



MANY STORIES—STILL UNTOLD

A New Vision for Minnesota's Historic Fort Snelling



On September 10, 1820, soldiers laid the cornerstone for what today is Minnesota's best-known historic site—Historic Fort Snelling. To commemorate the fort's bicentennial in 2020, the Minnesota Historical Society is embarking on a major initiative to reintroduce this dramatic area to Minnesotans and history lovers worldwide.

For centuries, Historic Fort Snelling and the surrounding area, known as Bdote by the Dakota, has evoked both pride and pain for people of many backgrounds. It is also a place of great beauty, located at the confluence of the mighty Mississippi and Minnesota rivers. Yet, today the area is underutilized, and the visitor center is deteriorating. Many enlightening stories of the place's history need to be told, and the area itself is difficult to reach and navigate by foot, bicycle or car.

With the support of citizens like you and the State of Minnesota, a new vision for Historic Fort Snelling is possible—a new way of drawing Minnesotans and people worldwide to this unique, compelling site.

What is the vision for Historic Fort Snelling?

Our vision is that visitors of all ages and backgrounds will come together in a park-like public commons overlooking the Mississippi. Historic buildings will be rehabilitated to serve the public with visitor amenities and exhibits. People will gather to share experiences and reflect upon the site's many stories—stories of history told nowhere else—placing Minnesota on the map for history and park lovers worldwide.



**HISTORIC
FORT SNELLING**

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MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

What is the vision? (continued)

- Historic buildings will be rehabilitated to bring the public a new visitor center, exhibits, and programs.
- Wayfinding for the entire area will be enhanced for pedestrians and vehicles, linking destinations like Minnehaha Falls, Coldwater Spring, Fort Snelling Memorial Chapel, Fort Snelling State Park, and Sibley Historic Site.
- Visitors will gather to commemorate the mosaic of stories in a park-like setting that builds upon the beautiful bluff-top vista and includes places for private reflection and public programming and events.
- Connecting people to the place and to one another through the sharing of powerful stories and experiences, illustrating universal historical themes: conflict and the struggle for power, human rights, the yearning for freedom.
 - **The Dakota.** To many Dakota people, the confluence—known as Bdote—is homeland, the birthplace of the world. Later, some 1,600 Dakota were held in a stockade below the fort following the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862.
 - **Westward expansion.** The fort represents a site of U.S. expansion into Dakota and Ojibwe homelands from the fur trade to European American settlement.
 - **Slavery.** Dred and Harriet Scott were among the enslaved people who used their residence at Fort Snelling to champion freedom.
 - **Trade.** The rivers created a watery highway for trade that played a major part in the place's history from 10,000 years ago, through the fur trade era to today.
 - **Military intelligence.** During World War II, Japanese Americans, many of whom had recently been forcibly relocated to internment camps, trained at Fort Snelling to gather intelligence that helped end the war.
 - **Military service.** Hundreds of thousands of soldiers mustered through the fort in the 19th and early 20th centuries to engage in national and global conflicts. Veterans were cared for here and it's where their sacrifices continue to be honored.

Time is of the essence.

Our plan is to create a foundation for the fort's bicentennial in 2020. Together, private and public investments will allow Minnesota to bring a new Historic Fort Snelling to the world, positioning this National Historic Landmark for its third century.

PLAN FOR 2020

MNHS is requesting \$30 million from the State of Minnesota for the construction phase of the project. MNHS has received \$4.5 million from the state for predesign and design work on the project and is committed to raising \$12 million in private funds.

Core project components include:

- Rehabilitate historic cavalry barracks (Building 18) and ordnance building (Building 22) to create a new visitor center
- Demolish current visitor center and landscape vacated space
- Enhance wayfinding
- Create a park-like plaza for reflection and commemoration
- Create new exhibits and other amenities inside the visitor center to share the fort's many stories

TAKE ACTION: HELP CREATE A NEW HISTORIC FORT SNELLING.

- Contact your Minnesota legislators and Governor Dayton mnhs.org/hfs2020
- Email development@mnhs.org or call **1-651-259-3094** to talk with us about making a donation.