

Suggested Reading List on New Ulm, its History and its Famous Citizens.

(These book reviews are my own and, therefore, subject to my own conclusions and viewpoints (02/10)

.....Terry Sveine)

“A German Town: A History of New Ulm, Minnesota”

2004

Daniel J. Hoisington

Edinborough Press, www.edinborough.com

At last, a modern, complete history of New Ulm! This work was commissioned by The City of New Ulm for our 150th Anniversary and is a wonderful, very readable book with enough information to please and amaze every reader. It will serve as a source book for many years to come.

There are many interesting photos, too.

“The Matter Lies Deeper”

2004

Elroy Ubl

This self-published overview of New Ulm purports to be a history of New Ulm as told through cemeteries and gravestones, but there is a wealth of other information here among these 996 pages! Before-and-after photos of buildings, lists of soldiers, memberships, business lists, murders and legends, and much more data is presented here. This will be the newest source book for decades to come on many areas of study. Mr. Ubl's past works and extensive knowledge of New Ulm, have combined to produce a marvelous book that every student of our town's history should own. With over 2,300 photos, this is a real value at \$30.00!

“New Ulm in Word and Picture”

1892 / 1997

J.H.Strasser, author

Don Heinrich Tolzmann, reprint translator and editor, - with Fredric Steinhauser

This 79-page little gem is a great history of early New Ulm and contains some interesting photo-copied pictures of old buildings. It has small excerpts on the Uprising, locust plague and tornado and yet brags up the town's resiliency and enterprising attitude. A fun book!

“A Chronology of New Ulm, Minnesota:1853-1899”

1899 / 1978

J.H. Strasser, author

Elroy Ubl, reprint translator and editor

A very good source for the serious student of New Ulm and/or genealogist. It is primarily a day-by-day listing of city government events and births, deaths and marriages in New Ulm's first 5 decades. (Mr. Strasser was the editor of New Ulm's paper at the time.) The last 1/4th of the book contains many photos from Ubl's own collection. This super resource is hard to find for private ownership but the Public Library has copies.

“New Ulm, Minnesota: J.H. Strasser's History and Chronology”

2002

Don Heinrich Tolzmann, translator and editor

Little Miami Publishing Co. Milford, Ohio

It is a reprint of the very hard to find original with new notes, comments and useful name lists from Tolzmann. In lieu of finding the original, this is an excellent substitute! (The additional commentary and lists may make it worthwhile to have even if you own the original!)

“Over the Earth I Come: The Great Sioux Uprising of 1862”

1992

Duane Schultz

Fictional history of the area, but done accurately in spirit. Some have disputed certain factual aspects of it, but I think it's a great insight into the Dakota mind, viewpoint and experience. A 2-3 day read because you can't put it down! A great place to start for general interest readers and students of history.

- “Historical Notes: A Glimpse at New Ulm’s Past – Vol. I and II”** ca. 1981
 Elroy Ubl
 These two books are a compilation of articles Mr. Ubl wrote for the New Ulm Journal newspaper in the late 1970s and early ‘80s. They are typically 1-3 pages long and deal with a single subject matter or person from New Ulm’s past. He often includes a photo where possible. These are great primers of essential knowledge on New Ulm and serve as an introduction to a wide variety of interests. It’s out of print, but I have seen them available at antique stores, garage sales or E-bay.
 The Library also has several copies.
- “The Sioux Uprising of 1862” /** 1976
- “The Dakota War of 1862”** (new edition, more “politically correct” name) 2001
 Kenneth Carley
 The best *concise*, narrative account of the war and surrounding time period...period! A must have!
- “Through Dakota Eyes: Narrative Accounts of the Minnesota Indian Wars of 1862”** 1984
 Gary Clayton and Alan Woolworth, editors
 A great account of interviews from the actual participants in the war. A viewpoint primarily of the Dakota Indians. A refreshing, and needed, change of outlook.
- “The Great Sioux Uprising”**
 C.M. Oehler Oxford Press 1959
 Da Capo Press 1997
 The testimonial on the cover says, “It is an admirable work and is destined to become a classic” and I totally agree. Oehler has a style that is intimate without being too cozy. He manages to tell a convoluted story in a logical and flowing manner with insights into the characters of the main people that somehow brings you into the story. An excellent book!
- “The Great Sioux Uprising: Rebellion on the Plains, August - September 1862”**
 Jerry Keenan DaCapo Press 2003
 www.decapopress.com
 This short book is part of the “American Battlefield Series” and is adequate as a short overview of the war. I was disappointed in the little coverage he gives to New Ulm and the 2 photos he uses of New Ulm are wrongly captioned! However, he does add a twist to the typical study in that he gives a short biography of the main players and gives directions to and modern descriptions of some of the famous battlefields.
- “Uprising”**
 Dean Urdahl 2007
 North Star Press
 I have not yet read this but John Isch from the BCHS Board gives it a good review. It is a fictional history of the Sioux Uprising and is well done. A new type of character, a Confederate soldier sent to “stir up the Indians,” is part of the character mix, as well as a lady who is captured by the Dakota.
- “The Indians Revenge”**
 Alexander Berghold 1891
 This fascinating account by Father Berghold, is a gripping account that tells the story by a person who came to New Ulm shortly after the fact. It’s a good insight into 1860s thinking and it is understanding of the Indian’s view. It also has many interesting facts about early New Ulm history.

“Charles E. Flandrau and the Defense of New Ulm”

1962 / 2006

edited by Russell W. Fridley, Leota M. Kellett and June D. Holmquist
Brown County Historical Society production

A great, detailed, 62-page book, full of obscure facts on the events directly in New Ulm.
It could be the most detailed account we have of the actual battles in New Ulm.

The paperback reissue in 2006 features the wonderful “2nd Battle of New Ulm” painting by Mike Eischen! It is very accurate (as best as we can determine) and really helps visualize the battle.

“The Sioux Uprising in Minnesota, 1862: Jacob Nix’s Eyewitness Account”

Jacob Nix

Don Heinrich Tolzmann, reprint editor

ca. 1997

A first hand account of the battle written by the de facto commander of the citizen defenders during the first Battle of New Ulm. It brings you into the action in a memorable manner. It is published in German and English and offers a “not-politically-correct” view held by those who lived through it.

“German Pioneer Accounts of the Great Sioux Uprising of 1862”

Don Heinrich Tolzmann, editor

Little Miami Publishing Co.

2002

Tolzmann has found some first-hand accounts of experiences during the Indian War and has them reprinted. They make for very interesting reading and are quite compelling. He has a forward and afterward with his insightful thoughts on it. A great addition to our knowledge of this time!

“New Ulm Area Defenders of August, 1862 / Dakota Indians and Pioneer Settlers”

edited by Elroy Ubl

A 54-page compilation of names, monuments and military lists. More for the specialist but a useful source for detail research.

“Index to Claimants for Depredations following the Dakota War of 1862”

Park Genealogical Books www.parkbooks.com

An index to claimants including many New Ulm and area citizens. There is some dispute that this is incomplete, but it is a great starter source and far easier than looking in state and federal records!

“Memories of the Battle of New Ulm”

Don Heinrich Tolzmann

2001

Heritage Books www.heritagebooks.com

A reprised and condensed version of L.A. Fritsche’s “History of Brown County, MN 1916”, that only deals with aspects of the Sioux Uprising/Dakota Conflict. It features a new “full name index”, a wonderful “personal recollections” section, a biography of Fritsche, and Tolzmann’s own conclusion. In lieu of getting at the elusive original, this is an accessible alternative with a focused presentation!

“The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux”

1929

Thomas Hughes

A serious study of the treaty of 1851 that opened up the land in the southern 1/3 of Minnesota. This event was pivotal in the development of the situation that led to New Ulm’s founding and the pioneer-Indian struggles that resulted. It also covers early white intrusions into the area and their first settlements. A “must read” for any true student of New Ulm’s history. It is still the major work on this event and time frame. Hard to find, though.

“Held in Captivity”

1926/1996

Benedict Juni

This is a 23 page booklet that is his first-hand experience during the Sioux Uprising as a 17-year old boy. It is very gripping and lets one imagine how many other stories like his were normal during these battles! Easily worth the small \$2.00 price.

“The Dakota Indian Internment at Fort Snelling, 1862-1864”

Corinne L. Monjeau-Marz

2005

Prairie Smoke Press, St. Paul, MN

This was a good book that I learned a lot from. She doesn't write much narrative or analysis but the book consists of many quotes from individuals, then-current newspaper articles, and letters between involved Minnesotans. There are numerous photos of Indians and the camp and the book ends with numerous charts and lists of census materials, all trying to document the Indians and their relationships.

“Dakota Uprising Victims: Gravestones & Stories”

Curtis A. Dahlin

2007

Beaver's Pond Press, Edina, MN www.beaverspondpres.com

This substantial, hardbound book is full of photos and stories behind all of the known dead from the Dakota Conflict. Chapter 3 deals with New Ulm and Brown County. Dahlin tells as much of a story as he can about every person he can find info on. This is a great source book and the stories add life to just names on a tombstone or a list of the dead. Well done!

“Alexander Harkin, Dealer in Dry Goods and Groceries”

1977

Jefferey A. Hess

M.H. S. Press

A delightful, yet informative booklet (24 pages) of Alexander Harkin's life and business ventures on the new frontier. The Harkin Store is a wonderful attraction outside New Ulm and connecting this book's insights to the store makes for a great experience. Excerpts from personal letters add a nice touch!

“Franz Massopust, German-Bohemian Pathfinder and Founder of New Ulm, Minnesota: 2004

A Tragic Family Saga”

Robert J. Paulson

Park Genealogical Books

Paulson takes great aim to clarify and explain his ancestor's role in New Ulm's founding and the tragic tale of that extended family, especially their sufferings in the Dakota Conflict of 1862. While it would particularly appeal to family members, there is ample information on early life in New Ulm for the general reader. Assisting in its 34-page message, are maps, photos, charts and genealogical tables.

“Dakota War Whoop”

Harriet Bishop McConkey

Ross + Haines, Inc. Minneapolis

1863/1970

Written right after the 1862 Conflict, she is quite derogatory to the Indian's reasons and actions and gives New Ulm a few “slams” as being “God-less” and “wild” due to the Turners' anti-religion stance. However, she should be credited for a sense of immediacy and passion in her story and one must be careful to understand the author's outrage when writing this. Several of her stories are exaggerated or half-truths, and would be discredited if written today. It is a good book to help understand what some white contemporaries must have felt - even if the Indians are made to look incompetent and degraded.

“Memory's Trail”

Grace Lovell May and Wilhelmina Pfaender Loenholdt

1954

As the authors point out, this is not a strict biography of Wilhelm and Catherine Pfaender but is the story of them and their immediate family told by their descendants. It covers much of early New Ulm history, as the Pfaenders were the leaders of the Turners - the second group of settlers in 1856. It's a short and lovingly written book, and easy to read.

“Memories of New Ulm: My Experiences During the Indian Uprising in Minnesota, 1862”

Rudolph Leonhart

Don Heinrich Tolzmann, editor and translator

1880/2005

Edinburgh Press www.edinburgh.com

This is a 117-page book that is a delight to read. Mr. Leonhart came to New Ulm in 1861 as a teacher and relates stories about his short life in the new, frontier town, including his experiences in the Sioux Uprising and the evacuation of New Ulm. A good book!

“A History of the Minnesota River Valley and The Sioux Uprising of 1862”

Charles Barlett and Edward O’Neill

1882

A super resource for more serious students. Previously unavailable for check-out, it is now able to be checked out of the N.U. Public Library. It is definitely for the specialist in history but, in addition to short pioneer biographies, it covers the region, county by county. If you liked the Louis Fritsche work, you’ll like this one.

“The History of Brown County, Volume 1 and 2”

Louis Fritsche

ca.1916

A super work of factual history and short biographies about the early settler families.

Given the complex nature of the subject, and its small pool of resources, it is a good tool for starting out one’s studies. (Nearly impossible to find for private ownership and until recently, not check-out-able from the research portion of the New Ulm Library.)

“Early Brown County”

Leota M. Kellett

1966 / 2004

Brown County Historical Society

This 19-page wonder is full of good information and is a good place to start one’s research. Mrs. Kellett was the BCHS Archivist for many years and felt a need to put together a handbook for researchers.

There are also 15 pages of maps and photos.

“A Pictorial History of Brown County”

The Journal newspaper

ca.1993

Coordinated by The Journal newspaper in New Ulm

This is a 128-page book full of photographs and captions submitted by locals showing pictures of people, homes, businesses and other activities around the county abound in this interesting volume.

It may be hard to find, though, but it is worth seeing.

“Marking Time”

Brown County Historical Society

2006

Caris Carmichael Braun, et. al.

A spiral-bound guide to every historical marker in Brown County. It features a copy of the text with comments and maps to help you find them. A very useful resource for people doing a variety of research or just for fun exploration!

“Joseph R. Brown and His Times”

William E. Lass

1995 / 96

The Henderson Independent, *for the Joseph R. Brown Interpretive Center*

One of my Mankato State history professors writes a nice story of Brown that I bought at the History Center in Henderson. It is a short booklet, about 50 pages, but gives a concise overview of this prolific man, after whom Brown County is named. Although he spent little time in modern Brown County and New Ulm, he was integral to the whole river valley’s development of which in turn influenced how New Ulm grew. Worth reading!

“The Peripatetic Joseph R. Brown: The First Minnesotan”

Gareth D. Hiebert and Archie Grahn

1987

New Ulm native, Hiebert, writes a more personal story of Brown than Lass’ version that stresses how important Brown was to, not only the Minnesota River valley, but to the State of Minnesota. His subtitle, “The First Minnesotan” sums up Hiebert’s focus. This is written in pamphlet form and I made a copy from a friend, so finding this may be a challenge – although it’ll be worth it.

“New Ulm and World War I”

1964

Martin Steffel

This is Marty’s thesis for a Master of History Degree from Mankato State. It is 61, single-sided pages, bound and only available at the Library. It is a very good study of another example of New Ulm’s role in Minnesota and U.S. history. Unusual and exciting!

“Watchdog of Loyalty: The Minnesota Commission of Public Safety During World War I”

1991

Carl Chrislock

Minnesota Historical Society Press

This is an excellent book on a subject of great important to New Ulm, that is, the anti-German hysteria and backlash against the large German population here. The events in New Ulm are featured in chapter 7 with several other references throughout the book. It’s relevant to New Ulm and a well-written book!

“A Long Year of Silence”

2004

Kathryn Adams Doty

Edinburgh Press

This is a story about New Ulm’s situation during the anti-German hysteria during World War I written from the viewpoint of a 15 year-old girl. Mrs. Doty brings a solid background to this story as the daughter of one of New Ulm’s religious leaders during this crisis. Well done, very readable and it covers an important subject that is not well known.

“Murder in Minnesota: A Collection of True Cases”

1962

Walter Trenerry

Minnesota Historical Society Press

An interesting book about 15 murders in Minnesota up to 1917. “The New Ulm Christmas Murders” are of particular interest. Trenerry was a lawyer who uses a lawyer’s rational approach to this event from 1866. He gives solid background material and then goes into detail telling how two trappers going back home to Mankato stopped in a New Ulm tavern where they were involved in a fight. A local man was killed and then mob violence ensued and the trappers were both hung! The chapter is only 15 pages long and so is an easy read, but it tells a fine story about a sad day in our history.

“The Minnesota: Forgotten River”

1962 / 2000

Evan Jones

Holt, Reinhart, Winston/ University of MN

A delightful book that gives short chapters on many of the state’s events and personalities along the Minnesota River. There are stories on New Ulm’s founding, Joseph Brown and, of course, the Sioux Uprising. This is an excellent, yet concise introduction to the river valley’s history!

- “Land of Amber Waters: The History of Brewing in Minnesota”** 2007
 Doug Hoverson
 University of Minnesota Press
 This is a wonderful overview of beer brewing in Minnesota and has ample coverage of not only August Schell in New Ulm, but covers all of the others in varying degrees. There are liberal photos and a listing with detailed information of each brewery.
- “A Time to Remember: An Informal History of Dr. Martin Luther College”** 1984
 Morton A. Schroeder
 A very good history that includes pictures and personalities from this old institution in New Ulm. This is an often over looked part of our town that deserves this book! It is only available at the college for \$8.00.
- “The Dacotah History Hotel -1859 to 1972”** 1988 / 2000
 Gareth Heibert
 A short, but fact-filled booklet with many photographs of this historic building and business. It is an easy read and quite useable for research or study. It is too bad we lost this treasure. All that remains is a plaque on the Citizens Bank building - and this book!
- “Hermann: From Legend to Symbol”** 1988
 Arnold Koelpin
 A short, 24-page booklet of the history of Hermann the man, the monuments in Germany and New Ulm, the architects, and the building of the New Ulm monument. This easy overview covers many facets of the famous statue, including pictures. It’s a great introduction to this subject and is available at the Brown County Museum for only \$2.00.
- “The Battle That Stopped Rome;
 Emperor Augustus, Arminius and the Slaughter of the Legions in the Teutoburg Forest”**
 Peter S. Wells W.W. Norton 2003
 Professor Wells has written an easy to follow book about “Hermann” that takes all of the possible evidence including ancient writings, past histories and recent archaeologies and puts it together in a way that will not overwhelm the average reader. Due to the dearth of actual info on Hermann, he weaves a lot of the story around the Roman military with examples of their strengths and tactics. He stresses that the result of Hermann’s battle was that Rome’s influence in Europe stopped west of the Rhine. It’s a good book but maybe not for a casual reader of this subject. It is evident that Wells is an archaeologist!
- “Varus Schlacht: In Search of the Lost Legions”** 1999
- “The Quest for the Lost Roman Legions: Discovering the Varus Battlefield”** 2005
 Major Tony Clunn
majoreclunn@aol.com
 A fascinating story by an English military man stationed in Germany, who becomes fascinated with the story of Hermann (or Arminius). His unusually written, but still easy to read, book is done in three interwoven formats: Clunn’s diary of his archeological discoveries; excerpts from historical writings about Hermann; and Clunn’s fictional account of how he feels the situation and battles would have gone. Very good and available at the Brown County Museum! The 2nd book mentioned is his updated version of the original and is more geared to an American readership.

“Rome’s Greatest Defeat: Massacre in the Teutoberg Forest”

Adrian Murdoch

2006

Sutton Publishing Ltd.

I have not read this yet but the review in the History Book Club Review points out a somewhat different tact from other “Hermann books,” in that the author concentrates on General Varus’ shortcomings and Hermann’s “astute assessment of the differences between Roman and German forces.” Apparently he also makes comparisons to modern wars, such as the U.S. in Iraq, but the reviewer isn’t sold on that validity. The title alone seems to point out the importance of Hermann and his legacy!

“Terror in the Teutoberg”

John Rothdeiner

2009

It is about Hermann’s battles, but seems to interplay modern military into it..? I have not read it yet.

“Minnesota Houses: An Architectural and Historical View”

1967

Roger Kennedy

A good book in general, but Chapter 3, “Houses the Germans Built”, is of special significance as it talks about several New Ulm examples and builders. Black and white pictures accompany the text and it is a nice reference on some of our local treasures, as well as those of the entire state.

“A Guide to the Architecture of Minnesota”

1977

David Gebhard and Tom Martinson

University of Minnesota Press

I have not read it all but there are 6 pages of good information on New Ulm’s architectural styles and examples of notable historic buildings. A good tool for study!

“German-Bohemians: The Quiet Immigrants”

1995

LaVern Rippley and Robert Paulson

This well-done book deals with this group of people in general but uses their experiences in New Ulm for many examples and references. Both of the authors are experts in this field of study and you can tell in that in their writing. They also use several New Ulm families as case studies and they include some interesting old photos of our town.

“Germans in Minnesota”

2003

Kathleen Neils Conzen

MN Historical Society Press

I have not read it, but the advance press mentions New Ulm and Brown County as “hot beds of Germanity” and so I’m sure it’ll be worthwhile!

“German Immigration to the Minnesota River Valley Frontier, 1852-1865”

2002

Bryce O. Stenzel

Minnesota Heritage Publishing

This book covers familiar territory but with a more localized approach. Stenzel is a Mankato area author who is trying to show how the German settlers in a 10 county area along the lower Minnesota River valley never got the credit they deserve. While it was a decent book that I learned some things from, I never felt he made it clear how and why the Germans were unique. He tries to summarize the “German” experience but it seemed little different from any other ethnic group of pioneers. He has much coverage of New Ulm in pictures and print but some of it is wrong – which then casts doubt on his accuracy level. Maybe because I am quite familiar with the subject, I give it an “O.K.,” but I’m not raving about it.

“A Heritage Deferred: The German-Americans in Minnesota”

1981

Concordia College

This 170-page book is a compilation of essays and papers from a conference held in Concordia College in Moorhead, MN in 1979. New Ulm is mentioned as the focus of several essays and cited as an example of strong German heritage many times. It’s a good book that puts New Ulm’s experiences in the larger context of other Germans in Minnesota.

“Scarlet Plume”

ca. 1964

Frederick Manfred

A fictional history from the point of view of a captured white woman who comes to better understand the Indian’s viewpoints and situation. Graphic at times but worthwhile for its realism. It appears to be quite accurate and is an easy read. A nice counter to Nix’s book. I have heard that some modern Dakota dispute some of it, but in general, I feel it’s good.

“Mystic Chords”

William J. Ridley

2000

It’s a fictional history that deals with an Irish immigrant family’s struggles as they settle outside New Ulm in 1860. Their mixed feelings about the struggles, the newness of the prairie life and their experience during the Dakota Conflict make for a relatable story. The final third of the book deals with a son’s time during the Civil War in a graphic but realistic manner. I particularly like the conversations between the characters that betrays the common man’s “take” on the then-current events. Accurate and readable.

“Flash Point of Deceit”

Larry Stillwell

1999

This book looks at the Dakota Conflict from the point of view of two Indians who helped out the white settlers. No startling new facts but a different viewpoint and an easy read.

“The God Seeker”

Sinclair Lewis

1949

An interesting novel about a young missionary’s life on the Minnesota River in 1848. While it doesn’t deal with New Ulm in particular, his insights into the Indian’s values and outlooks helps one understand the Uprising better. An easy read with romance, action and encounters with historical figures, such as Joseph Brown. It is hard to find, though.

“From Dalsland to Minnesota”

2000

Wallace Johnson

A long book (469 pages, although large print) that is the story of a Swedish immigrant coming to the area just north of St. George. The book covers the immigrant’s life in Sweden, his time getting to this region and his struggles in getting settled. While the author’s intentions are good, and I did learn some things, it is written in a very unscholarly manner with poor grammar, punctuation and spelling. The story is contrived and silly at times. Serious students of history and literature will be somewhat frustrated, but it does have merit. I don’t want to discourage reading this, but be prepared for the casual style. (Wally has a second volume in his heroes’ lives, called “Nordic Engineers.”)

“Blowing in the Wind”

1990

Bernice M. Chappel

This little known book, filed under the fiction –not history- section in the New Ulm Library, is a great piece of fictional history. It is an account of two German emigrant families and their decision to settle near New Ulm in 1850. The story of their Atlantic crossing is excellent, but graphic! The author’s choice of 1850 allowed her to show the development of the impact of the first white settlers in Minnesota. The families’ experiences during the Dakota Conflict are well done and believable. This book is worthy of more notoriety and publicity!

“The Big Swede”

1996

V.C. Hedner

A fictional account of a Swedish immigrant who seems to be involved in all aspects of the state’s early history. An easy read and yet effective overview of many events, including the Dakota Conflict, “August Schell’s beer and the friendly, German girls in New Ulm.”

“One More Summer”

1980

Virginia Strate

(the book has no publisher information.)

Ms. Strate does an excellent job in telling the story of the founding of New Ulm from the viewpoint of a fictional character, “Karl Steiner”. She uses Karl to relate what a typical immigrant might have reasonably experienced as he leaves Germany, struggles in New York, helps form the Chicago Land Society, is part of the exploring party that spends the first winter here and helps settle the new town of “Freiheit” (her name for New Ulm). Her descriptions of individual circumstances during the Sioux Uprising are vivid without being offensive. I really like her writing style and I think the story is entirely believable. It is very hard to find though, I found my copy on “E-Bay.” She has written a second book about German immigrants around 1900 coming to fictional New Ulm, called “The Last Bridge.”

A friend with old New Ulm connections has recommended it. (Virginia died about 2006.)

“Horse Dreamer”

Daniel W. Homstad

2000

AmErica House

This is a fictional account of the Dakota Conflict of 1862 written from the unusual viewpoint of a mixed-blood 16 year-old. As Homstad says in his Preface, the events and time-line are accurate except where the characters encounter the hero. The book is an easy read, offers a believable story line and brings in most of the major characters of the struggle. I liked it!

“Interesting Stories of Frontier Life on Lake Hanska”

ca.1935

Ole Synstebj

This small book, which is only available to read in the Brown County Museum and Hanska Library, is the recollections of an original settler in Hanska and he tells about his visits to New Ulm. A delightful first-hand account of early pioneer life in the area.

“Essig: It isn’t Made of Vinegar, Vols. I & II”

Alvin A. Rolloff

ca.1980

This two-volume history of the small town 7 miles west of New Ulm is a great study of early settler life. It is told in a series of personal recollections, interviews with older citizens, reprints from local newspapers and many photographs. Many of Essig’s first citizens ended up in New Ulm and they have great stories to learn about.

(P.S. the German word “essig” means “vinegar”, but the town was named for a rail station operator with that last name. The author plays on the odd name for the books’ title.)

“Autobiography of Christian Ahlness”

ca. 1900

Christian Ahlness

A fantastic story, told by the founder of Hanska, of his life, including leaving Norway, adventures in the U.S. and the settling and growth of Hanska, MN. His writing style is fast-paced and exciting and gives many details of life on the prairie and he mentions New Ulm several times. Regrettably, it is only available from the Ahlness family descendants but I can recommend a few if the reader is interested. (I have lobbied the Brown County Historical Society to reprint this book to no avail –yet!)

“Early History Notes”

1994

Gary Wiltscheck

This small book is an unusual study of Sigel Township, south of New Ulm, done in a logical manner that starts with Minnesota prior to 1862, then goes into the Dakota Conflict in New Ulm, general history of Brown County and ends up focusing in on early Sigel. It is easy to read and a good overview. This book is only available from Gary himself in New Ulm at 507-359-9645. Mr. Wiltscheck has also written several fine essays on local history, especially Siegel Township, that are available at the Brown County Museum.

“The Flying Dutchmen Motorcycle Club: Celebrating 50 years – 1947-1997”

Gary “Curly” Wiltscheck

1997

Preferred Printing, Madelia, MN

This is a “fun” history of the motorcycle club in New Ulm, complete with photos of club events and the membership from 1997. It is only available from Gary direct at 507-359-9645.

“Germania, USA: Social Change in New Ulm, Minnesota”

Noel Iverson

1966

Having heard for years this book used as a source of claims regarding the Turner Society’s power in New Ulm, I have finally read it. Mr. Iverson, a sociologist and former New Ulmite, writes a very scholarly treatment about the group that centers on analyzing a series of 111 questions. The bulk of the book will be too cumbersome for most readers, spending time analyzing in detail, the results of the questionnaire. His findings should not be too surprising to anyone familiar with New Ulm, that is, the Turner Society started as a semi-socialistic, anti-organized-religion group intent on forming a utopian, Germanic city on the American frontier. As the generations steadily got away from the immigrant founders and their beliefs, the society changed into a social group with some efforts on preserving some German traditions. Simple membership in Turner Hall did not equal social power in New Ulm-as some have read into the study! However, the 2 chapters called “Old World Roots” and “The Founding of the Town” are excellent and a “must read” about our history! Available at the New Ulm Library

“Soldier, Settler and Sioux: Fort Ridgely and the Minnesota River Valley, 1853-1867”

Paul N. Beck

2000

Augustana College, Sioux Falls, SD

Mr. Beck, who studied history at Mankato State and worked at the Harkin Store in the late 1970s, writes a very readable volume on the fort and its impact on the MN River valley, and by extension, New Ulm. Despite having a cover that features Fort Ripley near Brainerd (!) and a few small mistakes, his facts seem accurate. He does not spend too much time retelling tales already covered in other books but rather, he stresses Ft. Ridgely’s role on the western frontier’s advance by whites and European immigrants.

“New Ulm: Germany in Minnesota”

Lisa Sponholz Black

1994

This 29-page essay for a college degree, asks the question, “How German is New Ulm?”

It is an interesting look at how valid New Ulm’s tourism marketing claims are. She does a concise history of New Ulm and tracks the changes as the town steadily grew away from the founding generation’s language and customs. Her conclusions are sound and end on a positive note, but it prompts one to think. It is only available at the U of MN, the Brown County Museum and in the New Ulm Library. A unique perspective, worth reading!

“Swords to Plowshares”

2000

Dean B. Simmons

A great story of the 20 plus Prisoner of War camps in Minnesota for captured Germans during World War II. A full chapter tells the story of New Ulm=s camp and its most unusual situation and history.

A book that covers a surprising aspect of New Ulm=s role in U.S. history.

“Behind Barbed Wire”

1998

Alice Albrecht Buck

Another book about the Prisoner of War camps in Minnesota by a Minnesota native.

Well researched and documented. The section on New Ulm is quite good.

- “Growing Pains”** 1984
Wanda Gag
This is her autobiography of her early years in New Ulm and her education as our city’s most famous author and artist. The 468 pages, although long, are easy to read and charming. Wanda’s achievements are especially notable given her difficult childhood.
- “Wanda Gag: The Story of an Artist”**
Alma Scott University of Minnesota Press 1949
Wanda Gag House Association + Brown County Historical Society reissue 2003
This is a lovingly told tale of New Ulm’s “first family of art” dealing primarily with Wanda but telling the story of her whole family including her father and siblings. The author, fellow New Ulmite and Wanda’s friend, Alma Schmidt Scott, leads us through her friend’s life-long love of art and story telling. This book, an easy read, simply left me with a good feeling!
- “The Gag Family: German-Bohemian Artists in America”** 2002
Julie L’Enfant
Afton Historical Society Press
I have not read this yet but have heard Julie give the presentation to the Jr. Pioneers. There is much more made of this family than just Wanda and even Jim Boeck, past manager of the Gag House, said he has learned things from it. High praise indeed!
- “Wanda Gag: Storybook Artist”** 2005
Gwenyth Swain
Borealis Books
A children’s book by an award-winning author. I have not read it but have seen it offered in the MN Historical Society Press
- “Anton Gag’s Sketch Book”** 2005
Brown County Historical Society
This small booklet of Anton Gag’s sketches was released by the BCHS and is quite pleasing!
- “Wanda Gag – A Life of Art and Stories”** 2010
Karen Nelson Hoyle
University of Minnesota Press www.upress.umn.edu
This effort uses many of Gag’s personal and professional papers and correspondence to tell her story. I have not yet read it.
- “Wanda Gag: The Girl who Lived to Draw”** 2008
Deborah Kogan Ray Viking Press
A children’s book that describes Wanda and her work in a way that relates to young people.
- “The Man in the Bright Flowered Hat”** ca.1995
Mrs. Judy Macklin
It is about Bill Macklin, the former editor of the New Ulm Journal and offers some insights into New Ulm in the 1950s and ‘60s. It is a mix of Judy’s (his 2nd wife) life with him in northern Minnesota and reprints of some of his newspaper columns. It is not necessarily deep in New Ulm history but those who knew him will appreciate it.

“Boys”

William Bockus

1995

The personal recollections of a 14 year-old boy growing up in New Ulm in 1927. His stories are lovingly told and one can easily envision his adventures as you read. He mentions national and local events, as well as local people and places, which help to give it a sense of place and time. It will obviously appeal more to New Ulmites but can readily have universal interest. A charming book you can't help but like.

“Enemies of Sleep: New Ulm Musicians”

Dale Holtz

2005

Self-published

This book contains several short chapters describing famous New Ulm musicians. There are several interesting photographs, too. While it doesn't go into much depth on any of the various people featured, it is a nice overview of New Ulm's vibrant musical heritage. Available at the MN Music Hall of Fame for about \$15.

“Whoopee John: His Musical Story”

Dennis Brown

An 18 page booklet, with pictures, of New Ulm's great polka/old-time master, by his grandson.

“Where the Clouds Meet the Water”

Kimberly E. Contag and James A. Grabowska

2004

Inkwater Press, Portland, OR

www.inkwaterpress.com

During W.W.II, America forced the evacuation of South Americans of German descent back to Germany so that American prisoners could be returned to the USA. This story is of the Ernst Contag family's "repatriation" to Germany; their life during the war; the separation of the widower Contag's four children (including future New Ulm veterinarian, Carlos!); their refugee camp in France and finally their life back in Ecuador – which wasn't as pleasant as they remembered. It is a great story of “unknown” history.

“Potters and Pottery of New Ulm, MN”

George Tyrrell

1978

I have not read it, but it's 90 pages long and the Museum has it for sale.

“The Chemnitzer Concertina: A History and an Accolade”

LaVern Rippley

2005

Many New Ulmites are mentioned in this book, such as Christy Hengel, and several other players from southern Minnesota. Shy of seeing it in a bookstore, it can be ordered from:

Gerald Krzmarzick / 2612 4th Ave. NW / Rochester, MN 55901 or by calling

507-289-1020 or by e-mail at concertinaman@charter.net. It costs \$39.95 in hardbound.

“Lost and Found in New Ulm, MN”

2002

Dennis Glawe

1st Line Books

An unusual but quite intriguing story about a writer's experiences with love and murder set in fictional New Ulm. The story is definitely worth a read but the reader should be cautioned that New Ulm is only fictionally portrayed here. There are no real references or people. I met with the author in Decorah, Iowa and asked, “why New Ulm?”, and he said he was visiting his brother (Reed) here and he liked the town and that it fit his storyline!

(He has 4 other books out and I really liked “Viola's Hammer” from 2003. To my surprise, he used my name for a fictional character in his 2006 release, “Gifts from Decorah Laurah”!!)

“Town Ball”

???

2006

I have not read it but sports writer for The Journal, Jim Bastian, raves about it! It begins after WWII and traces the love of baseball in Minnesota, with special emphasis on southern MN. Photos abound, many from New Ulmite, Herb Schaper and his Baseball Historical Collection.

“The Captain: Albert Steinhasuer, German-American Journalist, Turner, and Freidenker, New Ulm, Minnesota”

2005

Don Heinrich Tolzmann

University of Cincinnati Press, Occasional Paper # 8, German-American Studies

This short (ca. 20 pages) story of Steinhauser celebrates a man who was important in the life of New Ulm, especially during the World War I period of anti-German hysteria. It ends with his wife’s informative epitaphical story of her husband. A nice read. Available at Brown County Museum for \$2.

The following are suggestions from friends. I have not yet read these, so can offer no review.

“A Trail of Blood”	by Ken Werner
“A Witness to Our Times”	by Flip Schulke
“Wanda Gag, A Catalogue Raisonne”	by Audur (sp?) Winnan
“Wanda Gag”	by Karen Nelson Hoyle
“Old Rail Fence Corners”	by Lucy W.L. Morris
“War Cries on Horseback”	by Stephen Longstreet
“The Civil War in the American West”	by A.M. Josephy, Jr.
“Holy Trinity Church of New Ulm, Minnesota: A Record of 75 Years, 1869-1944”	
“German Cincinnati”	by Don Heinrich Tolzmann
(Probably includes stories about the New Ulm Turners)	
“German Chicago”	by Don Heinrich Tolzmann
(Possible stories about the Chicago Land Association)	
a Sioux Uprising series of books	by John Koblas
“Cut Nose”	Mr. Buffient (sp?)
“Uprising”	Dean Urdahl

Reviewer’s note:

I feel that I have been judicious in my listing of possible books on the Sioux Uprising/Dakota Conflict, although, admittedly, a great many books are listed here. By the same token, it is easily New Ulm’s largest historical event and deserves to be included in any listing of books about New Ulm. There are many more that I don’t know about, have not researched, and didn’t included here.

This is not to be construed as the complete list on *any* New Ulm subject and I welcome input and suggestions for me to include in this listing and review. Danke schoen

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