

Driscoll Sibley Park Time Capsule Reveal

Driscoll, ND – Approximately 50 people attended the Driscoll Sibley Park Time Capsule Reveal on June 14, 2024. The event started with recognition for June 14th also being Flag Day, a day dedicated to honoring our nation’s symbol of unity and freedom.



Burleigh County Commissioner and Park Board Member Wayne Munson

Burleigh County Commissioner Wayne Munson thanked the following for their contributions:

- The 30’s Club – Development of the park and placing the time capsule.
- Driscoll Men’s Club – Added features (fireplace, picnic shelter and tables)
- Disabled American Veterans Post 3 (Bismarck) – Color Guard and mowing maintenance
- Burleigh County Highway Department – Preparation of the park and time capsule for today
- ND State Historical Society – Proper handling of artifacts
- Event attendees for helping celebrate the time capsule reveal on Flag Day



Color Guard, Disabled American Veterans Post 3, Bismarck, <https://www.aklein3dav.org/>
Retired General Robert Fode, Honor Guard Captain Dennis Boknecht, Ashley Cermak, Dale Thomsen

After the presentation of colors, Commissioner Munson provided the history about the park and its beginning:

The Battle of Stony Lake (Summary from Bismarck Daily Tribune, July 5, 1899)

Following the New Ulm Massacre in Minnesota, General Sibley was commissioned to hunt the Sioux Indians down who were responsible for it and punish them. He left Minnesota in June of 1863 with a force of 3,674 men and 225 6-mule wagons. His objective was to drive the Indians westward into the forces of General Sully who was traveling up the Missouri River by river boat with a comparable force, and thus with a force before them and a force behind them, to force them into a battle against men with superior arms.

Contact was first made with the hostiles North of Tappen, where the battle of Big Mound was found on July 25, 1863. Early on the morning of July 26th, they hastened after the Indians, coming upon them in the midst of a buffalo hunt and the following action has been known as the Battle of Dead Buffalo Lake. Both the Indians and General Sibley's Command became scattered and when evening came, the command camped at what General Sibley described as sweet water lake which he named Stony Lake.

Because of the confusion of the day, the spent condition of the men, and the lateness of the hour, this was one of the very few camps General Sibley made which was not protected by rifle pits. For this reason, the camp location was rather hard to determine; but Colonel Dana Wright retraced General Sibley's campaign route in 1914 accompanied by three of General Sibley's veterans who were still living. They determined that this camp had been made on a raise on the east side of what early settlers came to know as Cottonwood Lake, just northwest of the present site of Driscoll.

July 27th, the Indians escaped across the Missouri River which was very low and General Sully had been detained. The Indians vanished into the wilds across the river.

Driscoll Sibley Park Started from a Jubilee Profit (Summary from the Driscoll News, July 1, 1983)

The 30's Club made a profit during the 1970 Jubilee and decided to build a park in the Driscoll area. They chose a two-acre plot located in the southeast quarter of Section 18 (Township 139, Range 75)—the site of a battle General Sibley had with the Sioux Indians. The land was purchased with Club funds Allan Whitman in June 1973.

The Lewis and Clark 1805 Regional Council for Development designed the Park, and the plans were approved by the ND Parks & Recreation Department. A stipulation included transfer of park ownership to a political subdivision, and the Burleigh County Park Board accepted title to the park.

Dedication in Summer of 1974

The Club built a picnic shelter, picnic tables, outdoor restrooms, and installed a chain-link fence in the spring of 1974. The monument (built by Emmet Whitmore, formerly of Steele) and bronze plaque were dedicated to the men who died on the Sibley battlefield. A United States Flag that had flown over our Nation's Capital was also dedicated the same day.

The capsule was removed from the cement vault.



Burleigh County Park Board <https://www.burleigh.gov/park/>

Errol Behm, Park Board Member

Jeffery Herman, Park Board Member

Wayne Munson, Commissioner and Park Board Member

Assisted by Wayne Klein, Burleigh County Highway Department (yellow vest)



State Historical Society of North Dakota <https://www.history.nd.gov/>
Lori Nohner, Assistant Curator and Lindsay Meidinger, Deputy State Archivist

The Reveal! There were rumors of a video, but nobody really knew for sure what would be uncovered. State Historical Society employees were onsite to assist with the handling and transport of the items. The capsule was pried open, and contents included a VHS tape, cassette tape, belt buckle, variety of button, photo album, ribbons, key chains, a variety of newspaper articles, historical books, speech notes from former Burleigh County Commissioner Claus Lembke, and so many other items. Many paper items were stuck together due to the humidity within the capsule.



Time capsule (center) and some of the contents

Pictured below, is an attendee from the capsule's burial in 1989.



Robert Gellner

What's next? Due to the mold and condition, many of the items may not be salvageable; however, after they have been dried, the items will be scanned or photographed with descriptions, and we will provide a link to view the items on our website.

It was originally thought the capsule was buried in 1974 during the park dedication, but there were dated contents from 1984 and 1989. The Historical Society investigated further and discovered the capsule was buried on June 14, 1989 (Flag Day) to be opened in 35 years on the 50th anniversary of the dedication of the park on June 14, 2024 (Flag Day).



Top piece from the concrete vault.