# About the Mendota Community.

**Who We Are:** Mdo-Te or Mendota is a Dakota word meaning “Meeting of the waters.” Mendota is located near Minneapolis and St. Paul at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers. We are the Mendota Mdewakanton Dakota Tribal Community Our mission is: “To preserve, protect, and promote the Dakota culture for future generations.” History shows us that the Mdewakanton Dakota had villages here as early as the 1700’s. The MMDTC is the Fifth Dakota community in Minnesota and is currently in the process of achieving Federal Acknowledgement by the Department of the Interior. Members of the current Mendota community are direct descendants of French and Indian inter-marriages also called the “Mixed Bloods”. The majority are descendants of Angelique Renville and Hypolite Dupuis as well as other Mixed Blood families whose ancestors lived in this area.

**Early Life:** Our people were the first inhabitants of the State of Minnesota. We are the Dakota Mdewakanton. “Dwellers of the Spirit Lake” also called Lake Mille lacs. We also had villages located in the Anoka County/ Ramsey vicinity and along the banks of the Wakpa Tanka (Mississippi River). We are the descendants of Chief Cetan Wakuwa Mani of the Kaposia Band of the Mdewakanton Dakota. Cetan Wakuwa Mani was also called “Little Crow” of the Little Crow Dynasty.

In the 1700’s our Kaposia village was located in what is now St. Paul near our sacred cave “Wakan“ Spirit House” now called Carvers Cave and below our great ancestral burial mounds at Mounds Park. It’s location on the North side of the Wakpa Tanka now called the Mississippi River near the Lake Phalen creek was in proximity to the Imnizaska or “White Cliffs” to the West; the low- marshlands to the South and “The Grand Marias” now called Pigs Eye Lake to the East.

**Our Mission** is*to preserve, protect, and promote the Dakota culture for future generations*.

**We have 7 Goals:**

1. Acquire a land base.
2. Maintain a tribal office in Mendota, MN.
3. Obtain federal recognition.
4. Teach community members and others the Dakota language.
5. Develop self-sufficiency through in-house business.
6. Promote and support the preservation of the Dakota culture, including protecting sites of cultural significance to the Dakota people.
7. Promote an understanding between the Mendota Community and other Native Communities, and the public.

 **Donations are always Welcome and**

**Appreciated.**

The Mendota Mdewakanton Dakota Tribal Community (MMDTC) is a 501-C3 Nonprofit organization.

**Mendota Mdewakanton Tribal**

**Dakota Community Tribal Council:**

Sharon Lennartson: Chairwoman

Jason Delmont: Vice Chairman / Secretary

Joseph Lennartson: Treasurer

Gregory Strandmark: Historian

The Tribal Council are all volunteers except our Treasurer.

Brad Sumpter: Is our website designer.

Proud to be Dakota, a saying by Bob Brown came up with, our first Tribal Chair in 1996.

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 **Fur Trade and Early Anglo Relationships:**

Fur Trade and kinship was created amongst our community prospered as the Kaposi Chiefs, daughters married the French Fur Traders such as Joseph Renville and Hypolite Dupuis.

**Broken Treaties:** The Treaties the United State made with our Kaposia people negatively impact us even to this day. The 1805 Treaty negotiated between our Kaposia Chief “Cetan Wakuwa Mani” was just the beginning. Our people were also adversely affected by the 1830 Prairie du Chien Treaty; the 1837 Dakota Treaty; and the 1851 Treaty at Mendota. These Treaties were all designed to push our people to the West.

Joseph Renville and his daughter Angelique Renville signed that treaty. Sharon Lennartson gggrandmother. Angelique is also grandmother to many of our Mendota Members.

**The War and Its Legacy:** On August 18, 1862, after delay and failure of distribution of our annual annuities and facing starvation on the western prairies Dakota warriors including Taoyateduta took action into their own hands resulting in a wrath of death and destruction across western Minnesota. On September 28, 1862, two days after the surrender at Camp Release, a commission of military officers established by Henry Sibley began trying Dakota men accused of participating in the war. On December 26, 1862, 38 Dakota prisoners were led to a scaffold specially constructed for their execution, the largest mass execution in U.S. history. After the Dakota Removal Act was passed, bounties were offered for Dakota scalps. For six days beginning November 7, 1862, about 1,700 Dakota people (mostly woman, children, and older men) who had surrendered but had not been sentenced to death or prison, were removed from the Lower Agency to an Internment camp at Fort Snelling.

**The Mendota Dakota Tribal Thread**: We are the Thread that became the Fabric of the Community. Not all the Mixed Blood families left the area including Angelique Renville and Hypolite Dupuis who built a new home in 1854 located on Main Street in Mendota and raised a large family. Angelique and Hypolites children were Marguerite Louise Dupuis (LeClaire); Louise A. Dupuis (Auge); Marie Agnes Dupuis (Wigley); George Henri Dupuis; Fred K. Dupuis; Henri Dupuis; and Hypolite Pascal Dupuis. They also adopted A child by the name of Louise Allard. Angeliques children and grandchildren were forced to boarding schools. Others to the Reservation in Santee Nebraska. The Reservation became a temporary home for our relatives. As the cities of Mendota, St. Paul and Minneapolis expanded so did work opportunities. The families continued to settle into the areas.

Lillie Felix was forced out of her home to Carlisle Indian Industrial School Mendota at the age of 17. Lilly was there from Aug 27, 1897 to 1904. Lilly’s parents are Peter Felix Jr and Marguerite Belcourt. Peter and Marquerite did not volunteer her to Carlisle**.**

When she came home for the first time in 1904, she met Albert LeClaire and married him they had 5 children.

Alexander Faribault

**The Present**: Today, the Dupuis Home in Mendota, Minnesota is owned by the state and managed by the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS). Our community uses the Dupuis House for monthly meetings to explore our history and honor our ancestors. We offer Dakota culture and language classes as well as holding Inipi ceremonies and Wacipi meetings, we have Honored our Ancestors for 20 years on the second weekend in February. We feel honored to be able to grow our community at its’ historic location. There are hopes that one day the MMDTC will once again obtain ownership of our ancestor’s land and home. The Dupuis House!

We have kept an office in Mendota for over 216 years, thanks to our members contributions, donations, and a few grants. Mostly our members! We are now going on our 21st (Wacipi), Pow Wow scheduled for September 10- 11-12 2021, at St Peter’s Church, the oldest church in MN. 1405 Sibley Memorial Hwy, Mendota Minnesota, 55150.

**Activities of the Mendota Dakota Tribal Community**

Preserving the Culture: Consistent with our mission, several programs and activities focus on the preservation of Dakota culture. These include:

* Putting videos on our website.
* Conducting Dakota language classes free of charge and open to the public.
* Conducting traditional craft classes free of charge and open to the public. Closed no funding.
* Hosting the annual MMDTC Welcome Home Traditional Wacipi - Pow-Wow. Sept 11-12-21 at St Peter’s Church.
* Participating in annual ricing.
* Participating annual World Peace and Prayer Day and Winter Solstice.
* Ceremonies at Camp Coldwater.
* Participating in an annual traditional Sugar Bush Camp.
* Initiating and hosting the annual remembrance ceremony to honor the Dakota ancestors who were interred in the Fort Snelling concentration camp after the 1862 Dakota Conflict.
* Being part of the Oceti Sakowin (Seven Council Fires) meetings.
* Protecting the Culture: We believe that a critical component of ensuring that the Dakota culture will exist for future generations is protecting the culture today. These protective activities are crucial our mission.
* Exercising Treaty rights, such as pass and re-pass rights fishing rights under the 1805 Treaty.
* Partnering with the Pilot Knob Preservation Association to protect an historical site from being developed into a commercial office-building complex.

**Promoting the Culture:** We believe that promoting the Dakota culture is important on many levels. Promoting the culture ensures that accurate historical and contemporary information about the Dakota is present in relevant dialogues and is available to Dakota and non-Dakota alike. Promotion initiatives also provide the foundation for improved relationships with our non-Dakota relatives.