

# Visiting Minnesota Territorial Sites

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Territorial industries, architecture, religion, leaders, and early life are vividly portrayed at several of the Minnesota Historical Society's historic sites. In the Twin Cities area at the Sibley Historic Site, visitors can learn about Mendota's transition from an isolated trading post to part of an organized territory. Henry H. Sibley, an American Fur Company official, territorial delegate to the U.S. Congress, and leader in the quest for statehood, lived in his limestone house there until he began serving as governor of the new state in 1858. The site's Faribault house, which served as a hotel, and the Dupuis house also bear witness to the fur company's post at the confluence of the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers.

Across the Minnesota River at Fort Snelling, the U.S. government established its presence in the decades before Minnesota became a territory. Costumed living-history interpreters now depict the residents of the 1820s.

Up the Mississippi River is the St. Anthony Falls Historic District, the site of lumber milling during the territorial years. (In those times, vistas of the roaring falls would not have included James J. Hill's Stone Arch Bridge, built in 1883.) Farther up the Mississippi River near Elk River, the Oliver Kelley family first settled in 1849, and the Society has recreated their mid-century farming practices.

For a look at residential architecture of the times, visit the W. H. C. Folsom House in Taylors Falls on the St. Croix River. Along with other homes in the Angel Hill district, it is an example of the Greek and Gothic Revival styles popular with New Englanders who settled in the area. The Folsom House was the home of the lumber baron who also served as a state representative and senator.

Near Montevideo in western Minnesota is the Lac qui Parle Mission, where missionaries founded one of the region's earliest churches and

schools. Under the patronage of Joseph Renville, missionaries developed the first Dakota alphabet and translated the Bible into Dakota. A visit today gives insights into the mixing of cultures there.

Along the Minnesota River in southern Minnesota, Fort Ridgely near Fairfax and the Lower Sioux Agency near Redwood Falls were built after the treaties of 1851 to administer U.S. Indian policy as new settlers flooded over the Dakota people's former lands and to manage government business with the small Dakota reservation along the river. For information about the impact of the territorial period on the Ojibwe people, visit the Mille Lacs Indian Museum in north-central Minnesota.

To find out about visiting these or others of the 23 historic sites administered by the Minnesota Historical Society, phone toll-free 1-888-PAST-FUN, or visit the Society's website at [www.mnhs.org](http://www.mnhs.org).

Plowing with oxen at the Oliver H. Kelley Farm





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