



# Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway

## 2010 Calendar

featuring images from the Minnesota River Valley  
National Scenic Byway Interpretive Panel series



**The Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway Alliance**  
323 West Schlieman Ave. Appleton, MN 56208  
888.463.9856 [www.mnrivervalley.com](http://www.mnrivervalley.com)



## Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway Alliance Annual Report For 2009

*“The purpose of the Byway is to encourage economic development through the promotion, preservation, and protection of the intrinsic qualities of the Minnesota River Valley.” The primary duty of the Alliance is to “educate residents and visitors about the recreational, scenic, historical, cultural and archaeological characteristics of the river valley.”*

In furtherance of the Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway mission, we continued in 2009 to distribute our Visitor Guides at a host of sites. The Alliance began discussion on our next visitor guide's format and content, which will be on our plate as a 2010 project. This year we also updated our Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway six-minute video from a VCR format to a more user-friendly DVD format, and plan to add the video to our website: [www.mnrivervalley.com](http://www.mnrivervalley.com).

During 2009, a number of Alliance members were able to take advantage of available training opportunities. In April 2009, Ron Bolduan attended a Regional Scenic Byway conference in Omaha, NE. Alliance members Jean Hallberg and Terri Dinesen attended the National Scenic Byway Conference in Denver, CO in August. Joining them was Jenifer Fadness, who became a Byway staff member in January. Kristi Fernholz (Byway coordinator) and Terri Dinesen attended the State Byway Conference held in Walker, MN in October. It is always worthwhile for our Byway to attend training seminars and take advantage of educational opportunities to see what other byways are up to.

New Ulm was selected for the Byway's 2009 Fam (familiarization) Tour and was hosted by Terry Sveine, New Ulm Chamber Director and Alliance member. The theme was the US – Dakota Conflict of 1862. Terry lead a tour of New Ulm battle sites. The walking tour had over twenty people, many of whom are from a very knowledgeable Wood Lake Battlefield visitor group.

The struggle is over: the interpretive panels are finished! All of the fifteen panels and frames are fabricated, and most are installed and

**Several Alliance members work on the installation of the Gilfillan Interpretive Panel.**



**Terry Sveine leads the Fam Tour of battle sites in New Ulm.**



ready for viewing by the traveling public. This is an accomplishment to cherish. Great job, Byway Alliance members! You can see the images of the panels highlighted in this year's calendar.

The Gilfillan site near Redwood Falls was selected for our Interpretive Panel dedication ceremony in September. We were able to piggyback onto Gilfillan's Fall Festival, and its central location provided easier access for Byway members. It was an excellent choice with a receptive audience.

Guest Speakers in attendance were:

Mark Anderson, Minnesota Scenic Byway Coordinator  
Dave Vogel, Southern Minnesota Tourism Regional Manager  
Gary Revier, Redwood Falls Mayor and Local Historian  
Dennis Frederickson, Minnesota State Senator, District 21

All of the speakers did a great job of welcoming the new additions to the Byway experience, and we appreciate their participation at the event. It was an all-around good experience!

The event also presented the first opportunity to apply our new removable Scenic Byway tattoos to willing recipients. The tattoos, along with face painting, were well received by the children in attendance, who were probably inspired by how great the tattoos looked on the Alliance members!

During 2009, we continued dispensing the colorful Scenic Byway pins and selling the 20-minute Byway DVD. Along with the visitor guides, these marketing tools instill an appreciation and awareness of what this 287-mile Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway has to offer our valued visitors.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Bolduan  
President, MRVSBA



**Alliance members and Guest Speakers at the Gilfillan Interpretive Panel Unveiling Ceremony.**



**The children in attendance were especially fond of the face painting and temporary tattoos.**



## A Glacial Wall of Water



### The Glacial River Warren

Approximately 13,000 years ago, this land was encased by glaciers that had begun to melt because of a warming climate. An expansive melt-water lake named Glacial Lake Agassiz was formed in the northwest corner of what is now Minnesota. The landscape was still frozen in ice to the north and so the deepening melt water lake broke through the low ridge at the continental divide, excavating millions of tons of earth and rocks, carving a large scar across Minnesota, draining into what is now the Mississippi River. That huge torrent of water is now called the Glacial River Warren.

Eventually Glacial Lake Agassiz drained dry as the remaining glaciers were located much farther north. The remaining Minnesota River is but a trickle compared to the original torrent of water, rocks and soil. The valley holds clues to the tremendous forces that formed it. Ancient exposed bedrock has been dated to be among the very oldest exposed rock in the world and can be seen along the entire upper Minnesota River Valley down to Mankato. Potholes in the rock outcroppings show where a rock or pebble was caught by the water's current and ground itself a hole into solid rock. These same rock outcrops harbor unique plant and animal species, such as the five-lined skink and three species of cactus, that one would think would only be found in warmer climates.



Keep a watchful eye for the five-lined skink. In Minnesota, this small, rare, secretive lizard is found only on exposed rock outcrops with nearby deciduous forests here in the Minnesota River Valley and in a few other places in southeast Minnesota.

Imagine a tremendous torrent of glacial melt water pushing and then bursting across the continental divide and scouring its way to the Gulf of Mexico. The massive river was, in places, almost two miles wide and 130 feet deep. About 13,000 years ago, the ancient Glacial River Warren overflowed south out of Glacial Lake Agassiz and gouged out this remarkable valley. The quiet, mostly placid Minnesota River now winds along the bottom of this oversized valley, harboring secrets of ancient rock outcroppings, prickly pear cactus, rare lizards, and stunning landscapes.

### Cactus in Minnesota?

Three species of cactus can be found in the Minnesota River Valley: the Ball Cactus, the Plains Prickly Pear Cactus and the most common Brittle Prickly Pear Cactus. There are many public landscapes where you may visit to view the cactus and ancient rock outcroppings including the Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge, Blue Devil Valley Scientific and Natural Area, Memorial Park (Granite Falls) and Svede's Forest Scientific and Natural Area.



Plains Prickly Pear Cactus, blooming



Ball Cactus with buds



Brittle Prickly Pear Cactus, blooming

## A River's Legacy



From the Minnesota River's beginnings in the plains to its confluence into the Mississippi River, the river and its valley tell interesting tales of the ancient history and rich ecological diversity of the Upper Midwest. This is an important story to tell, as it is part of the overall effort to restore the Minnesota River and to connect people to the river and their own local environment.



Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway



Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway



[www.mnrivervalley.com](http://www.mnrivervalley.com)

## Big Stone County Historical Society Museum

Located at US Hwy 12/75 in Ortonville

# January 2010

## Calendar of Byway Events

- 7 Chamber Annual Meeting on the Boardwalk - Sleepy Eye
- 9 Tigers Baseball Dinner/comedy show - Henderson
- 16 Marcoux Corner at the '52 Wing - Appleton
- 16 Winter Fundraiser Concert - Dawson
- 21 Orphan Trains Historian Renee Wendinger - New Ulm
- 23 4th Annual Chili Fest - Montevideo
- 24 Nicollet County Historical Society Annual Meeting at Gustavus Adolphus College - St. Peter
- 30 Annual Chamber Banquet w/ Music by Jerry Ostensoe - Granite Falls
- 30-2/7 Ole & Lena Days - Granite Falls

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## Ancient Exposed Rocks Hold Clues to Valley's Past

The ancient gneiss rock outcrops are unique because the thin soils allow only certain types of plants to grow in this rare habitat. Some of the more unusual species include cactus, ferns, spiderworts, fameflower, and mousetail. The only population of ball cactus in the state of Minnesota is located on the outcrops in the Minnesota River Valley of Big Stone and Lac qui Parle Counties. The gneiss outcrops also provide rare habitat for several wildlife species.



Three species of cactus can be found in the Minnesota River Valley: the Ball Cactus, the Plains Prickly Pear Cactus, and the most common Brittle Prickly Pear Cactus. There are many public landscapes where you may visit to view the cactus. This Ball Cactus is almost ready to bloom.



Lichens quickly covered the exposed granite outcrops. Over time, thin layers of soil formed on portions of the granite outcrops, which created conditions for the establishment of plants. Lichens are fragile and can be damaged by walking on them.



### How were they formed?

Granite outcrops are a unique feature in the Minnesota River Valley. Melting ice from the Laurentide glacier caused the huge Glacial Lake Agassiz to form. A portion of Glacial Lake Agassiz extended into northwestern Minnesota and eventually overflowed to the south.

Approximately 9,000 to 12,000 years ago, these torrents of water called the Glacial River Warren eroded down through the landscape and created the Minnesota River Valley. At maximum size and depth, the Glacial River Warren was almost two miles wide and 130 feet deep. Imagine the power!

As the river cut down through the landscape, three terraces were created in this part of the valley. These terraces are better developed on the north side of the river valley. As waters receded, large granite boulders were left behind. The lowest terrace has the most spectacular boulder field. The extensive erosion also exposed the granite outcrops that we see today. The gneiss bedrock exposed in the outcrops in this valley is of Precambrian origin and are estimated to be approximately 3.6 billion years old.

The rock outcrops provide rare habitat for several wildlife species. Two species of skinks (northern prairie and five-lined skinks) live on the outcrops, as do several snake species. Small rodents, rabbits, and deer also frequent the outcrops. The outcrops are also favorite spots for butterflies when flowers are in bloom.

### Gneiss is Nice!

Gneiss (pronounced "nice") is an ancient metamorphic granite.

## A River's Legacy



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## Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge

Located at US Hwy 75/MN Hwy 7 near Odessa

## Calendar of Byway Events

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 1-7  | Ole & Lena Days - Granite Falls  |
| 5-6  | Winterfest Weekend - Dawson  |
| 6    | Fire Department Eskimo Days - Henderson  |
| 7    | Sportsmen's Club Ice Fishing Contest - Sleepy Eye  |
| 8-12 | Winterfest - Ortonville  |
| 10   | Sheldon Theater Brass Band at the '52 Wing - Appleton  |
| 13   | 31st Annual Arctic Open Golf Tournament - Ortonville   |
| 13   | Fasching (German Mardi Gras) - New Ulm   |
| 13   | Bock Fest - New Ulm  |
| 20   | "The Dams of the Upper Minnesota River Watershed" by Chris Domeier, DNR Fisheries - Montevideo |
| 20   | Concert Series "Ten O'clock Classics" - Redwood Falls  |

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# The Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway

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# Prairie Palettes

Imagine a palette of color that shifts with the seasons: the pale lavender of pasque flowers with their fuzzy coats in early spring, the bright purple plumes of blazing star in the hot late summer, the maroon hued golden grasses in the fall, and the white sparkle of hoar frost on milkweed pods in the winter. This is the striking prairie palette that marked the seasons for indigenous peoples of long ago, when vast grasslands spread across the south and western parts of the state of Minnesota



Pasque Flower



Blazing Star



Side-Guts Grass



Hoar Frost on Milkweed

Prairie is a plant community dominated by grasses, sedges, and other non-woody flowering plants called forbs that originally covered a large area of North America. With the advent of European settlement, much of the fertile prairie land fell to the settler's plow. Now, just a century and a half later, less than one percent (about 170,000 acres) of Minnesota's original 18 million acres of prairie remains. Urban sprawl, agricultural expansion and mining continue to threaten this rich resource. As remnant prairie habitats dwindle, so too do the species of prairie mammals, birds, and insects that depend on prairie ecosystems to thrive. Bison and elk once roamed the plains, and prairie birds such as the bobolink, prairie chicken and the sand hill crane were once plentiful. Protection and management of remaining remnants is critical if this complex ecosystem, with its shifting array of color and form, is to survive for future generations to enjoy.



Greater Prairie Chicken



## Controlled Prairie Burn

Before European settlement, fires – started both by lightning and American Indians – raged across prairies killing most trees but not the grasses and forbs. Prairie plants are not killed by fires because they store food in their massive root systems. Even though all the above-ground parts burn to ashes, the roots can survive. Some of the roots die and decompose each year, and this process has added large quantities of organic matter to the soil, making the prairie soils very fertile. After European settlement, fire frequencies were reduced, allowing woody vegetation to invade grasslands in many parts of the prairie region further reducing the acreage of remaining prairie.

Prairie plants send their massive root systems deep into the earth

# A River's Legacy



From the Minnesota River's beginnings in the plains to its confluence into the Mississippi River, the river and its valley tell interesting tales of the ancient history and rich ecological diversity of the Upper Midwest. This is an important story to tell, as it is part of the overall effort to restore the Minnesota River and to connect people to the river and their own local environment.



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## Plover Prairie & Chippewa Prairie Nature Conservancy Preserves

Plover Prairie is located along US Hwy 75 south of Odessa

Chippewa Prairie is located along Chippewa County Hwy 30 south of Appleton

# March 2010

## Calendar of Byway Events

- 6 Friends of Rush River Park Dance - Henderson
- 6 2010 Women's Conference - Montevideo
- 9 Cantus - Dawson
- 12-14 Farm Show - New Ulm
- 17 St. Patrick's Day Parade - St. Peter
- 18-21 Camper & Outdoor Show - New Ulm
- 20 St. Patrick's Day Parade - Benson
- 20-21 17th Annual Sports & Leisure Show - Ortonville
- 20-21 KLGR Home Show - Redwood Falls
- 26-27 KSCR/KBMO Farm, Home & Sports Show - Benson
- 26-28 Home Show - New Ulm
- 28 Granite Art Council Event - Granite Falls

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# Building a Dream



Olof Swensson

Olof Swensson

Olof Swensson, hardy Norwegian immigrant, traveled to America in 1871 with his wife, Ingeborg, and son, Sven, to fulfill a dream. Through years of hard labor, Olof and his growing family worked together to complete this generous homestead. The barn and home remain as a testament not only to this family, but also to all immigrants struggling to find their home in a new place. Walk through the site and experience Olof's strong belief in the "American Dream", which was grounded in religious freedom and built upon the foundation of the numerous rural homesteads spreading across the prairie.

## The House

On the home, the four granite corner markers are inscribed with the following dates:  
1843--Olof was born  
1871--immigrated  
1873--homesteaded, and  
1901--built this brick house (completed in 1903).

There are 52 doors, 59 windows, and a possible ten bedrooms.

Upstairs is a 38 foot by 38 foot room designated as the "Master's Room" where Olof, as a self appointed lay pastor, held church services.



Wind bracing in barn



June 2003 restoration of barn

## The Barn

Before the house was constructed, Olof and his daughter Katie built the barn. Both the massive stone foundation and the wooden barn with its elaborate system of notching and wind bracing attest to Olof's skills as a designer and builder.

However, over time, the hard Minnesota climate caused the barn's hand cut granite foundation to bow inward. During the summer of 2003, the foundation was extensively restored, one stone at a time, to save the crumbling base for the post and beam wood structure above, which also was in need of restoration.

## The Cemetery

Located in the family cemetery are the poured concrete grave monuments made by Olof. He even carved his own wooden mold except for the actual date of death that was completed by his youngest child, John, upon Olof's death in 1923.



Olof's grave mold



Swensson family grave monument in barn

## Feed for a Nation



The Minnesota River Valley has a regional, national and international story to tell of the growth and development of the American system of agriculture. Taking Food to a Nation: Telling the story of the region's innovations (e.g., agricultural cooperatives and Green Giant), its productivity and its farming systems will help all visitors to better appreciate the importance of agriculture to this nation.



The Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway



Chippewa County Historical Society



Presented in part by National Highway Administration



[www.mnrivervalley.com](http://www.mnrivervalley.com)

## Olof Swensson Farm Museum

Located along Chippewa County Hwy 15 southeast of Montevideo

## Calendar of Byway Events

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| 16-17 | Heritage Hill Spring Swap Meet - Montevideo                    |
| 17    | Border Water Opener - Ortonville                               |
| 18    | Concert Series "Boston Brass" - Redwood Falls                  |
| 23-25 | Pioneer Power Flea Market - LeSueur                            |
| 24    | Maud Hart Lovelace's Birthday Party at Betsy's House - Mankato |

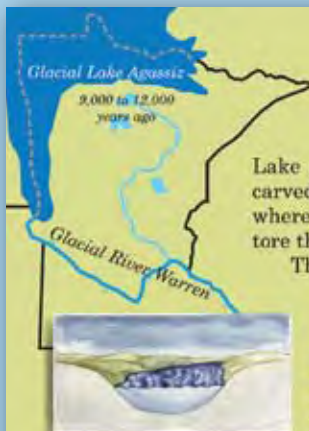
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# The Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway

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## Ancient Exposed Rocks

About 13,000 years ago, glacial melt water that collected in a basin named Glacial Lake Agassiz burst through a natural earthen dike creating a huge torrent of water that carved the Minnesota River Valley as we see it today. There are places along the valley where the scouring force of this tremendous ancient river, named the Glacial River Warren, tore the earth so deeply that 3.6 billion year-old metamorphic gneiss bedrock become exposed. These gneiss outcrops are scattered all along the valley floor from Ortonville to Mankato and today harbor some very unique plant and animal communities that strive to exist in a harsh environment.

### Glacial River Warren

The Glacial River Warren was not the first to flow this path, but the sheer volume of this ancient river carved a footprint upon this land that is recognizable from satellite images. The ancient Glacial River Warren valley reaches almost two miles wide in places and 130 feet deep in others. Today, the slow and usually peaceful Minnesota River remains as it winds its way through exposed bedrock knobs of ancient gneiss and stretches from Browns Valley to the river's confluence with the Mississippi River at Fort Snelling in Mendota, Minnesota.

### Five-lined Skink

The gneiss rock outcroppings here and throughout Memorial Park provide rare habitat for unique plant and animal communities. The five-lined skink requires an environment of open rock outcroppings with nearby hardwood communities. The area in and around Memorial Park is one of the few places in Minnesota where this small reptile is found. Encroaching woody vegetation is limiting the skink's habitat today and may eventually eliminate this reptile from this site.



John F. Memorial Park

### Lichen

Lichen are true pioneers. Lichen live in some of the most barren and inhospitable places. Lichen are a symbiosis of two organisms, a fungus and algae. They are joined so completely that they behave and look like an entirely new being. Lichen can dissolve rock surfaces, begin the process of making soil, survive severe cold, and remain dormant for long periods without harm.



### Cactus in Minnesota?

On the ancient gneiss outcroppings here in the Minnesota River Valley, three species of cactus have thrived for hundreds of years: the Plains Prickly Pear Cactus, the Brittle Prickly Pear Cactus, and the Ball Cactus. The cactus's brief blooming time is in middle to late June.



Plains Prickly Pear Cactus



Ball Cactus



Brittle Prickly Pear Cactus

Some of the oldest exposed rocks known on earth can be found in the Minnesota River valley. Geologists estimate the earth to be 4.5 billion years old, and some of the exposed bedrock in this part of the Minnesota River valley was created over three billion years ago during the Precambrian Era. Here in Memorial Park, throughout the city of Granite Falls, and nearby in the Blue Devil Valley Scientific and Natural Area, outcrops of 3.6 billion year old rock called gneiss (pronounced "nice") can be seen.



Ancient Gneiss Bedrock



Gneiss is a banded metamorphic rock formed when granite and other rocks were subjected to intense heat and pressure deep beneath the earth's surface for long periods of time. The word "gneiss" comes from an old Saxon mining term that seems to have meant decayed, rotten, or possibly worthless material. While identifying gneiss from other rocks can be difficult, rocks in the upper part of the Minnesota River Valley showing minerals occurring in distinct bands are probably gneiss.

The rocks in this area are some of the oldest known exposed rock in North America. The only bedrock in the world currently known to be older than the bedrock in the Minnesota River Valley is bedrock that has only recently been identified in Greenland.

## A River's Legacy



From the Minnesota River's beginnings in the plains to its confluence into the Mississippi River, the river and its valley tell interesting tales of the ancient history and rich ecological diversity of the Upper Midwest. This is an important story to tell, as it is part of the overall effort to restore the Minnesota River and to connect people to the river and their own local environment.



[www.mnrivervalley.com](http://www.mnrivervalley.com)

Yellow Medicine County Historical Museum

Located along MN Hwy 67 in Granite Falls

# May 2010

## Calendar of Byway Events

- 1 Border Walleye Challenge - Ortonville
- 1 Mai Fest at Morgan Creek Vineyard - New Ulm
- 8 MTT Minnesota Tournament Trail - Ortonville
- 14 Inland Water Opener - Ortonville
- 16 Syttende Mai Celebration - Milan
- 17 Syttende Mai - Benson
- 20 Chamber Golf Invitational - Benson
- 26 Ramsey Park Jamboree - Redwood Falls
- 28-31 Fort Ridgely Historic Site opens for the season
- 29 E. St. Julien Cox House Opens - St. Peter
- 31 Memorial Day Program - Henderson

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# A New Life with Family and Friends

This is the Lars Rudi home. Lars was the son of a farmer in Uvdal, Numedal, Norway, and was one of seven Rudi children who grew to adulthood. All but one of the Rudi siblings immigrated to America hoping to make a better life for themselves. Family and friends frequently settled in clusters because of familiar customs and language.

Lars and his new wife Vighild (Sunde) immigrated to the United States in 1866, where they lived and worked on the Lien Farm in Clayton County, Iowa that first summer. After harvest season, they set out for Rushford, Minnesota and lived with relatives for the winter. The next spring they came to Renville County where they settled near their neighbors and family from Norway. Across the river, Lars' only sister, Turi, settled with her husband, Tov and their four children. The Rudis lived with Thor Helgeson until the summer of 1869 when their tiny log home was built.

Lars became a lay religious leader for the cluster of Norwegian families. Religious services and parochial school were held in the Rudi home. Pioneer pastors stayed here while conducting services in the area.

Vighild's sister, Ingeborg, stayed with them to help with daily chores. Though Lars and Vighild had no children of their own, they helped raise many children and were loved by many people. The Rudis lived in this cozy home until Lars died in 1913. Vighild and Ingeborg then went to live with a nephew southeast of Sacred Heart until they passed away. The Rudis are buried in the Opdal Church Cemetery, southeast of Sacred Heart.

*Lars, Vighild and Ingeborg. Over the years, the building gained a lean-to on the north side. This was stripped away by Ole Enevoldt when he began restoring the place in the 1920s to become an area museum. In 1956, it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.*



## Building of the House



*Trees for the Rudi house were felled in the winter.*



*In spring they floated the trees down the river about three miles to the Rudi homestead.*



*Lars had a lime kiln similar to this to make his own plaster.*



*The house was constructed with dovetail notching.*



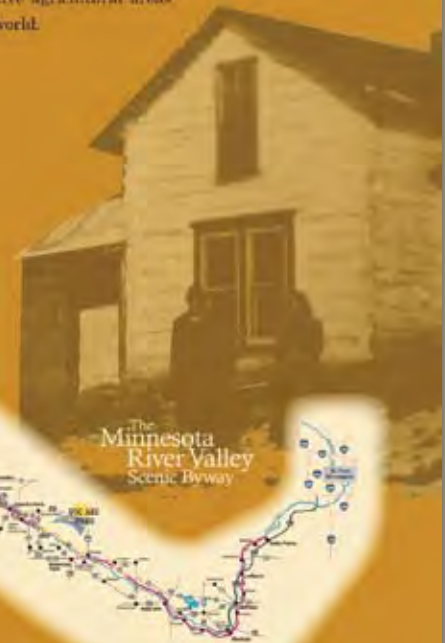
*Thor Helgeson*

In 1869, Lars hired Thor Helgeson to build their new log home here in the beautiful Minnesota River Valley. Thor Helgeson was to build a 15 foot by 18 foot home, constructed of oak logs that had been felled the winter before, stripped of bark, dovetail notched in the Scandinavian way and then lifted to make the walls. The spaces between the logs were chinked with lime plaster and the logs themselves regularly whitewashed with lime. Lime was commonly made from stones containing lime, picked in the field and burned to a powder in a kiln.

## Struggles for a Home



The Minnesota River Valley has a story to tell about indigenous people struggling to make a home amid a changing environment. The Minnesota River Valley also has a story to tell about the struggles of the pioneering immigrant families who eventually created one of the most productive agricultural areas in the world.



[www.mnrivervalley.com](http://www.mnrivervalley.com)

## Rudi Memorial

Located along Renville County Hwy 12 south of Sacred Heart

# June 2010

## Calendar of Byway Events

- 5 Lawn Party at the R.D. Hubbard House - Mankato
- 5 Celebrate Clinton Day - Clinton
- 6 Open House at the Fort Ridgely Historic Site
- 11 Redwood Community Parade - Redwood Falls
- 11-13 Lower Sioux Pow Wow - Morton
- 14 Pioneerland Band Festival & Annual Flag Day Parade - Benson
- 17-19 Town & Country Days - Arlington
- 18-20 City & Country Days - Morgan
- 18-20 Fiesta Days - Montevideo
- 20 Hartford's Father's Day Fishing Tournament - Ortonville
- 23-26 Western Fest Stampede Rodeo - Granite Falls
- 25-27 Sauerkraut Days - Henderson
- 25-27 Summer Celebration - Fairfax
- 25-27 Riverfest - Dawson
- 26 Headwater's Motorcycle Ride Around the Lake - Ortonville
- 26-27 Autofest Car Show - New Ulm
- 27 Unforgettable Tribute to Nat King Cole - Dawson

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# A Family's Proud Heritage The Enestvedt Seed Corn Company

This land was first tilled in 1867 by Ole Enestvedt and a pair of oxen with a single bottom plow. The early years were hard, back-breaking years as homesteading usually was. In 1900, Ole and Anna's youngest son, Engebret started the Enestvedt Seed Corn Company while attending the St. Paul School of Agriculture. This is the story of a strong Norwegian family that continues the tradition of seed corn production still today here in the beautiful Minnesota River valley.

## Corn Detasseling



Hired help to detassel corn with Engebret's son Bert at far left

Detasseling is essential to producing hybrid seed corn. The pollen-producing tassel is removed, so the corn plants that will produce the seed corn can't pollinate themselves. Instead, pollen from another variety of corn grown in the same field is carried by the wind, pollinating the detasseled corn's silk. The result is seed corn that bears the genetic characteristics of both varieties which can produce healthier crops with higher yields. Despite technological advances in agriculture, detasseling is still a task that is done primarily by hand though now detasselers ride instead of walk.

It was while Engebret was attending school that the University of Minnesota released 13 open pollinated varieties of seed corn in 1897. Engebret began growing and selling seed corn.

In 1908, Engebret married Clara and they started a family. A sad change came to the family as Engebret passed away in 1923 at the age of 43, leaving his wife Clara and five young children to carry the load of home and the seed corn business.

In the mid 1930's, the company started growing University of Minnesota hybrids call *Minhybrids*. The planting process changed using tractor-pulled multiple row planters with staggered planting dates to accommodate the crossing of hybrids.



Enestvedt Seed Farm, ca. 1942



Engebret picking corn, ca. 1912



Johannes, Alberta, Clara, Clara, Odean, Engebret and Bert Enestvedt, ca. 1900.

The Enestvedt brothers, Odean, Johannes, and Bert, managed the business through many changes and improvements in the seed corn industry. Johannes invented a machine to aid in seed corn planting. It was the combination of a two- and three-row corn planter mounted on the front and back of a single tractor enabling him to plant up to six rows of corn with one machine.



Johannes, Odean and Bert Enestvedt

In 1994, Bert received the Eldon Siehl Prize for Excellence in Agriculture due to his lifetime of service in production agriculture.

Enestvedt Seed Corn has received many awards over the years, including the University of Minnesota release of *Bert Soybeans* named for Bert and his involvement in the soybean industry.

The Enestvedt Seed Corn Company is still family-owned and is managed by a member of the third generation of this sturdy Norwegian family, Roger Enestvedt. This is a heritage to be proud of.



Bert Enestvedt

## Feed for a Nation



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The Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway



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Enestvedt Seed Company

Located along Renville County Hwy 12 south of Sacred Heart

## Calendar of Byway Events

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| 2-4    | Toquatlennial Days - Graceville                               |
| 4      | Patriotic Day at Turner Hall - New Ulm                        |
| 7-11   | Fun Days - Danube   |
| 8-11   | 136th Redwood County Fair - Redwood Falls                     |
| 11     | Blooming Pretty Garden Tour - Mankato, North Mankato & Kasota |
| 11     | Ice Cream Social - Ottawa                                     |
| 16     | Chamber Annual Ag-Open Golf Tournament - Granite Falls        |
| 16-18  | Bavarian Blast - New Ulm                                      |
| 16-18  | Morgan Creek Vineyard German Wine Tasting Fest - New Ulm      |
| 17-18  | Kid Day Weekend - Benson                                      |
| 18     | Music Under the Oaks - Ottawa                                 |
| 23-25  | 34th Franklin Catfish Days - Franklin                         |
| 23-25  | 36th Annual Couple's Golf - Ortonville                        |
| 24     | LTD Memorial Motorcycle Tour - Appleton                       |
| 28-8/1 | Corn Capital Days - Olivia                                    |
| 28-8/1 | Scott County Fair - Jordan                                    |
| 29-8/1 | Blue Earth County Fair - Garden City                          |
| 29-8/1 | Yellow Medicine County Fair - Canby                           |
| 30-8/1 | Giant Celebration - LeSueur                                   |

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# The Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway

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# Hand Hewn Monument



*Dovetail corner joints have compound angles that naturally interlock the corner joints so they do not pull apart.*

Skalbekken County Park was named in honor of Ole Skalbekken, the original recorded owner of the 300 acres that comprise Skalbekken County Park.

This dovetailed log home was moved in 1974 to this park to honor Odean Skalbeck, grandson of Ole, for his dedication to the Renville County Park system. As a lifelong resident of Renville County and a county commissioner, Odean Skalbeck selflessly worked to dedicate several county parks to preserve their beauty in a natural state for all citizens to enjoy.

Ole and Anna Skalbekken (later changed to Skalbeck) immigrated from Sweden and homesteaded in Hawk Creek Township in 1871. They had ten children: Herman, Olaf, Isan, Albert, Oscar, Hilda, Mathilda, Joseph, Alma and Benjamin.



Viola Skalbeck indicated that during the original move, the logs were hauled in a horse drawn wagon and numbered with Roman numerals to allow for its reconstruction.

Odean Skalbeck, one of eight children born to Oscar and Sophie Skalbeck, grew up and married a local girl, Viola Strandjord, in 1935. Their first home was this log house, originally built on the Ole Kolien farm site in south Sacred Heart Township and moved to the Rennevammen farm, where they lived until 1948.



*Odean and Viola Skalbeck stand in front of the house after its move to the park.*



Renville County restored this stately structure with its present features so it can continue its proud legacy to the Skalbeck family name.



*This photo from 1974 shows the house with the siding partially removed. Odean and Viola have three children: Patricia, Diane and Brian. Their daughters are standing in front of the proud structure.*

## Struggles for a Home



The Minnesota River Valley has a story to tell about indigenous people struggling to make a home amid a changing environment. The Minnesota River Valley also has a story to tell about the struggles of the pioneering immigrant families who eventually created one of the most productive agricultural areas in the world.



*The Minnesota River Valley Scenic Highway*



[www.mnrivervalley.com](http://www.mnrivervalley.com)

## Skalbekken County Park

Located along Renville County Hwy 10 southwest of Sacred Heart

## Calendar of Byway Events

- |       |                                       |
|-------|---------------------------------------|
| 1     | Corn Capital Days - Olivia            |
| 1     | Scott County Fair - Jordan            |
| 1     | Blue Earth County Fair - Garden City  |
| 1     | Yellow Medicine County Fair - Canby   |
| 1     | Giant Celebration - LeSueur           |
| 1-31  | Hummingbird Hurrah - Henderson        |
| 3-5   | Farmfest at Gilfillan Estate - Morgan |
| 4-8   | Sibley County Fair - Arlington        |
| 11-13 | Chippewa County Fair - Montevideo     |
| 11-15 | Brown County Fair - New Ulm           |
| 11-15 | Nicollet County Fair - St. Peter      |
| 14    | KMS Memorial Ride - Franklin          |
| 15    | Threshing Show - Benson               |
| 18-20 | Renville County Fair - Bird Island    |
| 18-22 | Swift County Fair - Appleton          |
| 19-22 | LeSueur County Fair - LeCenter        |
| 20-22 | 72nd Annual Cornfest - Ortonville     |
| 22    | Irish Festival - Henderson            |
| 26-29 | Traverse County Fair - Wheaton        |
| 27-29 | Pioneer Power Show - LeSueur          |
| 27-29 | Hummingbird Banding - Henderson       |

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*Mary Schwandt*

## Only Two Survived

Mary Schwandt and her brother August were the only two of their extended family of nine who survived the terrible six week long war now usually named the United States - Dakota Conflict of 1862. During Mary's captivity with the Dakota Indians, she developed a lifelong friendship with her Dakota protector, Snasna'wig. When the peaceful Dakota were confined at Fort Snelling the winter of 1862, Snasna'wig lost her two remaining children, leaving only two in yet another family.

In the spring of 1862, the Schwandt family moved to this seemingly quiet place to build a new life for themselves and their growing family: father Johan, mother Christina, Karoline Schwandt Walz, Karoline's husband John Walz, Mary, August, Frederick, Christian and family friend John Frass. They built a rough, two room log cabin that became their home.

On August 18, 1862, Dakota Indians, frustrated over broken treaty promises and seeing their way of life threatened, decided to take back their treaty land. The Schwandts and others not involved in the treaties between the government and the Dakota suffered the consequences of the attacks that followed.

Mary wasn't at home on August 18 when her family was attacked and killed by Indians. She was working for the Reynolds family and instead, she and two other young women were taken captive by the Dakota and taken to Little Crow's village. A Dakota woman Snasna'wig (Tinkling), who had just lost her seven year old daughter, traded a pony for Mary. Snasna'wig and her husband Wakin'yagwas'te, (Andrew Good Thunder) had two other small children. They became Mary's new family.

Snasna'wig kept Mary safe for the six long weeks to come. Mary was finally turned safely over to Sibley's troops at Camp Release late in September. Mary found out later that her entire family was gone except August. August, though injured, had wandered across the prairie to the safety of Fort Ridgely. Eventually, Mary and August were reunited and sent to live with an uncle in Wisconsin.

After General Sibley recovered the white and mixed-blood captives at Camp Release, the Dakota were interred at Fort Snelling for the winter. In this crowded space surrounded by a tall wooden fence, many became ill and died. Snasna'wig and Wakin'yagwas'te lost their remaining two children during that cruel winter. The following spring Snasna'wig was allowed to stay at Alexander Faribault's farm while many Dakota were exiled from Minnesota.



*Dakota at Fort Snelling*

Years later, through an article written by Mary about her experiences, Snasna'wig found Mary. They continued to write and visit over their remaining years.



*Snasna'wig (Maggie Brase) and Mary E. Schwandt Schmidt (Mrs. William)*



*Wakin'yagwas'te (Andrew Good Thunder)*

Reprint of the above story from "A Dakota Captivity Experience" by William G. Sibley 1900 edition, copyright 1912 1913

## Struggles for a Home



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The Minnesota River Valley also has a story to tell about the struggles of the pioneering immigrant families who eventually created one of the most productive agricultural areas in the world.



WAL-MART



Marked on your Road Trip Map



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## Schwandt Memorial

Located along Renville County Hwy 15 south of Sacred Heart

# September 2010

## Calendar of Byway Events

- 3-4 River Blast & Flotilla - New Ulm
- 9-12 Lac qui Parle County Fair - Madison
- 10 Oak Tree Golf Classic - Ortonville
- 11 3rd Annual Rib Fest - Benson
- 11-12 Heritage Days - Henderson
- 16-18 Applefest - Appleton
- 17-19 Mahkato 38th Annual Wacipi Pow Wow - Mankato
- 18 Schell's Brewery 150th Anniversary - New Ulm
- 18 Old Sod Days - Belview
- 19 Fall Farm Festival at Gilfillan Estate - Morgan
- 25 Redwood Falls Festival - Redwood Falls

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## Surrounded at the Coulee



This monument was dedicated in 1894 as a testament to U.S. soldiers and civilians who fought and died in the Battle of Birch Coulee. The U.S.-Dakota Conflict of 1862 started when Dakota Indians, frustrated by broken treaty promises and efforts to change their traditional way of living, made an attempt to drive out all the settlers of southwestern Minnesota. A burial party was sent out to bury the dead from previous battles, search for survivors and determine the whereabouts of the hostile Dakota. The battle that ensued would turn out to be one of the deadliest for the U.S. Army during the Conflict.



Wacouta  
(Chief Big Eagle)



Dakota  
(Chief Red Legs)



Mackato  
(Chief Blue Earth)

### The Battle

On Sunday, August 31, 1862, 170 U.S. soldiers and a few civilians, under command of Major Joseph R. Brown, moved against Fort Ridgely. Captain Hiram Grant commanded one company and Captain Joseph Anderson commanded the other company. Their orders were to bury the dead, search for survivors, and determine the whereabouts of the hostile Dakota. They burned over 70 settlers, soldiers and traders over two days on both sides of the Minnesota River. Seeing no sign of the Dakota, Grant set up camp at the head of Birch Coulee. Brown re-crossed the river and joined Grant.



Sketch of the Battle of Birch Coulee by Paul U. Sweeney, a participant

Near dawn, one of the sentries saw Dakota soldiers moving in the grass surrounding the camp and fired at them. While the men had slept, Dakota soldiers led by Etahatka (Chief Gray Bird), Wapaditanka (Chief Big Eagle), Haisia (Chief Red Legs), and Mackato (Chief Blue Earth) had surrounded the camp.

The Dakota fired a deadly hail of bullets into the half-awakened camp. Brown's Army was severely weakened, with many men wounded and almost all of the 90 horses killed. The U.S. soldiers used the dead horses for meat.

The firing was heard by sentries at Fort Ridgely, 16 miles in the distance. A relief column of 200 soldiers, led by Colonel McPhail, was sent out from Fort Ridgely only to be stopped by Chief Mackato and Dakota soldiers. A messenger was sent back to Fort Ridgely. Colonel Sibley led all of the remaining troops out to finally relieve the battered burial party at about 11:00 a.m. that next morning. According to most accounts, thirteen members of the burial party were killed and 47 severely wounded. It is believed that the Dakota lost three men.

The Birch Coulee Battlefield is located 2 miles northwest of this monument, just east of State Highway 71. It has a self-guided interpretive trail.



Major Joseph R. Brown

## Solid Friendships

Made of solid granite, the "Friendly Indian Monument" was dedicated in 1899 in honor of six Dakota Indians who befriended and protected government employees, immigrant settlers, missionaries, or aided soldiers during the United States - Dakota Conflict of 1862, most often at the risk of their own lives.



Ana'wung ma'ni  
Galloping Wolves  
Simon Ana'wung ma'ni

Ana'wung ma'ni married a woman and still is today during the Conflict. He also served as one of General Henry Sibley's messengers during the years after the United States - Dakota Conflict of 1862.

Snaena'wig  
Tinkling  
Maggie Beas

Snaena'wig purchased 15 year old Mary Schmiedt for the price of a pony from a Dakota woman and adopted her as her own during the United States - Dakota Conflict of 1862 to protect her from harm.



Mahkashu Heiya'wig  
She is a Strong  
Determined Woman  
Mary Crooks

Mahkashu Heiya'wig married in the presence of many captives.



Tupwagotatung  
Faces the Village  
Lorena Lawrence

Tupwagotatung led a number of soldiers to the safety of Fort Ridgely during the United States-Dakota Conflict of 1862. During the Battle of Wood Lake and after the Conflict, he served as a scout for Sibley.



Paul Ma zakute ma'ni  
Shoots as He Walks  
Little Paul

Ma zakute ma'ni spoke against the Conflict at Dakota councils and advised the release of the captives held by Chief Little Cow. After the Conflict he served as an army scout for Sibley. Before the Conflict he married Miss Crockett from White Spoke's camp along the James River after the Spirit Lake Massacre of 1857.

Ange'tato keca  
Good Sounding Voice  
John Othor Day

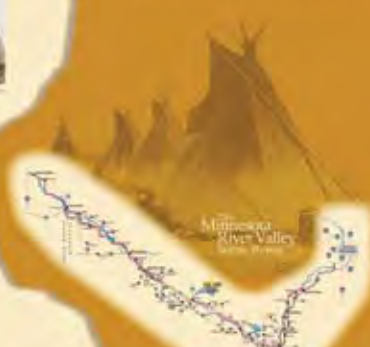
Ange'tato keca led 61 Yellow Medicine (Upper Sioux) Agency captives and their families to the safety of Washington at the beginning of the United States - Dakota Conflict of 1862. He then returned to the military as a scout for Sibley where he fought alongside Sibley's troops.



## Struggles for a Home



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www.minnrivervalley.com

## Morton Monuments

Located along MN Hwy 19 in Morton

# October 2010

## Calendar of Byway Events

- 1-2 Oktoberfest - New Ulm
- 1-3 Meander: Upper MN  
River Art Crawl -  
Ortonville, Appleton,  
Madison, Montevideo &  
Granite Falls
- 8-9 Oktoberfest - New Ulm
- 10 St. Joseph's 150th  
Anniversary Festival -  
Henderson
- 23 Women of Today  
Holiday Expo - Benson

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# Mother Hubbard, the Essential Flour



Storehouse - Nelson Milling Co. and Warehouse Company, in Dakota, PA storing Mother Hubbard Flour

The Hubbard Milling Company manufactured flour under the brand name Mother Hubbard. This flour, used in baking bread, was an essential part of every meal on the family dinner table. Since the beginning of the railroads in this region through most of the Twentieth Century, flour has been shipped from the Mankato area across America and to other parts of the world. Today, the mill functions as a feed mill.

## Rensselaer Dean Hubbard



R.D. Hubbard

Rensselaer Dean (R.D.) Hubbard was born in Otsego County, New York in 1837. His family were struggling farmers and R.D. worked hard to improve his lot in life. At the age of fifteen he left home to earn his own living. He worked as a surveyor, farmer, storekeeper, manager and banker.

R.D. came to Mankato in 1870 and soon built "one of the finest homes in town." The house was built in the Second French Empire style in 1871. This imposing home was noted for its innovative furnishings and interior detail. It was expanded in 1888, and completely redecorated in 1905.



R.D. Hubbard House  
ca. 1900

In Mankato, Hubbard owned or managed a number of enterprises related to agriculture. In 1879, he established the Hubbard Milling Company. R.D. became one of the most respected and successful businessmen in early Mankato.

The house, carriage house and the mill remain as testaments to R.D.'s progressive thought and business success.

The Minnesota River Valley and the nearby prairie were and still are a very rich agricultural region. In 1870, southern Minnesota ranked second only to California in wheat production. Farmers drove their wagons loaded with wheat to local wind-driven gristmills for grinding of the flour.

In the late 1870's Rensselaer D. Hubbard was general manager of the Mankato Linseed Company on North Front Street, where the railroad ran at the time. R.D. hired a young bookkeeper named George M. Palmer from Garden City. Realizing that Hubbard was determined to become a financial magnate with a variety of investments, Palmer urged his chief to take advantage of their location by embarking in the milling business.

In 1878 R.D. began construction of a water-powered flour mill in Mankato. It became the largest mill in southern Minnesota. Hubbard later introduced steam power to increase the size, power and dependability of the milling process.



Hubbard Milling Company  
in Mankato, MN ca. 1870



George M. Palmer

Hubbard was ably assisted in the milling business by George M. Palmer, who is honored and remembered here by the Palmer Centennial Gardens. It was Palmer who first ventured into the enterprise of grain storage in this area. Soon after Hubbard died in 1905, Palmer became President and eventually owner of Hubbard Milling Company.

## Feed for a Nation



The Minnesota River Valley has a regional, national and international story to tell of the growth and development of the American system of agriculture. Taking Food to a Nation. Telling the story of the region's innovations (e.g., agricultural cooperatives and Green Giant), its productivity and its farming systems will help all visitors to better appreciate the importance of agriculture to this nation.



The Minnesota River Valley  
Scenic Byway



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## R. D. Hubbard House

Located at 606 Broad Street in Mankato

November 2010

## Calendar of Byway Events

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 5  | MN Music Hall of Fame Induction - New Ulm    |
| 6  | Showcase of Hall of Fame Musicians - New Ulm |
| 6  | Women's Expo - New Ulm                       |
| 13 | Christmas Tree Lighting - Henderson          |
| 19 | Christmas by Candlelight - Redwood Falls     |
| 20 | Holid-Ice Santa Spectacular - Redwood Falls  |
| 21 | Holiday Tour of Homes - Redwood Falls        |
| 26 | Holiday Extravaganza - Appleton              |
| 26 | Parade of Lights Downtown - New Ulm          |
| 28 | Holiday Stroll - Benson                      |

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# Limestone Treasures

Built on a shelf of oneota dolomite limestone, Ottawa is home to six little known treasures from the past. Platted in 1853, the once thriving village has left behind a collection of limestone structures that have stood the test of time, all built between 1859 and 1870. The structures feature massive, masonry walls that demonstrate the high level of craftsmanship involved in the construction of these treasured structures. The group of seven (now six) simple, locally-crafted structures of ashlar construction are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and on Minnesota's Preservation Alliance's Most Endangered Properties list.

Small limestone quarries were scattered about the township as landowners quarried their own stone for building. Simple tools and methods were used to quarry the stone. The layers of limestone lend themselves very well to ashlar construction, which consists of flat rectangular blocks of rock, resulting in very solid walls.



The **Patten farm house** was constructed in 1863. It was the home of the David Patten family, who came from Canada in 1855. He was a landowner, farmer, and business investor. This house was owned by a sand mining corporation since 1986. The home was demolished in 2002 to clear the land for additional mining.



Built in 1868, Ottawa's **Town Hall** was once the center of the village, functioning as a general store owned by Charles Needham and David Patten. Needham bought out Patten in 1878. Then in the 1880's, Mr. Needham constructed a new general store across the street. In 1902, the township of Ottawa bought the building to be used as a town hall and it remains in use as such.



The **Methodist Church** is thought to have been built in 1859 and is a church of simple design. It has only one room with a gable roof crowned with a wood shingled tower with belfry and spire.



At the corner of Sumner and Whittier Streets sits the **Rinshed House**. This story and a half stone cottage has a gable roof and segmented arched windows with chimneys at both ends. Note the larger blocks of stone at the corners of the home. This home was built by stonemason John Rinshed. He owned one of the seven stone quarries located in Ottawa in the 1870s. The Rinshed home is private property.



It took the community from 1865 to 1868, to build the **Trinity Episcopal Church**. It is a beautiful example of coursed ashlar construction with a steeply pitched roof and gable ends. Due to declining attendance, it was sold in 1907 to the Catholic Church and became St. Mary's, a mission of St. Anne's in LeSueur, until approximately 1914, when it was again sold, remodeled, and became a residence. The home is privately owned.



German born Charles Schwartz built two limestone buildings on his farm one-half mile north of Ottawa. the **Schwartz barn and house**. The barn was built in 1874 with arched windows and doors. The farmhouse was constructed in 1875 and has a T-shaped layout with segmented arched windows. The house and barn are located on private property.



## Struggles for a Home



The Minnesota River Valley has a story to tell about indigenous people struggling to make a home amid a changing environment. The Minnesota River Valley also has a story to tell about the struggles of the pioneering immigrant families who eventually created one of the most productive agricultural areas in the world.



Schmidt Foundation



[www.mnrivervalley.com](http://www.mnrivervalley.com)

## Ottawa Village

Located along LeSueur County Hwy 23 south of LeSueur

# December 2010

## Calendar of Byway Events

- 3 Christmas Candlelight Wine Tasting - New Ulm
- 4 Christmas in LeSueur
- 4 Memories of a Hometown Christmas - Sanborn
- 11 Lighted Santa Truck - Benson

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The Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway

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