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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ANNOUNCING!! Communal Garden at the LeDuc Historic Estate

January 13, 2011 – Hastings, MN - Have you ever wanted to have a garden of your own, but don't have the space or the know-how to get started? Here is a real opportunity for you. This is a first for the LeDuc Historic Estate in creating a Communal Garden. Come join other volunteers for an informational meeting on February 3, 7 p.m. at the LeDuc Historic Estate, 1629 Vermillion Street, Hastings. Please call 651-437-7055 or check the website, www.dakotahistory.org for more information.

The LeDucs were firm believers in sustaining the land and with that concept in mind, the staff and volunteers of the LeDuc Historic Estate want to continue this tradition. The mission of the LeDuc Historic Estate is to "Preserve the history of the LeDuc family and Hastings area through programs that educate, entertain and encourage community participation." In addition to using the communal garden to interpret an important part of the LeDuc's lives, the garden will also be used to involve community members in the garden itself. Adults and children will be welcome to contribute their efforts and learn about gardening. Period appropriate gardening skills will be taught, using a combination of formal training, observation, and participation. In addition, children will learn about the sources of the food they eat and be introduced to new foods. Heirloom seeds and plants will be used, and volunteer gardeners will be able to take home some of the fruits of their labors. An additional goal is to facilitate connections between people as well as between people and the earth.

General William LeDuc grew up on a farm in Ohio. He and his wife Mary were pioneers in early Minnesota. In 1859, when the family lived at Vermillion Falls, William kept a garden journal. He wrote on June 19, "Sent to market some vegetables last Saturday..." In the Historic Landscape Report prepared for the Minnesota Historical Society by Carole Zellie and Lance Neckar, it says, "In 1884, when LeDuc appears to have focused seriously on market gardening as a means of income, he shipped asparagus, peas, strawberries, cabbages, green peppers,

eggplants, crab apples, corn, and squash to Duluth grocers..." It is clear that William LeDuc was a market gardener at times

Even during the times when William was not marketing his produce, the family maintained a kitchen garden. The area east of the carriage barn extended to a large tract across what is now Ramsey Street, where "Wheat, corn, cucumbers and other market crops were grown at various periods as well as hay and produce for the household..." There are also lists of seeds ordered at various times through the years as the LeDucs took inventory of their supplies and prepared for the gardening seasons.

Andrew Jackson Downing, America's first true landscape architect, whose architecture inspired the LeDucs to build their Gothic Revival house and barn, also strongly recommended a kitchen garden be included on every country estate. Most of his landscape plans show a large area behind the house labeled "kitchen garden." A "kitchen garden" was a place where fruits and vegetables were grown and very accessible to the homemaker.

Come learn more on February 3, 7 p.m. at the LeDuc Historic Estate when the Communal Garden plans will be unveiled.

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