JUNIOR PIONEERS
OF NEW ULM AND VICINITY

Vol. 25 / No. 2 **JUNIOR PIONEER NEWSLETTER** FALL 2014

Junior Pioneers Annual Meeting October 11th

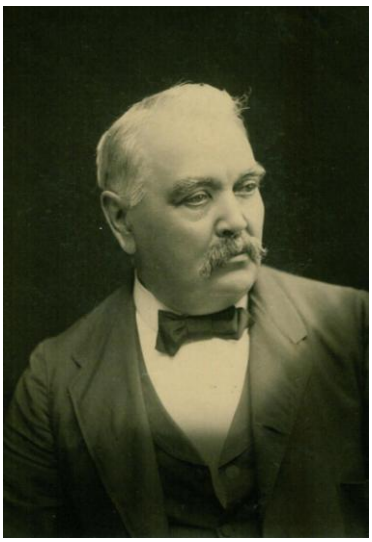
Turner Hall, New Ulm
6:00 Social Hour and Business Meeting
7:00 Dinner and Program

"Once Famous, Then Forgotten, Now Restored"

presented by: Terry Sveine

Terry Sveine is a New Ulm native and long-time member of the Jr. Pioneers. His qualifying ancestors came here from Luxembourg in 1857 and Norway in 1870. He is married (Ellie) and has two adult-aged sons and has been in the travel and tourism business for 31 years, but looks forward to doing more historical research and writing in his retirement coming at the end of October!

He will give an exciting presentation on a man whom he feels is an outstanding historical figure in New Ulm and Minnesota's history – Francis Baasen. All but forgotten after his death in 1901 and with no ancestors in the area, Baasen was a man who was "all over the map" of our town in the second half of the 1800s. Since arriving here from Luxembourg in 1855, he served in many, many public roles: as our town's first lawyer; two-term State Legislator; he helped write the State Constitution; was a Civil War officer; worked multiple times as our City and County Attorney; served as Judge; was our Postmaster and met President Cleveland; he helped found the Grand Army of the Republic branch in New Ulm; was very involved in the local Catholic Church; and was Assistant Adjutant General of the Minnesota National Guard. However, his most recognized office was that of Minnesota's First Secretary of State in 1858. He was involved with so many smaller civic roles that it's a wonder he found time to get married and raise five children!



All of Terry's research will be complied in a book to be called, *"Francis Baasen: From Luxembourg Emigrant to 'A Most Prominent Figure.'"* Sadly, the book will not be ready in time for the meeting, but Terry hopes you will patronize it when it is finished early in 2015.

Come prepared to hear an exciting and fast-paced presentation on one of our town's most prolific men and walk away educated and excited!

Dakota War Depredation Claims

The Brown County Historical Society has received a Legacy Grant to digitize depredation claims stored in the National Archives. These claims were filed over 140 years ago by settlers who suffered losses during the Dakota War of 1862. The exact location of the majority of the claims remained a mystery for many, many years. However, with the help of several researchers in recent years the boxes were discovered in various areas of the National Archives and in 2014 the BCHS wrote a grant to hire a private research team to begin the task of digitizing the collection of nearly 3,000 claims. The focus will be on digitizing the Brown County claims first and then completing the task of digitizing the entire collection.

The claims give valuable information including a narrative by the person that describes his home, his family and his property at the time of the Dakota War. The property lost is valued and listed in an attached schedule along with the final amount paid on the claim. The narrative often gives vivid descriptions of the claimant's experiences during the Dakota War. Once the claims are digitized and brought back to the BCHS they will be cataloged and entered into a computer data base and available to the public.

Book Report:

Henry David Thoreau's Visit to New Ulm and Fort Ridgely, Minnesota in 1861. By George L. Glotzbach

"In the spring of 1861 Henry David Thoreau set out from his native Concord on the last and longest journey of his life--a two-month, three-thousand-mile journey to frontier Minnesota--in a vain attempt to restore his rapidly deteriorating health." So begins the Introduction to a beautiful little book titled: "THOREAU'S MINNESOTA JOURNEY: TWO DOCUMENTS, Thoreau's Notes on the Journey West and The letters of Horace Mann, Jr.", edited by Walter Harding and published by the Thoreau Society of Geneseo, New York in 1962.

That which follows here is a condensation of the Introduction to the book, and direct excerpt quotations from the book, as they apply specifically to Thoreau's expedition to New Ulm and Fort Ridgely, Minnesota in June of 1861, along with comments as appropriate.

Henry David Thoreau was a nationally known author, poet, philosopher, historian, biologist, and an advocate of simple living. His health, always poor, was getting worse. His doctors in his home town of Concord, Massachusetts advised a change of climate. He decided on Minnesota where he could study flora and fauna, and the American Indian. Knowing he would need assistance on this journey Thoreau enlisted the aid of 17 year-old Horace Mann, Jr., son of the father of the American public school system. Young Mann was already a trained naturalist, and he eagerly agreed to join the tour.

May 10 the two left by train via Niagara Falls, Detroit, and Chicago, for East Dubuque, Illinois. Then by steamboat up the Mississippi River to St. Paul, Minnesota where they arrived May 26th. Thence by stagecoach to St. Anthony (now Minneapolis). There the two spent three weeks exploring the nearby prairies and forests, and studying local history in the libraries of the Twin Cities. One day they spotted an announcement offering an excursion up the Minnesota River by steamboat to see the annual federal government annuity payments to the Dakota Indians at the Lower Sioux Agency at Redwood. "Fare to Redwood & back $10" noted Thoreau in his expense account.

{COMMENT: DEPARTED JUNE 17, RETURNED JUNE 22. SEVEN DAYS INCLUDING PASSAGE AND MEALS. BUT THE ANNUITY PAYMENTS WERE LATE SO THOREAU AND MANN DID NOT SEE THEM.}

Thus begins the journey in the Introduction: "...on the 17th they embarked on the Frank Steele {COMMENT: THERE IS AN HISTORICAL MARKER IN NEW ULM AT 20TH SOUTH AND VALLEY STREETS WHICH READS "ON MAY 7TH , 1857, THE STEAMER 'FRANK STEELE' LANDED WITH ABOUT 60 OR 70 FAMILIES OF SETTLERS FROM CINCINNATI AT A PLACE A

QUARTER OF A MILE DIRECTLY SOUTHEAST FROM THIS POINT".} to observe the annual council of the Sioux at Redwood. Starting at 6 p.m., by 9 the boat had reached Shakopee and on the morning of the 18th, Henderson; on the evening of the 19th, Fort Ridgely; and their destination, the Lower Sioux Agency at 9 a.m. on the 20th. They remained at the agency long enough to see the Indians receive their payment and perform a dance or two, but before dark they were again on their way downstream."

Now, quoting directly from Thoreau's voluminous notes: "June 19...Good River from New Ulm to ? Much more bare bluff & plains today commonly bare. Great bends. 250 to 300 miles to Redwood; 120 or more by land straight." {COMMENT: ABOUT 120 MILES BY LAND FROM ST. PAUL TO REDWOOD STRAIGHT.} ...At Fort Ridgely at evening...June 20...Lay by last night at Fort Ridgely. Start about 4 a.m. Get to Lower Sioux Agency about 9 a.m...Indian strikes fire, takes a little punk (Illinois man says from white maple) & holds it flat against a flint, then strikes across their edges with a steel ring & puts the ignited punk on or in the pipe...Indians, 30 dance, 12 musicians on drums & others strike arrows against bows. The dancers blow some flutes. Keep good time. Move feet & shoulders, one or both. No shirts. 5 bands there. Ox cut in 5 parts....June 21...At New Ulm just before dinner. {COMMENT: THE NEW ULM BOAT LANDING AREA WAS PROBABLY NEAR THE

MINNESOTA RIVER FERRY POINT IN PRESENT DAY RIVERSIDE PARK AT FIRST SOUTH AND FRONT STREETS.} Lay by half night. Were 15 or 20 miles above Mankato (Minnesota)."

The book then moves on to Horace Mann, Jr.'s letters, specifically a letter to his mother dated: "(Thursday, June 20th): Dear Mother I did not write anything yesterday because I was looking most of the time. We passed a place called 'Redstone' from the color of the stone which is of a brick red color as I could see in some quarries opened on the banks of the river. The next place we passed was 'New Ulm,' a German town, and we were told everybody there was, except three, two women & one man, American. {COMMENT: THE POPULATION OF NEW ULM IN THE 1860 CENSUS WAS 635.} Just after we passed New Ulm there was a great bend and the river came round so as to be about two rods from itself."

Both documents quoted from this book are well worth reading in their entirety. They give one a fine verbal picture of nature and life in the new state of Minnesota.

Henry David Thoreau died in Concord of tuberculosis May 6, 1862 at the age of 44.

Help Junior Pioneers Go Electronic

Receive your newsletter electronically and help us communicate with you quick and easy via email. Send your email address to juniorpioneers@nutelecom.net

Find Us

Find us and LIKE us on Facebook! www.facebook.com/JuniorPioneersofNewUlm
Or, Junior Pioneer Parks Blog: http://juniorpioneerpark.wordpress.com

*Deceased Members

William Herzog	Harold Fenske	Thomas Forstner	Elaine Evans
Henry Nupson	Harriet Eckstein	Mark Retzlaff	

*New Members

Name	*Ancestor*
Jim Kretsch	Kretsch
Karen Kretsch	Schiller
Diane Sehrswintek	Sehr
James Seifert	Seifert/Ziegenhasen
Jamie Canales	Palmer

* Memorials

In memory of Karen Whitman
Ruth Simpson
Gerald & Shirleen Gulden

In memory of Elaine Runck
From her Children

In memory of Jeff Vogel
From his Aunt, Uncle & Cousins
(Inserra Family)

In memory of Harold Fenske
Andrea Danforth

In memory of Tom Forstner
Bill, Lori, & Taylor Otis

In memory of Mark Retzlaff
Bill, Lori, & Taylor Otis

If we have forgotten or miss-credited anyone concerning; Memorials, Donations, Deceased Members or New Members, please notify the President Lori Otis at 507.359.2320 or any Board Member and we will correct it.

*Elections To The Board Will Be Held

Three board members terms are up this year. They are: Darla Gebhard, Trudy Beraneck and Lisa Besemer. We thank them for their many years of service to the Junior Pioneers. Members of the nominating committee this year are Larry Mack, and Darla Gebhard from the board. Marilyn Hesse, George Glotzbach and Sherry Zins from the membership at large. Lisa Besemer was appointed to fill the unfinished term of Kathleen Backer (1 year was left on her term). Nominations to the board for 2014 are: Jim Kretsch and Dave Weldy and Lisa Besemer. Nominations will also be called for from the floor at the Annual Meeting. Please remember if you nominate someone from the floor they must be present and a current member of the Junior Pioneers. The business meeting will start at 6:30 p.m. following the social hour.

* Reminder Date

The Winter Social will be held at Turner Hall February 28, 2015. More information to follow.

Junior Pioneers 2014 Annual Meeting Reservation and Dues Payment Form

Name(s): _____

Banquet Tickets(s): Number Attending: _____ $23.00 each: _____

Reservations are Due by Wednesday, October 8th

Payments can be made at the door, but reservations are required prior to October 8, 2014
You can also send checks to: Junior Pioneers, PO Box 22, New Ulm, MN 56073
Questions?Reservations: Darla Gebhard at 507-354-6618 or 507-233-2619

2015 Annual Membership fees are due October, 2014

Single Membership	$20 ____
Joint Dues (*Husband & Wife both qualify for membership*)	$30 ____
Surviving Spouse	$20 ____

Send checks to: Junior Pioneers, PO Box 22, New Ulm, MN 56073
Questions? Darla Gebhard at 507-354-6618 or 507-233-2619

Park Report *by Lori Otis, JP President/ Park Manager*

After two years of a full assault on the invasive species, buckthorn, in our park, we found a very large beautiful oak tree located on the south end of the park. It took two years until we were able to *touch the tree.* We used the tree as a benchmark and motivation after countless volunteer hours and efforts. *We would like to name this glorious tree and are asking for your assistance.*

As a fundraiser for the park, we are having a 'Name that Tree' contest. To have your entry considered, please send the form in this newsletter, along with your tax-deductible gift of $5.00 per entry, to the Junior Pioneers.

If you wish to see the tree in its full fall colors, please stop by the south end of the park. It is marked with a very noticeable yellow ribbon. We will announce the winning entry at the annual meeting. Enter as many times as you wish. All funds raised will be used exclusively in the park.
We look forward to your suggestions. The winning entry and the name of the tree will be marked with an appropriate marker next spring.

We look forward to your entries!

NAME THAT TREE: (submissions are due at or before the Annual Meeting Oct. 11)

Name Suggested: _____

Please submit forms to **Junior Pioneers PO Box 22 New Ulm, MN 56073**
Questions? Comments? call Lori Otis at 507-359-2320

Name of Submitter(s): _____

Junior Pioneers
P.O. Box 22
New Ulm, MN 56073
(Return Service Requested)

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Junior Pioneer Board of Directors - 2014

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Rose Mary Dittrich, Treasurer	**David Kading**	**Larry Mack**
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