

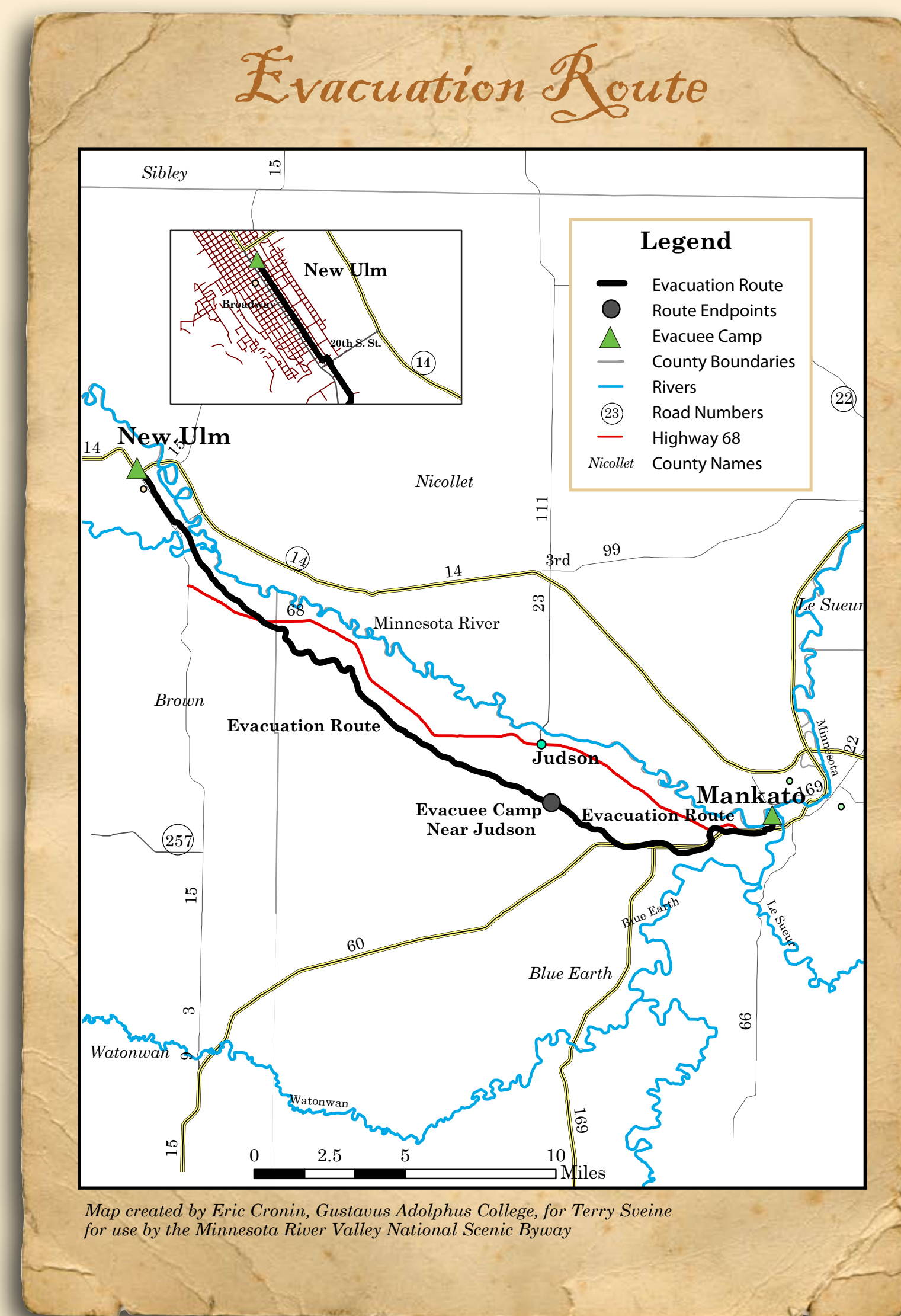
The Evacuation of New Ulm

When the Second Battle of New Ulm ended on the morning of August 24, 1862, the city lay nearly in ruins. Fearing that it would surely fall if attacked again, Colonel Charles Flandrau ordered the entire city to evacuate. The next day more than 2,000 people left by caravan, bound for Mankato 30 miles away. When their ordeal was over, many of the evacuees chose to return to New Ulm, ready to rebuild their lives. Others left southern Minnesota, never to return.



Minnesota Historical Society

Colonel Charles Flandrau leading the New Ulm caravan to Mankato. "Flight from New Ulm to Mankato," a panorama by New Ulm artists Anton Gág, Christian Heller and Alexander Schwendinger, ca. 1892.



Colonel Flandrau had cause to worry about the citizens of New Ulm. After two attacks in six days at the height of the U.S.–Dakota War of 1862, food and water supplies in the city were low, the threat of disease from poor sanitation was high, and ammunition stocks were nearly depleted. So at mid-morning on August 25, some 2,000 people left town on foot and on horseback, with 153 wagons carrying the injured, sick and aged.

Armed militia covered the head, flanks and tail of the caravan as it stretched out for four miles along the south bluffs of the Minnesota River valley. Traveling under the hot August sun, hungry, thirsty and already exhausted from the New Ulm siege, the evacuees also had to face their fears. Not knowing that the Dakota had retreated upriver to regroup, the townspeople proceeded warily, their progress steady but their position vulnerable.

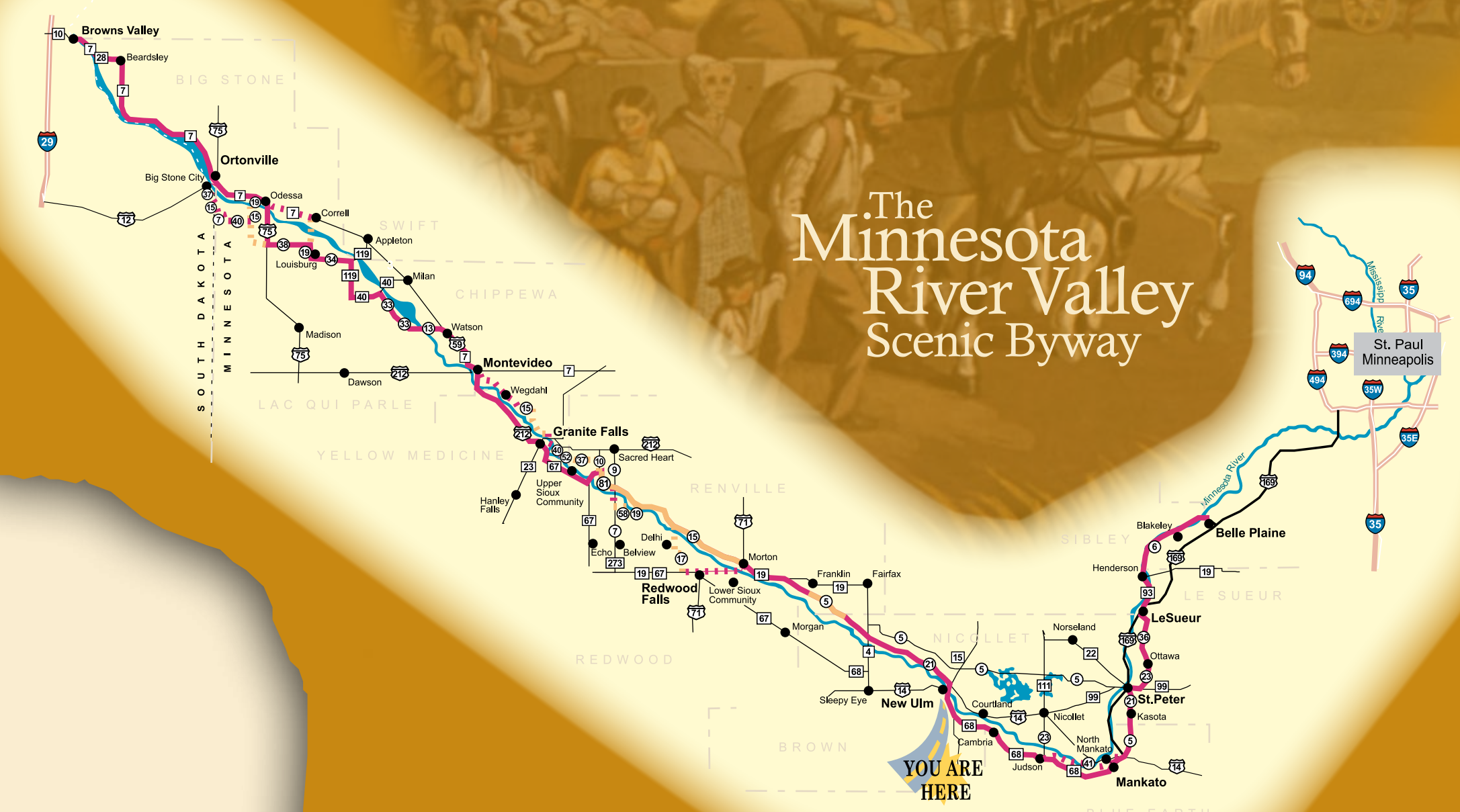
Despite the difficult journey, most of the caravan made Mankato by evening. To ward off a possible attack, the rear guard of 150 militiamen camped for the night near Judson and arrived in Mankato the next day. From Mankato, many of the injured continued on to St. Peter, 10 miles away. Some of the evacuees departed soon afterward to set about rebuilding their city. Some stayed in Mankato for a while to recuperate and rethink their future. And some left southern Minnesota forever.

On September 26 came word that some of the Dakota had surrendered at Camp Release and turned over all their captives. At last, it was time for the New Ulm evacuees to return home.

Struggles for a Home



The Minnesota River Valley has stories to tell...about the indigenous people struggling to keep their land and their way of life, and about immigrant families who began new lives here. Their stories came together, with tragic consequences for all, in what has become known as the U.S.–Dakota War of 1862 — a war that had repercussions for the whole country.



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