

April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007

To the kind soul reading this,

In honor of the lifelong mission of Prairie Island Community leader Amos Owen to commemorate the lives of the 38 Dakota men hanged at Mankato in 1862, Duane A. Owen and Sherece Lamke have committed to donating their time for the next year to complete a feature-length documentary on these men, the times they lived in and the survival of their families and their culture. A heartfelt story, well told, can indeed change the world or at least correct perceptions.

We respectfully request your support in this endeavor. The funds you provide would be combined with those from foundations, Tribal Council's and other individuals to help us secure footage and music rights, travel to the locations the descendants of the 38 live today and to hire the experienced crew necessary to give this documentary a lasting impact.

Through interviews with descendants across several states and Canada, interviews with historians and scholars blended with historical and family research, this documentary will bring a very personal aspect to this period of history. Our goals are to grant the viewer a sense of atmosphere in Minnesota at the time of the Dakota Uprising, to give a sense of the vitality of the Dakota culture that survives through to today and finally to promote reconciliation.

Each of us has a place in history and each of our stories have important lessons for future generations. We are all related. With your help we can continue on the path toward reconciliation.

IFP Minnesota is supporting the project and is our fiscal agent making donations tax deductible.

Enclosed is the full proposal and expense/income budget for your consideration. We would be happy to provide any additional materials you may need or to visit with you to share our passion for completing this documentary.

Sincerely,

Duane A. Owen & Sherece Lamke

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## **Dakota 38-Proposal**

### **Summary:**

Duane A. Owen and Sherece Lamke respectfully request support for a feature length documentary focused on the 38 Dakota men hanged at Mankato after the Uprising of 1862. Through interviews with descendents across several states and Canada, interviews with historians and scholars blended with historical and family research, this feature-length documentary will bring a very personal aspect to this period of history and help us understand the human rights relevance today. Our goals are to grant the viewer a sense of atmosphere in Minnesota at the time of the Dakota Uprising, to give a sense of the vitality of the Dakota culture that survives through to today, especially regarding language and cultural resurgence in the Dakota youth, and finally to promote reconciliation. Mr. Owen is Mdewakanton Dakota descended from the people exiled from Minnesota after the uprising and Ms. Lamke descends from English settlers, some of whom fought against the Dakota in 1862. We feel that by honoring our ancestors we can promote the need for tolerance and respect among people from diverse backgrounds.

### **The History :**

On December 24<sup>th</sup>, 1862 in an overcrowded jail in Mankato, Minnesota, 38 Dakota men are allowed to spend time with some of their family members for the last time. Two days later, upon orders signed by President Abraham Lincoln, they will die together in the largest mass public execution in U.S. history. Their bodies are claimed by area doctors for medical research. The Dakota treaties are soon canceled, the annuity payments forfeited and nearly all Dakota are forcefully removed from Minnesota.

Five months earlier the Dakota people are facing starvation. Groups go to the Lower Sioux Agency asking for food on credit but are turned away by trader Andrew Myrick who proclaims “if your children are hungry let them eat grass or their own dung.” At the Upper Sioux Agency soldiers require traders to release food to calm a near revolt. Rumors circulate that the late annuity payment may not come this year due to the Civil War or may never come again. Not that much of the payment has ever reached the Dakota since any trader can put claims against the annuities without the Dakota being able to challenge those claims. Bishop Whipple has written to two Presidents about this rampant fraud.

Dissatisfied with the Government’s promises and struggling for survival on reservation lands, many Dakota return to familiar areas to hunt in order to feed their families, but find them now occupied by white immigrants. In the 1850 census the Minnesota Territory had a population of just over 6,000 non-Indians; by 1862 the new state has over 150,000.

Exactly what happened on August 17<sup>th</sup> 1862 is not certain. The most likely scenario seems to be that at least four hungry young Dakota men from an unsuccessful hunting party visit with an acquaintance, settler Robinson Jones, argue over a borrowed gun and end up killing five people, including a 15 year-old girl.

The young men return to their village expecting to be turned over to authorities. Several in the council begin talking of the recent injustices against Dakota. Someone says that with so many men away fighting the Civil War, now may be the only time they will have the opportunity to take back their land for which the government has failed to make

payment. The group looking for a Dakota chief influential enough to lead them in war end up at Little Crow's camp where a council is called, options weighed and futures decided. Few Dakota are enthusiastic for war. They know retaliation will be swift, harsh and indiscriminate either way so war is decided and led begrudgingly by Little Crow.

On the morning of August 18<sup>th</sup> the Lower Sioux Agency is attacked. Andrew Myrick is among the first killed, his mouth stuffed with grass. A detail of soldiers coming to the Lower Agency is ambushed, and the uprising spreads across southern Minnesota. Within days over 300 are dead, civilians and soldiers alike.

Governor Ramsey declares "The Sioux Indians of Minnesota must be exterminated or driven forever beyond the borders of the state." He appoints Henry Hastings Sibley as the military leader to squash the Dakota Uprising. Sibley was the first Governor of Minnesota, sometimes friend of the Dakota, father to a few Dakota half breeds, and a man who had made uncontestable claims against the Dakota annuities. He has no military experience and the media soon begin to challenge his slow progress.

The war lasts only weeks and divides the Dakota Nation. As the last battle is fought and lost at Wood Lake, thousands of Dakota flee west and north. A peaceful party of Dakota takes into protective custody 269 white or mixed blood captives, mostly women and children, and turns them over to Sibley. He immediately renames their Dakota village Camp Release and takes the peaceful Dakota into custody. Within days he forms a military tribunal comprised of men who had fought against the Dakota and starts 392 trials. The trials are completed in just 5 weeks. Few of the men on trial understand English, none are provided counsel, and their interpreter is the same man who had interviewed each of them in the camp to identify those who were to be put on trial. No more than 60 are acquitted with over 300 sentenced to hang. Only President Lincoln's interference slows down the process of revenge as he asks to see all the transcripts before approving any executions.

1,700 Dakota at Camp Release, mostly women, children and elderly, are marched to an internment camp at Fort Snelling. They are attacked by angry mobs as they pass through Henderson. A baby is snatched out its mother's arms and dashed against the ground. Several who survive the march succumb to disease and starvation over the winter.

The 303 sentenced to hang, as well as 360 other Dakota men in chains and 20 women and children, mostly relatives of the condemned, are marched from Camp Release to Camp Lincoln in Mankato through New Ulm where they are attacked. Some of the soldiers and the chained Dakota are injured before the soldiers can push the mob back.

Minnesota congressmen send Lincoln a letter demanding that all hang to avoid letting mob law avenge the violated white women of Minnesota. Local and national newspapers run sensational and unsubstantiated stories of gang rape. Lincoln finds only two convictions that include even a rape charge and puts these men on his approved execution list. After a visit from Bishop Whipple, who makes a plea on behalf of the condemned men, Lincoln reviews the court transcripts looking for those accused of the murder of women and children as opposed to those convicted for fighting soldiers. Eventually he approves the execution of 39, and then reprieves one more when new evidence is found. On the day after Christmas 1862, 38 Dakota men stand on a platform attached by a single

rope. They call out their own and each others names proclaiming “I am here” before the rope is cut. An artist is there to paint the moment for posterity. The scene is recreated on souvenirs.

After Ramsey fails to find a state’s rights-versus-federal loophole to hang all those convicted he wins the right to remove them from Minnesota. In the spring those who’ve survived disease and starvation at Fort Snelling are moved to Crow Creek in modern South Dakota, while the remaining prisoners at Camp Lincoln are moved to Camp McClellan near Davenport, Iowa. Bounties eventually reaching \$200 are placed on the scalps of any Dakota people found in Minnesota. Little Crow, killed while picking berries with his son, has his scalp displayed at the State Capitol. Punitive expeditions led by Sibley and Alfred Sully are sent west where many Dakota who have avoided starvation are killed in battles or in outright massacres of entire villages.

Those imprisoned at Camp McClellan are released upon orders from President Andrew Johnson on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1866 and rejoin families in Nebraska, where a second reservation has formed after Crow Creek proves uninhabitable.

In the late 1880’s a few Dakota start coming home to Minnesota, joining the few who had stayed and eventually forming four small communities that became reservations, where they remain today.

**Project details:**

The structure of the documentary will likely follow the timeline of the events leading up to, during and in the years following the Dakota Uprising from the perspective of specific people. We will follow the intersecting lives of several Dakota people and a few average white settlers. It will include a few who have towns or streets named after them but many others whose lives were just as important although not as well-recognized.

Our focus will be on the families of the Dakota 38 wherever possible. We will include some of the Dakota who were tried and convicted but reprieved, like Wambdi Tanka who fought in and helped lead some of the battles against soldiers, then left an incredibly detailed and honest narrative. We will also include Dakota who opposed the war.

We will include the perspective of some of the white immigrants. Sarah Wakefield was taken captive in the early days of the uprising and had her life saved by one of the men eventually hanged. She published what was a controversial narrative at the time about the mistreatment the Dakota people endured leading up to the war. We will also include soldier Amos Day who enlisted as a Union soldier just days before the uprising began, and ended up in several of the battles as a green recruit. He was sent on the punitive expeditions to Dakota Territory in 1863 before being shipped south to fight Confederates. He was captured in Mississippi and shipped to the prison at Andersonville where he died of starvation. He bequeathed his Minnesota homestead to his baby sister Sarah. She wrote of the move to Minnesota in 1865, which was marked by the sad faces that lined the tracks for part of the way as they shared a train with the body of Abraham Lincoln.

Bringing the viewer face to face with history can provide building blocks towards further reconciliation. Used in the classroom, we hope this will help youth recognize the need for tolerance and understanding.

With immigration the hot topic in our news media today this timely presentation of a personal sense of history and an analysis of mistakes made in our nation's past could provide insights useful to our current era. Success for the project will be evaluated by counting the number of schools in Minnesota and beyond who choose to utilize the program in their curricula, as well as by collecting viewer responses regarding their reactions, gathered at festival or community screenings and on websites following broadcasts and cablecasts. We intend to donate copies of the program to historical societies, reservations and schools.

A crucial part of reconciliation will be the location and repatriation of the remains of the Dakota 38. We will investigate whether the American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990 has seen the remains quietly restored to the Dakota, as they were by the Mayo Clinic, or whether there is work yet to be done.

Reconciliation was something worked on earnestly for decades by Prairie Island Dakota spiritual leader, Amos Owen and white Mankato business owners Bud Lawrence and Jim Buckley, founders of the Pow Wow honoring the Dakota 38 in *Land of Memories Park* in Mankato. With this project Duane A. Owen and Sherece Lamke hope to continue this worthwhile tradition.

#### **Key Creatives:**

Executive Producer **Duane (Duffy) Owen** is an enrolled member of the Prairie Island Mdewakanton Dakota Community.

As a young man, Duffy studied filmmaking under award-winning independent producer/director Chris Spotted Eagle and award-winning international filmmaker Bob Richards. Working on both sides of the camera, he was instrumental in the production of several films including '*Harold of Orange*,' '*Fort Snelling*,' '*The Living History Series*,' and episodes of '*Wyld Ryce*' (a magazine program produced for Twin Cities Public Television).

In 1994 Duffy joined with Bob Richards to establish Strait Arrow Productions, Inc., a Native American-owned company. They produced several cultural films including '*Our People Today*,' '*Friend and Ally*' and '*The Elders*.' Both '*Our People Today*' and '*Friend and Ally*' are used as diversity training tools for employees of Treasure Island Resort and Casino. '*The Elders*,' an enchanting collection of interviews with senior members of the Prairie Island Mdewakanton Dakota Community, preserves the legacy of a now lost generation of the Dakota people.

Duffy is the youngest of seven children of the late Dakota spiritual and community leader Amos Owen and his wife Ione. His father Amos spent his lifetime promoting healing and understanding between Indian and non-Indian, educating young people, and preserving the culture of the Dakota people. In their own way, each of Amos' children carries on the vision of their father. Through his filmmaking, Duffy continues the journey of reconciliation.

Producer/Director **Sherece Lamke** is the sole owner and proprietor of Brighid Films which launched in 2006.

Sherece started out believing she wanted to be an actor.

She trained for years in that direction, working as a public television broadcast engineer in the early mornings and training at a theater late into the night. The first time she stood on stage with all eyes focused on her she realized that wasn't actually the side of storytelling that intrigued her. She understood at that point that it was the written word and crafting a story from behind a camera or edit desk that was what really held her interest.

Sherece has produced programs that promote understanding within diverse world cultures while sensitively handling difficult political subject matter (for Twin Cities Public Television; *Holocaust Aftermath: Across Generations*, *Armenian Genocide: 90 Years Later*, 2005 News Special regional Emmy nomination and 2006 NBNA Eric Severeid Award winner). She has directed, produced and edited performance DVDs meant to capture the moment the line between artist and audience disappears (*Live at the Ave* featuring Hothouse Flowers & Colin Devlin). She has directed, produced, ran one of the cameras and edited music documentaries aimed at giving viewers a peek behind the scenes with some amazingly inspirational musicians (*Hothouse Flowers: Scenes from a Tour*, *JoAnna James*, *Chris Koza* and currently working with *Colin Devlin*). She co-wrote, directed, co-produced and financed a narrative short entitled "*Influence*". She wrote the feature length screenplay "*Silence*" she calls a feminine perspective Cyrano de Bergerac (2000 Edmonds International Film Festival Final Draft Award).

Sherece sees herself ultimately as a storyteller with a sense of responsibility to the characters whether in documentaries featuring real people she is simply providing the means for the voice to be heard or in screen writing where the characters are created from her imagination for a specific purpose. She hopes with Brighid Films to make the world a better place, one story at a time.

**IFP Minnesota** supports this project and has agreed to be its fiscal agent. IFP Minnesota envisions a world where expression through images is valued and encouraged. For 18 years, IFP Minnesota has been the Center for Media Arts that supports and promotes the work of artists who create screenplays, film, video, and photography in the Upper Midwest.

**Timeline:**

We plan to be in principle photography sometime in 2008, Minnesota's Sesquicentennial year. We plan to complete the documentary in time for festival submissions and broadcast by the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the Dakota Uprising, August 2012.

**Conclusion:**

With the help of your tax deductible donation, checks made out to IFP Minnesota with "Dakota 38" in the memo line, the names and stories of the Dakota 38 will not be lost. Each of us has a place in history and each of our stories have important lessons for future generations. We are all related. With your help we can continue on the path toward reconciliation.

## Dakota 38-Expense Budget

### EXPENSES (production goal August 2008 through August 2009)

*Sherece Lamke & Duane A. Owen (Producers) donating time for the life of the project.*

Associate Producer (for research & production administration)	\$ 8,000
Line Producer/Production Manager for shoot & post coordination	\$ 4,400
Field Production: (24 field days with videographer & audio engineer-mostly out Of Twin Cities Metro area. Travel around conflict sites, Mankato In September and December, North and South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska and Canada to the sites of exile.)	\$ 49,000
Travel costs for the producing staff (3)	\$ 8,000
Post Production: (2 weeks online edit, 2 weeks sweetening with Music Composition, 8 hours Voice Over time for narration and 40 hours of design time (for open and graphics)	\$ 20,500
Flat Art & Footage rights	\$ 5,000
Voice Talent (will need several voices for historical letters as well as an Overall narrator and are looking at name recognized talent)	\$ 7,500
Music Composition/scoring (several musicians, studio rental & mixing)	\$ 10,000
Contingency/Research Books & MHS copying services	\$ 2,075
Dubbing/Transfer: Final dubs, master DVCam and dubbed DVD (not authored/ Chapters). Assumes 1 hour show close captioned.	\$ 1,100
Non Profit Fiscal Agent	\$ 4,425
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$120,000</b>

### FUNDING PROPOSALS ARE OUT TO FOUNDATIONS & TRIBAL COUNCILS

Contact Sherece Lamke at [Sherece@brighidfilms.com](mailto:Sherece@brighidfilms.com) for more information