

## **Minnesota Superintendency of Indian Affairs**

The two principal types of field jurisdictions of the Office of Indian Affairs in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were superintendencies and agencies. Superintendents had general responsibility for Indian affairs in a designated geographical area. Their duties included the supervision of relations between the tribes and non-Indians, the supervision of the conduct and accounts of agents responsible to them, the communication of instructions from the Commissioner to agents, and the granting of leaves of absence to subordinates. It was also common practice for them to receive contract bids, enter into contracts, and issue annuities to the Indians. Under each superintendent were agents, subagents, or special agents immediately responsible for one or more tribes.

The Minnesota Superintendency was established in 1849 with the organization of Minnesota Territory (9 Stat. 403), which included the eastern part of what later became North Dakota and South Dakota. The Territorial Governor at St. Paul served as ex officio superintendent throughout the existence of the superintendency. The superintendency included the St. Peters Agency (which oversaw the Mdewakanton, Wahpetkute, Sisseton, and Wahpeton people in Minnesota), as well as the Winnebago Agency. When the Minnesota Superintendency was discontinued in 1856, its agencies were transferred to the Northern Superintendency.

### **Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1849-1856 (M234).**

The records in this microfilm publication consist of communications received by the Office of Indian Affairs from the Minnesota Superintendency concerning the general situation of the Indians, their population, education, health, and medical care, and their agriculture and subsistence. The letters cover such matters of administrative concern as emigration, land allotments, annuity payments, depredations, claims, complaints, traders, buildings, supplies, employees, and accounts. Correspondence is grouped by year and thereunder arranged alphabetically by initial letter of surname or official position of the writer. Within each alphabetical section, correspondence is arranged by file number, which was assigned to each letter as they were registered.

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### **Records of the Minnesota Superintendency of Indian Affairs, 1849-1856 (M842).**

This microfilm publication was produced by the National Archives and contains incoming and outgoing correspondence relating to almost all aspects of Indian administration within the Minnesota Superintendency. There are letters relating to negotiation and enforcement of treaties; land matters; Indian emigration and subsistence; intrusions on Indian lands; law and order; annuity and other payments; inter-tribal hostilities; military operations; depredation claims;

traders and licenses; missionaries and schools; location of agencies; construction and repair of buildings; purchase and transportation of goods and supplies; employees; and accounts. Some of the records also concern other Territorial matters.

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