

## **The Dakota Conflict Remembered**

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The history of conflict and reconciliation between the Dakota (Sioux) and non-native peoples in the State of Minnesota spans at least 140 years. The need for reconciliation in southern Minnesota stems from events occurring between 1851-1862.<sup>1</sup>

In the 1800s, two incompatible social worlds collided, resulting in the U.S.-Dakota Conflict of 1862, possibly the bloodiest and costliest Indian war in our history. At its conclusion, 38 Dakota warriors were executed in Mankato, MN., in the largest mass execution in U.S. history.<sup>2</sup> These historical events led to a loss of place and a way of

life for the Dakota (Feezor, 1994). Since 1862, an estrangement among and between Dakota and non-natives in Minnesota has existed (Cavender, 1987; Meyers, 1993).

The historical accounts of conflict between Dakota and Minnesota non-natives are captured in Chief Big Eagle's (Dakota) 1894 words. They provide a Dakota perspective into some of the complex causes of the conflict between the Dakota and the whites.

Then the whites were always trying to make the Indians [Dakota] give up their life and live like white men -- go to farming, work hard and do as they did -- and the Indians did not know how to do that, and did not want to anyway. It seemed too sudden to make such a change. If the Indians had tried to make the whites live like them, the whites would have resisted, and it was the same way with many Indians. *Chief Big Eagle (Dakota) (1894)* (In Meyer, 116)

This essay reviews and synthesizes historical accounts of conflict and reconciliation between Dakota and Minnesota non-native communities. It describes, analyzes and evaluates the dynamics and reconciliation processes used in the last 38 years to begin the healing of estranged relations among and between the two cultures. Finally, it offers recommendations for continued reconciliation efforts to attain a more just and lasting peace among Dakota, other tribal groups and non-native peoples in Minnesota. Data reported in this essay was derived from participant observation field work by Dowlin and Dowlin, interviews and archival material (1986-2000).

In 1987, when a Year of Reconciliation was proclaimed by Minnesota Governor Rudy Perpich, various individuals sought to begin a state-wide effort to heal the wounds relating to the 1862 U.S.-Dakota Conflict. Several definitions of the concept of reconciliation were offered. Dowlin (1987; 1989) defined the concept of reconciliation as "the restoration or bringing together of parties that are estranged. Dr. Chris Cavender (Dakota) maintained that reconciliation needs to happen on three levels: (1) between communities; (2) between individual parties; and (3) between self and the Creator (Dowlin, 1987). Vine Deloria, Jr. (Yankton/Lakota), Key Note speaker at a Treaty Symposium held in Minneapolis,<sup>3</sup> issued a pragmatic challenge for reconciliation which included creating "new ceremonies" or communally-created and shared activities<sup>4</sup> that involved the land and the collaborative efforts of the Minnesota Dakota and non-natives (See Appendices A and B).

In a recent conversation with Vine Deloria, Jr., (June 2000), he stressed that "reconciliation is not a program, it is a 'people thing.'" Over the last 40 years, efforts to reconcile and heal these historically based wounds have been evident in Minnesota. The following discussion highlights the numerous historical reconciliation "people things" evidenced by the Minnesota Dakota and non-natives.

#### Individual Reconciliation Efforts:

In 1958, two men from different cultures met and formed what became a 32-year friendship (Lawrence, Personal Conversation, October 26, 1999). It all began when Lawrence, a non-Native business man from Mankato, MN., met Amos Owen (Dakota) (died June 6, 1990) when he and his family were fishing near Owen's community, the

Mdewakanton Prairie Island Community, MN. Lawrence's friendly overture evolved into on-going visits, lengthy conversations, shared experiences in the way of family get-togethers and the eventual collaborative creation of shared Dakota and non-Native activities which contributed to increased mutual understanding and appreciation of each other's culture and uniqueness. Both men came to recognize the value of their friendship and learning about the other's culture, so much so that they expanded their friendship to include others.

In 1963, Owen and Lawrence collaborated on an educational opportunity at the Prairie Island Mdewakanton community for Mankato Indian Guide boys and girls to take part in a Dakota mini-pow wow. This would be the first of many educational events planned by these two men. Owen (Dakota) was elected Tribal Chair of the Prairie Island Mdewakanton community in 1965. To show respect and honor Owen's election, as well as promote the Mankato Indian Guide program, Lawrence, Barry Blackhawk (Winnebago/Hocak), a Mankato State University student at the time, plus another Mankato businessman, Bob Rolfes, walked from Mankato to Red Wing, MN (2-day, 90 mile walk). Jim Buckley took part in another similar walk in 1969. These acts of friendship, honoring and showing of respect helped to further deepen the two men's relational bonds with one another. Dakota people reciprocated the act of friendship by coming to Mankato to perform a ceremony and put on a mini pow wow in the YMCA gym.

These developing friendships, honoring acts and communally shared events set into motion on-going relationships and educational exchanges (1970-1985) with Dakota

people coming to Mankato area schools for area youth groups, e.g., Indian Guides, Boy Scouts, Campfire Girls. A healing process between the two cultures had begun.

Community Reconciliation Efforts:

The personal friendship of Lawrence and Owen (Dakota) inexorably led to the involvement of people on many different levels in the Mankato area (Lawrence, Personal Conversation, October 26, 1999). The first pow wow in Mankato, for example, took place in 1972 with the collaborative involvement of the Y's Mens Club, a support group for the Mankato Y.M.C.A., headed by a close friend of Lawrence named Jim Buckley. They met with initial reluctance due to stereotypical views regarding alcohol-related problems that could occur with the involvement of Native Americans. After being assured by Lawrence and Buckley that such activity was not a part of traditional events such as a pow wow, the group agreed to sponsor the event and became the main source of finances and manpower making the event possible.

Despite concern on the eve of the pow wow that there wouldn't be any dancers, the pow wow attracted 1,500-2,000 Native Americans, most of them curious about the fact that the city of Mankato was actually hosting such an event! The most dramatic and significant memory of this first pow wow was the sight of bald eagles circling above the baseball field at the time of the Grand Entry, the event preceding the dancing. Some observers said there were 38 eagles. This stunning event solidified the understanding that Mankato events would be in commemoration of the 38 executed Dakota.

This initial pow wow was conceived of as a one-time event, but by 1974, pressure to have another pow wow in Mankato was exerted by the Mankato Chamber of Commerce and Zonta, the women's service club. Dialogue between representatives of these groups, the Dakota, plus an administrator of Mankato State University, led to the conclusion that the pow wow in 1972 had indeed been good for both Mankato and the Native American communities, that the positive aspects of the pow wow had far outweighed any negative aspects and that a pow wow should be held again. An initial meeting was held at the Indian House at Mankato State University, a home that served as the headquarters for Native American students and their supporters. Again, Mankato's city manager arranged for the free use of a beautiful city park, along with utilities. This positive collaborative effort led to a successful event and the planning of another pow wow in 1975.

A significant event in 1976 was the formation of a new entity to host future pow wows. The consensus was that a new group with its own name would have more clout in the community and give a stronger identity to the event. The result was the Mdewakanton (meaning "people of the sacred lake") Club, whose 13 charter members included both Natives and non-Natives.<sup>5</sup> The name came from the band of Dakota to which most of the Dakota in Minnesota belonged. Amos Owen, the group's spiritual leader, liked the idea of having a distinctive group. The 1976 pow wow, the first one sponsored solely by the Mdewakanton Club, experienced slightly better attendance and funding, thanks to the collaborative efforts of local fund-raising plus fund-raising from

the Dakota communities by Vernell Wabasha (Yankton Sioux), wife of the traditional Mdewakanton chief.

The memorial pow wow shifted to a new location in 1980 when the city of Mankato presented the Dakota people a special section of a new park for the pow wow. City Manager Bassett had made several visits to the Dakota reservations asking them to provide the name for the park. The Dakota people named it Dakota Wokiksuye Makoce Park, meaning Dakota Land of Memories, referring to the memories of the 38 Dakota.

Increased interest in the event continued to be seen in the period from 1981-1986. Most years, Amos Owen, other family members and other Dakota would come to Mankato a few days before the pow wow to make appearances and speak with the children, teachers and administrators in local schools, usually on the elementary school level. Newspaper, radio and T.V. coverage of the these appearances and of the pow wow itself were extremely positive on a consistent basis, thereby interesting more Mankato area residents and their families in making the decision to attend their first pow wow to see what really happened at such an event. As more area people starting attending the pow wow on a consistent basis, friendships developed.

Accounts of individual and community reconciliation episodes presented here were recounted by Lawrence in a personal conversation, October 26, 1999.

#### State Reconciliation Efforts:

In 1987, when Governor Rudy Perpich, had proclaimed 1987 to be "The Year of Reconciliation" in Minnesota to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the 1862 Conflict (State of Minnesota, 1986; Dowlin, 1987), he was responding to a request from

the Dakota Studies Committee. This was an informal group which had been meeting sporadically for over 10 years.<sup>6</sup> This researcher writer and her husband, Mdewakanton Club President B. Dowlin, began attending the meetings in 1986 and served as a liaison between the two groups. The committee meetings always featured a circle allowing everyone to speak freely to share and propose reconciliation event ideas.

The proclamation proved to be a pivotal event in inspiring many groups around the state to make cooperative efforts to promote understanding and appreciation between the Dakota and non-Dakota. Led on the state level by year-long cooperation from the governor's office, the Minnesota State Historical Society, Minnesota Humanities Commission and the Science Museum of Minnesota, it prompted groups in many locations to reach out to each other to begin the journey of understanding.

The year began meaningfully and dramatically with an 85 mile relay run on December 26, 1986 (Moos, 1986a; 1986b). A cooperative planning meeting led to this new event, which covered the distance from the site in Minneapolis where 1600 relatives of the men condemned to hang in Mankato were held in confinement to the actual site of the execution in Mankato. Both natives and non-natives participated in the run itself and in the memorial ceremony and feast concluding the event. It was to be the first of many new events and ceremonies held in 1987 and later, inspired by Dakota activist Vine Deloria, Jr.'s (Yankton/Lakota) challenge delivered at a Treaty Symposium at the University of Minnesota's Hubert H. Humphrey Center to create new ceremonies involving "Natives, non-natives and the land" (Camp, 1987; "1987's reconciliation"

1987). This symposium was one of six held around the state sponsored by the Minnesota Humanities Commission.<sup>7</sup>

Another effort with significant state-wide impact was the publication of the "The Great Dakota Conflict" by the *St. Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch*. As their contribution to the "Year of Reconciliation," they published a 5-part series of articles in their Sunday edition that outlined in great detail the events before, during and after what had long been called "The Sioux Uprising" (Coleman and Camp 1987a, 1987b, 1987c, 1987d, 1987e). The revelations shocked and angered many Minnesotans who had not been aware of the extent of the greed and chicanery practiced by some of the earliest settlers and leaders of the state against the Dakota people. This presentation of the complexities of the state's early history aided greatly in defusing resentment against the state's Native Americans, which was based on lack of knowledge and/or misinformation. This information was helpful to the Dakota people also, as this history, as well as much of their own, had been lost over the last century due to their dispersion and education in government boarding schools, which discouraged the retention of their language, culture and history.

Many other newspapers and magazines also devoted attention to the subject throughout the year in a way that indicted a general realization that this was indeed a subject that needed to be addressed (Coleman, 1987). County historical societies also made sure that the topic was addressed in various ways, e.g., displays, lectures, plays, et. al.<sup>8</sup>

As the "Year of Reconciliation" progressed, notice was taken outside the border of Minnesota. In 1987, Iowa returned Dakota remains related to the Conflict and the following year its governor proclaimed a "Decade of Reconciliation," as reported by the Iowa Advisor for Indian Affairs, Maria Pearson (Yankton) (Personal Conversation, September 20, 1999). In 1989, the governor of South Dakota proclaimed a "Century of Reconciliation" in a state noted for racial problems with its Native American residents as reported by G. Mikkelson, Governor of South Dakota (Personal Correspondence, 1989).

Mankato saw the establishment of a collaboratively planned education program (Mahkato Education Day) for all area 3rd graders, public and parochial, held the day before the annual traditional pow wow in September. (See Appendices C: Collaborative Mahkato Education Day Model). The children were taught in small groups by Dakota people who were willing to share their special areas of expertise about their culture. It was discovered that the children themselves not only enjoyed meeting Dakota people, but told their parents and relatives about it, some of who then came to the pow wow to see it for themselves! The local school district was pleased enough with the event that it became a regular field trip (1987-1999) (Gaffer, 1999).<sup>9</sup> Since 1987, over 7,000 children, teachers and Native American resource persons have taken part.

The "Year of Reconciliation" concluded in Mankato with two special events. The first was a second memorial relay run which arrived in Mankato at the hour in which the 38 Dakota warriors had been executed 125 years earlier.<sup>10</sup> Also dedicated that day on the same site was a limestone sculpture entitled "Winter Warrior," carved by a young local artist as his contribution to the Year of Reconciliation.<sup>11</sup> It received generous

support from the entire community as a gift from the people of Mankato to the Dakota nation. At its unveiling, Amos Owen and sculptor Tom Miller jointly pulled a red blanket from the sculpture to the applause of a large crowd including Twin Cities media. Despite the tragic setting, a feast and program in the local Armory brought a meaningful conclusion to the year's formal activities (Camp, J., 1987a; 1987b; "Ceremony" 1987).<sup>12</sup>

Additional Reconciliation Efforts:

As a result of the momentum created by the "Year of Reconciliation" and the education of both the general public and the Dakota people, a number of communally shared events begun during the year became annual events ("new ceremonies") and new communally shared events occurred.<sup>13</sup> A communication course at Minnesota State University, Mankato, for example, was developed by this researcher-educator in 1988 (repeated in 1990) entitled "Those Who Spoke Out: Native American Voices of the Past and Present." A total of twelve Dakota people involved in the "Year of Reconciliation" activities came to MSU to interact with both the class and the community. For most students, it was their first contact with a Native American.

A new building housing the Nicollet County Historical Society in St. Peter, MN was designed (with Dakota input) and built in 1994 on the site of an 1851 treaty and called the Treaty Site History Center. An annual Treaty Site Commemorative Encampment brought together Dakota and area people (Traverse des Sioux Commemorative Encampment Program, 1994). Part of each year's event included seeking out and honoring the Dakota descendants of chiefs who had signed the Treaty.

In addition, the Society elected two Dakota people to its Board of Directors, the first time that had been known to happen in the state.

A Dakota man with a vision for bringing healing to descendants of the 38 Dakota executed in Mankato began an event in 1995 called the "Gathering of Kinship." Located at a site associated with a battle during the US-Dakota Conflict of 1862, it is a small but emotionally powerful event for those attending (Natives and non-Natives) (Sacred Gathering of Kinship Traditional Wacipi Program, August 29, 1997). Dakota people re-establish contacts with each other and with their history and heritage. An unusual and unexpected part of this unique event has been the appearance of the mayor of New Ulm, MN., at the Birch Coulee event. There he publicly welcomed the Dakota people to the area, acknowledged the historic bad feelings between the two groups and warmly encouraged the much-needed process of healing and reconciliation evidenced at the September 5, 1998 gathering (Schapekahn, Personal Correspondence, July 8, 1999 ). The significance of this is the fact that New Ulm was the site of the bloodiest fighting during the 1862 Conflict and remains to this day a place where Dakota are uncomfortable.

The most recent evidence of the continued impact of the Year of Reconciliation was the dedication of Reconciliation Park in Mankato (Reconciliation Park Dedication Program, September 21, 1997). It was the culmination of several years of cross-cultural community building wherein Dakota people raised funds for a remarkable Kasota stone sculpture of a white buffalo and Mankato residents worked cooperatively with the business community to obtain the large amounts of in-kind contributions

necessary to develop the site. Several Dakota and Mankato residents worked together on details such as the appropriate plants and layout for the site. A dedication ceremony at the time of the 1997 Wacipi (pow wow) in Mankato attracted much publicity and about 300 Dakota and area people. A spiritual ceremony of passing the pipe concluded a program of speeches and songs by representatives of both sides (Lindberg, 1997).

Conclusion:

The wounds associated with the 1862 Conflict, never far from the minds of the Dakota people and but recently acknowledged by the general public, run deep and may never be completely healed. That is the goal, however, of people of good will on both sides. Through mutual sharing of histories and new ceremonies shared by both cultures, the work of healing history's wounds in Minnesota has begun.

Dialogue since 1958 between many Dakota and non-Dakota individuals has led to numerous collaborative efforts to create opportunities for Dakota and non-Dakota people to mutually learn, heal and participate in "new ceremonies" where new shared histories and the building of community can begin. Deloria describes this new place as a place " that when you enter it, you give up presuppositions, bad feelings, assumptions and simply try to have a common experience" (1987). In response to the question "Why is reconciliation so difficult?," Deloria responded (personal conversation 2000):

You can't keep hard feelings forever. Generally, the youth picks up on the energy but not the reasons things happen. Your project has done the best

with this. South Dakota didn't. People in Minnesota have been far better than South Dakota. The Civil Rights report after 20 years, reports no progress.<sup>14</sup> You need people at the local level over a period of time for reconciliation -- to get involved.

. . . .I think you guys [Dakota and non-Dakota in Minnesota] have done really good work. . .it's one of the few places that you've really shown that you can do something. At the local level, you need people to step forward. You guys did and look what's been accomplished. Reconciliation is not a program. . .it's a people thing.

Transcending issues relating to this collision of two incompatible social worlds requires creating new and commonly shared social realities.

#### Visions/Recommendations

A long-held belief among the Dakota is that actions of an individual or group affect the following seven (7) generations in either a positive or negative way. The events of 1862 are now involving the seventh generation. The evidence presented in this paper is leading some to believe that this generation may see the beginning of the end of the old ways of seeing and being and that new ways of relatedness may replace them. An unexpected and dramatic example of this was the discovery and return of the remains of one of the 38 executed Dakota warriors whose bodies were stolen the very night of the execution. This had hindered the Dakota from performing certain ceremonies for the souls of the 38. In an emotional ceremony on May 19, 1998, the

remains of this warrior, Cut Nose, were returned for burial to the Lower Sioux Community in Morton, MN., allowing the possibility for closure to begin for the Dakota people in regards to their executed forefathers (M. Selvage, Jr. (Dakota) and E. Red Owl (Dakota), Personal Correspondence, 1998).

Reflecting one woman's vision of hope for the future, a Minnesota Public Radio documentary program in 1997, broadcast live from the site of the 1862 execution, concluded with a Nakota woman calling in to report:

. . .When I drive to Mankato which is several times a year, there is a great sense of melancholy that overcomes me, and I appreciate the work that your guests are doing. I worked with Amos Owen on the same issue in the 80s and I just think reconciliation is near -- on both sides. I'm talking about the pervasiveness of the feeling of melancholy that comes from the non-Indians and the Indian people and I look forward to the day when I can drive through that area and feel like this whole issue is healed.

Such sentiments as this give hope to people of good will in both cultures that indeed the day may yet come when, in the opening words of treaties signed by both Dakota and whites. . ."peace and friendship shall be perpetual." This form of relatedness is essential to the process of community building between estranged cultures.

**Mitakuye Oyasin -- "We are all related"**

Notes

<sup>1</sup> Minnesota Dakota History: The 1851 Treaty of Traverse Sioux ceded 24,000,000 acres recognized today as most of southern Minnesota and parts of South Dakota. The Dakota people were to receive \$1,665,000 in payment, however only \$30,000 was paid at the time of the Treaty. The remainder of moneys due and other provisions (e.g., education, farming supplies) were withheld indefinitely (Meyer, 1993, 25).

Delayed and skipped payments drove the Dakota to increasing desperation with each passing year. Through deceptive business practices, unscrupulous traders and government agents to much of what the Indians did have. Poverty, starvation and general suffering led to unrest that in 1862 culminated in the U.S. Dakota Conflict, which launched a series of Indian wars on the northern plains that did not end until the battle of Wounded Knee in 1890 (Mankato Area Chamber & Convention Bureau, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> Mankato Dakota History: Lincoln approved death sentences for only 39 of the 303 prisoners. One of the 39 was reprieved.

At 10 a.m. on December 26, 1862, in Mankato, the group of 38 ascended a specially-erected timber gallows 24 feet square and 20 feet high. More than 1,400 soldiers of the 6th, 9th and 10th Minnesota Volunteers and of the First Minnesota Mounted Rangers were on hand to keep order among the crowds of hostile citizens. The Indians sang as they left their prison and continued singing until the end. It was the largest mass execution in American history (Mankato Area Chamber & Convention Bureau, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, Minneapolis: symposium scheduled on November 13-14. The program included major addresses by Gary Clayton Anderson, non-Indian historian and scholar, Vine Deloria, Jr., Lakota scholar and educator, Arlo Hasse, adopted Dakota lay-expert on the Minnesota Dakota Treaties, and Roger Buffalohead. The program format included a mixture of general sessions, workshops, opportunities for questions and comments, and "mixing meeting" sessions designed to encourage informal dialogue between participants. General sessions focused on the U.S.-Dakota history, the Treaties of 1805, 1851 and 1858--provisions, negotiations, implementation, and the aftermath. Constituency workshops focused on "How 'We' Acted Then and Now." One unique session, a "Reconciliation Session," provided "much opportunity for face-to-face interaction [and opportunities] to discuss ideas about follow-up, [and the] meaning of 'reconciliation'" (Humphrey Institute, 1987). The final session focused on recognizing and claiming current conditions. This reconciliation event

provided opportunities to work towards understanding through dialogue and discovery.

- 3 The Mahkato Mdewakanton Club is a Mankato based bi-racial group that has been in existence since 1976. Indians and whites work together each year to organize and coordinate a traditional pow wow. The public is encouraged to attend to learn about Dakota ceremonies and traditions. This pow wow is unique in that no reservation is located in the area. The establishment of this group and the sponsoring of the yearly pow wow event grew out of a long-time friendship between two white men, Bud Lawrence, manager of a restaurant business in Mankato, Jim Buckley, Real Estate Broker, Mankato and Amos Owen, Dakota spiritual leader, Prairie Island Reservation near Red Wing, MN. (Camp, 1987b). Treaties related to the U.S.-Dakota Conflict (Meyer, 1967).

- 4 Note specifically: *communally created and shared*. A common mistake, observed by the writers, happens when sincere white people, eager to redress old wrongs, come up with an idea, begin to develop it and then approach Native American people for their approval and involvement. By that time, the opportunity for true mutual collaboration has already been lost.

Historically, *new ceremonies*, according to Deloria, were created "When elders had a problem and went to the Medicine man, if he didn't know how to solve the

problem, he would say 'let's do a ceremony.' He would use paint and smoke [the pipe]. He created a ceremony and when a similar problem came up, they would do the ceremony again. [Minnesota] Anglos and Indians in 1987 said in affect -- 'let's do a ceremony.' That is why your project worked. A ceremony includes a little bit of each party being willing to give -- to surrender something. Create [ceremonies] and take [them] seriously for certain occasions" (Personal conversation, 2000)

- 5 Dakota Studies Committee: The Dakota Studies Committee was a project of Dr. Chris Cavender's (Wahpetonwan Dakota). Cavender served as the coordinator. The first meeting took place in 1977. Interested Dakota and non-Indian peoples came together to share and talk about concerns. The stated purpose of this committee was to study, share and preserve the richness and beauty of the Dakota heritage and culture. Participants during the Year of Reconciliation included representatives from the four Dakota communities (, e.g., Upper Sioux, Lower Sioux, Prior Lake, and Prairie Island), Minnesota Historical Society, many county historical societies, Humphrey Institute for Public Affairs, Department of Natural Resources, Science Museum of Minnesota, University of Minnesota, members of the Mdewakanton Club, Mankato, journalists, clergy and other interested parties.

<sup>6</sup> *The Indian Heritage of the Region* (1987, April 29). This program was conducted for the Traverse des Sioux Library System "Staff Day" program covering nine regional library systems, Minnesota Valley Regional Library, Mankato, MN. The purpose of this program was to provide librarians with adequate resource information regarding the role and contributions of the Dakota (Sioux) to Southern Minnesota history. This program was designed with the Year of Reconciliation theme in mind.

Aspects of History and Culture programs included ("Aspects of", 1987):

"Dakota women's roles in the Conflict of 1862." Yvonne Wynde, President of Sisseton-Wahpeton Community College, Sisseton, S.D., May 6 and 7.

"Indian and white perceptions of an expanding republic: Minnesota in the mid-nineteenth century." Dr. Reginald Horseman, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. May 20 and 21.

"Public reaction to the Dakota Conflict." Nick Coleman, *St. Paul Pioneer Press and Dispatch*. June 3 and 4.

"A talk with four Dakota elders." Amos Owen of the Prairie Island Community, Elsie Cavender of Upper Sioux Community, Eli Taylor of Sioux Valley

Reserve, Manitoba Canada, and Evelyn Prescott of the Lower Sioux community. June 17 and 18.

"What we can learn from the great Dakota Conflict." Dr. Gary C. Anderson, Texas A & M University, author of *Little Crow: spokesman for the Sioux*, June 24 and 25.

"Reservation communities in the Twentieth Century." Dr. Don Fixico, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Commentary on Minnesota's Dakota Communities by David E. Larsen, Chairman of the Lower Sioux Community, Morton, July 9 and 10.

*Fry Bread Forum, The Year of Reconciliation*, (1987, October 22). "Ethnicity and the U.S.-Dakota Conflict." Lecture and panel reaction. Dr. Gary Anderson, Professor of History at Texas A & M, lecturer. Macalaster College, St. Paul, MN.

<sup>7</sup> Other responses to the Minnesota efforts included the religious world. The religious world responded admirably both in Minnesota and beyond its borders supporting the theme of reconciliation and going even further. In the US, both the United Methodist Church and the Episcopal Church issued formal apologies to all Native American people for past insensitivities towards Native culture and in

Canada the Federal Council of Churches, representing most denominations in Canada, also issued an apology and asked for forgiveness from the native people (Dowlin, 1987).

8 Artistic, performance and commemorative events fostering opportunities for understanding during this year included:

Circle of Reconciliation painting. An internationally recognized artist from Mankato, Marian Anderson (1987), honored the Dakota in a spirit of reconciliation through her creation of an 24x27 oil painting portrait of Amos Owen, a Dakota spiritual leader. Tougas (1987b) reported Anderson's thoughts at the unveiling of the portrait in Mankato: "Owen is a central focal point of the Spirit of Reconciliation. . . .The work is not so much a painting of Amos, but of the spirit of reconciliation of which. . .Owen is a local center." Tougas (1987b) continued: "The halo-like circle around her subject symbolizes both sides of the historical conflict reaching the full circle of understanding--with Owen as the center." Anderson honored the Dakota with her artistic gift during the Year of Reconciliation. It hangs in the Minnesota Valley Regional Library near the site of the 1862 hangings.

St. Peter Community Choir Concert: Key representatives included: Amos Owen, Dakota spiritual leader of the Wabasha band of the Mdewakanton people, Prairie

Island Mdewakanton Dakota Reservation, Dr. Chris Cavender, coordinator of the Dakota Studies Committee, Minneapolis, and Bruce Dowlin, president of the Mahkato Mdewakanton Club, Mankato, Minnesota ("Wedding Feast," 1987).

Dogs in the Hot Moon, St. Paul -- Great North American History Theater

Production. Belville, Lance (1987). This play presented "a fragmented view of the Sioux Uprising of 1862, in which as many as 800 white settlers and soldiers and an undisclosed number of Indians died in a month of mutual butchery along the Minnesota River near New Ulm and Fort Ridgely" (Vaughan, 1987a). Belville explores the Dakota side of the story (Moos, 1987). He concentrates on a few participants in the war: Susan Brown, an Indian woman married to a white trader, Mattie Williams, a white woman captive, Rev. Stephen Riggs, a white cleric, Otakle, a black who fought with the Dakota and later turned informant for the government, and military opponents Little Crow, and General Henry Sibley. Ron Leith, a direct descendant of Little Crow, played the role of Little Crow. Leith commented: "I think what I'm doing is bringing to light facts and information concerning these events as people should know them" (Vaughan, 1987b). This play received positive and negative reactions from the Indian community and the public (Vaughan, 1987; "Critics choice," 1987; Willand, 19087; Beleville, 1987).

Fort Snelling Marker Dedication: Fort Snelling is the site of the internment camp where 1600 Dakota people were held following the U.S.-Dakota Conflict 1862.

Several hundred Dakota people--men, women, children--died while being held prisoners during the winter of 1862-1863. An all night vigil with an opening pipe ceremony, oral accounts of the camp from the Dakota elders and a reading of the names of Dakota people held prisoner took place at Fort Snelling State Park, October 30, 1987. This observance was followed by the dedication of an historical marker that describes the internment experience from the Dakota perspective and acknowledges by name those who were interned there. The Department of Natural Resources and the Minnesota Historical Society sponsored this event (Camp and Coleman, 1987c; "Fort Snelling," 1987).

New Ulm -- Brown County Historical Society commemorative events: "The Brown County Historical Society, housed in a city that 138 years ago was soiled with bloodshed from the Dakota Conflict, will sponsor a series of events Saturday to honor the "year of Reconciliation," e.g., tours of conflict sites, children's games, films, craft workshops, guest speakers ("Speakers, films," 1987; "NU settlers," 1987). One 92-year-old New Ulm citizen, Dr. Kurt Bell recalled the embittered settler stories told him by his relatives. However, he recognized both sides: "'I think it's important that those people [whites] be remembered,' but he added, 'I'll be the first to stand up and say the Indians got screwed' (Franklin, 1987).

In January 1988, the Brown County Historical Society was awarded the New Ulm Human Rights Commission award for "raising the community's consciousness

about the U.S.-Dakota conflict of 1862." Commission member Ellen Olson stated: "It seems fitting that our area should be one of the leaders in trying to bring about some kind of reconciliation ("New Ulm/History," 1988).

Ft. Ridgely and Lower Sioux Agency Interpretive Center commemorative programs: "The Frontier Soldier," (Ft. Ridgely) -- showing the life of a typical soldier on a frontier post in the 1800's; "Cultures in conflict," (Lower Sioux) -- "This program will endeavor to bring about a better understanding of the differences between the Dakota and white cultures which were a direct cause of the Dakota War of 1862" ("Interpretive centers," 1987; Peterson, 1987; "Historical group," 1987).

Monson Lake Memorial Association: presented the "Year of Reconciliation" theme in an August 23rd public program in the form of a People's Court. Participants listened in on two conversations, one conversation of two Scandinavian ladies visiting and describing the recent horrors brought on by the Indian uprising and another conversation by Indians who described their feelings of being cheated and mistreated by the United States government (Bengtson, 1987). This was a significant event in that traditionally over the past 60 years, this annual memorial observance has only recognized the white settlers that were killed.

Chippewa County Historical Society, Montevideo, MN: sponsored an event to commemorate the release of hostages at Camp Release, on September 26th the exact date of the release. Walking tours of the area where Dakota villages and campsites once existed were scheduled. Dr. Chris Cavender presented the Dakota perspective of activities at Camp Release and representatives from the Torture Victim Center, St. Paul, spoke on the hostage experience ("Chippewa County," 1987).

- 9 Feedback received from Native American resource people and school district participants attending the Mankato Education Day program:
- a) Joe Croud: An Ojibwe man who described himself as being alienated from himself in terms of failing to see himself as a valued, capable human being. He stated that he has discovered his own personal value as a benefit of the positive and respectful interactions with Mankato teachers, children and parents. (Personal Conversation)
  - b) Dottie Whipple, Mdewakanton Dakota: A woman who describes herself as being alienated from her history, language and relatives stated: "Coming to Mankato to dance and teach is a part of my healing." (Personal conversation)
  - c) Eli Taylor, Dakota: A 91 year old Canadian Dakota elder, who talked about being alienated from his homeland, stated that when he came to Mankato, he was "returning to the old country." (Personal Conversation)

d) Mankato 3rd grade teachers and children - Feedback from children and teachers indicated an appreciation for the Dakota philosophy and way of life (1993-1998). They also described the Dakota as friends (Information derived from Interviews (Dowlin 1993) and event feedback (Dowlin 1987-1998)

<sup>10</sup> Memorial Run and Ceremony: On December 26, 1987, a core group of 12 runners (11 Dakota--8 men and 3 women and 1 non-Indian) completed the second 90 mile relay run which started at Ft. Snelling and ended in Mankato. This 12-hour run began at 12:01 a.m. in below zero temperatures. Runners and their supporters were greeted by a crowd of approximately 100 people at the Land of Memories Park in Mankato. The runners and their supporters entered a sacred circle wherein they shared the peace pipe and heard the Dakota prayers offered by Amos Owen honoring the 38 Dakota warriors. A traditional feast and reconciliation program honoring the 38 Dakota and the relay runners and their supporters followed (Moos, G. 1986a; Parsons, J. 1986; Abbott, 1989; "In Honor of the 38. . .," 1989; "Dakota Indians to be remembered" 1990; Gersten, 1994; Gonzales 1994; 1995; 1997)

<sup>11</sup> Dakota Indian Statue Unveiling: On December 26 following the memorial service and feast in Mankato, Tom Miller unveiled his large-than-life statue sculpted out of a 7.5 ton piece of Kasota Limestone before a crowd of approximately 300. Mankato Mayor Vernon Carstensen introduced Miller who offered words of

recognition and honor to the Dakota people. Miller then presented his work to Amos Owen, (Dakota). Owen and Miller jointly unveiled the statue. One St. Paul reporter described this event in the following way (Camp, 1987a): "Dakota spiritual leader Amos Owen of Prairie Island and sculptor Tom Miller of Mankato share a grip on a traditional eagle feather staff in front of Miller's statue. . ." (Iron Shield, H. 1987)

<sup>12</sup> Owen's reconciliation efforts were acknowledged with a "coalition-builder" award by the Urban Coalition of Minneapolis (1987c)

<sup>13</sup> A Wo-pi-da Wo-ta-pi ("A meal of Thanksgiving") was held on January 14, 1988. This celebration took place near Minneapolis at the home of Mrs. Betty Radcliffe, staff member of the Hubert Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. The agenda for this gathering was entitled "Reconciliation, Reflection and Re-Commitment." Approximately 55 persons (Indian and non-Indian workers and supporters of the Year of Reconciliation) attended for the purpose of "celebrating and giving thanks to the Creator,' reflecting on the past year, 1987 -- the Year of Reconciliation, and sharing our thoughts on the question -- 'Where do we go from here?'"

<sup>14</sup> In its report, entitled "Native Americans in South Dakota: An Erosion of Confidence in the Justice System," developed from a meeting Dec. 6, 1999, in Rapid City, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights outlined a wide array of

problems from different sources. . .The overall theme of the report: There is a great divide, not only between the races, but also how the races perceived conditions in the state. . .The expressed feelings of hopelessness and helplessness in Indian country cannot be overemphasized. There is a long-standing and pervasive belief among many Native Americans that racial discrimination permeates all aspects of life in South Dakota and that prejudice and bigotry play out on many levels, including the workplace, schools, business, and public accommodations, the report says. Despair is not too strong a word to characterize the emotional feelings of many Native Americans who believe they live in a hostile environment (Anderson, 2000).

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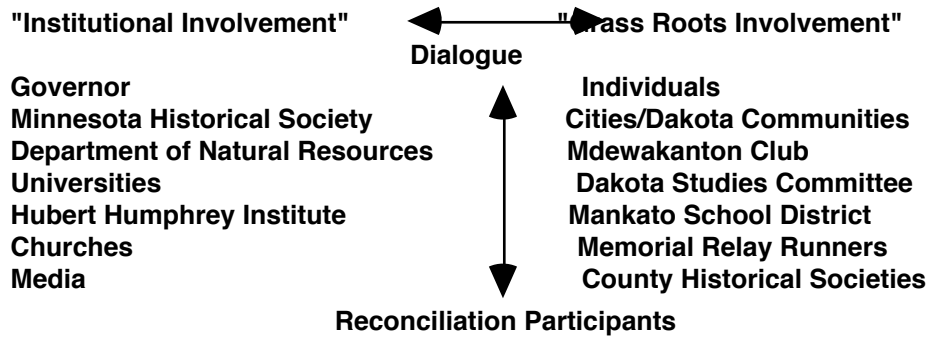
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## APPENDICES A

### COLLABORATIVE GROUPS



Collaboration between individuals and groups, large and small, created synergy during the Year of Reconciliation, as illustrated by the above diagram.

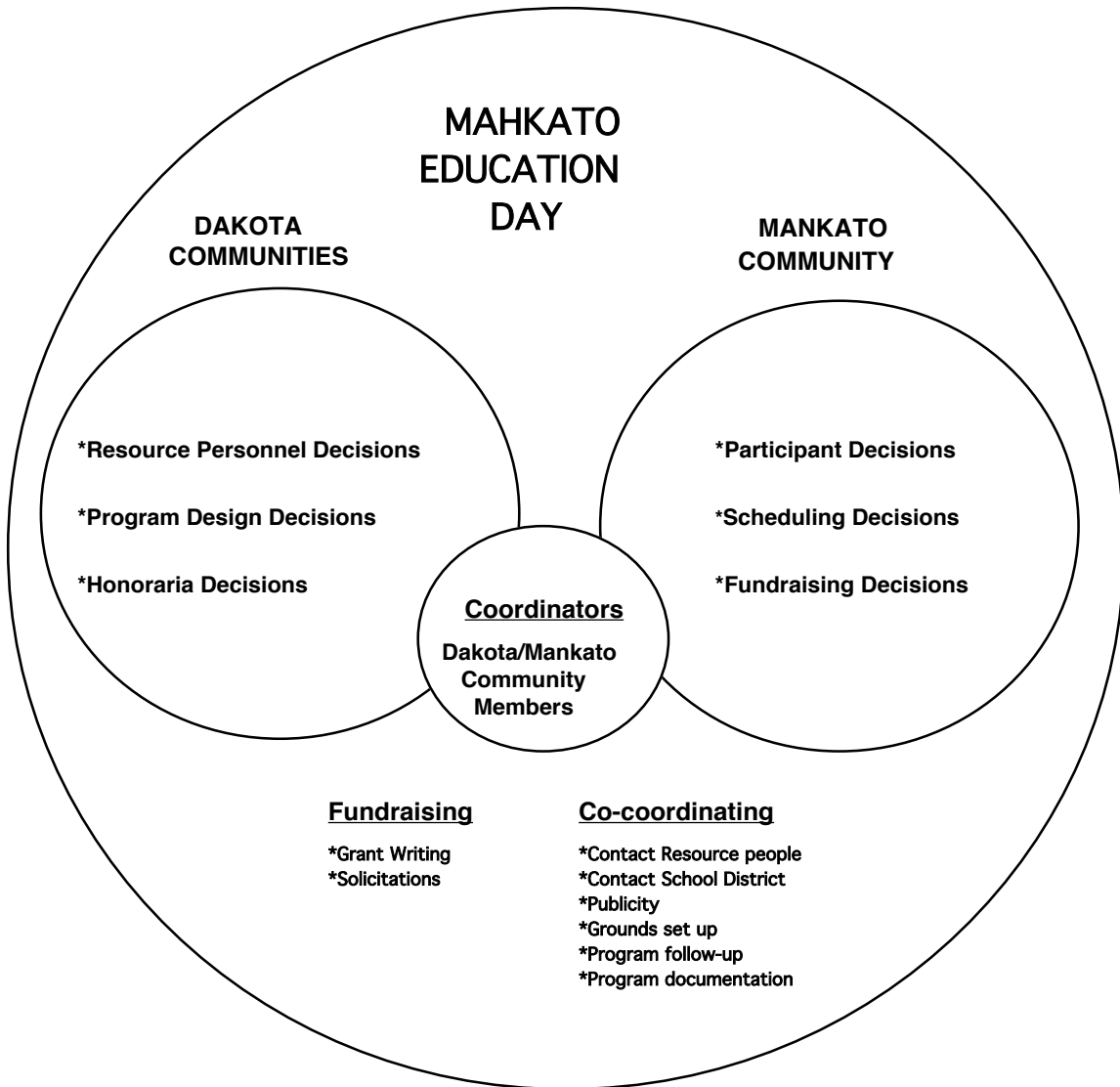
## **APPENDICES B**

### **COMMUNALLY SHARED EXPERIENCES**

**Wacipi (dance or pow wow)**  
**Memorial Relay Runs**  
**Public art (sculpture, art)**  
**Performance and Commemorative Events**  
**Exhibits (Historical Societies, libraries, public malls)**  
**Symposiums, Lectures**  
**Community education programs**  
**University education programs**  
**School District Education**  
**Feasts**  
**Ceremonies (naming, honor, marriage, adoption, memorials, sweatlodge)**  
**Design and creation of Reconciliation Park, Mankato**

All of the above activities during the Year of Reconciliation by intention involved both Dakota and non-Dakota people in an effort to create personal connections that would outlast the Year itself.

APPENDICES C



**Mahkato Mdewakanton Education Day Collaborative Planning Model**

This collaborative effort involves the Dakota Communities, Mankato Area Schools, City of Mankato and the Mankato Mdewakanton Wacipi (Pow Wow) Association.

