

Date: March 21, 2023

To: Minnesota State Legislators

Subject: Preserving the Access to and Sanctity of Burials

Dear Minnesota State Legislators,

One of the things which our society holds dear and sacred is that the graves of those who have passed on are to be treated with utmost respect, wherever they may be found. For the past 20 years, I have researched and written on the subject of the US – Dakota War in Minnesota in 1862. During the War, the Dakota Indians killed 600 settlers in Minnesota, with 400 of their victims lying in unmarked graves, where they were killed. The 400 are not in cemeteries.

Just as in our society today, we respect burials, so too we set aside a special place in our hearts for murder victims. In the case of the 600 victims, they are and should be treated as doubly sacred, since they died as the result of being murdered. And 100 of these 600 murder victims were children who were age ten or under.

So today, when we are dealing with the transfer of land from the State of Minnesota at the Lower Sioux Agency and potentially at the Upper Sioux Agency, where there are victims from 1862 who are buried in unmarked graves, it is imperative - a must - that any and all burials on this land be recognized and be freely accessible to whoever desires to pay their respects. Even unmarked graves whose precise location is unknown need to be included in this. This is sacred land.

Our society does not need any more problems than it already has, so putting this matter to rest in a fair manner is one of the things that can and must be done. All graves are equally important, regardless of the race of the person. This issue will not go away by itself, so action is needed by the State Legislature.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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