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Papers.

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Northwest Miller, vol. 3, 1876



Joseph N. Nicollet and John C. Fremont, with several companions, crossed Redwood County in 1838 on a Government survey of the region between the Missouri and the upper Mississippi Rivers. After traveling up the Minnesota River to the Cottonwood, they proceeded up the valley of the Cottonwood on their way to the pipestone quarries. They then went into Dakota. Upon returning to Minnesota, they examined the region around Big Stone Lake.(19)

Captain James Allen of the First Regiment of U. S. Dragoons conducted an expedition in 1844 to the heads of the Des Moines and Blue Earth Rivers. The march brought him through territory which became southwestern Minnesota. After traveling up the Des Moines River he came to Lake Shetek, where he established his camp. From there he went north 37 miles, crossing the Cottonwood and Redwood Rivers, and then went due east to the St. Peter's (Minnesota) River. On that part of his trip he passed through Redwood County and, near Redwood Falls, again crossed the Redwood River.(20)

Fort Ridgely was established in the spring of 1853 on the Minnesota River near the mouth of Rock Creek, a few miles above New Ulm. At the same time, ground was broken for the buildings of the Lower Sioux Agency, some 30 miles above the fort.(21) The first building put up housed the agency headquarters. Other buildings, erected during the next few years, were the warehouse, cook house, bunk house, carpenter shop, and barns. An Episcopal church and rectory, a physician's residence, and homes for officials, teachers, Government farmers, mechanics, and laborers

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- (19) Joseph N. Nicollet, Report Intended to Illustrate a Map of the Hydrographical Basin of the Upper Mississippi River, pp. 9-18, 51, 52; John C. Fremont, Memoirs of My Life, pp. 34-37, 53.
- (20) James Allen, Capt. J. Allen's Expedition, H. Doc. 168 (serial 485), pp. 2-7; (photostat copy of manuscript map omitted from this report is in Minnesota Historical Society); U. S. Military Academy, The Centennial of the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, 1802-1902, p. 170; C. Stanley Stevenson, "Expeditions into Dakota," South Dakota Historical Collections, IX, 352-354, map, p. 350.
- (21) Willoughby M. Babcock, ed., "Up the Minnesota Valley to Fort Ridgely in 1853," Minnesota History, XI (1930) pp. 162-165, 176, 177; U. S. Office of Indian Affairs, Annual report of the Commissioner, 1853, pp. 74, 75. The Lower Agency was located in what is now Sherman Township, Redwood County, a few miles from the present city of Redwood Falls.



A few miles from the park stands an old stone windmill constructed by hand in 1862. Although at some distance from the park proper, the mill and grounds around the site ~~is~~ <sup>was made a</sup> an old Indian village, which will probably be added to the park in the near future.

Near the park

part of the park by the 1931 Leg.

Old mill & grounds made part of the park by 1931 Legislative. Near the park <sup>the</sup> site of an old Indian Village which will probably be added to the park in the near future.

66 acre tract Wooded Valley and Hillside four miles west of Mankato, on Highway No. five.

"Minneopo" is an Indian Word meaning "two falls". To the word is attached many Indian legends.

A few miles from the park stands an old stone windmill constructed by hand 1862.

Although at some distance from the park proper the mill and ground around it was made a part of the park by the 1931 Legislature. Near the park is the site of an old Indian Village which will probably be added to the park in the near future.

Leg. Manual, 1935, p. 153

a 120 acre tract of wooded  
4 miles west of Mankato on Highway #61.

17.  
Legislature  
Manual  
1941

# Minnesota State Park - Lefseman Mill

Minnesota State Park has as the natural attraction Minnesota Creek which tumbles over two water falls into a deep-cut gorge covered with a dense mature stand of mixed deciduous timber.

The name - Minnesota is an Indian word meaning "Two Falls" and it is this feature that makes the park an unusual beauty spot.

The 110.24 acres are located in Blue Earth County six miles west of Mankato on U.S. Highway No. 60. It was acquired in 1905 and now affords excellent picnic facilities, including a water system, a modern comfort station, picnic kitchen and shelter and refectory.

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History of  
Minnesota  
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Min. Dept.  
of  
Conservation  
Dir. of Forests

Located in sections 16, 20, 31 - South Bend Township

Map of Minnesota State Park on page 4  
Cut of Minnesota Falls - 1869 - showing Linton's date  
Care to left in river behind the two White Trees.

Minnesota State Park is located about five miles west of the city of Mankato, in the Township of South Bend, Blue Earth County, Minnesota, on Minnesota Creek. Minne (water) mune (falling) mope (twice) was the name given to the stream by the Sioux Indians from two picturesque waterfalls. Both found two or three miles above its mouth. Both falls are in close proximity, about half a mile down the wooded glen forming part of the creek bed. The upper falls is about six or seven feet high and the lower falls, about four rods down stream, drops forty feet or more. The creek is the outlet of Lily, Crystal and Loom Lakes and drains quite an extent of country. It is about eleven or twelve miles long and empties into the Minnesota River. The upper half of the creek meanders over a rich prairie, while its lower portion flows through a deep wooded glen.



The Minnesota State Park and Recreational Area Plan 1939.

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# Minnesota State Park

Minnesota State Park - with 110.24 acres is located in Blue Earth County, six miles west of Mankato. The area was purchased by the state in 1905. U. S. Highway No. 6 and a paralleling railroad bisect the area. The principal natural attraction is Minnesota Creek, which tumbles over two falls into a deep-cut rock gorge, topped with high slopes, covered with a dense mature stand of mixed deciduous timber.

Three -

The park is primarily local, serving principally the City of Mankato. It has been developed for picnicking and hiking. It is recommended that any additional improvement be limited to only the improvement of picnic facilities. Administrative quarters are provided. It is recommended that:

Because the park is too small to serve the present demand, the area lying between the present boundary and Pigeon River Road be acquired, together with the plot in Section 20, bounded by the park line, the Pigeon River Road and the ravine road, a total of less than forty acres.

four -

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Present acreage 110.24 - Recommended Addition 40.00 acres - Recommended total 150.24 acres

Thomas Hughes History of Minnesota State Park

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On the Blue Earth River and only half a mile distant south from the Park is located the famous bed of blue clay, which the Sioux Indians called Mankato (Blue Earth) which gave its name to the River on which it is located. to the County wherein it is situated to the County seat of that County, and to the County



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Minnesota  
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Page 5-6

The Blue Clay  
and  
the French  
Coppermine

## Minnesota State Park

seat of an adjoining County. This clay was highly esteemed by the Aborigines for time immemorial for decoration of their bodies and wigwams and as a magic to ward off evil-luck in sickness and war. This clay was also the means of bringing the first white men to visit this country when in Sept. 1700 Le Seur, under commission of the French Government, to explore the land then belonged arrived at the mouth of the Le Seur and built Ft Le Huillier. The next summer he and part of his company loaded their ship with a quantity of this clay and took it to France, supposing from its bluish-green color, it to be copper. In 1702, the balance of Le Seur's party having been attacked by hostile Indians, cached their mining tools and fled the country. Surviving their stay, no doubt Le Seur and his men often visited Minnesota Falls only a half a mile from their copper mine and very likely many of the 400 buffaloes killed for sustenance by them the first year were from the vast herds which grazed on the prairies adjoining Minnesota and vicinity. The last survivor of these herds was shot by a Civil War soldier as late as June 1863 at Buffalo Grove near the head of the creek. Probably too, some of the beavers, whose skins went to make up the "more than 400 beaver robes & nine skins each" which the Indians sold to Le Seur, were found along this old creek.

Page 5-6. - East of upper Minnesota Falls.

# Minnesota State Park.

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Page 6.

Some of our oldest settlers used to tell of a wonderful cave which existed in 1855, in the north bluff of the Blue Earth in the claim of Solomon Taylor, nearly opposite the bed of Blue clay. the entrance to which cave was covered by a landslide about that year. The only settler who claimed to have seen the inside of the cave was an Indian doctor, who said the walls had a metallic luster and that he found in one of its corners a box which probably contained the picks and shovels of the French miners, and in the corner lay a human skeleton, which kept the superstitious savages from touching it.

## East of Lower Minnesota Falls —

Page 7

Two or three of the earliest settlers of the neighborhood remember seeing a hole in the side of the bluff before the landslide, but thought it was a wolf or fox den. Fifty or more years ago, two students from an Iowa school in an exploring tour found the Blue Clay bed, but found no sign of a cave under the debris of the landslide, though they spent some days digging with pick and shovel. Doubtless, the cave was myth, as well as the copper character of the clay.

## East of Lower Minnesota Falls.

First  
white  
family

To the early white pioneers the stream was known as Falls Creek and Lyons Creek, after Isaac V. Lyons, who was the first settler to build his cabin and locate a claim in its banks in July, 1853. and in August of the



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Page 8.

First  
white  
family

following year, erected on it a small saw mill operated by water power - being the first mill west of the Blue Earth River. "Buckskin" Lyons, as he was called by the pioneers, from his dressing in deer skin clothing, had come with his wife and children from Iowa in a "prairie schooner" drawn by oxen, bringing the first crew to Blue Earth County, and as noted on his diary by the late S. C. Evans, "Mrs Lyons on August 6<sup>th</sup> 1853, churned the first butter west of the Blue Earth." On September 6 1854, John Lyons, a son of Mr and Mrs Lyons, twenty-one years old, died, this being the first white death in the County, and his body was the first interred in Minnesota Cemetery. ....

The Lyons log cabin stood at the foot of the west bluff of the creek in a small valley, where was located the ancient Indian Village of Sintomniduta's band of Tassietons. The old Indian trail passing through Mankato from Mendota to the mouth of the Big Cottonwood, and the present County Highway No. 11, crosses the creek in this valley. Close to the village site is a fine spring of cold water which never has gone dry, and never has frozen in winter and was famed both among the Indians and the pioneer white settlers for the palatable and medicinal quality of its water.

Page - 5

The Indians

S. C. Evans who came to South Bend among the very first whites in August 1, 1853, and was the principal one of the five proprietors of townsite of that name and the owner for many years of Minnesota Falls, contributed



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The Indians

an article on Sintonmuduta's band who had their village on Minnesota Creek from which we take the following relation, giving his experience in witnessing a scalp dance performed at this Indian Village in the fall of 1853: The Indians called the locality "Makatosa" (The Goose). The band was known as "Six" and belonged to the tribe designated Dakota. The name of the band came from the fact that they always arranged their tepees in groups of "six" that is, six, twelve, eighteen, twenty-four etc. I have seen as many as seventy-two lodges in one camp. The lodges were made by planting green poles in the ground in the form of a circle with the tops bent together cone shaped, leaving a hole at the peak for smoke. Green boughs were woven longitudinally into this upright cone and the whole covered with bark or with buffalo or deer skins. Some of the bark lodges were built rectangular. The fire was built in the center of the lodge, but the hole at the top seemed to carry the smoke mostly off so it was not very noticeable, still the odor of the smoke always smelled rather strongly of it.

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Four photographic inserts: Red Iron, May-asha Friendly Chief, 1862 - Sleepy Eye, Dsh-Ta-Ba Head Chief Head Chief of Sisseton - Sintonmuduta (all Area Red) Sub Chief of Sleepy Eye. - Hon. S. C. Evans, Pioneer Curator of Minnesota Park.

Page 10  
Sigent

The Indian women were very muscular. Especially were they able to carry heavy loads.

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Page 10  
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State Park

## Minnesota Park.

They did the manual labor and, therefore, were much stronger than the men, who only hunted.

Photographic Insert of Minnesota Glen

Page 11

Detailed description of a Scalp Dance - narrated by S. C. Evans - in the fall of 1853 at Sintonniduta's Village.

Photographic insert of Minnesota Glen in Winter

Page 12.

Detailed description of an Indian Dance one night in the fall of 1853 between Chief Sintonniduta and Chief "Frenchman".

Page 13.  
The  
Sintonniduta  
Scare

In the early spring of 1857, occurred the first Sioux Massacre in Southern Minnesota, when Sintonniduta and slaughtered over fifty settlers, men, women and children, on the present village of Jackson, and over the Iowa line and wounded others that escaped, took four women captives, two of whom they killed, and the other two, some months later, were ransomed by Christian Indians near the Sioux River in South Dakota. All the property of the murdered settlers was either burned or carried off as plunder, by the savages. This whole country was thrown into a panic of fear. Garden City, South Bend, Mankato and St. Peter were reported at Fort Snelling and the towns to the East as having been captured.



## Minneopa Park.

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Minneopa  
State Park.  
Page 13.  
The  
Oskaduta  
Lease

and, burned and the inhabitants massacred. United States troops were stationed from Fort Ridgely, and Fort Snelling, to the defense of the settlers, and Militia companies hurriedly organized at Mankato, South Bend, St. Peter and other towns and dispatched to the frontier, and log forts were constructed at nearly every village for its defense. During this scare, the settlers along Minneopa Creek, should huddle several families together, in one of their small log cabins each night for mutual protection.....

anecdote of the cabin of John Jones (Maesmaur)

Page 14  
A Bear  
Hunt

anecdote of J. A. Pannenberg in the late  
spring of 1857.

Page 14  
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The  
Welsh  
Colony

In June, 1855, a colony of Welsh settlers from Emmett, near Watertown, Wisconsin, located mostly along Minneopa Creek. Among them were Evan H. Evans, Hugh Edwards, Thomas Jones (Maesmaur) Thomas J. Jones (Bryn Llys) etc. They came across country by way of La Crosse and Rochester in eleven covered wagons with their families, farm implements and stock, and it took them six weeks to make the journey. There were no roads, only such as they made themselves..... All of these pioneer settlers along the creek are now dead and most of them sleep in Minneopa Cemetery, but many of their descendants are to be found in the vicinity.

Eye-witness  
account  
of  
Indian Life

One of the descendants was the late Hon. Hugh H. Edwards and he gave the author a glimpse of life in this Indian village in his boyhood days which I give in his words:



## Minnesota State Park.

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Neloh  
Colony

Eye witness  
account  
of  
Indian Life  
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The Chief of this Minnesota band in my day was called Wape-duta (Red Leaf) and he often visited at our house and often gave us a part of the game he killed. He noticed that mother had poor facilities to catch rain water from the roof of the cabin to wash with, and one day he brought her a big canoe made from the log of a butternut tree which did the work fine and was used for years. The Minnesota boys used frequently to go to play with the Indian boys at the village, shooting at a mark with bows & arrows, running races, wrestling, and an Indian boy on foot could race with a white boy on horseback. For this game a stake would mark the point of starting and another stake would be put about twenty rods distant, and the test was who could get to the distant stake and back first. ~~When the boy on foot had the advantage was in stopping, turning around, and starting back first. When the boy on foot had the advantage was in stopping, turning around, and starting back first.~~ When the boy on foot had the advantage was in stopping, turning around, and starting back. And he generally won. Then we had ball games called "La Crosse". Then the older Indians would teach us their dances which consisted in going around in a circle one after another, with the body bent forward, lifting the foot high and hitting the ground hard with it in time with the tom-tom and chanting some Indian words. How they would laugh at our mistakes and awkwardness. The Indian kids had a peculiar way or habit in laughing of throwing themselves on their backs and kicking their feet in the air. Then the Indian men had hoops painted white, red and black

## Minnesota State Park.

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Minnesota  
State  
Park

black, which they used in their religious ceremonies and some of our youngest kids found them one day hidden in some brush and took them, and the Indians made an awful fuss about it"

Welch  
Orlony.

Eye witness  
account

Indian Life

The First  
Summer  
Resort.

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Within half a mile of the old Indian Village site, in the spring of 1858, on what was afterwards known as the "McCormell farm" Miner Porter built a summer resort or hotel and planted in front of it an acre or more into trees, shrubbery, flowers - with winding, artistic walks and arbors, swings, play equipments and surrounded the whole with a fancy looking board fence, the front of which was entered by three arched gates, the center one being much larger than the other two and having artistically painted in its arch piece the word "Minneisneepa". It was at this resort the "Blue Earth County Agricultural Association" was organized and held its first meeting October 7, 1859 and its first fair was held here on the same day, at which Judge Daniel Bush delivered the main address. The place was conducted by Mr Porter as a resort for tourists and visitors to the Falls, which at that early day was becoming quite noted. Prominent legislators of St Paul, St Anthony and elsewhere took pictures of it in the summer of 1859, among whom were Hall and Whitney of St Paul and O'Brien of St Anthony. The great Civil War and the Sioux outbreak however rendered greatly the success of the enterprise and about 1870 it was abandoned.

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## Minnesota State Park.

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Minnesota  
State Park  
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Within a few rods of the Northwest corner of the park lived, in 1859-60, S. A. Alden, better known as Tom Thumt No. 2, who was at that time reputed to be the smallest man in the world. He was then 22 or 23 years old, weighed 35 pounds and only 35 inches tall -  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch shorter than Barnum's Tom Thumt. He spent most of his time with the show concerns.

The Last  
Battle  
Between  
Chippeway  
and  
Sioux.

An Sunday, June 9, 1860 was fought the last battle between Chippeway and the Sioux. It took place on Minnesota Creek around the village of Chief Wahpeduta. The fall before a band of Sioux had made an incursion into the Chippeway country and brought back a few scalps, and during the winter and spring had been holding a number of scalp dances at their camps below Mankato, in North Mankato, and at Minnesota. To retaliate, a band of eight or more young Chippeway warriors came on their ponies from the North, tied their ponies in a clump of willows just below the present station of Gray on Minnesota Creek, and stealthily crawled down the creek through the brush and timber to the Sioux Village and made a surprise attack upon it. The battle raged for two or three hours. A few of our old settlers, in crossing on the road over Minnesota, got into the battle area without realizing it. Among them were F. G. Pannentey, John N. Roberts and others, but the Indians did not molest them and they made haste to get away from the scene.



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State Park.

The squaws and papooses fled mostly to South Bend Village and hid in the homes of the settlers. . . . .  
Eye Witness account of the battle follows.

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The Last  
Battle  
between  
Chippewas  
and  
Sioux

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"There were a few killed on both sides and they were buried in the brush on the top of the East Minnesota Hill near the south side of the road leading from the Indian Village to South Bend Village." Old settlers claim there were about a dozen graves in all. Years later some of the graves were opened by relic hunters among the whites. Mr. Parnell Long stated that John W. Roberts and he opened one of them, but found nothing but bones. It may be that one of the Chippewas had been there interred. Later he opened another and found a gun. The stock was partly rotted. This was replaced by a new stock and the gun proved a very good one, and Parnell Long used it pigeon hunting for years. Dr. Thompson also opened a grave and found a steel tomahawk. The Indians now occupied their village on Minnesota after the Sioux War of 1862.

The Building  
of Railway,  
Depot  
and Village

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cut on Page  
17  
omitted see  
see next page

During 1868 and 1869, the St Paul and Sioux City Railroad was constructed between Mankato and Crystal Lake, following the course of Minnesota Creek much of the way and passing through the middle of the present Park grounds. The Hon. S. C. Evans then turned the land upon which the falls

## Minnepa State Park.

Thomas Hughes are situated and when the railroad company concluded not to put a depot in South Bend Village, as it was too near Markato, Evans induced it to put one at the falls. This, of course, killed South Bend. But Mr. Evans got around the biggest interest in this old townsite, was somewhat propitiated by having a depot on his land by the falls, and Elias F. Drake, who was a prominent member of the Ry. Corporation, gave him half interest in the portion of Mr. Evans' land by the falls, which was in Oct. 1870. Said that as a townsite, under the name of Minnepa. The Company built the depot and grain elevator, and Mr. Evans was made the grain buyer and the first month he bought 19,600 bushels of wheat.

Building of  
Ry. Depot  
and Village

~~The company built the depot and grain elevator and Mr. Evans was made the grain buyer.~~ A hotel, store, blacksmith shop and other buildings were soon erected and a lumber yard was opened and business was good for a time. Mr. Evans cleared the ground of brush and fallen trees about the falls and constructed foot bridges over the creek and built a flight of wooden stairs down into the glen below the falls. Large Picnic excursions came from St. Paul & Mpls. While churches, lodges, schools and other societies made it their gathering point.

But the great grasshopper plague came and all crops for three successive years were destroyed and Minnepa Village disappeared from the map.

In 1878-9 a deep well was bored by a company searching for natural gas on the N. R. McLean.



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Thomas Hughes  
History of  
Minnesota  
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Minnesota State Park.  
from a short distance west of the Falls.  
after reaching a depth of 1,200 ft. without  
any sign of gas, the project was  
abandoned, but it furnished proof that  
the country was in a marked degree adapted  
for artesian wells.

Page 17.

Five photographic inserts under the  
Caption of Moods of Minnesota: Upper  
Picnic Grounds, View from Picnic Grounds,  
Paradise, Minnesota Falls in Winter,  
Upper Falls.

Page 18.  
The  
Creation  
of the Park.

about the last of January, 1905, Hon. Ezra Gates,  
late of Gander City, Minn. then a representative  
from Blue Earth Co. in the State Legislature,  
introduced a bill creating the North East Quarter  
of the Northeast Quarter and the North Fourteen Acres  
of the Southeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter  
of Section Twenty (20), in Township One Hundred  
Eight (108), Range Twenty-seven (27), being the  
land on which the famous Falls are situated,  
into a public State Park and appropriating \$5,000  
for its purchase. as the spot had then been  
celebrated for over forty years for its natural  
beauty and had been known and used  
by the people of Southern Minnesota as a  
public resort and gathering place during  
all that time, the project met with hearty  
and general approval of the Legislature and  
the public.

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# Minnepa State Park.

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Minnepa  
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The Creation  
of the Park.

The Board of Trade of the City of Mankato at a special meeting called at once for the purpose, passed a resolution approving the bill and commending Representative Bates for his action and appointing Dr. J. W. Anderson, Thomas Hughes and L. N. Anderson as a committee to assist the Legislature with information about the necessity of the park and otherwise to aid in having the bill passed and in procuring the land for a state park. The press not only of Blue Earth County, but of Southern Minnesota, generally approved the bill. On April 19, 1905, it was passed. The only other park then owned by the state was Starza Park at the source of the Mississippi other than International Park in the Dells of the St. Croix, owned jointly by Minnesota & Wisconsin.

In October of that year, Gov. John Johnson, attorney General E. J. Young and State Auditor S. G. Ferson who had charge of procuring the land, with the local committee of the Mankato Board of Trade and others met on the site of the proposed park with Mr. Orange Little, then the owner and inspected the grounds and opened the negotiations for its purchase. These negotiations were continued until Sept. 1906, when the East portion of the land with the Falls was bought for \$3,500 of Edwin Benson who in the meantime had become the new owner of it, and on Feb 10, 1910, the West portion was purchased for \$1,600 of the same party.

On May 29, 1907, the Commercial Club of the City of Mankato procured a deed from the Town of South Bend conveying to the State of Minnesota for Minnepa Park, the Northern Quarter of the

# Minnesota State Park.

Thomas Hughes  
History of  
Minnesota  
State Park  
Page 19.  
The location  
of the Park.

Northwest Quarter of Section 20, Township 108,  
North of Range 27 ~~West~~ except cemetery in the  
North west corner, at a cost of \$45 per acre,  
and paid the consideration of \$1000.00 to the Town  
therefor. Thereafter on April 22, 1909, the Legislature  
passed an act incorporating this land  
obtained from the town together with the North  
1/4 acres of the South west Quarter of the Northwest  
Quarter of said section 20 as a part of the Park.  
A deed for the North 1/4 acres above mentioned  
was obtained from T.H. Hoefner on Nov. 4, 1910  
by the State for \$1,250.00. On April 3, 1917, the  
Park was again enlarged by an act of the  
Legislature of that year, adding to it all West  
of the Town Road of the South 26 acres of the  
Southeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter  
of Section 20, Township 108, Range 27  
containing 11 1/2 acres. This was purchased  
of the Wm. R. Williams Estate on April 9-  
1917 for \$1000 making the total area of the  
Park proper at that time about 103 acres.

In the summer of 1906, Alexander Bashaw  
a Mankato Contractor built at a cost of  
\$1,200.00 the first concrete bridge ever erected in  
Blue Earth County. It was constructed for  
the county across Minnesota Creek, just  
above the falls in the road running North and  
South through the middle of the present Park.  
It was a good bridge and Bashaw was so  
proud of it that he inscribed his name on it in  
large letters. But ten years later, when  
State Highway No 5 was changed to run East  
and West through the middle of the Park, it crossed  
the old North and South Road within a few feet  
of the North end of the Bashaw bridge, and travel  
on this new highway to enter the present grounds  
of the Park, had to use the bridge and it had



# Memoranda of State Park

Thomas  
Humphreys  
History of  
Minnesota  
State  
Parks

not been designed for the purpose so the  
Bastard Bridge had to be replaced by the  
Highway Dept. with the present concrete bridge  
which permits easy ingress and egress at  
its north end from and to three directions.

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2)

Page 7 Photograph - Negotiating Purchase of  
Minnesota State Park. October 13, 1906 -

The Addition  
to the Park.

Page 28  
The last  
addition  
to the  
Park

On April 12, 1932, a part of six acres of land  
was added to the Park on its south side on top of  
the high bluff being the south five acres of the north  
nineteen acres of the southwest quarter of the north  
west quarter of section 21, Township 108 North of  
Range 27 West, together with a four rod road to  
connect that part of the Park with the Pigeon Highway.  
This gives the Park the largest and most scenic  
pictures ground any where to be found, overlooking the  
valleys of the creek and the Minnesota River. This  
additional land was obtained by purchase for \$1,000  
from Peter Maier and T. H. Hoffmann and makes  
the total area about 110 acres. It is further proposed  
to complete the area required for the Park by the purchase  
of a tract of about eighteen acres comprising the two  
valleys down the Creek adjoining on the north the  
Manhato and New Albin Highway, the site of the  
old Indian Village.

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Superintendent  
appointed  
and  
Superintendent  
made

In 1906, J. B. Hodge, the depot agent at Minneapolis  
was appointed the first superintendent of the Park.  
In 1907, he resigned and H. R. Williams, who then  
owned the farm adjoining the Park on the West  
was made his successor in May 2 of the same  
year, and held the position until his death Dec. 1913.  
During his time, he erected a small refreshment stand  
which was used until the end of 1930 for that purpose.



# Minnepa State Park

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State  
Park.

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During the winter of 1930-1- the present Superintendent's home, refreshment stand and park police station combined was erected at a cost of \$1,338.00. In the summer of 1910 the main part of the pavilion was built. Two additional wings of the pavilion were constructed in 1920. Each wing is 22 x 20, making the completed pavilion a matter cross having a total length of 68 x 20 ft wide. North and South, as well as East and West. An antenna pole was also sunk and other improvements made. About 1912 the local park committee was enlarged to five members. The official designation of this local committee is given the Advisory Board of Minnepa State Park. The annual attendance at the park has been since 1921, when the count was first taken and kept, between 25,000 & 30,000 people.

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In 1921, an arch concrete foot bridge of 50 feet span by 6 ft wide between the two falls was constructed. In 1926, the State Highway Department altered the route of State Highway No. 5 so it passed through the middle of Minnepa Park and the grading was done that year, and a concrete surface put on it in 1930. In 1928 to save the upper falls from injury by disintegration, a wall of durable rock and cement was constructed under the hard ledge on which the water falls.

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Photo inserts of four Superintendents from 1907 to present. In the center of group picture of the Author of the Bill to purchase Park.

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Two Photos - Chairman of Advisory Committee (1912-27) and Lower Falls 1932.

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Photo - Advisory Committee, Minnepa State Park.

# Minnesota State Park

History of  
Minnesota  
Valley

by  
Rev. E. D. D.  
Neill  
1882.  
Mpls.  
Minn.

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South Bend is one of the smallest towns in the county, its area about 20 square miles. It is situated in the northern part of the county at the point where the Minnesota River makes the great "south bend" from which the town derives its name. When first formed in 1858 it contained all of Congressional Township 105, range 27, lying West of the Blue Earth River excepting the ten sections in the south. At another meeting, held a few days later, the County Board attached that tier.

In June, 1853, a small steamboat named the "Clarion" landed at the bank where the village of South Bend afterward came into existence. She was commanded by Capt. Saml. Huntington. He had with him, his nephew, his clerk and his engineer. The location so pleased them that they determined to settle there and start a town. With that object in view Mr. Huntington built a small shanty and placed his nephew in charge of his interests while he was away furthering his project. Shortly after they left J. S. Lyons (called Buckskin Lyons, because of his wearing a suit of buckskin) came in from Iowa with an ox team. Lyman Mathews and S. C. Evans came in July, others in the fall. During the winter Mr. Evans built a log house 16 x 24 ft. 3 stories high. This was the first permanent building erected in the town. The town was laid out in Dec 1853 and continued to increase until the population amounted to about a thousand inhabitants. At that time the Indian outbreak occurred and created a panic, causing many to leave. The bridge across the Blue Earth also washed away by a freshet. In the meantime, Mankato being the county seat, had obtained the advantage and began to flourish while South Bend gradually lost prestige, her business melted away until till now there is but one store and one hotel in the place.



## Minnesota State Park.

History of  
Minnesota  
Valley  
by  
Rev. Ed. S.  
Neill  
1882 Apple

South  
Bend.  
Page 579

Settlements  
Page 533

The village of Minnesota was platted in Sept 1870 on section 20. It is a present only a flag station. It was named from the falls near, which the Indians called Minniwioha meaning the stream of two falls or double falls. A post office was established in South Bend in 1855. The first religious services were conducted in the Spring of 1855 at the home of S. C. Evans. The first school in town was taught by Mrs. Joshua Barnard in 1855. The Minnesota Hotel was started in 1858 by Mr. Miner Porter on his farm a short distance west of South Bend. He subsequently fitted up the grounds as a summer resort for visitors to the falls. He is now proprietor of the Nevada Hotel Mankato.

South Bend and Lake Crystal appear to have been the two places next to Mankato to receive the first fruits of civilization. South Bend, in its early days, was quite as rival to Mankato, and for long disputed the right of supremacy. A peculiar feature of these early settlements was the method by which many were effected, a means which usually took the shape of the organization of companies as they were called. They were not really bodies corporate but simply the association together of any number of individuals for the purpose of mutual protection and assistance. In this way were many places settled. That it was a form of colonization much in vogue in the decade commencing with the year 1850 is manifestly apparent when the records are inspected. These companies, too, were a rule formed for the purpose of making claim to town sites. And the fact that no government survey had been made had no doubt much to do with their organization.

## Minnepa State Park

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Manual  
Minnesota  
1935

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A 120 acre tract of wooded valley and hillside is located 4 miles west of Mankato on Highway 60. Near the highway are two waterfalls a few rods apart where the water drops 50 feet into a gorge surrounded by high hills. The name "Minnepa" is the Indian word meaning "falls". To the word is attached many Indian legends. Now the park is the site of an old Indian village which will probably be added to the park in the near future. In the park are good accommodations for campers, picnickers and tourists.

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Manual  
Minnesota  
1941

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Minnepa Park has as the principal natural attraction Minnepa Creek which tumbles over two waterfalls into a deep cut gorge covered with a dense mature stand of mixed deciduous timber. The name "Minnepa" is an Indian word meaning "Two Falls" and it is this feature that makes the park an unusual beauty spot. The 110.24 acres are located in Blue Earth County six miles west of Mankato on U. S. Highway No. 60. It was acquired in 1905 and now affords excellent picnic facilities including a water system, a modern comfort station, picnic kitchen and shelter and refectory.



Supplement  
1911

## Minnesota State Park -

Laws of  
Minnesota  
1931  
Page 12  
Chapter 7.

That the boundaries of Minnesota State Park as established and created by General Laws 1905 Chapter 27, and as enlarged by Gen. Laws 1909, Chapter 409, and by Gen. Laws 1917, Chapter 107, be and the same hereby are enlarged by adding to said park the following land situate in Blue Earth County Minnesota to wit:

Commencing at a point 835 feet west and 1,087 feet south of the northeast corner of section 18, township 108 north 7 range 27 west; thence at an angle of 122 degrees 17 minutes right (with 63 degrees west) 772 feet to a point on the north side of highway; thence along the north side of highway 158 degrees 31 minutes left (with 41 degrees, 45 minutes east) 345.7 feet; thence 34 degrees, 36 minutes left (with 76 degrees 30 minutes east) 474.8 feet; thence 110 degrees 36 minutes left (with 5 degrees 45 minutes west) 23 feet to the place of beginning, containing about one and 24/100 acres of land.

The state auditor is hereby authorized to accept a gift of said lands from the Blue Earth County Historical Society, and said lands are by this act dedicated to the perpetual use of the state of Minnesota as a state park under the restrictions now provided or which may hereafter be provided by law.

## The Seppman Mill.

Thos. Hughes  
History of  
Minnesota  
State Park

Mill Left  
of  
Conservation

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Photos.

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Seppman  
Mill  
Location

Description  
Page  
26.

Contains three cuts - Seppman Mill -  
Louis Seppman, Builder - Cross section of  
Mill

an act of the Legislature dated March, 1931, added  
to the Park (Minnesota) one and  $\frac{2}{3}$  acres of the  
Northeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of Section  
18, Township 108, Range 27, on which stands the  
old Seppman stone windmill one mile distant  
of the Minnesota Valley from the park proper. The  
mill and land was donated by Albert B. Seppman,  
son of Louis Seppman, to the Blue Earth Historical  
society to be by it transferred to the State of Minnesota  
to form a part of Minnesota State Park.

This famous relic of by-gone days was constructed  
by Louis Seppman and Herman Hegley, a neighbor.  
Mr Seppman was born in Germany Oct. 31, 1835 and  
came to the U. S. in 1852 and to Blue Earth County  
in 1857, locating first at Le Hillier, between Mankato  
and South Bend. He was a stone mason by trade,  
and was somewhat familiar with the windmills of  
his native land. Furthermore he had considerable  
natural talent for mechanics and invention. There  
were abundant building stones on his claim in So.  
Bend township, and plenty of timber near by, so in  
the summer of 1862, when finishing a stone grist mill  
for Mr. Rokey, at Mankato, he took what wages he had  
earned to construct a stone windmill on his own claim  
and had two or three of the masons that had helped  
him build the mill for Mr. Rokey come and  
help him start the erection of his mill. But after  
he had got the masonry of about 10 ft or so high, money  
gave out and the snow set back occurring at this time,  
the building was abandoned until the next summer.  
Mr. Herman Hegley, a neighbor then joined in the enter-  
prise to complete the building.



## The Seffman Mill.

Thos. Haynes  
History of  
Minnesota  
State  
Park.

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Continued.

Mill:

They had no derrick or other appliance; however to lift the stone mortar and the heavy timber to their places in the mill, and the wall was getting rather high. But this problem Mr. Seffman solved by building an inclined roadway to the top of the wall from the northern side, where there was a little advantage in the rise of the ground, and the stone, mortar, and the timbers necessary for walls, floors and machinery, were carried by hand by a wheel barrow up this inclined roadway, and the mill finished in 1864. The wall was circular in form and built of native stone found on Mr. Seffman's farm, and is two feet thick at the base and six inches at the top. The mill is thirty feet in diameter at the bottom and twenty feet at the top, and is 32 ft high to the top of the wall, and it took 55 cords of stone. The outline of each stone on the outside of the wall was originally penciled with black paint, so as to make it look more artistic. The roof is dome shaped and fits on a track with rollers so that it, with the wings fastened to a hub protruding from it, could be turned clear around by a rope and windlass attached to the lower end of a triangular wooden frame rising outside from the roof and called the "the tail," and the arms of the mill were thus made to face the wind from any direction. The four arms were wooden frames, to which were attached strips of sail cloth each arm 35 ft. long, making with the diameter of the hub a spread of 72 feet. The mill had five floors including the one in the dome and the second and third floors, which were only about four feet apart, and intended mainly to hold in an enormous wheel made of wood and with wooden coars in it, and lay horizontally between the two floors mentioned. Parts of this wooden wheel are still in existence and a few of the coars made of hard maple. The hub of this big wooden wheel was of solid white oak, but covered with a board about 2 ft. square, and was about 24 feet long, extending from the second floor to the base of the dome, where its other end fitted

## The Selfman Mill.

This Hughes  
History of  
Minnesota  
State  
Park.

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Construction  
of  
Mill.

into a socket in a transverse piece of timber resting on top of the stone wall. A few feet below its upper end, there was fitted onto this big shaft a huge iron beveled cog wheel, of which is still to be seen in the mill, which cog wheel meshed about 800 pounds and meshed into a second immense wooden wheel with wooden cogs, the upper part of which wooden wheel extended upwards into the dome, and the hub of which was a second immense wooden shaft about 2 ft. square and extending from one side of the dome to the other. One end of this shaft protruded through the side of the dome near its base and to this protruding end was attached the arms which revolved it and furnished power for the whole mill. The second wooden wheel was 12 to 15 ft in diameter and its rim was 8 to 10 inches wide and about 10 inches thick and had maple cogs inserted along the inner side of the rim meshing with the big beveled iron cog wheel.

At one this big wheel of like garrating and width and encircling it at a space three or four inches between the two surfaces more than half way round, was a heavy wooden brake, one end fastened into a timber in front of the wheel and the other end weighted down by a box full of stone which when the weighted stone was let down, curved the wheel and stopped the mill. The first large wooden wheel which lay between the second and third floors meshed into another beveled wheel, which had for its hub a short shaft extending upward through the third floor into the center of the uppermost stone and turned it.

In the restoration recently made of the floors the second and the fifth floors were omitted. There was also omitted a small door which opened from the dome onto a small platform on the outside about four or five feet wide just above the "tail" and on the opposite side of the dome from the wings.



## The Seppman Mill.

Thos Hughes  
History of  
Minnesota  
State Park  
1932.

Page 27.

Description  
of  
Workings  
of  
The Mill.

Here in the olden days, the miller occasionally would sit and smoke her pipe, and view the landscape while enjoying a little rest. On the fourth floor, a room was partitioned off in which was a wheel gear located the largest mill, operated by a belt and pulley, while another pulley with a rope and roller attached hoisted the bags of grain to it from the ground floor.

Nearly all the machinery, as well as building itself was home made. Hardly any iron or sawed timber went into its construction. All of the shafts and wood work were hewed by Mr. Seppman with a broad ax. Even the cogs of the gearings as well as the wheels themselves, were of hard maple, with the exception of the two large beveled cog wheels and the great stones, which were bought at St. Louis for \$600<sup>00</sup>. Wooden pegs took the place of bolts and nails. Then he had to purchase some wheat in order to get started with his mill. Then he hired an expert to come and help him start the mill, as he had no practical knowledge of operating a grist mill at all. When the expert came, there was no wind for four or five weeks, and he got tired and went home. Finally, one Sunday afternoon the wind started to blow and his partner Mr. Hegley ran to his house to tell him there was a little breeze, so they decided to start the mill at once. Now Seppman was inexperienced in the operation of the mill and the first thing the wheat clogged between the stone, and he and Hegley thought it was due to the fact that the mill was not going fast enough. So they put on full sail, and the wind also arose, and the mill ran away with them, and they could not stop it. Mr. Seppman went to the upper story of the mill with a log chain to try to stop one of the shafts and slow it down, but things were getting desperate, and the boiler of the mill was getting hot and threatening to put the mill on fire. So Mr. Seppman threw his log chain into some of the gearings, and a link was broken and flew up to the ceiling, going through the roof of Mr. Seppman's hat. Finally, when it looked as if the mill would tear itself to pieces, they

## The Seppman Mill.

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History of  
Minnesota  
State  
1932.

Page 27-28.

Description

Sketchings  
of Mill

managed to get some of the sails unfurled and stop the mill, but the chain had broken one of the castings, so some repairs had to be made. x x x x  
Seppman also discovered that the rear on the mill stones clogged near that he had not dressed them right. So this end was corrected, and a better brake to control the mill put in and the repairs made, and finally the mill was started late in September 1864, and ground both flour and feed. When the wind was favorable it would transform about 150 bushels of wheat per day into a fairly good flour. People living 20 to 30 miles away, hauled their grain to it. x x x x  
During the seventies Mr Seppman erected a new residence, and the old home close to the mill built of stone about 1869, became the warehouse for the mill.

On June 2, 1873, the lightning struck two of the arms, but they were soon replaced. Then again in the summer of 1880 a tornado carried away two of the arms again, and they were never restored because the building of many water and steam grain mills all over the country together with the inventing of the roller process, had made windmills unprofitable. The mill continued to operate as a feed mill with two arms until 1890, when another storm damaged the two remaining arms and Mr Seppman discontinued using it altogether.

The old mill still stands on its hill, in the beautiful Minnesota valley - a noted relic of pioneer days. As it was fast becoming a ruin, the Blue Earth Historical Society was induced to take an interest in its preservation, and the Seppman heirs generously donated it in the summer of 1930 with one and 2/100 acres of land on which it stands to that society - which spent 3000 in putting a new roof upon it and repairing some of its walls and then gave it to the State for Minnesota State Park in the early spring of 1931. Additional repairs and new floor have since been put into it during 1932 by the state and the old building today is in a fairly good condition. An interesting



Thos. Hughes  
History of  
Minnesota  
State Park  
1932 Park  
Main Dept.  
Conservation  
Division  
Forestry

The Leppman Mill.  
mementos 7 days gone by.

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Appendix

Honor Names on Minnesota Map.

A short note who's who sketch of two personages intimately connected with Minnesota Park in its pioneer days:

Hon. S. C. Evans for whom the Camp Grounds are named.

Elegabeth Wingan for whom the Wingan Glen Picnic Grounds are named.

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Out of the Falls springing rivet as it  
seems no caption, presumably it is of the  
Lower Falls.

## The Leffner Mill

Northwestern  
Miller

Sept 19-1934

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Pencil Sketch, by H. E. Thompson, of mill.

The old mill having played its part in the early development of the rich and fertile valley in which it stands, is now a landmark which stirs the memories of the "old timers" and brings back visions of those strenuous "other days". Minnesota was a frontier country then, with trails nearly impassable at certain seasons of the year. At such times the hardy pioneer would fasten a sack of corn to the saddle and mounting his faithful horse travel the faint trail to the mill.

Built of cottle stones picked up close at hand circular in form with a diameter of 30 ft at the bottom and 20 at the top its two foot walls rise to a height of 30 feet. As a record of pioneer millage days in southern Minnesota it is well worth preserving. The Blue Earth Historical Society took this in hand a few years ago, and under its direction the mill was re-roofed. In 1933 the Minnesota legislature accepted the property as a part of Minnesota State Park, and it is now in charge of the park trustees. The masonry had previously been pointed up, and the park authorities have considered covering it with stucco as a further means of protection. Both the original stone and masonry are reasonably well preserved.

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of  
Minnesota  
1935

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a few miles from the park stands an old stone windmill constructed by hand in 1862. Although at some distance from the park proper, the mill and ground around it was made a part of the park by the 1931 Legislature.



## Leffman Mill

Main  
Legislative  
Manual  
1933  
Page 152.

a 66 acre tract of wooded valley and hillside, is located 4 miles west of Mountaintop in Leghway No 5. xxx a few miles from the park stands an old stone mill constructed by hand in 1862. Although at some distance from the park proper, the mill and ground around it was made a part of the park by the 1931 Legislature. xxx