



Smithsonian  
*National Museum of the American Indian*

## **The Dakota–U.S. War of 1862: A Symposium of Remembrance**

**Thursday, November 19, 2015, 1:00 p.m.–5:30 p.m.**

**Rasmuson Theater | National Museum of the American Indian**

**4<sup>th</sup> Street and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC**



In the late summer of 1862 a war raged across southern Minnesota between Dakota warriors, U.S. military, and immigrant settlers. In the end, hundreds were dead, and thousands more would lose their homes forever. The day after Christmas, 1862, thirty-eight Dakota men were hanged in Mankato by order of Abraham Lincoln. It remains the largest mass execution in United States history. The bloodshed of 1862 and its aftermath left deep wounds that have yet to heal.

Held in conjunction with the exhibition *Commemorating Controversy: The Dakota–U.S. War of 1862*, now on view at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., this symposium examines the lasting consequences of the violent and divisive Dakota–U.S. War of 1862 that led to the exile of the Dakota people from their homeland. The program explores the subject from a variety of perspectives, with attention to the role of broken treaties; the effects on the community and Dakota history after the war; memory and multigenerational impacts; efforts at reconciliation and healing; and how cultural institutions address the Dakota War and their efforts in partnering with the Dakota people.

Live webcast at: <http://nmai.si.edu/multimedia/webcasts>

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## PROGRAM

- 1:00 – 1:05 pm      **Opening Blessing**  
Dennis Zotigh, National Museum of the American Indian
- 1:05 – 1:10 pm      **Welcome**  
Kevin Gover, Director, National Museum of the American Indian
- 1:10 – 1:20 pm      **Introduction**  
Joe Horse Capture, National Museum of the American Indian
- 1:20 – 2:00 pm      **When We Don't Tell Our Own Stories: Writing over the Dakota History of 1862**  
Gwen Westerman, author and professor, College of Arts and Humanities, Minnesota State University, Mankato
- 2:00 – 2:20 pm      **Reconnecting Generations Through Oral History and Genealogy**  
Tamara St. John, Tribal Archivist, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate
- 2:20 – 2:30 pm      **Break**
- 2:30 – 2:50 pm      **Impact of War and the Legacy of Institutional History: Meeting Communities as Partners**  
Ben Gessner, Collections Associate, American Indian and Fine Art Collections at Minnesota Historical Society
- 2:50 – 3:10 pm      **The Making of *Dakota 38***  
Sarah Weston, co-director of *Dakota 38*
- 3:10 – 3:30 pm      **Panel Discussion**
- 3:30 – 3:45 pm      **Break**
- 3:45 pm              **Film Screening: *Dakota 38*** (Running time 1 hr. and 18 min.)

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## SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

**Ben Gessner** is a Collections Associate who works with the American Indian and Fine Arts collections at the Minnesota Historical Society. His academic background is in art history, nonprofit management, and cultural resource management and for nearly a decade he has worked with museum collections and American Indian communities. At MNHS, he has managed the digitization and online publication of Dakota material culture and coordinated numerous digitization outreach activities in Dakota communities. He currently manages the Native American Artist-in-Residence program, which was designed to foster meaningful interactions with historic materials, providing communities with opportunities for cultural understanding,

**Kevin Gover**, who is a member of the Pawnee Nation, is the director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian and a former professor of law at the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University (ASU). He served on the faculty of the university's Indian Legal Program and was co-executive director of ASU's American Indian Policy Institute. Before joining the university faculty, Gover served as assistant secretary for Indian Affairs in the U.S. Department of the Interior from 1997 to 2000. A presidential appointee, he was responsible for policy and operational oversight of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, where he oversaw programs in Indian education, law enforcement, social services, treaty rights, and trust asset management.

**Joe D. Horse Capture** is an Associate Curator at the National Museum of the American Indian, and focuses on research and exploring how the museum can use its resources to directly benefit Indian Country. Horse Capture formerly served as Associate Curator of Native American Art for fifteen years at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. His academic focus is on the art of Native North America and he specializes in the Great Plains region. A second-generation curator, Joe also served on the Board of Directors of the Otsego Institute for Native American Art History, Fenimore Art Museum. He is the author of numerous publications, including *Beauty, Honor, and Tradition: The Legacy of Plains Indian Shirts*, and *From Our Ancestors: The Art of the White Clay People*, and has contributed to several publications. Joe is a member of the A'aninin Indian Tribe of Montana.

**Tamara St. John** is Tribal Archivist in the Tribal Historic Preservation Office of the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate of the Lake Traverse Reservation, which is located in the Northeastern part of South Dakota and a small portion of southeastern corner of North Dakota. An enrolled member of the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate, St. John is an accomplished Native American genealogist. While studying the many Dakota/Lakota/Nakota families, she began in-depth research in the history of the Oceti Sakowin or Seven Council Fires which make up the 7 Bands of Sioux or the Tatanka Oyate (Buffalo Nation). She worked with the Minnesota Historical Society and the

Dakota Tribes to collaborate on the *Commemorating Controversy: The Dakota–U.S. War of 1862* exhibition. She has participated in panel discussions on the Dakota-U.S. War of 1862 and made numerous presentations on genealogy for Dakota and other Native American peoples.

**Gwen Westerman**, an enrolled member of the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate, is Professor of English and Director of the Humanities Program at Minnesota State University, Mankato, where she has been named a Distinguished Faculty Scholar. She is the co-author of *Mni Sota Makoce: The Land of the Dakota* which won a 2013 Leadership in History Award from the American Association of State and Local History and a 2014 Hognander Minnesota History award. A visual artist and poet, she is a Native American Artist-in-Residence at the Minnesota Historical Society, and currently has a solo exhibit titled *We Are Star People* at the Great Plains Art Museum in Lincoln, Nebraska. Her poetry collection *Follow the Blackbirds* was published in 2013 and is written in Dakota and English. She just received a two-year NEH grant through the Scholarly Editions and Translations Program for her project to translate letters written in Dakota between 1838 and 1878, which will begin in January 2016.

**Sarah Weston** is an enrolled member of the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe. A multimedia artist, she received her certificate in filmmaking from the New York Film Academy. Weston was a writer and editorial assistant for *Dakota/Lakota Journal*. She co-directed, filmed, and edited *Dakota 38*. Weston is currently filming a feature length documentary about her tribe's leading decision to legalize and sell marijuana on their reservation.

**Dennis Zotigh** is a Kiowa, Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo, and Santee Dakota Indian and a member of the Kiowa Gourd Clan. A cultural specialist at the National Museum of the American Indian, Zotigh grew up receiving cultural knowledge from his maternal and paternal grandparents, as well as his parents. He further extended his capabilities as a cultural practitioner by learning songs, dances, and their significance from Indigenous nations across North America. With this rich foundation, Zotigh became the director of a noted dance company, The Great American Indian Dancers. Zotigh also previously served as American Indian researcher and historian for the Oklahoma History Center in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.



Front cover photo: Dakota Reconciliation Ride, 2010. Photo by John Cross, *Mankato Free Press*.