

## Connection points in history

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Anoka County history by Ryan Dawson

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The family had been to the Black Hills before, and so Hilde looked through some of the information they had brought back, and sure enough she found the name Moses Manuel listed along with his brother Fred as the men who had originally staked the claim for the largest and deepest gold mine in North America - the Homestake Mine in Lead, S.D.

This intrigued Hilde; "I had learned to use libraries as a resource, so I called up there to see if they had any more information, and they told me, 'Oh yes, we have a really wonderful diary that he wrote, and we can send you a copy.'" After receiving the very faded, 14-page manuscript, Hilde retyped the entire document from 1903 and brought a copy to the Anoka County Historical Society for the archives.

Last week, I came across the manuscript while thumbing through the files, and after reading the first few pages, I was simply blown away by the stories that Moses shared about his adventures as a boy in Henderson around the mid-1800s. Moses and his brother Fred hunted and trapped among Sioux and Chippewa tribes and "saw considerable fighting."

Moses Manuel wrote, "The first little Indian excitement I remember was made by a band of Sioux, led by Chief Little Crow. They had got hold of some whiskey and were drunk. They surrounded the house and made a good deal of noise, but finally went away without harming anyone."

In 1862, Fred went south with the 10th Minnesota Regiment and served in the Civil War until it ended, and by the spring of 1867 the Manuel boys headed through the hostile Dakota territories into what is now Montana. There they were introduced to mining along with other Minnesotans who had named the town after St. Helena, Minnesota. Later, Helena would become the capitol of Montana.

Moses and Fred Manuel spent many years traveling and mining throughout the west from Montana to Utah to Arizona. They spent a good deal of time in California and Nevada and had considerable success at prospecting. In 1874, Moses "followed the Alaska excitement to the north" and found "plenty of gold there."

The Manuel brothers finished out the season, headed to Portland and sold their "gold dust" for about \$25,000, preparing to set sail for Africa. While waiting for the ship, Moses had gotten a hold of General Custer's report of the Black Hills and

decided to postpone the trip. Instead, the Manuel boys packed up and headed back east, surely unaware that they were about to make history. (To be continued next week)

Have an interesting story? Please e-mail me at [ryanwdawson@gmail.com](mailto:ryanwdawson@gmail.com) .