Minnesota History: A Chronology

1659-1660	French fur traders Groseilliers and Radisson explore western end of Lake Superior and environs.
1673	French explorers Marquette and Joliet discover the upper portion of the Mississippi River.
1679	Frenchman Daniel Greysolon, Sieur du Luth meets with Dakota near Mille Lacs.
1683	Catholic Missionary Father Louis Hennepin returns to France after exploring Minnesota and being held captive by the Dakota to write the first book about Minnesota, *Description de la Louisiane.*

1700

1745	The Anishinabe defeat the Dakota at the Kathio, driving the Dakota into southern and western Minnesota.
1763	Spain receives Louisiana Territory (includes Minnesota west of the Mississippi River) from France in compensation for its loss of Florida during the Seven Years War. Great Britain wins claim to what is now eastern North America (east of the Mississippi River) and Canada.
1770-1804	Grand Portage (Minnesota) evolves into the western fur-trading headquarters of the British Empire in North America. British troops stationed here act as only military force in Minnesota during the American Revolution. Fur trading continues to be the main source of commerce in Minnesota through the early 19th century.
1775-1783	American Revolution
1783	The newly formed republic of the United States of America wins the eastern portion of Minnesota (from the Mississippi river east) from Great Britain in the American Revolution.
1787	Eastern Minnesota officially designated part of the American Northwest Territories of the United States of America.
	David Thompson, working for the North West Company (fur-trading) completes the first formal mapping of Minnesota.

1800

1800	France acquires Louisiana Territory from Spain.
1803	The United States of America purchases Louisiana Territory from France, gaining ownership of the western portion of Minnesota. Boundary disputes with British Canada keep British fur companies in Minnesota until 1818.
1805	The U.S. government commissions Zebulon Pike to negotiate a treaty to acquire Dakota lands for a military post. Pike secures the signatures of two Dakota individuals, whom he pays with $200 worth of gifts and alcohol.
1808	The U.S. Senate ratifies the first treaty between the United States and Dakota nations, which was negotiated between Zebulon Pike and two Dakota individuals in 1805. The treaty gives the U.S. 100,000 acres of land in what would become the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area for $0.02/acre.
1812-1814	War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain with their Dakota, Ho-Chunk, and Anishinabe allies.
1815	Peace treaty negotiated between the Dakota nation and the United States government. First American fur traders enter Minnesota.
1818	Northern boundary of Minnesota fixed at the forty-ninth parallel. Boundary negotiations with British Canada continue until 1931. Lawrence Taliaferro instated as first United States Indian agent at Fort Snelling.
1819	Colonel Josiah Snelling begins construction of Fort St. Anthony on land purchased from the Dakota for $2000 US.
1824	Fort St. Anthony completed. Name changed to Fort Snelling in Honor of Colonel Josiah Snelling's work.
1832	Henry Schoolcraft credited with finding the source of the Mississippi River at Lake Itasca, Minnesota with his Anishinabe guide, Ozawindib.
1836	Creation of Wisconsin Territory, which encompassed Minnesota.
1837	Land-cession treaties negotiated with the Dakota and the Anishinabe nations for United States rights to a portion of land between the Mississippi and St. Croix rivers. This new land stimulates the lumber industry in Minnesota.
1841	Chapel of Saint Paul built. Later it would serve to name the state capitol which sprang up around it.
1838-1848	St. Paul, St. Anthony, and Stillwater (Minnesota's first towns) founded.
1848	Wisconsin admitted into the union as a state, leaving residents of the area between the Mississippi and St. Croix rivers (current day eastern Minnesota) without a territorial government or legal system.
1849	Minnesota Territory formed with present day eastern and southern boundaries set. The settler population amounts to less than 4000 people. Law provides for free public schools to be open to all people between four and twenty-one years of age. Minnesota Historical Society formed to collect, publish, and educate people about Minnesota history. James Madison Goodhue begins publishing Minnesota's first newspaper, the *Minnesota Pioneer.*

The signing of the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux

Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society

1850	Treaties concluded at Traverse des Sioux and Mendota whereby the Dakota ceded their lands east of the Red River, Lake Traverse, and the Big Dakota River and south of a boundary line between the Dakota and Anishinabe in 1825. In return the Dakota received $1,665,000 US, $1,360,000 of which was set into a trust fund. The vast majority ended up being used to pay off Indian debts to white traders. Wheat becomes a major crop in Minnesota.
1851	Charter granted to the University of Minnesota, the first collegiate institution in the territory.
1853-1857	Population explosion occurs in Minnesota from 40,000 people in 1853 to approximately 150,000 people in 1857.
1854	St. Paul becomes a city with a total area of four square miles.
1855	*Die Minnesota Deutsche Zeitung (The Minnesota German Newspaper)*, Minnesota's first non-English newspaper, rolls off the press for the first time in St. Paul.
1857	The Dred Scott Decision is rendered by the United States Supreme Court, where a Missouri slave, Dred Scott, sued for his freedom based in part upon his residence in Minnesota. Amidst the sectional and racial animosity sweeping the nation, the court ruled Scott remained a slave. The residents of the Minnesota territory ratify the state constitution almost unanimously. The Panic of 1857 sends prices skyrocketing. Banks bust and businesses fail. Depression lingers until 1861.
1858	Newspaper promotion of the Minnesota Territory prompts over one thousand steamboat arrivals in St. Paul, filled with settlers. On May 11th, Minnesota becomes the thirty-second state admitted to the Union of the United States of America. State seal adopted by the Minnesota Legislature.
1858-1859	Henry Sibley instated as first governor of Minnesota.
1859	First Minnesota State Fair held.
1861	Civil War of the United States begins. Minnesota volunteers one thousand men for service in the Union Army. Minnesota eventually provides 24,000 men for service in the Union Army.
1862	The U.S.-Dakota War begins with a series of attacks motivated by hungry Dakota enraged by the failure of the U.S. government to honor treaties. By the end of the conflict 486 white settlers are dead. On December 26th thirty-eight Dakota are hung at Mankato following questionable war trials. It is the largest mass execution in U.S. history. Minnesota's first railroad is completed, connecting Minneapolis and Saint Paul.

Casualties from the Charge of the First Minnesota at Gettysburg

Photo Courtesy of American Memory

1863	At the Battle of Gettysburg the First Minnesota Regiment makes a heroic charges, losing 215 of 262 men.
1865	Civil War of the United States ends.
1868	Mankato receives a city charter. The Minnesota Legislature authorizes establishment of the 2nd State Normal School in Mankato (now known as Minnesota State University, Mankato).

Duluth, Minnesota - 1870

Photo Courtesy of American Memory

1873	A three-day blizzard hits Minnesota in January, killing 70 Minnesotans.
1878	68.98% of tilled land in Minnesota devoted to wheat production, the high point for wheat farmers in Minnesota. After five consecutive summers of devastating infestations of Rocky Mountain Locusts (called the great Grasshopper Plague) which thrived on wheat, farmers decided to diversify, and wheat production was slowly replaced by other crops and dairy farming. A massive explosion in a Minneapolis flour mill kills 18.
1880	Telephone communication begins between St. Paul and Minneapolis.
1881	St. Paul is destroyed by fire.
1883	Mayo Clinic founded by Dr. William Worrall Mayo in Rochester, Minnesota after a tornado sweeps through Rochester, killing 35. With his two sons, Dr. William James Mayo and Dr. Charles Horace Mayo, he begins a clinic world-renowned for its dedication to the latest advances in medicine and surgical procedures.

1884	Minnesota iron ore begins to be exported heralding the dawn of iron mining in Minnesota. Over the next two decades mines spring up on the Mesabi, Cuyuna, and Vermilion iron ranges, spurring the rapid growth of mining cities such as Evelyth, Chisholm, Virginia, and Hibbing, Minnesota as well as the port cities of Duluth, Minnesota and Superior, Wisconsin.
1886	Sauk Rapids is flattened by a tornado. Seventy-nine people die. St. Paul holds its first winter carnival.
1887	St. Paul hosts the first ski tourney in the Midwest.
1888	Western Minnesota receives a major blizzard on January 12th which takes 109 lives.
1890s	Electric streetcars become commonplace in large Minnesota cities.
1893	The Minnesota state flag, designed by Amelia Hyde Center of Minneapolis, is accepted by the Minnesota Legislature. Virginia, Minnesota destroyed by fire.
1894	A massive forest fire caused by clear-cut logging debris encompasses Hinckley, Minnesota and several other nearby communities. Over 400 die.
1898	The Spanish-American War begins. Minnesota, the first state to volunteer, raises four regiments, one of which serves in the Philippines. Disease proves to be the biggest killer, with combat fatalities accounting for only four Minnesota soldier deaths. Farmer Olof Ohman finds a stone tablet with runic carvings on it in his field near Kensington, Minnesota. The runes indicate a party of Viking explorers passed through that area in 1362. Initially considered a hoax, it was accepted by the Smithsonian Institution in 1948. Opinions differ, but most academic sources today doubt its veracity.

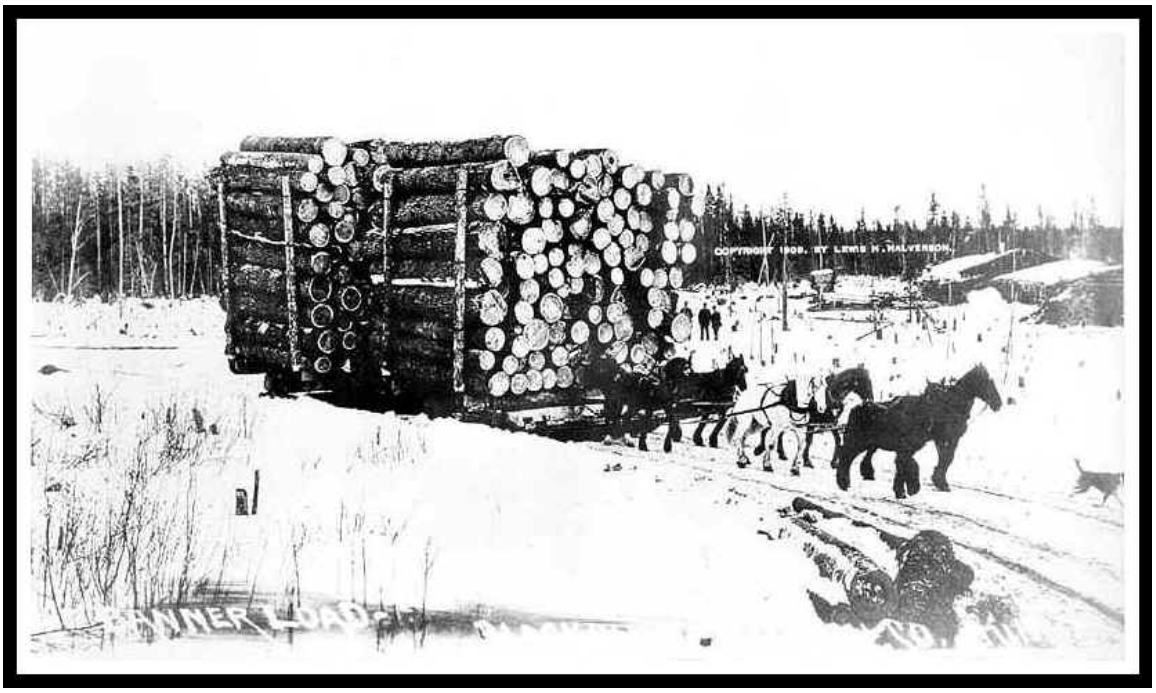
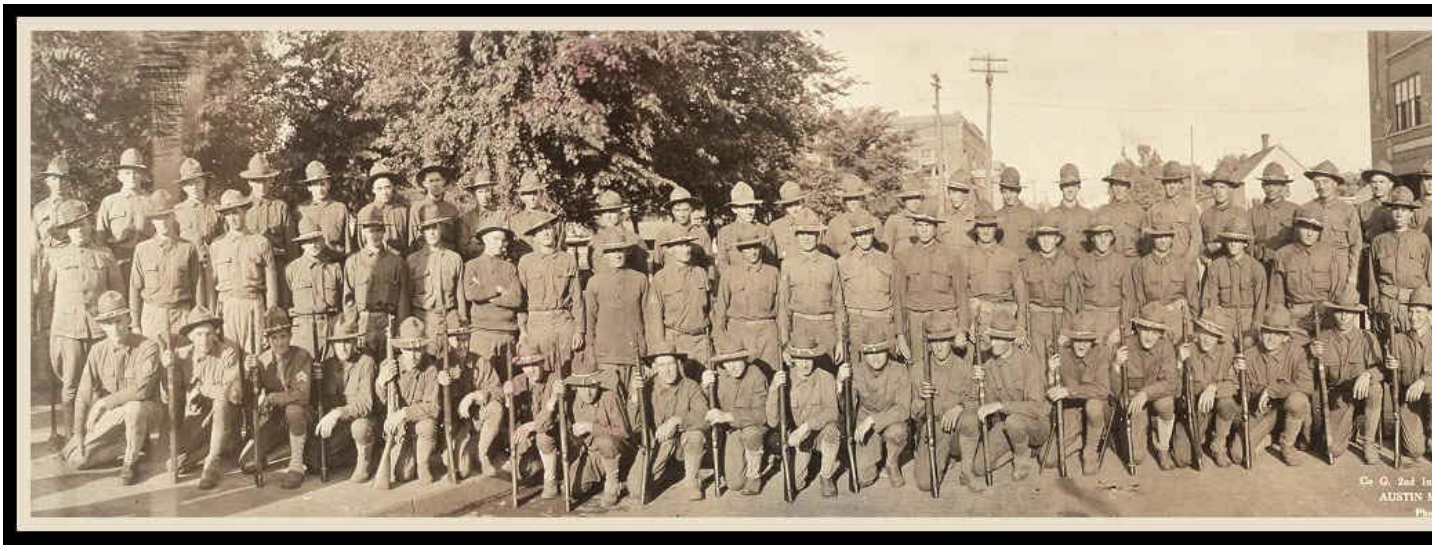


Photo Courtesy of American Memory

1899	Minnesota's lumber industry reaches its peak. By 1930 only 1/3 of the state would remain forested, with very little of that virgin growth.

1900

1900	Virginia, Minnesota destroyed by fire again.
1902	Approximately 12 automobiles appear in Minneapolis. Tom Shevlin, son of a lumber magnate, gets arrested for violating the 10 mile-per-hour city speed limit.
1905	John A. Johnson, Minnesota's first native-born governor, elected to the first of his three terms. Lumber production peaks in Minnesota.
1906	William Williams is hanged in the county jail in St. Paul on February 13th, the last capital punishment in Minnesota.
1908	Chisholm, Minnesota is virtually obliterated by a late summer forest fire.
1914	World War I begins. Minneapolis becomes the home of the Federal Reserve Bank.



Company C, 2d Infantry, Minnesota National Guard - Austin, Minnesota, 1917

Photo Courtesy of American Memory

1917	The United States of America enters World War I. 118,497 men from Minnesota serve in the war.
1918	World War I ends with 1,432 Minnesotans in uniform giving their lives for their country. The new Farmer-Labor Party becomes the second-largest political party in Minnesota and capitalizes on the rural depression which plagues Minnesota until 1824 to gain a broad base of support. Influenza spreads to Minnesota. Labeled a "pandemic of influenza", this disease to kills 7,521Minnesotans in 1918 and more than 4200 over the course of the following two years. Cloquet and Moose Lake, Minnesota are destroyed when 72 mile-an-hour winds change minor forest fires into major conflagrations.
1919	Minnesota ratifies the 19th amendment (Women's Suffrage) to the United States Constitution. A tornado strikes Fergus Falls, Minnesota killing 59.
1920	Minnesota authors receive international recognition. *Main Street*, written by Sinclair Lewis, earns national recognition as he takes a critical look at his hometown of Sauk Centre, Minnesota. By the end of the decade he had won the Nobel Prize for literature after a string of four more novels won international acclaim. St. Paul native F. Scott Fitzgerald receives much acclaim for his book *This Side of Paradise.* By 1925 he had published five more works, all focusing on the extravagance and despair of the 1920s in the United States.
1921	WLB, the first Minnesota radio station, airs from the University of Minnesota.
1927	Charles Lindbergh, a native of Little Falls, Minnesota, flies solo across the Atlantic Ocean from New York to Paris.
1929	The Great Depression begins in Minnesota with the bankruptcy of key employers in Minneapolis and quickly spreads to the rest of the state.

Photo Courtesy of American Memory

1930-1935	Over 1/2 of iron ore extracted from the earth originates in Minnesota mines.
1931	Ancient remains of 20,000-year-old skeleton dubbed "Minnesota Man" found in Otter Tail County, Minnesota.
1933	"Browns Valley Man" remains, estimated to be 8,000 - 10,000 years old, are discovered in Brown County, Minnesota.
1934	Edward G. Bremer of St. Paul is kidnapped by the Barker-Karpis gang. His ransom of $200,000 is one of the largest ransoms in the United States up to that time. By 1936 the kidnappers are caught and convicted. "Public Enemy Number 1", John Dillinger, has a gun battle with FBI agents in St. Paul on March 11th and escapes. Minneapolist truckers' union, Teamsters Local 574, initiate a citywide strike in May to gain union recognition and fair wages. The conflict eventually results in a violent confrontation between the strikers, police forces, and a local militia that was rounded up by business leaders. The settlement of the strike is a major victory for the labor movement in Minnesota.
1936	Temperatures remain below zero for a record thirty-six days beginning on January 18. Later in the summer Moorhead, Minnesota ties a state record high official temperature of 114 degrees Fahrenheit, previously set in Beardsley, Minnesota in 1927.
1939	A hockey game in the Duluth Amphitheater is interrupted when the ceiling collapses under the weight of snow. No deaths are reported.
1940	The Armistice Day Blizzard strikes Minnesota leaving a 16.8 inches of snow in 24 hours. Winds that day exceed 32 miles-per-hour with gusts over 60 miles-per-hour. Forty-nine Minnesota residents die and over $1,500,000 worth of property is damaged.
1941	First tax on taconite, a black magnetic iron-bearing ore, in effect in Minnesota. The United States enters World War II. Singer Bob Zimmerman (Bob Dylan) born in Duluth.
1944	The Democratic and Farmer Labor parties merge to form the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party.
1945	World War II ends, with 6,255 American servicemen from Minnesota giving their lives for their country. The Minnesota state song, "Hail! Minnesota" is adopted by the Minnesota Legislature.
1948	Minnesota's first television station, KSTP, goes on the air.
1950	The Korean War begins. By the time of the armistice in 1953, 688 Minnesotans had died in the fighting.
1951	Over 82% of iron ore extracted from United States mines during this year originates in Minnesota.
1954	Coya Knutson becomes the first Minnesota woman elected to the Congress of the United States.
1958	Prince Rogers Nelson (the artist formerly known as Prince) born in Minneapolis.
1959	The opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway makes Duluth accessible to the Atlantic Ocean.
1963	Last iron ore shipment leaves the Vermillion iron range.
1964	Minnesota Senator Hubert Humphrey elected Vice-President of the United States as the running-mate of president Lyndon Johnson. Conventional American ground forces are introduced into Vietnam.
1968	Senator Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota begins his bid for the presidency by easily winning the New Hampshire presidential primary. Minnesota Senator Hubert Humphrey also runs for president that year, narrowly losing to Richard Nixon. The American Indian Movement (AIM) is founded in Minneapolis to combat oppression of American Indians.
1969	Warren Burger, a native of St. Paul, is appointed to the Supreme Court of the United States.
1970	Minnesotan Harry Blackmun is appointed to the Supreme Court of the United States. He would later write the majority opinion in the case of *Roe v. Wade*, which confirms the legality of abortion.
1972	First annual *Dakota Mahkato Mdewakanton Wacipi* is held. The three-day powwow commemorates the 38 Dakota who were killed on December 26th, 1862 and encapsulates reconciliation efforts between Dakota and non-Dakota people of the Mankato area.
1975	The last American military personnel leave Vietnam with the evacuation of the United States embassy in Saigon, completely ending American involvement in Vietnam and the Vietnam War. 1,053 Minnesotans give their lives over the course of the war.
1976	Jimmy Carter becomes the 39th president of the United States with Minnesota Senator Walter Mondale as his vice-president. Mondale would later run for president in 1984, losing to Ronald Reagan.
1977	Rosalie Wahl becomes the first woman justice in the Minnesota Supreme Court.
1980	The City of Mankato presents the Dakota people the *Dakota Wokiksuye Mokoce* (Dakota Land of Memories) as a place to host the annual powwow. Last iron ore shipment leaves the Cuyuna iron range.

1982	A total of 34.3 inches of snow falls on the Twin Cities on January 20th and 22nd. Taconite mining emerges as the future employment source for the iron range, with 12,000 workers. The subsequent depression and trend toward mechanization halve that number by 1995.
1984	Last iron ore shipment leaves the Mesabi iron range, effectively ending Minnesota's direct iron ore industry and confirming a difficult depression on the iron range.
1987	An official Year of Reconciliation is declared between the Dakota and non-Dakota people of the Mankato area. The Minnesota Twins win the World Series.
1988	The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, passed to promote tribal economies, causes a boom in Indian casinos and gambling in Minnesota. By 1990 Minnesota ranks fourth in the nation in per capita gambling sales. Minnesota hit by a record setting drought.
1990	Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev visits Minnesota.
1991	Operation Desert Storm occurs with approximately 11,000 Minnesotans in uniform helping to defeat Iraq and liberate Kuwait. The Minnesota Twins win the World Series. A record-breaking snowstorm hits Minnesota on November 1st, depositing 24 inches of snow in 24 hours.
1996	Coldest official temperature ever recorded in Minnesota set at -60 degrees Fahrenheit on February 2nd near Tower, MN.
1998	Minnesota becomes home to largest ethnic Hmong population in America.
2002	Dakota people in Minnesota organize the first Dakota Commemorative March to honor their ancestors that were forcibly marched to concentration camps in 1862.

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