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EVENTS: battles, deaths, injuries.

Pre-conflict: The area of Stearns County was once occupied by several indigenous groups: Dakota, Ojibway, and Winnebago (Ho-Chunk). The Dakota and Ojibway occasionally had skirmishes in the county: at St. Cloud, in December 1859, a fight which involved a Dakota and Ojibway group fighting and commandeering the houses of two settlers for protection, and a fight in May 1860 at Maine Prairie in which 5 were killed and 3 wounded. NUP 21-22. In July 1860 the New Ulm Pioneer reported St. Cloud's entire population was alarmed by the news that Dakota had destroyed some settlement; the news turned out to be a rumor.

St. Cloud, by its location on the Mississippi, became an early center of transportation. Several early trails connected St. Cloud to the Fort Snelling and St. Paul areas, to the Grand Forks area, and the Red River Valley in the far northwest corner of present day Minnesota.

Stockades were built by settlers at Fairhaven, Maine Prairie, Paynesville, Richmond, St. Joseph, and Sauk Centre to protect settlers. Stockades could be put together quickly if needed, such as the one at Forest City, which was put together in 24 hours. DW 43

The post at Sauk Center was taken over and enlarged by the US Army until 1865 and used as a supply post to Fort Abercrombie.

mid-August, 1862: a supply train with 30 wagons loaded with Indian goods and 200 cattle set off from St. Cloud headed west, heading towards a treaty site for a proposed meeting with the Pembina and Red Lake Chippewa bands near present-day Grand Forks. Before it reached its destination the first attacks of the US Dakota Conflict of 1862 took place, and the wagon train was halted.

during the conflict:

No battles or direct attacks related to the U.S. Dakota Conflict of 1862 took place in Stearns County. The conflict was certainly felt there, with shipments of goods, wagon trains, refugees, and soldiers passing through the county. Stearns County residents were fearful that the conflict would come to them, and they knew where their closest stockade was and where they would head for protection.

Aug. 17-22, 1862: St. Cloud organized a militia, the Northern Rangers.

August 28, 1862 letter in the St. Cloud Democrat had a statement by Ambrose Freeman, who said they arrived at Paynesville on August 24, 1862, saw the surviving member of families that had been murdered at Norway Lake. (Norway Lake described as being 17 miles southwest of Paynesville.) Freeman stated that John Lundborg, after the attack at Norway Lake, escaped to Paynesville, then returned the next day to bury the dead, and there found the entire Broberg family killed, their bodies burned and mutilated. TDU 146

September 1862: Military units had been sent to the St. Cloud area to help guard the citizenry: Company H of the 8th Minnesota, Company G. of the Ninth Minnesota, and the citizen group, The Northern Rangers under St. Cloud resident Capt. Ambrose Freeman. DW 57

mid September 1862: troops that had been stationed in the St. Cloud-Sauk Centre area were sent to defend Ft. Abercrombie.

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The St. Cloud Foundry cast signal cannons for the military to use as alerts in case of attack.

mid September 1862: An attack was made at Paynesville on a building that housed several farm workers who had been threshing grain. The Indians stole horses and cattle. DU 171

During the conflict:

August 20-September 26, 1862: battles and attacks on the prairies raged, while those at home dealt with uncertainty and fear, newspaper and in-person reports that were sometimes accurate and sometimes exaggerated, aiding refugees, and worries about their loved ones on the farms, in the towns and on the battlefields.

September 26, 1862: see **Camp Release; the state breathed a sigh of relief.**

Post-conflict:

Small bands of hostile Dakota operated in central Minnesota in the fall of 1862 and between the spring and fall of 1863. To prevent attacks the military stationed soldiers at various points on the Minnesota frontier. Curt Dahlin, Dakota Uprising Victims.

About Oct. 5, 1862: Some 60 settlers who had been sheltered at Ft. Abercrombie were escorted to safety by Capt. T.D. Smith, Acting Brigade Quartermaster of Fort Abercrombie and Capt. Ambrose Freeman, the Third Minnesota detachment and Freeman's cavalry, arrived at St. Cloud. DU 171

November 3, 1862: according to an article in the St. Paul Daily Union, a train of 150 wagons, loaded with supplies for Fort Abercrombie, left St. Cloud, under a guard of three armed companies of the Mounted Rangers, commanded by Cats. Taylor, Wilson, and Henderson, the whole battalion commanded by Lt. Col. Peteler. The train is under the charge of Cat. T.D.Smith, Assistant Quartermaster, now stationed at Fort Abercrombie.

Little Crow was reported to have visited St. Joseph (in the spring of 1863 after he had escaped from Sibley's troops) on a trip intending to steal horses from the whites to give to his children. TDU 143

(SOME) HISTORIC PEOPLE CONNECTED TO CONFLICT

Jane Grey Swisshelm, journalist. Strongly against the Dakota after the war. HHS 177, DU 170
Freeman, Ambrose. Resident of Stearns County, who formed the Northern Rangers, became part of the force sent to relieve Fort Abercrombie; he escorted refugees from the fort to St. Cloud, was a scout for General Sibley, and was killed on the ND prairie. DW, DU 172

MILITARY UNITS WITH STEARNS COUNTY MEN THAT SERVED IN THE US DAKOTA WAR

4th MN, Co. D and Co. G; 7th MN, Co. I; 9th MN Co. G.

Company G of the Ninth Minnesota Regiment was organized in the St. Cloud area between Aug. 16 and 22 by Lt. Theodore Barrett. It was unusual because it contained a number of Chippewa Indians and mixed blood soldiers. They served at Ft. Abercrombie and later protecting the frontier between Ft. Abercrombie and St. Cloud. Because the Chippewa and Dakota were traditional enemies, the Chippewa soldiers in this unit may have had special motivation to be effective in their attacks. DU 173.

St. Cloud citizen militia "Northern Rangers", DUV 106

Note: see Section 5, this website, "Military units: USDakotaWar" for more information.

RESOURCES

Books (see attached bibliography for titles)

DI.DW, DUV, HHS, TDU

DW: Chapter Ten: Frontier Forts and Citizen Soldiers gives detail about building forts or stockades in various towns.

DU: section on St. Cloud

See Resource section for Book titles and Codes, Journal titles and Codes

Articles

article or book about Sauk Centre--MH??

section on the stockades in Stearns County: DW 48

Minnesota's Frontier: A Neglected Sector of the Civil War-

<http://collections.mnhs.org/MNHHistoryMagazine/articles/38/v38i06p274-286.pdf>

See Resource section for Book titles and Codes, Journal titles and Codes

Narratives

Freeman, Ambrose, TDU 148: Mr. Freeman's Statement: Dreadful Tale--fourteen persons killed--Others Missing--Great Amount of Property Taken. From Aug. 28, 1862 St. Cloud Democrat.

Garrison, O.E. TDU 154- Sept. 2, 1862 -account of Indian activity west and south of Sauk Centre

Freeman, Ambrose, TDU 148

Hills, W.P. TDU 158

Wilson, J.P. TDU 156 Sept. 17, 1862 letter printed in St. Paul Weekly Press, "Indians in Stearns County"

- description of escapee Baptiste Gubeau, who escaped during the attack at Big Stone Lake, walked to St. Cloud where he was attacked by suspicious settlers. MH 3: 106-107.

- letter to editor, St. Cloud Democrat, from O.E. Garrison, describes his encounter with Baptiste Gubeau. MH 3: 109.

See Resource section for Book titles and Codes, Journal titles and Codes

Photos

Paintings, sketches, & murals

oil painting of Sauk Centre stockade in the Sauk Centre Public Library, DW 49

Battle of Acton: part of the Gag-Heller-Schwendinger panorama

MONUMENTS & HISTORIC SITES

INTERPRETIVE CENTERS

CEMETERIES WITH GRAVESTONES OF PARTICIPANTS

Fair Haven cemetery: James A. McGannon, killed in Meeker County July 1, 1863, whose jacket Little Crow was wearing when he was killed near Hutchinson July 3, 1863.

Freeman, Ambrose, buried in the North Star Cemetery, St. Cloud.

Whitford, Joe, settler killed Sept. 1862 near Ft. Abercrombie. DU 182, bur. North Star Cemetery.

WEBSITES

WEB CONTENT

The History of Stearns County by William Bell Mitchell can be read on-line.

STEARNS HISTORY MUSEUM
STEARNS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
235 33rd Avenue South
St. Cloud, MN 56301-3752
320-253-8424
Fax: 320-253-2172
Email: info@stearns-museum.org
Executive Director: Charlene Akers
<http://www.stearns.history.museum/>

Paynesville Historical Society
PO Box 35
Paynesville, MN 56362
Contact: Michael Jacobson
www.paynesvillearea.com/community/histsociety/payhistsoc.html

St. Joseph Area Historical Society
25 - 1st Street NW
Box 434
St. Joseph, MN 56374
darolellie@hotmail.com

Sartell Historical Society
PO Box 1907
Sartell, MN 56377
Contact: Paul Brenhaug
paulbrenhaug@charter.net