

Historical Unit Hears Talk on Dakota Founder

DAKOTA, Minn. — About 60 attending a meeting of the Winona County Historical Society at the Methodist church here Sunday heard a reading of the life story of Nathan Brown, pioneer area resident, by Ellsworth Brown, a grandson.

Brown said that his grandfather was born April 24, 1820, in Clinton County, N. Y., the son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Brown.

"By 1844, he had saved \$8,000 by being very careful of his spending and decided to look for an investment. He came to Prairie du Chien (Wis.) and ran a ferry and did other work. In 1847 he came to St. Anthony and St. Paul, intending to settle, but was induced by B. W. Buboiss and F. T. Richards to join with them and establish a trading post at Dakota."

NATHAN Brown was unable to get a government license at that time, as all land west of the Mississippi was Indian land, so he made a treaty with Chief Wabasha and for \$50 worth of flour and various trinkets he got his trading rights with the Indians.

He continued, "At one time his entire holdings had a paper value of \$50,000, because at that time the Black River came in above Dakota. But soon, La Crosse men cut a channel along the Wisconsin side, allowing all logs from that side to come straight down. This reduced the value of the site to around \$2,000 in 1850. However, Nate never gave up the idea it would one day be a city."

Other settlers often became discouraged and Nathan Brown purchased numerous properties until at one time he owned a total of 400 acres in the Dakota area.

In 1855, Dakota village was laid out, and 17 years later Nathan Brown opened a store with his son, Hoyt Brown, as clerk.

Nathan Brown donated land for a cemetery and his first wife was the first to be buried there in 1854. Mr. Brown also donated land for three churches and the railroad with the stipulation that the train should stop here each way, "so long as a station was here."

THE FIRST school was in Nate Brown's home. The first teacher, Ellen Young, received \$12 a month for teaching eight students.

The post office was established at Dakota in 1874 and Nathan Brown was the first postmaster. Master of ceremonies for Sunday's program was John Donehower. Informal talks were by Merrill Cass and Mrs. George Kissling. A picture of Nathan Brown from files of the Winona County Old Settlers Association was shown. Elwood Brown presented a vocal solo, accompanied by Miss Elsie Brown. Refreshments were supervised by Mrs. Frank Sheehan Sr. Mrs. Ray Iverson was in charge of local arrangements.