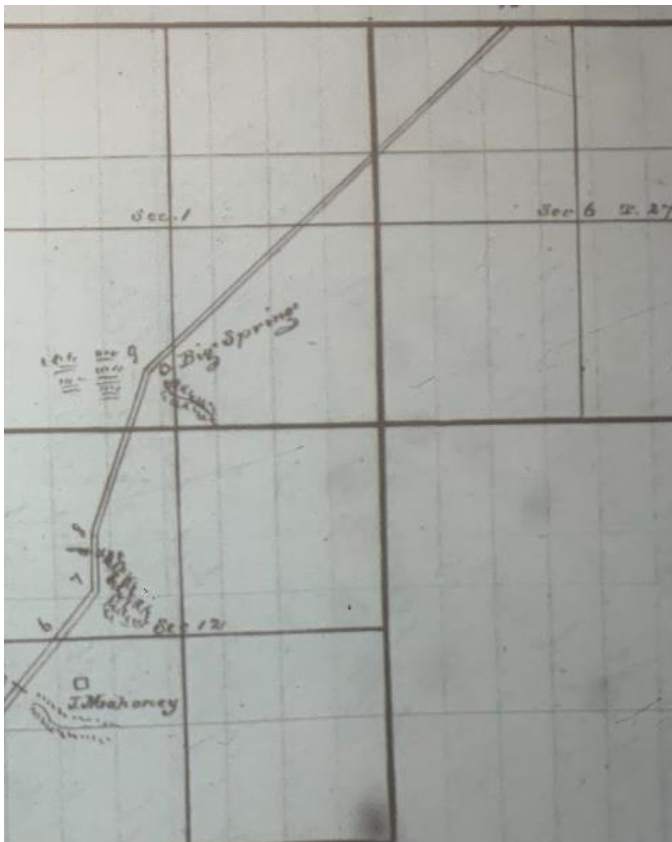
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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>123</sup> Edward D. Neill and J. Fletcher Williams, *History of Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis, Including the Explorers and Pioneers of Minnesota; and Outlines of the History of Minnesota*, (Minneapolis, MN: North Star Publishing Company, 1881), 229; For an overview of the 1863 punitive expedition John Le Borius took part in see, Paul N. Beck, *Columns of Vengeance: Soldiers, Sioux, and the Punitive Expeditions, 1863-1864*, (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013), 81-98.

## Farming and Development

After the wars of the 1860s Bloomington and the future South Loop District entered their prime decades of settlement and development as a farming community. Jeremiah Mahoney was home from the war by 1865 and living on his land with Anna his wife and their eleven-year-old daughter, Martha. The remaining surveyed land had been sold in the eight years since the public sale in 1856 and 1857 to other farming families. Just to the north of the Mahoneys was the Hansen family: husband and wife William and Anna along with their two children, Charles and William. William Hansen was a German settler from Prussia. To their north was James E. Smith, his wife Anna and their three children. The rest of the South Loop still belonged to the United States Government and was part of the Fort Snelling Military Reservation.<sup>124</sup>



*Figure 28: Survey of what would become Old Shakopee Road in the South Loop, 1867. Note the Mahoney farm, bottom left. Road Records, Bloomington Township, Hennepin County, Records, 1858-1964, Government Records Collection, Minnesota Historical Society.*

As the farming community grew in the late 1860s it moved to improve its infrastructure. Contrary to popular myths, farmers in the nineteenth century were not self-sufficient and self-sufficiency was not their goal. They were entrepreneurs who grew crops to be sold at market and were subject to the ups and downs of the economy. Settlers were not necessarily attached to the land, but to the value it could produce. Many farmed cash crops with one goal in mind: to make a living. Farmers also depended more and more on transportation networks to bring their crops to market. A main priority of the farmers was the improvement of the roads throughout town so they could transport their crops more easily. Due to these developments, the Dakota trail that became a government road in the 1850s became a site of controversy. What became Old Shakopee Road was called the “Bloomington Ferry & Fort Snelling Road” and the “Bloomington Ferry & St. Paul Road” in the late 1860s. It ran

through the private property of several farmers, including the Mahoneys. One or several of the property owners along the route resisted the public use of the road and closed it. Other farmers in

<sup>124</sup> Minnesota State Census, 1865; The Smith family’s land was where the Marriott Minneapolis Airport and Ikea are today. The Hansen’s land is now bounded by the block of Highway 77, Killebrew Drive, East Old Shakopee Road and E 86th Street.

the community took the matter to the Bloomington Town Council and then to Hennepin County Court. The court ordered that the road be made into a public road, surveyed, and further developed. The road was “ordered a public highway to be of the width of four roads.” The landowners along the route received compensation for the annexation of their land; The Mahoneys received fifty dollars.<sup>125</sup>

The town council of Bloomington and Hennepin County could improve local roads, but these entities could do nothing for farmers when it came to the cost of freight for residents looking to transport their harvests and livestock. Monopolies among railroads, and large companies that processed what farmers produced also left many of the people at the whim of the markets. Other farmers, including Oliver Kelley who lived on a farm in Elk River, Minnesota wanted to do something about these issues. In 1867 Kelley and six of his colleagues at the United States Bureau of Agriculture founded the National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry. The Grange fought for farmers’ economic rights, protested monopolies that gauged them, and supported increasing the agricultural knowledge of farmers. Within two years there were forty Grange chapters in Minnesota and a state organization. In 1873 membership soared nationally to 700,000 members and 9,000 chapters, as crop prices failed and shipping costs increased. The National Grange was founded that year.<sup>126</sup>

Part of a populist “agrarian revolt” the Grange also advocated for a set of progressive reforms. The organization wanted United States Senators to be elected directly and wanted women to have the right to vote. It advocated for government control of railroads and free mail delivery to rural areas. It was also hoped by Grangers that currency, which was a problem since Minnesota’s territorial days (see the Panic of 1857) would be inflated and made more reliable through greenbacks and silver coins. The Grange never gained great political power, but on a local level it created great social change. Members of Grange chapters worked to improve education for children as well as adults in not only agricultural, but many topics. Lending libraries, and the lengthening of the school year were things the Grange achieved.<sup>127</sup>

Riding this wave of growth, the farmers of Bloomington founded their own chapter of the Grange in 1874: Bloomington Grange No. 482. They created a lending library to disseminate

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<sup>125</sup> Road surveys, 1866, 1867, and 1875, Road Records, Bloomington Township, Hennepin County, Records, 1858-1964, Government Records Collection, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota; Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920*, (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2009), 137; Henricks, *Bloomington on the Minnesota*, 44.

<sup>126</sup> Oliver Kelley Farm, “The Grange,” Minnesota Historical Society; Oliver H. Kelley, *Origin and Progress of the Order of the Patrons of Husbandry in the United States; A History from 1866 to 1873*, (Philadelphia, PA: J.A. Wagenseller, 1875), 11.

<sup>127</sup> R. Douglas Hurt, *American Agriculture: A Brief History*, Revised Edition, (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2002), 203-206.





Figure 29: The Bloomington Grange Hall, about 1890.  
Minnesota Historical Society.

knowledge among community members, held a township fair, formed a stock company, and in 1876 constructed a Grange Hall. Town hall meetings were held in the Grange Hall until 1892. The farming community and Grange membership continued to grow. A newspaper correspondent recorded the appearance of the South Loop area as he traveled west on the what had come to be called the “Shakopee and St. Paul Road:”

...we could not only see a great number of new farm houses, (humble cottages and imposing mansions) as far as the eye could reach, with one continuous stretch of cultivated fields, but without exception every field was alive with the work of seeding; the farmer himself leading off with the wheat laden drill and closely following was the son or the hired man or men with the many toothed harrow. It was fourteen years since the writer had passed through this particular district, and the transformation from a wild tenantless prairie, which he then thought a sterile waste, to a busy and prosperous farming community, was really marvelous.

The writer described the Mahoneys as owning a 320 acre farm and their home as an “imposing premises.” To their south, along the river was the Davis “farm and mansion” on 240 acres of wheat and corn. Davis described the South Loop saying, “All this region about here was a blank prairie twelve years ago.”<sup>128</sup>

Farming is often seen as the paramount occupation of the settler because it provides another argument for the settlers’ “rightful” acquisition of the land. As these quotes illustrate, because it was commonly asserted the land had been empty or not properly cultivated, settlers could claim they were simply making use of what Native Americans had been letting go to waste. Farming was seen as a democratic and American way of life, one wrapped up in “Manifest Destiny.” Therefore, taking the land was justified. And by claiming large scale farming was the only real way to live on the land, settlers could say they were the first ones to really “live” there and erase Native Americans from the landscape.

<sup>128</sup> “The Question Settled. A Bridge Will Pay.” *St. Paul Daily Globe*, March 23, 1878.

The blank prairie was beginning to shrink even further in the 1870s due to a second reduction in the size of the Fort Snelling Military Reservation. Caught up in legalities and controversy the United States Government finally settled the purchase of the reservation with Franklin Steele. The businessman felt he had been manipulated out of owning the land, while the government argued he had missed payments on it and therefore forfeited any right to it. Local

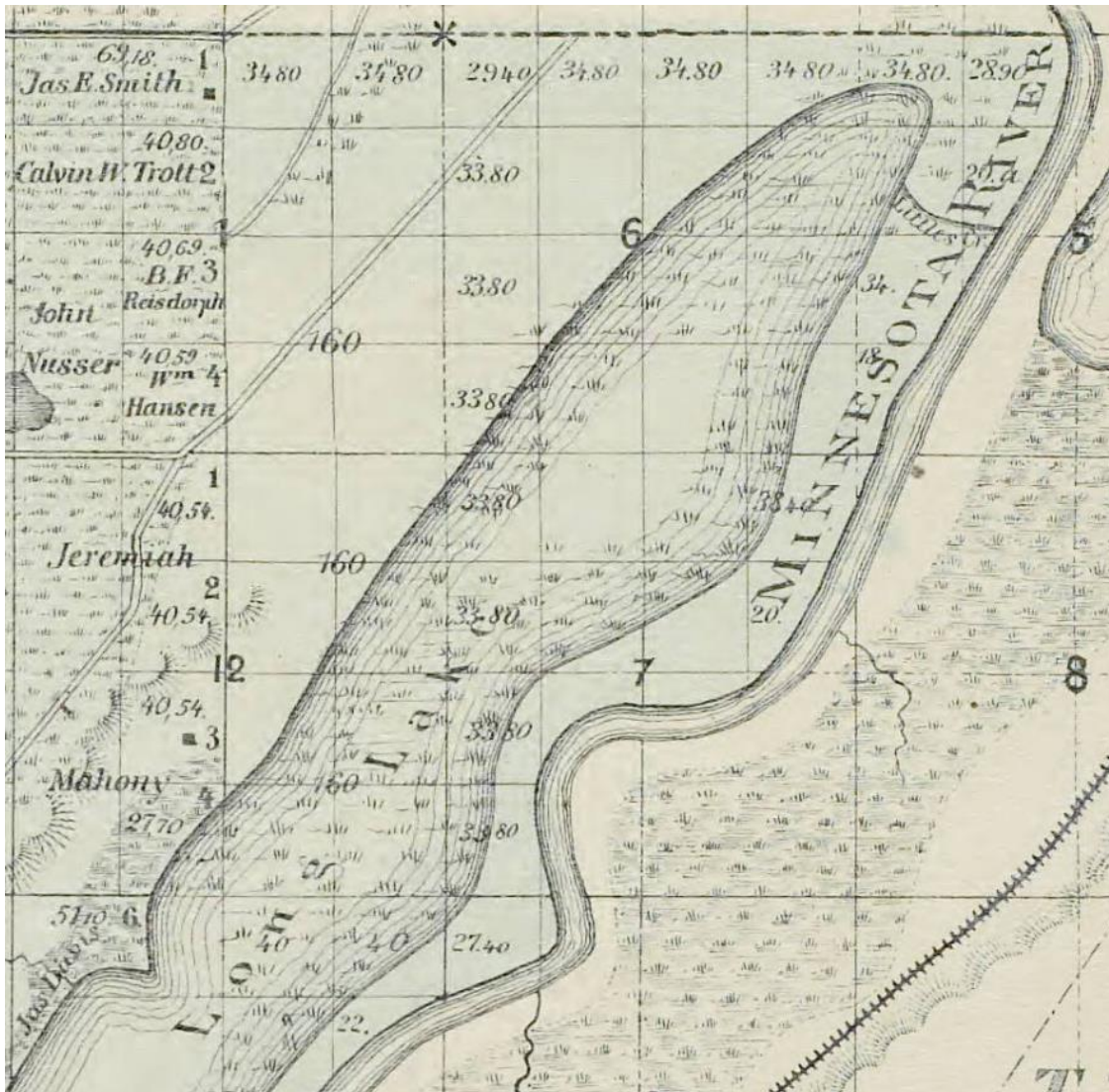


Figure 30: Plat map of the South Loop 1873. Map by George Burdick Wright, published as part of a Hennepin County Atlas. Note that the former Fort Snelling land, while not yet settled, has been surveyed. Minnesota Historical Society.

settlers resented the sale of the land to Steele because it had not been public. In the settlement the government kept Fort Snelling and a land reserve of 1,521.2 acres, which it wanted as a base to support US Army campaigns in the west. Franklin Steele obtained most of the surrounding land, over 6,400 acres, which he developed, sold, and passed on to his heirs. It took several years, but eventually the final sections of the South Loop District were purchased by more farm families.

The final piece of the private property puzzle on which the present-day South Loop rests, was put into place.<sup>129</sup>

With more farmers in the area, the Bloomington Grange increased in membership from twenty founding members to forty. In 1878 the Bloomington Grange got behind the effort to have a bridge constructed between Fort Snelling and the east side of the Mississippi. More and more an economic and political divide between the city and the country animated agrarian politics. The two spheres were more connected than ever as farmers needed to access distributors in cities and distributors needed the crops farmers provided. A new bridge would make the markets at St. Paul more accessible to the farmers, who at the time brought their goods to Minneapolis. The bridge represented agency for Bloomington farmers in where they sold their crops. Interviewed by a traveling newspaper correspondent, “Sergeant Mahoney a veteran soldier and son of Erin” as he was described, expressed his support of the bridge project.

I regard the bridge as very essential. It ought to have been built 20 years ago. The great objection in the way of our going to St. Paul is the uncertainty, danger and expense of the Snelling ferry, and the climbing of a bad hill, where half a load is too much of a load[.]...At our recent meeting of the Grange held at Bloomington the entire body signed a petition and earnestly urged the bridge project. Under the circumstances we really all have to go to Minneapolis, and then have to take just what the millers see fit to give us. The bridge would give us a choice of market with our preferences steadily in favor of St. Paul.

The lobbying efforts of the Bloomington Grange paid off when the new bridge was opened in 1880. Twelve years later as the population continued to increase the Cedar Avenue Bridge was built generally forming the southwest border of the South Loop District.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Stephen E. Osman, *Fort Snelling and the Civil War*, 5-6.

<sup>130</sup> “The Question Settled. A Bridge Will Pay.” *St. Paul Daily Globe*, March 23, 1878; Bloomington Grange No. 482 Records, 1874, 1879-1917, Manuscript Collection, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota; Bloomington County Historical Society, “Bloomington History,” (accessed 8/1/21); Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920*, (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2009), 135; Henricks, *Bloomington on the Minnesota*, 39; The old Cedar Ave Bridge is now a pedestrian trail and Highway 77/Cedar Ave has taken its place.

## Martha Mahoney, a Woman of the Grange

By the 1870s Jeremiah Mahoney was becoming a more elderly man, turning sixty in 1877. Though apparently still active in the community, records indicate that it was Martha, his daughter who represented the family at Bloomington Grange meetings. Born in 1854, presumably at Fort Snelling, Martha had grown up alongside the town of Bloomington and the settlement of the South Loop. Little is known of her early life except what census records can tell. She lived with her parents at least up until 1870 and likely lived the typical life of a young girl on a farm performing manual labor, learning to keep house, and possibly attending the local school. Martha may have helped harvest the crops, particularly the wheat grown by her family, milked cows, churned butter, taken care of chickens, and washed for the hired hands that often lived on the farm. One could imagine her father, the former sergeant in charge of food and supplies, attempting to run the farm business with military efficiency.<sup>131</sup>

At the age of nineteen Martha married a man named Michael Lynch on October 18, 1873, an ill-fated choice that seems to have set her on a progressive trajectory. Sadly, Michael abused Martha. She resisted his terrible treatment first by separating from him and then going back to live with her parents. Jeremiah, having experienced divorce twenty years before, helped his daughter begin divorce proceedings in 1875. A few months later a dramatic headline appeared in the *Minneapolis Daily Tribune*: “A SHOT IN THE DARK. That Will Probably Result in the Death of J. Mahoney, Son-in-law Lynch the Accused.” When Jeremiah was riding down a quiet street in Mendota after dark, somebody attempted to murder him, with a gunshot to the face. Bystanders brought him to a nearby house in critical condition. Unable to speak, he wrote on a piece of paper that his son-in-law, Michael Lynch had attempted to kill him. Lynch denied the deed and even attempted to feign innocence by directing a doctor to Jeremiah. After the shooting Lynch rode out to the Mahoney farm and informed Martha of the shooting. She accused him of the deed and would not go with him to see her father, fearing for her own life. Three days later Lynch was arrested in Hastings and the newspapers reported that Jeremiah would survive his terrible wound. With a strong case and the law behind her, Martha was able to secure a divorce from Michael Lynch.<sup>132</sup>

This traumatic event appears to have caused Martha to reassess her life and stay with her parents. It is likely that with his age and horrible wound to his face, that Jeremiah could no longer run the family farm. In addition, the family was in a difficult financial situation and unable to pay the taxes on their property. For these reasons, and perhaps as a form of feminist expression and rejection of the life she had recently led, Martha joined the Bloomington Grange. At the advice of his niece, Caroline Hall, Oliver Kelley had organized the Grange so it gave full membership to women and committed to uplifting them. Granges could not be organized if they did not approve full membership for women and on the national level four offices were held for

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<sup>131</sup> Minnesota State and Territorial Census, 1857, 1865; United States Census, 1860, 1870, 1880; R. Douglas Hurt, *American Agriculture: A Brief History*, 203-206.

<sup>132</sup> “A SHOT IN THE DARK,” *Minneapolis Daily Tribune*, October 2, 1875; “Personal Mention,” *Minneapolis Daily Tribune*, October 5, 1875; United States Census, 1880.

women. Earlier agricultural societies and farmer clubs had treated women as homemakers and auxiliaries to the lives of men. Women made sure the Grange was different from the beginning. Caroline Hall had lived in Minnesota and it was her observations of farm women there that convinced her that women needed to be equal to men in matters involving rural life. She and other feminists argued that women needed more social opportunities and that their morality, knowledge of home economies, and perspectives would benefit the Grange.<sup>133</sup>

Along with discussing the typical economic issues, women brought important topics to



Figure 31: Minnesota State Grange meeting at Northfield. Photograph by Edward Newell James, about 1875. Note the women seated center left. Minnesota Historical Society.

their Grange meetings for discussion. They centered children, equality in marriage, household issues, temperance, and the fight for women's suffrage in the discourse of the Grange. Grange women also argued that it was they, not men, who were the primary protectors of the home. Women contended that men were far more likely to bring negative contagions from the outside world into homelife. Leading Grange women thought the home was a woman's sphere and from there she should work to change the world through charity. But other women pushed the issue saying that in order

to protect her home a woman had to have a place in public life. It seems clear that these issues, especially the messages around the dangers of men and the advocacy for the rights of women, must have interested Martha Mahoney. Within the Grange structure she could fight to improve her family's financial situation while also embracing her own progressive ideas about rural womanhood. Sitting in the Bloomington Grange Hall, expressing her opinions as a single woman, must have helped her pivot away from the negative experience of her marriage. By 1879 the Bloomington Grange had forty-nine members, twenty-one of whom were women, Martha among them, who was a member at least until 1888. Over the course of Martha's life, from 1854 to 1880 the landowners in Bloomington had increased from 38 to 200.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>133</sup> Oliver H. Kelley, *Origin and Progress of the Order of the Patrons of Husbandry in the United States*, 15; Donald B. Marti, "Sisters of the Grange: Rural Feminism in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Agricultural History* 58, No.3 (July 1984), 247-250.

<sup>134</sup> Donald B. Marti, "Sisters of the Grange: Rural Feminism in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Agricultural History* 58, No.3 (July 1984), 247-250. 251-257; Donal B. Marti, "Woman's Work in the Grange: Mary Ann Mayo of Michigan, 1882-1903," *Agricultural History* 56, No. 2 (April 1982), 440; Bloomington Grange No. 482 Records, 1874, 1879-1917, Manuscript Collection, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul; Miller Dunwiddie, Architects, Inc. *Bloomington: A Community Survey of Historic Sites*, 4.

## Final Settlement and the Erasure of Native Americans

In 1881 professor of history at Macalester College, Reverend Edward D. Neill, and Secretary of the Minnesota Historical Society, John Fletcher Williams, published a history of Hennepin County. In it, they detailed the history of Bloomington and described the land at length:

The town of Bloomington occupies the southeastern part of the county, lying on the Minnesota River, which forms its entire eastern and southern boundary. A strip of meadow, varying from twenty rods to a mile in width, skirts the river the whole length of the town. The bluffs are, therefore, back from the river, but here and there stretch out bare, sandy points to the meadow below. Beautiful rolling prairies extend back from the bluffs over the whole township. The bluffs are not usually bare, but are covered with turf and timber, while the bottom lands, at the foot, have in some parts large areas of water. . . . The small lakes east of Nine Mile Creek are now very shallow, without outlet and appear to diminish year by year. They will doubtless wholly disappear.

Along with the description of Bloomington the authors documented its earliest settlers, prominent citizens, churches, schools, and organizations like the Grange. The names and stories of the Dakota people who had called the area home were not listed. Aside from brief sections on “mounds” and “Indians” the history of Hennepin County was that of settlement. Native people, whom they called “our savage predecessors,” removed only twenty years prior were written off as relics of the past, anecdotes in the stories of the first European Americans that entered what would become Minnesota. History was progress, and progress began with “the white man.” To them, early settlers like the McLeods (omitting his Dakota wife) and the Mahoneys held “prestige” and belonged “to the aristocracy of early settlers.” Neill and Williams mused, it seemed, over the startling speed of colonization: “We can never look out thoughtfully at our immediate surroundings but a course of reasoning will start up leading us to inquire the causes that produced the development all around us, and at the same time we are led to conjecture the results to follow causes now in operation.”<sup>135</sup>

“Development all around us” described the South Loop land of the 1880s perfectly. Throughout the mid to late 1870s, Franklin Steele sold much of his land in the South Loop which had been part of the Fort Snelling Reservation. Upon his death in 1880, what was left went to his heirs. The Town of Bloomington grew denser as early settlers sold parcels of their original land holdings. In the countryside of Bloomington, of which the South Loop was a part, land was sold mostly in neat forty acre lots. But to the east of the South Loop where the city center had developed (where Old Shakopee Road crossed Nine Mile Creek and near the Bloomington Ferry) lots were becoming smaller. In 1857 there had been six landowners in the South Loop, some of whom were land speculators. Thirty years later in 1886 there were twenty-one. The Mahoney’s still had their

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<sup>135</sup> Edward D. Neill and J. Fletcher Williams, *History of Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis, Including the Explorers and Pioneers of Minnesota; and Outlines of the History of Minnesota*, (Minneapolis, MN: North Star Publishing Company, 1881), iii-iv, 222.

320 acres of land but had moved their home from the below the bluff, up onto the prairie off of Old Shakopee Road. Among the other settlers were the Nussers and Le Boriuses (German immigrants), Coullards, Smiths, and Lincolns (migrants from Maine), Van Nesses (Canadians), Hansons (German immigrants from Canada), Wrights (Minnesotans), and Linkas (Scandinavian immigrants). The largest landowner in the South Loop was Rosa P. Vincent, who was an heir to Franklin Steele. She owned 900 acres, consisting mostly of Long Meadow Lake, which she leased to the Long Meadow Gun Club. The club was founded in 1883 by Minneapolis men who worked in the grain business and were avid duck hunters. They also leased the right to use a driveway through the Van Ness property to access the lake. Where the Maga yute sni “those who do not eat geese” people, from Black Dog’s Village, had once hunted so much water fowl they rarely ate it, now wealthy Minneapolis business owners fired off shotguns during their leisure time.<sup>136</sup>

As the farm families plowed their fields there were few left in the district like the Mahoneys who could remember the land prior to settlement. More recent arrivals could not imagine the fur trade society that had existed there forty years before, much less the rich culture of the Dakota and the connection they had to the land—their relative. However, in 1882 a surveyor named Theodore H. Lewis worked his way through part of the South Loop and made the deep history of the area’s habitation clear. Lewis was a Virginian and amateur archaeologist who, after living in Ohio for several years, became fascinated with the prehistoric Native American mound cultures of the Midwest. He later moved to St. Paul and met Alfred J. Hill a government surveyor and member of the Minnesota Historical Society. Like Lewis, Hill had encountered ancient mounds in his surveying work and written several articles on them. Together, the two began what they called “The Northwestern Archaeological Survey” in 1880. Their main goals were to survey Native American mounds and gather archaeological artifacts from them. Since settlement the mounds had been under threat. Settlers dug into them as curiosities, destroyed them when building their homes, and plowing out their fields. Farmers would dig into mounds on their property and at times, entire communities would hold gatherings to discover what lay in local mounds. Lewis and Hill were aware the mounds were being destroyed and moved to document as many as they could.<sup>137</sup>

In September 1882, nearly thirty years after Jesse Jarret had documented “rolling hills” in the initial public land survey of the South Loop, Theodore Lewis stood on the Northwest edge of Long Meadow Lake prepared to survey mounds in the area. He titled this section of his survey, “Mounds of the Minnesota River” and started, “Beginning four miles southwest from Fort Snelling continuing westward along the bluff of the Minnesota River[.]” Lewis made his way

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<sup>136</sup> Plat Map of Bloomington, Minnesota, 1886, Bloomington Historical Society; United States Census, 1870, 1880, 1890, 1900; Establish a National Wildlife Recreation Area in the Minnesota Valley, S 2097 and Amendment No. 1023 Hearing Before the Subcommittee on the Environment of the Committee on Commerce, United States Senate, Ninety-fourth Congress, First Session, Serial No. 94-48, November 10, 1975.

<sup>137</sup> N.H. Winchell, comp., *The Aborigines of Minnesota: A Report Based on the Collections of Jacob W. Bower and on the Field Surveys and Notes of Alfred Hill and Theodore Lewis*, (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society, The Pioneer Company, 1911), vii-x.

west along the river bluff and into the South Loop. Though not documented in his surveying notes it seems clear he talked to the South Loop farmers as he went, gathering information on the mounds they knew of and gaining permission to traipse across their land. Lewis walked roads, hopped fences, gazed across farm fields, searched any unplowed prairie that was left, and clawed his way through the timber and brush along the bluff. In all, Lewis documented ninety-two mounds in the South Loop. Most he called “conventional mounds” of varying sizes, some with “approaches.” He noted the existence of some very large mounds, one “83 ft. wide and 11 ft. high.” The larger mounds were typically isolated from the rest. Other mounds were gone or partially gone, flattened by the farmers. Lewis continued his survey west along the bluffs and through his writings and drawings showed that mounds existed all along the Minnesota River in Bloomington. In an act of colonization, Lewis grouped the mounds according to the property they had been surveyed on and named the mounds after property owners. The sacred Indigenous burial and effigy mounds in the South Loop were named: Cunningham group, Lincoln mounds, The Van Ness mounds, Hogback group, and Hanson mounds. Two mounds existed a few acres from the Mahoneys’ front door. And so, Jeremiah Mahoney, an Irish immigrant, who had participated in the conquest of the continent, the removal of its native peoples, and the settlement of their lands, came to have two mounds—symbols of the deep indigenous history of the South Loop—named after him. These names are still used by archaeologists today, an ironic pairing of Indigenous and settler history.<sup>138</sup>

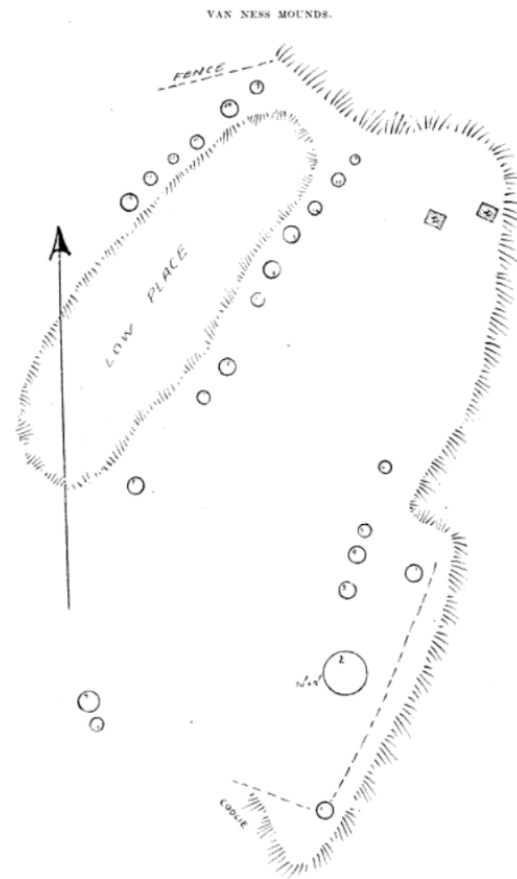


Figure 32: The Van Ness Mounds, surveyed September 7, 1882. From Winchell, "Aborigines of Minnesota."

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 242-245, 247; Plat Map of Bloomington, Minnesota, 1886, Bloomington Historical Society.



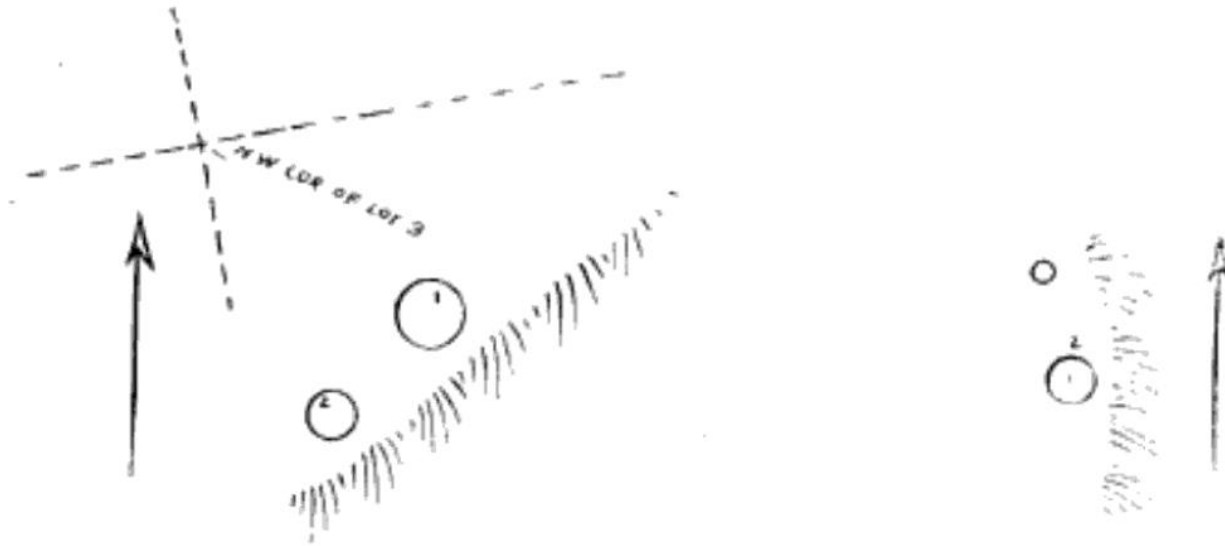


Figure 33: The Mahoney Mounds, surveyed September 7, 1882. From Winchell, "Aborigines of Minnesota."

From the mid-1880s to the turn of the century the South Loop and Bloomington were completely settled. Though surveyed, the mounds were not protected. Farmers continued to remove them, and settlers to dig into them, desecrating burial sites. Many of the mounds in the South Loop including the Van Ness, Hogback, and Mahoney groups were destroyed. Aside from the mounds that were fast disappearing the only other evidence of the Dakota people and their ancestors were arrowheads, axe heads, and pottery found in farm fields. The "Shakopee and Saint Paul Road," provided a reminder of the Dakota history in the area but that name came to refer more to the town of Shakopee and not the line of hereditary Dakota leaders who had once lived on the site of the settler town. Into the 1890s farmers like the Mahoneys continued to struggle financially and sold off parcels of their property. Others began dividing up their land among their children as the town population increased to about one thousand in 1892. The northern sections of the South Loop, especially along the main road, became more densely populated. By 1898 there were forty-four landowners in the South Loop. In 1th 1890s Jeremiah Mahoney and the other first-generation settlers entered the twilight of their lives. Anna Mahoney died in 1893 at

After settlers have eliminated Native Americans from the landscape, they frequently co-opt Indigenous place names. This recuperation of Native names is done in America to express the uniqueness of its settler society (it is different from its European antecedents) and even claim settler indigeneity to the land. The original Native name rarely survives unscathed when it is co-opted. "Old Shakopee Road" is an example of settlers using an Indigenous name. The name is commemorative as it indirectly honors the line of Bdewakantunwan leaders known as Sakpe. But it is also assimilated inaccurately. "Shakopee" was not a place, but a person. The real place was Tinta Otonwe, "village of the prairie" which settlers incorrectly named in a generic phonetic spelling after its line of leaders. In 1857, settlers then completely co-opted the name, incorporating a new town called "Shakopee." The name of the road followed.

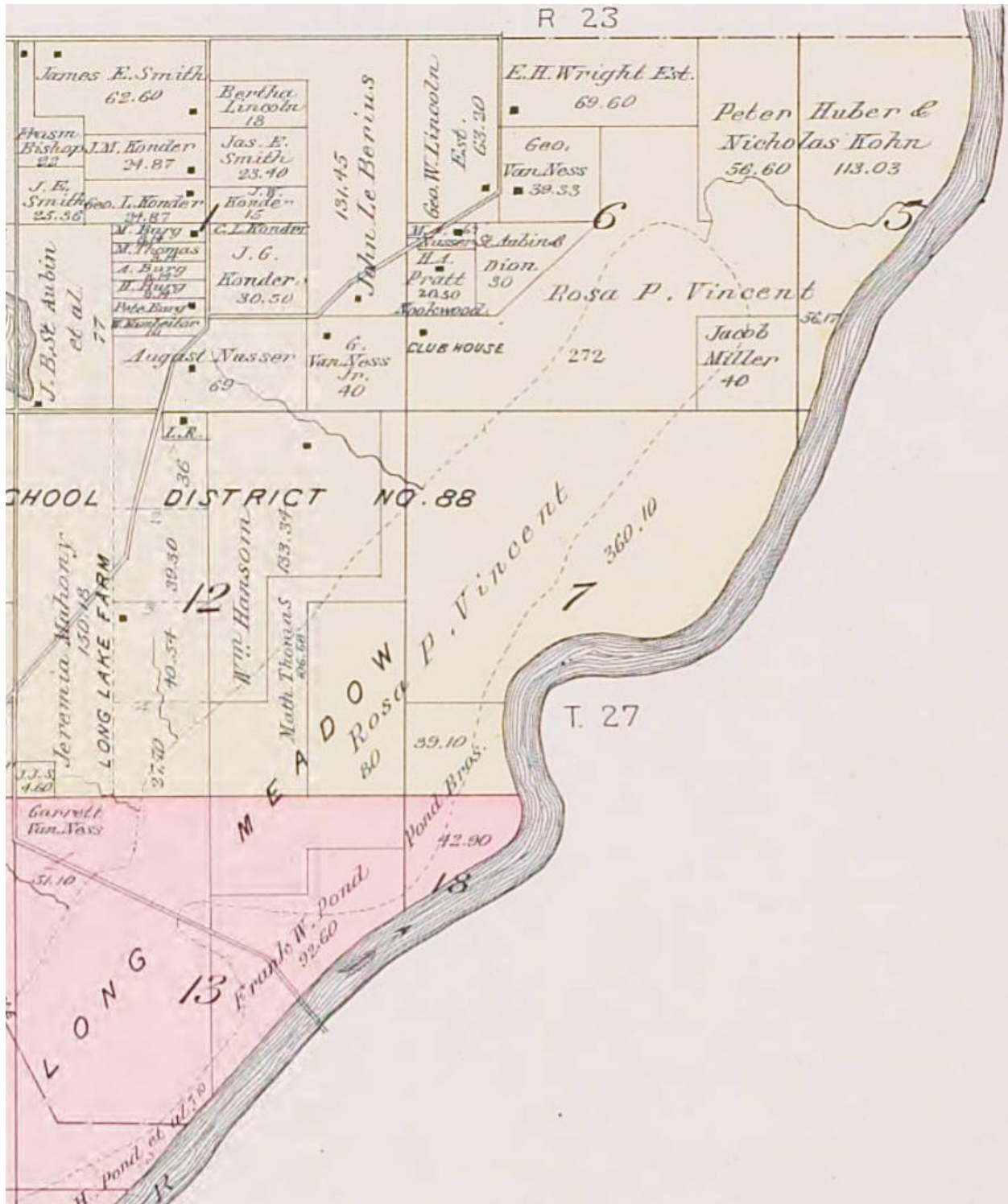


Figure 34: Plat map of the South Loop, 1898. Map by Peter M. Dahl from "Plat Book of Hennepin County, Minnesota." Note Old Shakopee Road running through sections 12, 1, and 6. Minnesota Historical Society.

the age of seventy-six and the family began selling some of their land. Martha continued to live with her father and took on more responsibility for running the farm, becoming an owner of some of the land in 1899. Jeremiah seems to have turned to the past. He pursued a pension for his war service and became vice president of the St. Paul Old Settlers Association where those of his generation would come together to swap old stories. On November 30, 1899 Jeremiah Mahoney died at his home at the age of eighty-eight. His life, like the other residents of the future South Loop District, connected its history to events and places outside its geographic bounds. Through seasonal movements, sacred ceremonies, trade, immigration, war, and settlement, people had lived and moved within its borders.<sup>139</sup>

## Conclusion

Historical context helps us understand the present and build a better future. It also plays a critical role in the identity formation of people, communities, and places. The history of the South Loop District can be used as a powerful asset to enhance its identity as a place and the identity of its residents. This history can connect people to place through powerful stories. The South Loop District has been an ancient burial ground and Dakota homeland. It has been claimed by France, Britain, and the United States. Treaties between the Dakota and United States put lines on the land. The public survey and its grid drew more lines and transformed the South Loop District into property to be bought and sold like any other commodity. Settlers brought dramatic change to the land, planting their crops, building roads and establishing a new polity. The land of the South Loop has been all of these things and its identity has changed over time.

But it is people who ascribe meaning to the landscape and create its identity. Countless people have lived on the South Loop lands across time. Native Americans lived there and buried their dead in mounds. The Dakota inhabited the land for centuries, and according to one of their origin stories, since time immemorial. For the Dakota the land is a relative and not a thing to be owned. French, British, and American fur traders came to the land. Native American women like Mary Elizabeth McLeod were at the center of the fur trade society that followed. Dakota leaders like Wanyaga Inazin, Tacanku Waste, and Mahpiya Wicasta cared for their people and

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<sup>139</sup> Hendricks, *Bloomington on the Minnesota*, 2-6, 80; Plat Map of Bloomington, Minnesota, 1890, Bloomington Historical Society; Miller Dunwiddie, Architects, Inc. *Bloomington: A Community Survey of Historic Sites*, 13; Peter M. Dahl, *Plat Book of Hennepin County, Minnesota*, (N.P: Northwester Map Publishing Company, 1898; Minnesota Department of Administration, Office of the State Archaeologist, Site Record, July 12, 2021; "Died. Mahoney," *St. Paul Daily Globe*, February 19, 1893; "Deaths of the Week," *Minneapolis Irish Standard*, December 9, 1899; "Old Settler Dead," *Saint Paul Globe*, December 1, 1899; Mexican War Pension Record of Jeremiah Mahoney, Q.M. Sgt., 1887, United States Mexican War Pension Index, 1887-1926; Jeremiah Mahoney Pension Record, 1894, United States General Index to Pension Files, 1861-1934; "For Sale. Unimproved Property," *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 21, 1893; "Real Estate Transfers," *Minneapolis Tribune*, February 2, 1899; "The Forty-Niners. Thirty-first Annual Meeting of the Old Settlers' Association," *St. Paul Daily Globe*, June 2, 1888; "A List of Lands & Town Lots in the County of Hennepin and State of Minnesota, Upon Which Taxes are Delinquent and Unpaid Upon the First Day of June, 1879," *Minneapolis Tribune*, July 7, 1879; "A List of Taxes Delinquent and Unpaid Upon Real Estate Within Hennepin County, Minnesota on the First Monday in January, 1901," *Minneapolis Tribune*, February 20, 1901.

eventually signed treaties. Through different journeys The McLeods and Mahoneys removed Native people from the land and then claimed it as settler colonists. Women farmers like Martha Mahoney grew crops there and fought for their rights. The identities of these people were diverse: nomadic hunters, Dakota women and leaders, fur traders, soldiers, settlers and farmers. Their experiences were just as varied: fighting to survive, protecting their people, raising families, and working to make a living. The land of the South Loop meant something to all of them. The people and the place were connected, their identities intertwined, as each person applied new meaning to the landscape. Each of these people in their own way were placemakers. Knowing their history and the history of the land can only enrich the Creative Placemaking initiative in the South Loop.

## **Thematic Suggestions for Historical Interpretation**

Below are eight recommendations for interpretive elements that could be included in the South Loop District placemaking effort. These themes are designed to highlight some of the most powerful stories the South Loop can tell and aid in the effort of forming its unique identity. The topics presented here are meant to be general so they can be adapted to multiple forms of interpretation whether it be interpretive panels, public art, or public programs. Each interpretive theme has four key elements.

1. Theme: What is the historical topic addressed by this interpretive element?
2. Objective: What should guests know as a result of this interpretive element? How does this element support the goal of creating an identity for the South Loop District?
3. Messages: What are the take-aways we want people to walk away with?
4. Interpretive Strategies: How can the audience be connected to the content?

### *The South Loop District's Deep Indigenous History*

1. Theme: This theme will address the history of Native American habitation of the South Loop. It will cover the earliest possible presence of Native Americans, the mound building culture, the Ioway, and the Dakota. This theme could especially focus on the Dakota and their origin stories.
2. Objective: Guests will know that Native Americans have lived in the South Loop District for thousands of years. This will add a history of Native American homeland to the identity of the South Loop District. It could elevate that identity, leading to decolonization efforts.
3. Messages:
  - a. Native Americans may have lived in the South Loop District 12,000 years ago.
  - b. Human habitation dates conservatively to 8,000 years ago.
  - c. A sophisticated mound building culture existed along the Minnesota River Valley.
  - d. The South Loop District is Dakota Homeland.
4. Interpretive Strategies
  - a. A public program in collaboration with Dakota archeologists or tribal historic preservation officers.
  - b. Interpretive signage, perhaps near the bluff line, describing the mound building culture.
  - c. Public art completed by a Native American artist that represents to deep Indigenous history of the South Loop District.

### Maps of the South Loop District

1. Theme: This theme will present historical maps of the South Loop District.
2. Objective: Using maps, guests will understand that the land of the South Loop has changed over time and been claimed by many people. This will enrich the South Loop's identity by making guests aware of what existed on the land before what they see today. It will also allow the stories of the Dakota, French, British, and United States eras of the South Loop to be told.
3. Messages
  - a. European Americans have been mapping the South Loop District land since the early 1700s.
  - b. Mapping land was part of the process of colonization.
  - c. Maps are powerful tools for understanding how a place can change over time.
  - d. The current buildings and roads of the South Loop District are located where prairies and farmland used to exist.
4. Interpretive Strategies
  - a. Through a digital interactive, overlay historical maps on a present-day map of the South Loop District.
  - b. Using ARTBOX projects present maps of the South Loop throughout the district.
  - c. Via programming or interpretive signage use selected historical maps to highlight Dakota interaction with different European American powers.

### Old Shakopee Road: What's in a name?

1. Theme: This theme will explain how Old Shakopee Road was named. It will discuss Tinta Otonwe, "village of the prairie" and the line of Bdewakantuwan leaders who had the name Sakpe. The history of the road's use, from Dakota trail, to modern road will also be covered. This theme could also interweave the topic of placenames and how settler societies co-opt and assimilate Indigenous names.
2. Objective: Guests will know how Old Shakopee Road got its name and understand the concept of Indigenous placenames in settler society. This will elevate the South Loop's identity by providing information on one of its key thoroughfares and connect it directly to the idea of Dakota Homeland.
3. Messages
  - a. "Shakopee" is actually a reference to Tinta Otonwe, "village of the prairie," a Dakota village that existed where present-day Shakopee is today.
  - b. European Americans named the Dakota village "Shakopee's village" after the line of hereditary Bdewakantunwan leaders called "Sakpe, (The Six)."
  - c. The road was originally a Dakota trail between Tinta Otonwe, the prairie where Bloomington now exists, and Bdote.
  - d. Settler societies co-opt and assimilate Indigenous placenames.
4. Interpretive Strategies
  - a. Partner with the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, specifically the Hocokata Ti Cultural Center, to tell the story of how Old Shakopee Road got its name.

- b. Place interpretive signage at key intersections of Old Shakopee Road in the South Loop District that address this history.

### *The Fort Snelling Military Reservation*

1. Theme: This theme will explore the South Loop land's inclusion in the Fort Snelling Military Reservation from 1839 to 1871. It will discuss how the military reservation restricted Dakota and European habitation of the land.
2. Objective: Guests will know that the South Loop District was once part of the Fort Snelling Military Reservation. They will also know that from 1852-1871, half of the South Loop was open to settlement, while the other half was still part of the military reservation. This theme will enhance the South Loop's identity by connecting it to Fort Snelling. It will also elevate the South Loop as a unique district within the city of Bloomington because its settlement was restricted and bisected for several decades.
3. Messages
  - a. After years of debate between the Dakota and the United States over the "Pike Treaty," the US Military defined the boundaries of the Fort Snelling Military Reservation in 1839.
  - b. US Army officials controlled who could live on the land of the South Loop for over thirty years.
  - c. The Fort Snelling Military Reservation was reduced in 1852, but its western border bisected the South Loop District.
  - d. Full settlement of the South Loop District did not occur until after the Fort Snelling Military Reservation was reduced for a second time in 1871.
4. Interpretive Strategies
  - a. Partner with the Minnesota Historical Society and Historic Fort Snelling to tell the history of the Fort Snelling Military Reservation.
  - b. Place interpretive signage somewhere along 24<sup>th</sup> Ave S, identifying it as the border of the Fort Snelling Military Reservation after its reduction in 1852.
  - c. Through a digital interactive, ARTBOX, or signage present maps of the South Loop District that highlight its inclusion within the Fort Snelling Military Reservation.

### *Women of the South Loop*

1. Theme: This theme will highlight the stories of women who have lived in or near the South Loop District. It will focus on the lives of Dakota women and women farmers during the period of Bloomington's settlement. Mary Elizabeth McLeod and Martha Mahoney can be highlighted here.
2. Objective: Guests will know that women have played pivotal roles in the history of the South Loop. They will know the role women played in Dakota society and the central place they held in the Fur Trade. Guests will understand the lives of farming women and their push for representation and rights in the Grange. This theme will enhance the identity of the South Loop District by foregrounding the importance of Women's History and defining it as a female space. It will bring the often-absent narratives of women forward.
3. Messages

- a. Dakota society is matriarchal and women have always held an important place within it.
  - b. Native American women were central to the Fur Trade. Without them the relationships between Native People and European American traders would not have existed. Mary Elizabeth McLeod is an example of this female centrality in the trade.
  - c. Female settlers lived hard lives on farms and played a pivotal role in settling the South Loop District.
  - d. Women like Martha Mahoney advocated for the rights of their families, farmers, and themselves in public ways and were full members of the Bloomington Grange.
4. Interpretive Strategies
- a. In partnership with Dakota community members, specifically women, connect the role of Dakota women in history to that in the present-day. Show continuity and change over time.
  - b. Somewhere on the former land of the Mahoney farm (perhaps the land bounded by Highway 77, Killebrew Dr, Old Shakopee Road, and E 86<sup>th</sup> St) place interpretive signage telling the story of Martha Mahoney and the Grange.

#### *How Dakota Homeland became Private Property*

1. Theme: This interpretive theme will explain how the homeland of the Dakota became the private property of United States citizens.
2. Objective: Guests will understand the concepts of Indigenous homeland, treaties, Indian Removal, land surveys, land sales, and settlement. This theme will enhance the identity of the South Loop District by revealing the legal and political basis of its existence.
3. Messages
  - a. No matter where you are in North America, you are on Native American homeland. The South Loop exists within the homeland of the Dakota people.
  - b. The Treaties of 1851 transferred ownership of the South Loop from the Dakota to the United States Government.
  - c. The Public Land Survey was the tool used by the US Government to turn the land into public property and sell it to private individuals.
  - d. Millions of Americans (virtually all Minnesotans) live within the grid of the public land survey, which makes ownership of land by private citizens possible.
4. Interpretive Strategies
  - a. Place interpretive signage along one of the roads in the South Loop that lies along a section line of the public survey grid system. 24<sup>th</sup> Ave S and Highway 494 are two options among several.
  - b. Through a digital interactive, overlay the original public land survey map over a present-day map of the South Loop.
  - c. Using interpretive programming, signage, or public art to highlight the Treaty of Mendota, signed in 1851 by Bdewakantunwan leaders who represented the South Loop District.



### Force March of the Dakota in 1862

1. Theme: This theme will acknowledge that the United States Military force-marched Dakota non-combatants along Old Shakopee Road and through the South Loop on their way to be imprisoned in a concentration camp below Fort Snelling.
2. Objective: Guests will understand that Dakota people, mostly women and children, were marched along Old Shakopee Road to a concentration camp at Fort Snelling. They will also understand that many of the Dakota on the march had lived in and around the South Loop District prior to being removed in 1852-1853 to the Minnesota River Reservation. This theme will further enhance the South Loop's identity as a place that acknowledges the painful history of the US-Dakota War of 1862 and the district's connection to it.
3. Messages
  - a. The vast majority of Dakota people who were marched through the South Loop in November of 1862 were women and children.
  - b. Members of Good Road's Band, and the Black Dog Band, were likely familiar with the land of the South Loop, but the settlement would have been new to them.
  - c. The South Loop is intimately connected to the wider history of the US-Dakota War and the genocide of Native Americans.
4. Interpretive Strategies
  - a. Partner with Dakota community members to tell this sensitive history in the South Loop. Perhaps co-develop a memorial walk program along Old Shakopee Road.
  - b. Somewhere along Old Shakopee Road acknowledge this history through a memorial, sculpture, or public art.
  - c. Place interpretive signage somewhere along Old Shakopee Road explaining this history.

### The Mahoney Farm

1. Theme: This interpretive element will tell the story of the Mahoneys and connect the South Loop to wider events in American History.
2. Objective: Guests will know who Jeremiah Mahoney was and his journey to the South Loop District. Guests will also learn about Eliza, Anna, and Martha Mahoney, highlighting the lives of women in the period. Guests will come to understand how immigrants can become settlers. Interpreting this history will enrich the identity of the South Loop because it is humanizing. People relate to the stories of individuals and families
3. Messages
  - a. The story of Jeremiah Mahoney illustrates how an immigrant can be an agent of settler colonialism and then join the settler polity.
  - b. At one time 320 acres of the South Loop District was owned by the Mahoney family.
  - c. Farmers of the period were not pursuing self-reliance; they were pursuing profit and income in the market economy.
  - d. Women fought for agency and against patriarchy in the nineteenth century.
4. Interpretive Strategies
  - a. Use interpretive signage to identify the former land of the Mahoney farm (perhaps the land bounded by Highway 77, Killebrew Dr, Old Shakopee Road, and E 86<sup>th</sup> St.).

- b. Through interpretive programs, interpretive panels, or public art, tell the story of the Mahoneys and link the South Loop to the broader phenomenon of Settler Colonialism and other aspects of United States History.

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