

In the Footsteps of Our Ancestors



*The Dakota Commemorative Marches
of the 21st Century*

Edited by

WAZIYATAWIN ANGELA WILSON



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Decolonizing the 1862 Death Marches

WAZIYATAWIN ANGELA WILSON



In November of 1862, approximately 2,100 Dakota men, women, and children were forcibly moved in two groups from the Lower Sioux Agency to concentration camps at either Fort Snelling or Mankato, Minnesota—events that marked the first phase of expelling our Dakota people from our homeland of Minisota Makoce.¹ These two groups were paying the severest of penalties for the retributive actions of Dakota people who dared to fight the Wasicu invaders. These Dakota dared to fight because they could not take any more offenses; indeed, they dared to fight because they were pushed to desperation and because there appeared to be no other options. In this chapter, I examine existing accounts of these removals from a critical perspective within the broader framework of colonialism. Furthermore, I discuss how necessary remembering and truth-telling are in our commemoration of these removals in order to achieve healing and to restore well-being among Dakota People.

If we apply a framework of colonization, the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 emerges as just one point on a continuum that carries through to the present day, yet the framework also suggests the possibility for change in the future. At the most basic level, the colonization framework challenges the

narrative that seeks to justify policies of invasion, forced removal, and genocide. The narrative of White innocence and Dakota guilt is immediately displaced by one of White oppression and Dakota subjugation. On the topic of violence and oppression, Brazilian liberationist educator Paulo Freire wrote:

With the establishment of a relationship of oppression, violence has already begun. Never in history has violence been initiated by the oppressed. How could they be the initiators, if they themselves are the result of violence? How could they be the sponsors of something whose objective inauguration called forth their existence as oppressed? There would be no oppressed had there been no prior situation of violence to establish their subjugation.²

The term *violence* here encompasses not only the physical assaults but also all injurious abuses perpetrated upon a People, their way of life, and their land. If we examine 1862 in the context of the subjugation and oppression of the Dakota People by the colonizing Wasicu settlers and the United



States government, then it becomes clear that the process of violence had been initiated long before.

When people are faced with oppression, several psychological responses follow: flight, fight, or capitulate. The Dakota had already capitulated to a tremendous degree. Our ancestors had continually sought peaceful resolutions through treaty negotiations over land

issues; they had tolerated missionaries, traders, agents, and settlers, even when these Wasicus were illegally occupying Dakota lands and destroying Dakota resources. Some of our ancestors had already fled further west to escape the oppressive forces at work in Minnesota. Other of our Dakota People, however, wished to stay in our ancient homeland. As these Dakota were pushed to desperation with their very survival at stake, fighting increasingly became the most likely option. The violence finally echoed by Dakota warriors was simply a defensive response to the subjugation and oppression they had been enduring for decades.

This is not to excuse the acts of violence perpetrated by Dakota people. This violence did not advance the Dakota cause (though it is unlikely anything would have done so in the face of White greed for Dakota land), and it is a reality that White families were killed during the war. However, to consider another case of subjugation and oppression, Archbishop Desmond Tutu points out that, though the human rights abuses perpetrated by African National Congress (ANC) members against the upholders of apartheid South Africa were legally equivalent with the abuses perpetrated by White South Africans, they were not

morally equivalent. In all cases where acts of violence have already been perpetrated, we can make important distinctions between, for example, justifiable homicide and culpable homicide.³

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It may be that all suffer no matter who the perpetrator is, but the culpability of White Minnesota settlers is a story that has not been documented. Instead, the

story has been suppressed because of what it suggests about the colonizers.

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The year 1862 marked perhaps the greatest turning point in the long history of our Dakota People. By the early 1860s, we had already faced for at least several decades tremendous assaults at the hands of the colonizers on our land, our spirituality, our educational system, our communal lifestyle, our subsistence patterns, and our physical being. In August of 1862, our Dakota People were facing starvation because the U.S. government had again violated its treaty obligations and was late in producing the gold necessary to fend off starvation.⁴ A few Dakota finally had enough and struck out by killing a family of White settlers in Acton, Minnesota, after a quarrel when some warriors took some eggs. The next day, the Dakota officially declared war upon the United States government and its citizens. The war, however, was short-lived. Within six weeks, the Dakota were defeated by the troops organized against them.

After the 1862 defeat of our People at Wood Lake, it was reported that the leader of Dakota resistance, Bdewakantunwan Chief Little Crow,

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was despondent and heartbroken. After stepping out of his lodge, he told the people that he was ashamed to call himself Dakota:

Seven hundred picked warriors whipped by the cowardly whites. . . . Better run away and scatter out over the plains like buffalo and wolves. . . . To be sure . . . the whites had big guns and better arms than the Indians and outnumbered us four or five to one, but that is no reason we should not have whipped them, for we are brave men, while they are cowardly women. I can not account for the disgraceful defeat. It must be the work of traitors in our midst.⁵

Little Crow certainly was betrayed by traitors among his people—by those such as Wabasha and Taopi who negotiated secretly with Sibley and worked toward Little Crow's defeat. Yet for the purposes of this essay and the task of decolonizing the historical record, we can see in his recognition of this reality that Little Crow was also acknowledging the old divide-and-conquer tactics typically used by colonial forces to subjugate a People. He was experiencing this consequence of colonialism through the betrayal by his fellow Dakota.

Colonization was sufficiently extensive by 1862 to prevent the Dakota from taking united action. Far from being accidental, this divide-

and-conquer tactic was purposeful on the part of missionaries, agents, traders, and White settlers, who rewarded those who adopted the traditions of the Wasicu.⁶ Dakota men who agreed to take up the full-time occupation of farming, for example, were rewarded with food or material goods, while others were punished for refusing to abandon their traditions. Missionaries gained control of treaty-provisioned educational funds and used them to carry out their work of "civilizing" the Dakota, creating a gap between the supposedly "educated" and "uneducated" Dakota and injuring traditional educational systems. To undermine Dakota leadership, government agents were urged by the missionaries to dole out annuities to heads of families instead of chiefs. They encouraged nuclear family settlement with individual plots of land, rewarding housing to those who complied in order to foster individual greed

and to break up the communal villages.

More than simply disrupting traditional systems, all of these efforts brought tremendous harm to the fabric of Dakota social, political, and economic life. Previously, the Dakota had constructed an egalitarian society in which generosity was highly valued and

the welfare of the group took precedence over individual desires. A comprehensive educational system existed in which individuals were well trained and mentored in skills necessary not only for their own survival but also to produce contributing members to the society. In addition,

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rather than using their positions of power to amass wealth for themselves, the chiefs gained respect through their ability to give generously to the people by distributing goods and gold. These societal structures were purposely targeted for attack to subjugate the Dakota, ensuring U.S. dominion not only over the people but also over the land and its resources.

Relentlessly pursued, these attacks on Dakota social structures were designed to eventually create a population so weakened and dependent that the way would be totally cleared for Whites to settle and appropriate Dakota land and resources. This pattern was repeated continuously across the continental United States. Thus, by the time the colonizers set their sights on Dakota lands, imperial expansion demanded the eradication of the original inhabitants.

Within this framework, Dakota dispossession was a foregone conclusion. Internal breakdown—and the simultaneous lack of unity necessary for any meaningful resistance—wreaked devastating consequences for the Dakota but served the interests of the colonizers well. Those Dakota who converted to Christianity, dressed in Wasicu clothing, cut their hair to resemble the Wasicu men, and learned to speak English became known as the “friendlies” and reaped the rewards of preferential treatment. Big Eagle, for example, stated, “The ‘farmers’ were favored by the government in every way. They had houses built for them, some of them even had brick houses, and they were not allowed to suffer. The other Indians did not like this. They were envious of them and jealous, and disliked them because they were favored.”⁷

Indeed, the government did not hesitate to pit

Dakota people against each other for its own purposes. This occurred, for example, when annuities were illegally withheld from the Dakota until they had attempted to kill or capture Inkpaduta for his attacks on White settlements.⁸ Though Inkpaduta may be remembered as one of our fiercest resisters to Wasicu invasion, his fellow Dakota were metaphorically held hostage by the Whites until they agreed to take up arms against him. By 1862, the use of these colonizing divide-and-conquer tactics against the Dakota People and way of life had been so successful that our people were deeply factionalized. Even after the war, those Dakota who served as scouts for the U.S. Army were ordered to kill any Indian trying to return to Minnesota or face military execution themselves. Sisseton elder Ed Red Owl recalls,

One of the chief scouts here tells . . . of encountering his own nephew. When he saw his nephew coming, he said, “I had tears in my eyes, but yet I had the orders of the United States Army to fulfill. And so before my own eyes, I shot him until he died.”⁹

This painful fractionation that began in the nineteenth century became intergenerational and continues today.

The punishment of the Dakota after the war officially ended was swift and brutal, resulting in Dakota casualties and losses that have yet to be enumerated. Governor Alexander Ramsey stated unambiguously in September of 1862 that, “The Sioux Indians of Minnesota must be extermi-

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nated or driven forever beyond the borders of the State."¹⁰ Henry Sibley was commissioned to carry out these goals, which he did with marked success.¹¹ At the final Battle of Wood Lake, Dakota people began to surrender, believing that they would be treated as prisoners of war, while others fled north into Canada or west into the Dakotas. Twelve hundred Dakota initially surrendered to Colonel Sibley, and that number quickly grew to two thousand.

It was soon clear that the price for Dakota military resistance to the invasion would be exceedingly high. Upon surrendering, the men were immediately separated from the women and children, shackled, and tried for war crimes before a five-man military tribunal. By November 5, 392 trials had been completed, some having lasted as little as five minutes; 307 Dakota men were sentenced to death, and 16 were given prison

terms. An executive order was still required, however, and the trial records were sent to Washington for President Lincoln's review.

On November 8, the condemned men were forcibly removed to the concentration camp at Mankato, where they continued to await execution orders. On December 26, 1862, at the order of President Abraham Lincoln, thirty-eight of those Dakota men were hanged in what remains the largest mass execution in United States history. In the spring of 1863, those with commuted death sentences were transported to Davenport, Iowa, and imprisoned there for three years. By the time they were finally released in 1866, only 247 were still alive; 120 had died in prison.

Meanwhile, on November 7, 1862, the group of some 1,600 women and children were forcibly marched to Fort Snelling, where they, too, were imprisoned through the winter. In May of 1863, the 1,300 women and children who had survived the death camp were sent to a new reservation beyond Minnesota's borders in Crow Creek, South Dakota.

Once the Dakota were forcibly removed from Minnesota, bounties were placed on the scalps of any and all Dakota people who remained. These bounties began at \$25 and eventually were raised to \$200. Moreover, the treaty money, which had ar-

rived too late the previous summer to prevent the war, was sent back to Washington and then redistributed to White settlers, totaling \$1,370,374 in 1863-64, as recompense for depredations incurred during the war. The Dakota treaties were abrogated, the people were exiled from our homeland, and our lands were opened to White settlement. The legacy of these policies is evident in the extant diaspora of our exiled people and our only minimal presence in our ancient homeland.

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Early scholarship on the topic of 1862 reveals a hatred for Dakota people and a clear sense of White superiority. Rampant throughout these narratives is terminology that reflects this perspective. Typical of colonial interlopers on Indigenous lands, writers from the era regularly used words such as "massacre," "slaughter," or "atrocious" to describe Dakota actions upon "innocent," "pure," "brave" White settlers. The Dakota, on the other hand,

were depicted as "savages," "red devils," "blood-thirsty demons," "wretches," "beasts," "fiendish perpetrators," and even "government-pampered" Indians, as Minnesota's first schoolteacher, Harriet Bishop McConkey, described us.¹² McConkey's work is representative of many early Wasicu accounts of the war as well as the views held by many of those early Euro-American settlers. In the introduction to her book about the war, she stated:

It is a dreadful tale—one from which the heart recoils and the pen shrinks; but I have girded me for the effort, and what though every hair of the head is erect, and every nerve a vibrating medium, making me, for the time being, as a living, actual witness of all I rehearse; the reading word shall hear, if they cannot see, what young Minnesota has experienced, how her adopted sons and daughters have suffered from the savage bullet and bloody tomahawk, while yet is undulating the clear prairie air, in brutal fierceness, never to die from the ear of the sufferers, the terrible Dakota war-whoop.¹³

Similarly, in their book *A History of the Great Massacre by the Sioux Indians*, Charles Bryant and Abel Murch begin:

The massacre in Minnesota, by the Annuity Sioux Indians, in August, 1862, marks an epoch in the history of savage races. In their westward march across the continent, in the van of a higher civilization, the native red men have, at different

times, given sad and fearful evidences of their enmity to the dominant white race; but, from the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers on the rock-bound coast of New England, in the winter of 1620, until their descendents had passed the center of the continent, and reached the lovely plains of Minnesota, no exhibition of Indian character so afflicted and appalled the soul of humanity, as the fearful and deliberate massacre perpetrated by them in August 1862.¹⁴

These writings lack context. They cite merely the symptoms of the problem rather than its root in the processes of conquest and colonization. In writings from the period, many Wasicu expressed almost a complete astonishment that any act of war would be declared upon them; they seemed to view themselves as entirely innocent. From their perspective, the "Indian problem" was being dealt with appropriately. Settlers arrived on the "Indian frontier"; they pressured the government to negotiate treaties so that legal land title could be claimed, after which Dakota homeland was declared first Minnesota Territory and then in 1858 the State of Minnesota. Their plans were progressing nicely. Such a conquest agenda can be rationalized only by a deeply ingrained myth of self-apotheosis coupled with a simultaneous dehumanization of the Dakota.

Our ancestors, on the other hand, were forced to confront the reality that something had gone horribly wrong. Why were our People being outnumbered and overpowered in our own home-

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land? What were we to do when this powerful government consistently failed to fulfill its treaty obligations? How were we to subsist while we were being confined to smaller and smaller tracts of land and facing diminishing supplies of food? Were these Wasicu so favored even by our Creator that they could take what was ours and leave us with nothing?

While Dakota people attempted to rationalize these tremendous violations of justice, the Wasicu proclaimed a definitive explanation: The Dakota were not favored by God. Instead, they believed it was the White race that possessed a divine right and responsibility to invade the land, conquer its people, and develop its resources according to their own interests, and we were mere obstacles to the fulfillment of that destiny—that *Manifest Destiny*. The colonization of entire Peoples is always rationalized in such ways. The colonization might have ended in that generation, but every subsequent generation has elected to maintain the status quo instead of challenge it.

Unquestionably, the oppression and colonization of our People was well under way by the mid-nineteenth century. For example, in 1852 when Alexander Ramsey was pressuring the Dakota to sign papers agreeing to the fraudulent traders' claims, the Sisitunwan Dakota Chief Mazasa (Red Iron) stated in their meeting:

We want our pay, and we will sign no paper except a receipt for the money. The snow covers the ground, and we are still waiting for our money. We are very poor; you have plenty. Your fires burn well; your tents are well-closed against the cold. We have nothing to eat. We wait

a long time for our money. Many of our people are sick from hunger. We will have to die, because you do not pay us. We may die, and if so we will leave our bones unburied, so that our Great Father may see how his Dakota children died.¹⁵

For making these comments and refusing to sign the papers, Red Iron was taken prisoner. A head-soldier from Red Iron's band, Lean Bear, then advocated warfare, stating, "I will lead you against the long knives (bayonets and swords) of the white men who have come to swindle us, to rob us of our land, and to imprison us, because we do not assist them to rob our wives and children."¹⁶

Lean Bear was persuaded against warfare at the time. However, by August 1862, the Dakota were in a life-and-death struggle that required a reaction, and some chose war. In the subsequent period, our People faced complete defeat militarily, outright land theft in the abrogation of our already despicable treaties, genocide in the policies of extermination, and expulsion from our homeland. After these atrocities effectively cleared the way for White settlement, military force was no longer needed, and a quieter period of colonization ensued.



To expand the empire, colonization requires the expulsion of the original residents from as much land as possible, and the Wasicu began to expel Dakota people from our Minisota homeland in two successive waves and two distinct groupings. I say two successive waves because, although White sources do not connect the two, my own family's oral accounts make little distinction

between the forced marches to the concentration camps and the later banishment from Minnesota. Thus my grandmother learned from her grandmother that "they passed through a lot of towns going to South Dakota."¹⁷

The first wave of removal occurred when the uncondemned Dakota were sent to Fort Snelling and the condemned men to Mankato. On November 7, 1862, 1,658 of our people were force-marched under heavily armed guard from the Lower Sioux Agency to Fort Snelling under the command of Colonel William R. Marshall, who would later become governor of Minnesota.¹⁸ This armed guard consisted of the Seventh Regiment Minnesota Volunteers and three companies of soldiers. In a four-mile procession, our ancestors were paraded through towns and subjected to additional violence by Wasicu settlers.

Just one day later, the 392 condemned men who were awaiting news of their execution or prison sentencing—forty-eight of them having been acquitted of formal charges but still kept in confinement—made their way to Mankato under the supervision of Colonel Henry Sibley. Also accompanying them were seventeen Dakota women who served as laundresses and cooks, four of their babies, and four of those whom the Whites called "friendly Indians" to assist in caring for the prisoners.¹⁹

The second wave of removal occurred in late spring of 1863 when our people were physically forced out of our homeland. On April 21, the condemned men—thirty-eight fewer in number after the hanging in Mankato—were sent to a dilapidated prison in Davenport, Iowa, where they remained for three years. While there, they suffered cold, disease, and intensive pressure for

religious conversion, as well as White educational training. When they were finally released, roughly one-third, or 120, had not survived the imprisonment. On May 4 and 5, groups of prisoners from Fort Snelling—1,318 in all—boarded boats that brought them down the Mississippi River and then up the Missouri River to the Crow Creek Reservation in South Dakota. One group traveled by boat to St. Louis and then up the Missouri River to St. Joseph, while the second group of 547 prisoners stopped in Hannibal, Missouri, and traveled by train across Missouri to St. Joseph. Once in St. Joseph, both groups boarded a single boat for the rest of the difficult journey. The missionary John Williamson described the trip as "nearly as bad as the Middle Passage for slaves."²⁰

This essay and book are concerned with the first phase of removal, when our Dakota people made the journey to concentration camps. I first learned of this forced relocation from my grandmother, Elsie Cavender, who carried a narrative account passed down from her grandmother, Maza Okiye Win (Woman Who Talks to Iron). Maza Okiye Win was ten years old at the time of the war, and thus the accounts she relayed to her children and grandchildren were born of her own traumatic hardships. Kungsi (Grandmother) Elsie entitled this story of her grandmother's "Death March," consciously drawing a parallel between this forced march and that of the Bataan Death March during World War II, during which 70,000 U.S. and Filipino soldiers were forced to walk sixty-three miles to a prison camp while facing starvation and poor treatment. Learning of this event from a relative who had experienced it, she saw similarities with the march her

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grandmother was forced to endure. The following account, which I recorded in 1990 with my grandmother, remains the most descriptive and lengthy one yet documented. It is relayed here in my grandmother's words:

Right after the 1862 Conflict, most of the Sioux people were driven out of Minnesota. A lot of our people left to other states. This must have been heartbreaking for them, as this valley had always been their home.

My grandmother, Isabel Roberts (Maza Okiye Win is her Indian name), and her family were taken as captives down to Fort Snelling. On the way most of them [the people] walked, but some of the older ones and the children rode in a cart. In Indian the cart was called *canpahmihma kawitkotkoka*. That means "crazy cart" in Indian. The reason they called the cart that is because it had one big wheel that didn't have any spokes. It was just one big round board. When they went, they didn't grease it just right, so it squeaked. You could just hear that noise about a mile away. The poor men, women, old people, and children who had to listen to it got sick from it. They would get headaches real bad. It carried the old people and the children so they wouldn't have to walk. Most of the people just walked. Some of them if they were lucky rode horses.

They passed through a lot of towns, and they went through some where the people were real hostile to them. They

would throw rocks, cans, sticks, and everything they could think of—potatoes, even rotten tomatoes and eggs. They were throwing these things at them, but the Indians still had to walk through the main streets. So they had to take all that. Then when they would pass through the town they would be all right. A lot of those towns I don't know the names of in English. They used to say them in Indian. The two towns that were the worst they had to get through were Henderson and New Ulm, Minnesota. I didn't know the name in English, so I said, "Grandfather, do you know how they call them in English?"

"No, I just know their Indian names," he said.

So then I had to go to Mr. Fred Pearsall. In Indian his name was Wanbdi Ska (White Eagle). He was a white man, but he knew a lot of things about the conflict. He talked Indian just like we do. He knew all those things that happened, and he knew just what words to use to describe the times. So I was able to get the names of those towns. They were the worst ones they had to go through.

When they came through New Ulm, they threw cans, potatoes, and sticks. They went on through the town anyway. The old people were in the cart. They were coming to the end of the town, and they thought they were out of trouble. Then there was a big building at the end of the street. The windows were open. Someone threw hot, scalding water on

them. The children were all burned and the old people too. As soon as they started to rub their arms the skin just peeled off. Their faces were like that, too. The children were all crying, even the old ladies started to cry, too. It was so hard it really hurt them, but they went on.

They would camp some place at night. They would feed them, giving them meat, potatoes, or bread. But they brought the bread in on big lumber wagons with no wrapping on them. They would just throw it on the ground. They would have them sleep in either cabins or tents. When they saw the wagons coming, they would come out of there. They had to eat food like that. So, they would just brush off the dust and eat it that way. The meat was the same way. They had to wash it and eat it. A lot of them got sick. They would get dysentery and diarrhea and some had cases of whooping cough and small pox. This went on for several days. A lot of them were complaining that they drank the water and got sick. It was just like a nightmare going on this trip.

It was on this trip that my maternal grandmother's grandmother was killed by White soldiers. My grandmother, Maza Okiye Win, was ten years old at the time and she remembers everything that happened on this journey. The killing took place when they came to a bridge that had no guard rails. The horses or stock were getting restless and were very thirsty. So, when they saw water, they wanted to get down to the water right

away, and they couldn't hold them still. So the women and children all got out, including my grandmother, her mother, and her grandmother.

When all this commotion started, the soldiers came running to the scene and demanded to know what was wrong. But most of them [the Dakota] couldn't speak English and so couldn't talk. This irritated them and right away they wanted to get rough and tried to push my grandmother's mother and her grandmother off the bridge, but they only succeeded in pushing the older one off and she fell in the water. Her daughter ran down and got her out and she was all wet, so she took her shawl off and put it around her. After this they both got back up on the bridge with the help of the others who were waiting there, including the small daughter, Maza Okiye Win.

She was going to put her mother in the wagon, but it was gone. They stood there not knowing what to do. She wanted to put her mother someplace where she could be warm, but before they could get away, the soldier came again and stabbed her mother with a saber. She screamed and hollered in pain, so she [her daughter] stooped down to help her. But her mother said, "Please daughter, go. Don't mind me. Take your daughter and go before they do the same thing to you. I'm done for anyway. If they kill you, the children will have no one." Though she was in pain and dying, she was still concerned about her daughter and little grand-

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daughter who was standing there and
witnessed all this. The daughter left her
mother there at the mercy of the soldiers,
as she knew she had a responsibility as a
mother to take care of her small daughter.

"Up to today, we don't even know
where my grandmother's body is. If only
they had given the body back to us, we
could have given her a decent funeral,"
Grandma said. So, at night, Grandma's
mother had gone back to the bridge
where her mother had fallen. She went
there, but there was no body. There was
blood all over the bridge, but the body
was gone. She went down to the bank.
She walked up and down the bank. She
even waded across to see if she could
see anything on the other side, but no
body, nothing. So she came back up. She
went on from there not knowing what
happened to her or what they did with
the body. So she really felt bad about it.
When we were small, Grandma used to
talk about it. She used to cry. We used to
cry with her.

Things happened like this, but they
always say the Indians are ruthless killers
and that they massacred White people.
The White people are just as bad, even
worse. You never hear about the things
that happened to our people, because it
was never written in the history books.
They say it is always the Indians who
were at fault.²¹

In telling these stories and commenting as she
did, my grandmother was clearly aware that she

« IN TELLING THESE STORIES . . . MY
GRANDMOTHER WAS CLEARLY AWARE
THAT SHE WAS SUBVERTING THE
USUAL HISTORICAL NARRATIVES
ABOUT THE 1862 WAR. »

was subverting the usual historical narratives
about the 1862 war. She was also well aware that
the perpetrators of atrocities against the Dakota
had gone unpunished. Indeed, whereas the Japa-
nese commander in charge of the Bataan Death
March was tried, convicted, and executed by U.S.
military commission for his actions, the leaders
behind these marches—notably Henry Hastings
Sibley and Alexander Ramsey—not only were
hailed for their conduct but also remain cele-
brated heroes in Minnesota history.

Governor Ramsey's call for either the exter-
mination or the forced removal of our ancestors
in September 1862 was clearly a policy of ethnic
cleansing, yet this has not diminished his ap-
peal to White Minnesotans. Between Ramsey's
implementation of his policies and their sup-
port by state and federal authorities, it became
impossible for the Dakota to live in Minnesota.
As one writer commented, "Congress exiled re-
maining Sioux from Minnesota March 3, 1863,
and stopped all further annuities, and thereafter
troops stationed in the state felt no compunction
in shooting those found within its boundaries."²²

It is only because the same colonizing class
retains power that this obvious genocidal policy
can still be rationalized. Genocide and its per-
petrators can be celebrated only as long as the
colonizers are still colonizing. There was no am-
bivalence about the call for extermination and

forced removal in 1862, nor is there today. Nonetheless, not only did our Dakota people have to go through the horror of having Ramsey's plan implemented with the full support of White settlers in the state, but every Dakota person since then has been assaulted on a near daily basis with a celebration of the very leaders responsible for the "ethnic cleansing" of our People from Minnesota. Yet, such realities continue to escape the critical eye of the general public. This would be comparable to expecting Jewish people to live in a state where counties, streets, numerous statues, paintings, schools, and parks were created in honor of Hitler or Eichmann and bore their names.

Even Colonel William Marshall, who was in charge of the soldier who killed my ancestor, went on to become governor of Minnesota. In fact, Samuel Brown, the mixed-blood son of a Sisitunwan Dakota woman named Susan and Major Joseph Brown, celebrates Marshall as "one of the bravest and noblest of men." Thoroughly indoctrinated with the racist ideology that condemned the "savage Indian," Samuel Brown betrayed his Dakota People. He served as a scout and accompanied Colonel Marshall's detachment with the uncondemned men, women, and children to Fort Snelling, while his father, the elder Brown, accompanied the condemned men to Mankato. In Brown's eyes, Colonel Marshall warranted this characterization because,

While the train was passing through the town one of the citizens, with blood in his eyes and half-crazed with drink,

rushed up with a gun leveled at Charles Crawford, one of the friendlies, and was about to fire, when "the bold charger of the plains," Lieutenant-Colonel Marshall, who happened along on horseback, rushed between them and struck down the gun with his sabre and got Crawford out of the way, thus saving a life at the risk of his own.²³

I would like to know where Colonel Marshall was when my elderly grandmother was stabbed, but

**« ONLY WHEN THE
COLONIZERS ARE
STILL COLONIZING
CAN PERPETRATORS
OF GENOCIDE STILL
BE CELEBRATED. »**

perhaps she was not friendly enough to the White cause. Or, why the adjutant general reported that Lieutenant-Colonel Marshall's detachment guarding the Dakota to Fort Snelling stated, "This detachment received no molestation from the

settlers upon the route, and arrives safely at their destination on the 13th."²⁴

This statement is extraordinary given the oral record of what happened to our ancestors on that journey. Brown was one of those who offered a more detailed description of the hardships facing Dakota people on their walk through Henderson in his well-known quote:

At Henderson, which we reached on the 11th, we found the streets crowded with an angry and excited populace, cursing, shouting, and crying. Men, women, and children, armed with guns, knives, clubs, and stones, rushed upon the Indians as the train was passing by and, before the soldiers could interfere and stop them,

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succeeded in pulling many of the old men and women, and even children, from the wagons by the hair of the head and beating them, and otherwise inflicting injury upon the helpless and miserable creatures.

I saw an enraged white woman rush up to one of the wagons and snatch a nursing babe from its mother's breast and dash it violently upon the ground. The soldiers instantly seized her and led, or rather dragged, the woman away and restored the papoose to its mother, limp and almost dead. Although the child was not killed outright it died a few hours after. The body was quietly laid away in the crotch of a tree a few miles below Henderson and not far from Faxon.

I witnessed the ceremony, which was, perhaps, the last of the kind within the limits of Minnesota; that is, the last Sioux Indian "buried" according to one of the oldest and most cherished customs of the tribe.²⁵

Of course the White woman responsible for killing a Dakota baby went unpunished because, though extreme, her act of crime was viewed as an act of retribution against Dakota violence.

Another oral account, this one given by Bain Wilson, recalls the brutality and indignity suffered by women and children along the way. An elderly Dakota woman told him:

My great-great-grandma was on that route when they were taking them to Crow Creek. On the way down she wanted to go to the bathroom. They told her not to go

to the bathroom, "If you have to go, go in your pants." But that old lady got out of the wagon and she started to walk toward some trees and some soldiers saw her and they shot her. And that old lady hollered back to the people, she said "They shot me! Makutepi ye!" she said. And so they went back to try to pick up the body and that body was missing, it was already gone.

The elderly woman in this narrative was shot by White soldiers, not because she posed any kind of threat to them or the White settlers, but because she tried to maintain some semblance of her dignity and modesty amidst a seething pool of inhumanity. It was not enough that our Dakota People should be dispossessed of our ancient homelands; it was also necessary that our dignity be smothered in the process. The pain in Wilson's voice was apparent when he continued, "And I couldn't help hear that old lady crying. She said, 'To this day we don't know whatever happened to my great-great-grandma.'" He then wisely and passionately pointed out, "These kinds of stories should bring our Dakota People back together."²⁶

—o—

Few written accounts expressing the Dakota perspective of this march have been documented or translated.²⁷ Yet other Dakota families still strong in the oral tradition most likely carry accounts about this event. Until these accounts are uncovered, additional insight may be gleaned from the plethora of Wasicu first-person accounts of the war. For example, an account given by Sarah Purnell Montgomery more clearly illuminates

my grandmother's story. Montgomery described the Wasicu women's roles in helping to arm the town of New Ulm while Dakota warriors attacked. Montgomery wrote:

The men not on picket duty, occupied the lower floor, while the floor above was filled with women and children, the latter sleeping on the floor in a small room. For the rest of us, there was no sleep. We filled every available vessel with water from a nearby well, and laboriously carried up an outside stair way. Fires were kept burning to keep the water boiling, and had the Indians attacked us that night, as was their intention, they would have received showers of boiling water upon their heads.²⁸

Montgomery was not one of those who threw boiling water on our Dakota elderly and children during their forced march, since she was in the town of South Bend by then, but she likely learned this tactic from her association with the women who did. Nonetheless, in November of 1862, the women of New Ulm apparently kept the fires burning to keep the water boiling in anticipation of the four-mile procession of women, children, and elderly. And they waited to pour the water on the most feeble of the group—the elderly women and the youngest children who rode in the wagon.

The group of uncondemned Dakota people arrived at Fort Snelling on November 13 to spend a winter under horrendous conditions. Duane Schultz comments:

The Indians were confined in a fenced camp of tepees on the north side of the river. It was a gloomy, inhospitable site, on bottomland that turned to mud and offered no protection from the icy winter winds. Settlers ran off the Indians' few horse and oxen and taunted them until eventually they grew bored. The army allotted the Indians only meager rations, typically bread for the adults and crackers for the children.²⁹

Imprisonment at the Fort Snelling concentration camp meant continued suffering and hardship through the winter of 1862–63, during which time hundreds more died from starvation, disease, and exposure.

The day after Marshall's procession left for Fort Snelling, the condemned men—those who had been tried, convicted, and sentenced to execution under the command of commissioned colonel Henry Hastings Sibley—were shackled in groups of two and then placed in wagons holding ten prisoners each. Isaac V. D. Heard described that morning:

At six o'clock our drums were beating for forward march. The general was one of the earliest of risers. He had all the camp aroused and at breakfast before four. It was a disagreeable morning; "the owl through all his feathers was a-cold," and so were bold "sojer" boys. We soon cantered away, and left the aforesaid quondam kitchen, but henceforth im-

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mortalized court-house, in which three of us had slumbered cozily for many a pleasant night, . . . probably forever.³⁰

Although these men were relieved from walking the roughly seventy miles from the Lower Sioux Agency to Mankato, their journey was not without pain and hardship. In reference to the trip through New Ulm, Sibley described the attack on their convoy, stating that it was "set upon by a crowd of men, women, and children, who showered brickbats, and other missiles, upon the shackled wretches, seriously injuring some fifteen of the latter, and some of the guards." He went on to say, "The assailants were finally driven back by a bayonet charge. . . . I did not dare to fire, for fear of killing women and children. The Dutch she devils! They were as fierce as tigresses."³¹ White settlers were demonstrating an uncontrolled rage and desire for revenge on the Indigenous inhabitants who dared to challenge their right of invasion and conquest.

Heard similarly describes the scene in New Ulm:

Hearing that we were passing by, they all rushed forth—men, women and children, armed with clubs, pitchforks, brickbats, knives and guns, and attacked the prisoners. The women were perfectly furious. They danced around with their aprons full of stones, and cried for an opportunity to get at the prisoners, upon whom they poured the most violent abuse. Many rushed forward and discharged a shower of stones. One woman, who had a long knife in her hand, was especially violent

in her demonstration, and another pounded an Indian in the face until she broke his jaw, and he fell backward out of the wagon.³²

In his book *Indian Outbreak*, Daniel Buck rationalizes the mob violence against the Dakota by saying, "The principal actors in the attack were mostly women and young people, many of whom had relatives and friends who had suffered from the depredations of these Indians, and who feared that the latter would escape from due punishment of their crimes through the leniency of the United States government."³³

Sarah Purnell Montgomery also documented her recollections of the procession of condemned Dakota men as they were paraded through their town:

It was on a beautiful Indian summer afternoon a few weeks after we had returned to South Bend, that General Sibley and his staff, in full uniform, and mounted, headed a strange procession that passed through our village. Behind them marched a regiment of infantry. Then came forty wagons drawn by horses containing four hundred of the murderers. They were chained together, and seated on the floor, five on a side, facing one another. Many wore bright shawls that they had taken from the homes of the settlers. Nearly all covered their heads.

Another regiment of infantry was followed by ambulances carrying the wounded settlers, who had been found

nearly dead from hunger and exhaustion. The squaws retained to cook and care for the prisoners, rode in army wagons drawn by mules. The camp equipment and supplies was followed by the artillery which comprised the rear guard.

They came to a halt at the Blue Earth river, midway between South Bend and Mankato.³⁴

This excerpt illustrates the twisted perceptions of White settlers. Though she failed to comment on the millions of acres stolen from the Dakota in our own homeland, Montgomery felt compelled to discuss the shawls Dakota men took from the homes of the White settlers.

The documents from this era clearly dismantle one of America's favorite images, namely, that of the innocent, pure, and benevolent White pioneer woman. Numerous accounts of the role of White women (and their children) in the civilian attacks on the Indigenous prisoners challenge the notion that their participation in Dakota genocide and dispossession was benign or exculpatory.

While the fierceness of the women in New Ulm is routinely commented upon, only from a soldier's journal do we understand why it was the women who committed most of the violence. In his entry for November 8, 1862, when his company was camped eight miles outside of New Ulm, this soldier noted that a boy had warned them that the citizens of New Ulm were intending to kill the prisoners as they passed through. On November 9, as they made their way into town, he states, "They had planked up their store fronts and had pierced them for rifles, through which they intended to shoot the Indians when

we came through." He went on to say, "About a mile from town, we came to a halt and a guard of infantry was placed between us and the wagons containing the Indian prisoners. We again moved forward and orders were given to allow no man to come within the lines." Thus, if the prisoners were to be murdered, the women of the town would have to be the perpetrators. They did not disappoint:

Women led this drive. They were armed with every conceivable weapon. In a moment all was in an uproar. Stones began to come like hail, smashing the heads and breaking the jaws of the Indians and knocking some out of the wagons. The drivers took shelter behind their horses, which were nearly unmanageable. An Indian was knocked out of the wagon nearest to me and was dragged a long distance by a chain made fast to his leg and to another's held in the wagon. Some women broke through, our men making but little opposition. The infantry made a show of resistance, but nothing in earnest. Our orders were to let *no man* [emphasis in original] through and we didn't.³⁵

The half-hearted attempts by the soldiers to keep the women and children at bay resulted in the deaths of Dakota prisoners. The same soldier commented, "Eight out of ten Indians in the wagon that I was guarding were hurt . . . some of the Indians died that night from wounds received during the day."³⁶

Perhaps the most graphic description of the condemned men's removal was given by George

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Crooks, one of the Dakota men who experienced the events firsthand. This source stated that Crooks was six years old at the time of the war but was with the Indian women who followed their Dakota warriors to battle and traveled with them as they awaited their execution or imprisonment. His account appeared in the February 10, 1909, issue of the *New Ulm Review* while he was living at Lower Sioux. He stated:

After the surrender the Indians were loaded into old Red River carts and started for the Lower Agency and Mankato. The carts were small, drawn by oxen, and it was difficult for any more than four persons to occupy the box. In the cart I was forced to occupy were two Indian men and my sixteen-year-old brother. We were bound securely and on our journey resembled a load of animals on their way to market. We traveled slow, meeting now and then a white person who never failed to give us a look of revenge as we jolted along in our cramped condition.

As we came near New Ulm my brother told me the driver was afraid to go through the town. My heart leaped into my mouth and I crouched down beside my brother completely overcome with fear. In a short time we reached the outskirts of the city and the long looked-for verdict, death, seemed at hand. Women running about and men waving their arms and shouting at the top of their voices convinced the driver that the citizens of the place were wild

in their thirst for blood. Accordingly he turned the vehicle in an effort to escape the angry mob. But it was too late. In an instant the crowd was upon us and pounded us almost to a jelly, my arms feet and head resembling more than anything else raw beefsteak.

How I escaped alive has always been a mystery to me. My brother was killed and when I realized that he was dead I felt that the only person in the world who would look after me was gone and I wished at the time that I might have been killed too.³⁷

Some Dakota people report today that George lived because his older brother protected him with his own body, sparing him the worst beatings by bearing the brunt of them himself. However, the sufferings of the condemned men have generally not been depicted as sympathetically as those of the people making their way to Fort Snelling, largely because these men were seen as murderous savages who committed heinous crimes against innocent, unsuspecting Whites. It is here that we as Dakota need to stand up most forcefully to call into question the innocence of Whites in Minnesota in 1862 and to declare that the violence committed upon the Whites in Minnesota during the war was not caused by the Dakota; it was caused by the Whites' own actions and the actions of their government. "Never in history has violence been initiated by the oppressed."



In Governor Ramsey's message to the state legislature on September 9, 1862, he stated that the

Dakota "have themselves made their annihilation an imperative social necessity";³⁸ he appealed to the logic of vengeance for our assassination of White women and children. By Ramsey's own logic, though, what did the Whites in Minnesota expect would happen when they invaded our lands, watched or participated as we were defrauded of land, treaty money, and goods, forced us into starvation and subservience, and constantly attacked our way of life? No doubt they believed nothing should happen as a consequence of their behaviors, because in their minds they were morally justified. Why? Because they believed themselves to be superior civilized beings, while we were uncivilized savages. This alone decries White innocence.

Some have argued that friendships existing between the Dakota and White settlers demonstrate that there were innocent Whites in Minnesota in 1862 or that not all Whites were guilty of participation in the subjugation and/or extermination of the Dakota People. I would suggest instead that these relationships of friendship are more comparable to that of the exploitative relationship between a master and slave in the old South. By 1862, our Dakota ancestors knew that we were viewed as an inferior form of humanity—that our weapons, language, spirituality, housing, dress, food, and every other conceivable aspect of our culture were seen as inferior. By 1862 when White settlers were plowing and farming our old lands and destroying our resources, our ancestors also knew that there was a power imbalance. But more important, the Dakota People suffered constant trauma caused by invasion and colonization—the very survival of the Dakota Nation was at stake—and this trauma

played a major role in the formation of Dakota-Wasichu friendships.

Many other victims of trauma (such as those who are held hostage and suffer physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or are indoctrinated into cults) exhibit an emotional bonding with their perpetrators. This pattern of bonding is now referred to as the Stockholm Syndrome, named after a 1973 bank robbery in Stockholm during which the hostages became emotionally attached to their victimizers. Given this phenomenon of trauma bonding, it makes sense that victims of trauma caused by invasion and colonization may exhibit similar symptoms. Accordingly, many Dakota people in 1862 and in subsequent generations have denied the perpetration of tremendous violence by the invaders and have attempted to focus on what they (mis)construe as the positive benefits of colonization. Others rationalize the abusers' violence as a way to maintain an emotional and psychological bond with the colonizer in the face of ongoing colonization. Even more commonly, many of our Dakota People have been made to feel ashamed of our last attempt to strike out against the invaders, and so we resort to blaming ourselves for the colonizers' violence in an attempt to feel a sense of control. Sufferers of the Stockholm Syndrome often adopt such responses toward the perpetrators of their abuse and trauma. While these reactions might offer ways to overcome a sense of powerlessness or to maintain hope in an overwhelming situation, they nonetheless deny the violence of the perpetrator.

Yet the experience of Dakota people is different from that of other trauma victims. Whereas the dominant society presumably condemns acts of abuse, torture, and trauma, it still actively af-

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firms the rightness of its invasion and conquest. Our Dakota people can find no larger community that offers shelter from the ongoing violence or safe haven for healing and recovery. Quite the opposite, the colonizer continues to benefit from the perpetuation of the historical relationship of oppression. Thus it is that each new generation is traumatized all over again, and the colonization of Dakota people becomes more deeply fixed.

In light of these realities, the Dakota-White "friendships" of this period are actually not true friendships at all but instead relationships born between a colonizer and the colonized, between the oppressor and the oppressed. We must be clear that no Whites in Minnesota believed it was wrong that we were removed from our lands and that our way of life was eradicated. If there had been Whites who advocated this, they would not have invaded. Furthermore, extensive research on this period has not uncovered evidence of such a view among any of the Whites. Even if some believed this in their hearts, they were nonetheless complicit in their actions.



It is true that a few Whites recognized what they deemed unfair treatment, such as the shameful behavior of the traders in swindling the Dakota out of treaty funds, the irresponsibility of the government in not fulfilling treaty obligations, or the injustices perpetrated in the trials of Dakota men. People such as Bishop Henry Whipple, Samuel Hinman, or the Williamson and Riggs missionary families raised these issues. However, even though these individuals were able to see gross wrongs in the situation, they would not deny that White people held a superior right to

the land or that the Dakota way of life and spirituality had to be obliterated.

So, while there certainly were some White individuals who favored some Dakota individuals, we must ask if any of these "true friends" of the Dakota were willing to abandon their farms and return them to their rightful owners? Were they lobbying in Washington for the removal of White people from the state? If such sentiments had been expressed or actions taken, perhaps an argument could be made for some strain of White innocence. Yet this is not the case. In a situation of colonization, the colonizer realizes the benefits of subjugating other human beings. As Albert Memmi reveals about the colonizer:

[H]e must also understand the origin and significance of this profit. Actually this is not long in coming. For how long could he fail to see the misery of the colonized and the relation of that misery to his own comfort. He realized that this easy profit is so great only because it is wrested from others.³⁹

Every White person either came to Minnesota knowing that Indigenous people would be removed or killed to make way for them or learned this fact shortly after they arrived. Such knowledge did not prevent them, however, from making their homes on Dakota lands. Furthermore, they had a vested interest in keeping quiet or supporting Dakota dispossession, because to speak out would mean a loss of their own privilege. Even the most benevolent among them—those who believed merely in cultural and spiritual ethnocide—did not view the Dakota as human beings of equal

value. We were valuable only because we provided an opportunity for them to save heathen souls. We must all be vigilant about our complicity in the injustices perpetrated around us.

Something must be said, though, about the degrees of culpability. Because some Whites may not have called for Indian extermination outright, as people like Ramsey did, or may not have physically attacked Dakota captives as they were paraded through the small towns of Minnesota, their degree of culpability might be lessened. However, claiming innocence would be a long stretch.

Some of the arguments made by scholars about the Jewish Holocaust during World War II regarding varieties of collaboration might be useful here. Andrew Rigby, for example, comments about countries of Axis-occupied Europe, "It was virtually impossible to be a neutral bystander."⁴⁰ He goes on to outline the various manifestations of political, military, social, and economic collaboration. Rigby stresses that collaboration may be offered willingly or reluctantly, and it may be motivated by degrees of individual self-interest and community interest.⁴¹ Furthermore, as an advocate of a Truth Commission into Genocide in Canada, the Reverend Kevin Annett has invoked the Nuremberg Legal Principles to discuss complicity. These principles require that "citizens refuse to support, financially or any other way, institutions which committed or are committing genocide."⁴² These are issues that must be explored.



Though this discussion of the historical and ongoing injustice perpetrated against the Dakota will elicit reactions of anger and discomfort, it is time for us to stop denying the truth about our

history to please our oppressors. Anyone who believes that oppression and colonization have ended need only drive down the road from my home reservation. In Redwood Falls, adjacent to the Lower Sioux Reservation, is Ramsey Municipal Park. Almost every day of their lives, Dakota people at Lower Sioux are reminded that Minnesota loves the man who called for the extermination of our People. This would not happen in a place free of oppression. A growing number of us will no longer be silent. We speak today carrying the burden of seven generations.

Frantz Fanon told us that decolonization is always a violent phenomenon, because it requires that the colonial structure be overturned.⁴³ Decolonizing our history regarding the events of 1862 will, therefore, be a violent phenomenon. The colonial structure established prior to the war that justified policies of theft, genocide, and forced removal is the same structure that denies justice to Dakota people today.

Furthermore, by not questioning or challenging their continued right to Dakota lands and resources, Minnesotans have sustained, generation after generation, all the rationalizations that supported our dispossession in the first place. No doubt it has been easy for them to do this, since "All the perpetrator asks is that the bystander do nothing. He appeals to the universal desire to see, hear, and speak no evil."⁴⁴ In 1862, citizens of the state were at worst direct perpetrators of genocidal policies of ethnic cleansing and at best complicit in those policies, but all of the citizens directly reaped the rewards of Dakota extermination and dispossession, as they continue to do today.

In recovering our forgotten history, we are seeking accountability from the perpetrators, and

we are disallowing bystanders who from 1862 to the present right to occupy our land. Reparations have not been made. Furthermore, given that Dakota people have integrity, the occupation significantly changed the Dakota people suffering and colonization have we continued lies and our spirit. Dakota communities of Minnesota remain in exile. Our by social ills stemming from colonization.

More importantly, we must collectively heal ourselves, our indigenous knowledge, and our relationship with the land. Alfred describes colonialism today as a lack of freedom to be Indigenous and the unjust occupation and political space. Indigenous people and colonialism that.

Not only will it be a violent process, but a narrative about it will be well. For the War in regards to 1862, their right to exist to exploit our resources, bloodies the hands.

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we are disallowing a claim of neutrality for the bystanders who watch and do nothing—from 1862 to the present day. The sense of a superior right to occupy our lands is so ingrained that fair reparations have never even been discussed. Furthermore, given the extent to which our Dakota people have internalized the colonialist mentality, the occupation of our homeland has not been significantly challenged since 1862. Just as Dakota people suffered the violence of oppression and colonization that led to the 1862 war, so too have we continued to suffer violence on our bodies and our spirits ever since. Only four tiny Dakota communities remain in our vast homelands of Minisota Makoce, and most of our People remain in exile. Our communities are still plagued by social ills stemming from generations of ongoing colonization.

More important, the means for us to most effectively heal ourselves—that is, to recover our Indigenous knowledge and ways of living—depend on our relationship with our homeland. Taiaiake Alfred describes the overwhelming reality of colonialism today as “the fundamental denial of our freedom to be Indigenous in a meaningful way, and the unjust occupation of the physical, social, and political spaces we need in order to survive as Indigenous peoples.”⁴⁵ This is certainly the reality of colonialism that our Dakota people face today.

Not only will decolonizing the history of 1862 be a violent process, but challenging the master narrative about those events will be violent as well. For the Wasicu, the decolonization process in regards to 1862 will fundamentally challenge their right to exist on our land and their right to exploit our resources. This fresh look at 1862 bloodies the hands of the descendants of those

who invaded our lands and called for our extermination or forced removal. The blood of our ancestors can no longer be washed away by appeals to White innocence or purity, as so often spew from the lips and writings of the colonizers.

For the many Dakota who have spent decades, generations, and lifetimes attempting to prove that they and their ancestors have been friends to the Wasicu, decolonization may be an equally violent experience. It will require calling into question their own actions and values, as well as any privilege they may have gained by carrying out the colonizers’ objectives.

Those who are ready to stand up and speak the truth about the history of Minnesota will also face violence, since this is the usual response to threats to the status quo. Yet this group offers the greatest hope for the liberation of all. Referring to the fact that the task of liberation falls to the oppressed, Freire writes, “The oppressors, who oppress, exploit, and rape by virtue of their power, cannot find in this power the strength to liberate either the oppressed or themselves. Only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both.”⁴⁶

While the consequences of war have hurt our People, so, too, have the consequences of complicity. We only need to look around our reservations today to see the poor social conditions affecting a once strong and healthy People, all of which is part of the legacy of colonization. Today, 144 years later, we must cultivate a critical consciousness that will allow us to shed the colonialist visions of our past—visions that have justified our extermination and expulsion from our homelands. We must organize a meaningful and essential recovery of what is ours.

Specialists in the area of trauma and recovery have noted, "Remembering and telling the truth about terrible events are prerequisites both for the restoration of the social order and for the healing of individual victims."⁴⁷ Once we make a proper account of the U.S.-Dakota War in the broader context of colonialism and thus achieve a wider recognition that our People have been subjugated, we will have taken a major step in our own healing and in restoring our dignity. To accomplish this, we must step forward and tell each other and our children that we do not need to make apologies for our actions and that we need to give one another the strength to tell our stories.

However, we need to take additional measures as well. In her excellent work on historical trauma, Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart offers important strategies for addressing group trauma with group treatment—strategies that include "incorporating sharing experiences, the provision of hope, collective mourning, and social support."⁴⁸ Our Lakota relatives, for example, participate in a communal memorialization of the Wounded Knee massacre through the Big Foot Memorial Ride; so, too, must we as Dakota struggle with how to address the legacy of colonialism and historical trauma that we continue to face as a result of the forced removals of 1862.

NOTES

1. This particular translation is offered by Chris Mato Nunpa.
2. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970; reprint, New York: Continuum, 2001), 55.
3. Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness* (New York: Image Books, 1999), 106.
4. It must be noted that the treaty food provisions had arrived and were sitting in warehouses, but the gold also due had not arrived. The agent was waiting to distribute them together, while in the meantime, Dakota people were starving.
5. Samuel Brown, *In Captivity* (Fairfield, WA: Ye Galleon Press, 1996), 21. It must be noted that this is Brown's interpretation and translation of Little Crow's words. In Brown's translation, he reports that Little Crow said he was ashamed to call himself a Sioux, though it is much more likely that Little Crow used the term Dakota. It is also unlikely that Little Crow used the term "Indian," and he probably used "Dakota" here as well.
6. This strategy of divide and conquer is well documented. See, for example, Paulo Freire, who states, "As the oppressor minority subordinates and

dominates the majority, it must divide it and keep it divided in order to remain in power." This must happen, he says, because unity of the oppressed would signify a "serious threat to their own hegemony." Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 141.

7. Gary Clayton Anderson and Alan R. Woolworth, *Through Dakota Eyes: Narrative Accounts of the Minnesota Indian War of 1862* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1988), 26.

8. Roy Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux: United States Indian Policy on Trial* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), 96–100.

9. Ed Red Owl, Minnesota Public Radio, September 26, 2002, "Execution and Expulsion" by Mark Steil and Tim Post in the MPR series *Minnesota's Uncivil War*.

10. Message of Governor Ramsey to the Legislature of Minnesota, Delivered September 9, 1862 (St. Paul: W.M. R. Marshall, State Printer, 1862), 12.

11. Former governor of Minnesota Henry Sibley was chosen to lead this expedition because he had decades of experience trading with the Dakota, at one time even having a Dakota family. Though he

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12. See, fo
*Dakota War-
in Minnesota*,
Ross & Haine

13. *Ibid.*, 1

14. Charle
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15. Alexa
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16. *Ibid.*, 7

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19. Brown.

20. Meyer,

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1998), 31–33, t
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22. Roy P.
(Bismarck: Sta
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23. Brown,

24. Bryant
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25. Brown,

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had no military experience, he was believed to be the
 best candidate for the job because he knew the Da-
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12. See, for example, Harriet Bishop McConkey,
*Dakota War-Whoop: Or, Indian Massacres and War
 in Minnesota, of 1862-'3* (1863; reprint, Minneapolis:
 Ross & Haines, 1970).

13. *Ibid.*, 19.

14. Charles S. Bryant and Abel B. Murch, *A His-
 tory of the Great Massacre by the Sioux Indians, In
 Minnesota, Including the Personal Narratives of Many
 Who Escaped* (Cincinnati: R.W. Carroll, 1868), iii.

15. Alexander Berghold, *The Indians' Revenge*
 (New Ulm, MN: Monument Press, 1891), 71.

16. *Ibid.*, 72-73.

17. Elsie Cavender Oral History Project, con-
 ducted by Angela Cavender Wilson, Fall 1990.

18. Marshall had an excellent reputation among
 the White population for being "an officer without
 fear and without reproach," as one historian de-
 scribed him (see Buck, *Indian Outbreaks* [Minneapo-
 lis: Ross & Haines, 1965], 280).

19. Brown, *In Captivity*, 25.

20. Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux*, 146.

21. The version here is based on the one appear-
 ing in Angela Cavender Wilson, "Grandmother to
 Granddaughter: Generations of Oral History in a
 Dakota Family," in *Natives and Academics: Research-
 ing and Writing about American Indians*, ed. Devon
 Mihesuah (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press,
 1998), 31-33, though it also includes some of the in-
 formation edited out of that version.

22. Roy P. Johnson, *The Siege at Fort Abercrombie*
 (Bismarck: State Historical Society of North Dakota),
 72, reprinted from *North Dakota History* 24, no. 1 (Janu-
 ary 1957).

23. Brown, *In Captivity*, 26.

24. Bryant and Murch, *A History of the Great Mas-
 sacre*, 454-55.

25. Brown, *In Captivity*, 25-26.

26. Bain Wilson, "My Great Great Grandmother,"
Mahkato Wacipi recording, American Composers
 Forum, 2001. Though Wilson states that this was in

reference to the trip to Crow Creek, it appears that
 this story refers to the march to Fort Snelling. Elsie
 Cavender's account of her grandmother's experiences
 similarly placed the story in the context of the move
 to Crow Creek, clearly associating the first phase of
 this removal in November of 1862 with the removal
 out of Minnesota in the spring of 1863 and discussing
 it as one long event, rather than two separate events.

27. There is currently, though, a Letters Project in
 Flandreau, South Dakota, that has taken on the task
 of translating the letters sent back and forth among
 prisoners at Fort Snelling and Mankato. Perhaps they
 will uncover more specific references to these forced
 marches.

28. Sarah Purnell Montgomery, "Some Recollec-
 tions of the Indian Outbreak of 1862," M582, Roll 2,
 Dakota Conflict of 1862 Manuscripts Collections,
 Minnesota Historical Society.

29. Duane Schultz, *Over the Earth I Come: The
 Great Sioux Uprising of 1862* (New York: St. Martin's
 Press, 1992), 253-54.

30. For this quote, see Isaac V.D. Heard, *History of
 the Sioux War and Massacres of 1862 and 1863* (New
 York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1865), 240. It
 must be mentioned that while Heard places the date
 of the condemned men's departure from Lower Sioux
 on November 9, it is more likely that the group actu-
 ally left on November 8. See Lisa Elbert's essay in this
 volume for further discussion on this topic.

31. Henry Hastings Sibley to his wife, Wednesday,
 November 12, 1862, Minnesota Historical Society,
 Henry Hastings Sibley Papers, M164, Roll 11.

32. Heard, *History of the Sioux War*, 243.

33. Buck, *Indian Outbreaks*, 222.

34. Montgomery, "Some Recollections of the In-
 dian Outbreak."

35. John K. Glanville and Carrol G. Glanville, eds.,
*I Saw the Ravages of an Indian War: A Diary Written
 by Amos E. Glanville, Sr., Company "F" 10th Minne-
 sota Volunteers, August 26, 1862 to July 29, 1863* (Leoli
 KS, 1988), 36-39.

36. *Ibid.*, 44-45.

37. "Relates Unlikely Story: George Crooks, an

Indian Living at Morton Tells of His Experiences Following the Outbreak," *New Ulm Review*, February 10, 1909, no. 6.

38. Message of Governor Ramsey to the Legislature of Minnesota, 12.

39. Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, expanded version (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), 7.

40. Andrew Rigby, *Justice and Reconciliation: After the Violence* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), 19.

41. Ibid. 20.

42. Kevin Annette, *Love and Death in the Valley* (Bloomington IN: 1st Books, 2002), 163.

43. See Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963).

44. Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence from Domestic Abuse to Political Terrorism* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 7.

45. See Taiaiake Alfred, "Warrior Scholarship: Seeing the University as a Ground of Contention," in *Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities*, eds. Devon Mihesuah and Angela Cavender Wilson (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004).

46. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 44.

47. Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 1.

48. Eduardo Duran, Bonnie Duran, Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, and Susan Yellow Horse-Davis, "Healing the American Indian Soul Wound," in *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma*, ed. Yael Danieli (New York: Plenum Press, 1998), 351. See specifically, Maria Y. H. Brave Heart-Jordan, "The Return to the Sacred Path: Healing from Historical Trauma and Historical Grief among the Lakota" (PhD diss., Smith College, School for Social Work, 1995).



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