



Making
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TERRITORY
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FRONT COVER: Detail from Francis D. Millet's 6 x 10-foot oil painting, *The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux*, depicting how the U.S. obtained much of southern Minnesota from the Sisseton and Wahpeton Dakota. Millet's 1905 canvas, made from the sketches of Frank B. Mayer, who had attended the 1851 treaty signing, hangs over the fireplace in the Governor's Reception Room in the Minnesota State Capitol. For the full painting, see "Territorial Imperative: How Minnesota Became the 32nd State." *Photograph by Jerry Mathiason.*

BACK COVER: *Fort Snelling* by Sgt. Edward K. Thomas, about 1850

INSIDE COVERS: *Winnebago Wigwams* by Seth Eastman, reproduced in Henry R. Schoolcraft's *Indian Tribes of the United States* (1852), and the Snyder and McFarlane land office, Minneapolis, 1856.



Mendota, about 1845

Preface

1999. 1849. One hundred and fifty years ago, in March 1849, Minnesota Territory was established by an act of Congress. Lines were drawn on a map enclosing lakes and rivers, prairie and woods, hills and valleys. Officials were appointed, local men grappled for power, and a European-American grid of law was officially imposed on the new entity. For some of Minnesota's residents, it was a time of great hope and wide-open opportunity. For the territory's native peoples—Ojibwe, Dakota, Ho-Chunk (Winnebago), Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara—and the métis, or European-Indian people of the fur trade, the outlook was far different. Their ways of life and livelihoods would change forever.

Anniversaries provide a time to rethink as well as to remember, and so the editors of *Minnesota History* invited an assortment of thoughtful writers to look back and reassess, from the edge of the new millennium, the meaning of the territory. How did its creation fit into the larger national picture at midcentury, especially the growing controversy over slavery? What did the political acts of boundary drawing and nation building mean for people's lives? Who lived in Minnesota before the territory was created, and what kinds of people moved to the region during the nine years before statehood in 1858? What induced newcomers to travel beyond the farthest rail connections to take up a new life in a new place? And what

did this mean to the Indian and mixed-blood people who had lived in the region for centuries?

This collection of essays, issued simultaneously as a special edition of *Minnesota History* and as a book, is an attempt to answer to those questions—and more. Articles by Rhoda R. Gilman, Bruce M. White, William E. Lass, and Jane Lamm Carroll detail the varied people, the web of politics, the sometimes outrageous boosterism, and the always opinionated newspapers of Minnesota Territory. In "Every Object Tells a Story," Marcia Anderson, Patty Dean, Charles Diesen, Kendra Dillard, Lisa Krahn, Linda McShannon, Stephen Osman, and Adam Scher show that the variety of objects preserved in the collections of the Minnesota Historical Society—itsself created with the territory in 1849—speak volumes about their owners and their era. Similarly, Scott Anfinson's "Territorial Views" unlocks the silent stories of some still-standing remnants of the territory's built environment. John Crippen and Katherine Piva detail MHS historic sites associated with the long-ago territorial years.

Finally, eight "Day in the Life" features scattered throughout this collection capture the vivid everyday sights, smells, sounds, and events familiar to some of Minnesota's early residents but largely lost to us now. The people and occurrences depicted are real, although the authors were granted some creative

latitude in piecing together their stories. Here are found the voices of everyday citizens from many walks of life, suggesting the diversity of the territory.

Along with the authors, many people contributed greatly to this volume. For invaluable advice on both the big picture and the small details, thanks are due to Brian Horrigan, William E. Lass, and Alan Woolworth; for tireless and inspired illustration sleuthing, Deborah Swanson; for help selecting from the riches of the Minnesota Historical Society's unique images collection, Bonnie G. Wilson, and from its art collection, Thomas O'Sullivan; for facilitating "Every Object Tells a Story," including artifact selection, Sherri Gebert-Fuller and Kendra Dillard; for their artful work evident in these pages, photographers Peter Latner, Eric Mortenson, and Jerry Mathiason; for the maps, Alan Ominsky; for making a beautiful whole from the parts, designer Lois Stanfield; for careful and patient keying of corrections, Chris Banks; and for reading portions of this collection, the Minnesota Historical Society's Indian Advisory Committee members David Aubid, Jody Beaulieu, and Jeff Savage. The essays were funded, in part, by a grant from the research department of the Minnesota Historical Society with funds provided by the State of Minnesota.

—Anne R. Kaplan & Maribyn Ziebarth

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ANGELA CAVENDER WILSON, or Tawapaha Tanka Win (Her Big Hat Woman), is the great-great-granddaughter of Maza Okiye Win. She is a Wahpetonwan Dakota residing at the Upper Sioux community in Granite Falls, Minnesota, and a doctoral candidate in American history at Cornell University.

CREDITS

The illustration facing the preface, a detail of Seth Eastman’s *Mendota from Fort Snelling*, is in a private collection, courtesy the Minnesota Historical Society; p. 176 is courtesy the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada; p. 201, the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; and p. 256 (top), the Northeast Minnesota Historical Center, Duluth. The bank note, p. 165, was purchased with funds donated by W. G. Kirchner. The painting on the cover and p. 160–61, from the Governor’s Reception Room in the Minnesota State Capitol, was photographed by Jerry Mathiason.

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“If earth has a Paradise, it is here.”

—*Minnesota Territory promoter and schoolteacher Harriet E. Bishop, 1847*

IN THIS LIVELY COLLECTION of essays, historians reassess the events and meaning of Minnesota Territory 150 years after its creation.

They describe how its birth in 1849 during the growing national conflict over slavery forever changed the lives of Minnesota’s native and mixed-blood residents. Reinterpreting the rush to statehood in 1858, these writers offer fresh insights into the roles played by wildly optimistic territorial promoters and the no-holds-barred newspapers of the time. Eight fictional

“Day in the Life” essays, as well as nearly 100 historical daguerreotypes, paintings, photographs, and curators’-choice artifacts, call up the sights, sounds, and surroundings of ordinary people living in tumultuous territorial times. An essay on surviving buildings and landscapes offers readers the opportunity to see and experience territorial Minnesota today.



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