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MINNEAPOLIS? MINNESOTA.
TOPIC: Indians 220.
By George B. Selkirk.
March 18, 1936.

No. of Words: 1000

Indians Pick Pine Cones.
(Continuity.)

Picking pine cones in Northern Minnesota is something that is not generally known and the first question that usually arises when I make mention of picking pine cones is "What do they do with the pine cones." The answer is a long one but briefly speaking I would simply say "They plant them and grow great pine forests."

The kind of pine trees that are of the most commercial use are the Norway pine, the White pine, the Jack pine, and the white spruce. Each tree is a distinct specie and each have a different shaped cone. The Norway pine cone is quite regular in shape and size, being in the shape of a peg top and about an inch long and nearly the same in diameter. The White pine cones are long spikes from four to six inches in length and about a half inch in diameter. The Jack pine cone is in the shape of a horn and about an inch long and three quarters of an inch in thickness. The Spruce cone is nearly round

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and about a half inch long. The Spruce cones ripen in August. The White pine in late August and in September the Norway pine cones ripen. The Jack pine cones do not mature until spring. White pine and Jack Pine cones sell for a dollar per bushel. The Norway pine cones about two dollars and the Spruce commands a price of about two and one half dollars. The White pine cones are usually found in singles. The Jack pine in pairs while the Norway pine cones range from two, three, four, five and six to a cluster. The Spruce cones are found near the top of the tree and in heavy clusters.

When the cones are gathered, they are stored in warehouses and placed in large shallow crates, about a bushel to the crate. The temperature is usually kept at about 114 degrees Fahrenheit and under this heat, they dry out and open. Then the crates are vigorously shaken and the seed falls out. The seed is very small, about the size of a pin head with a wing-like appendage. The seed is very oily. Many bushels of cones are required to produce a single bushel of seed. Four or five thousand bushels of cones will produce less than a hundred bushels of seed.

After the seed has been extracted, it is then planted in seed beds very thickly. When the plant has developed into a plant about an inch or two in length, it is carefully dug up and replanted in the areas of the forest that have been cut over by lumbermen or burnt over by a forest fire. It takes a hundred years or more to grow a forest of trees that are fit for commercial use. The picking of cones, the extracting of the seed and the transplanting of the young trees furnishes employment to a vast army of men.

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Now we will go out and pick pines cones. It is great fun to be out all day in the solitary forests where you will have a chance to commune with Nature, get a wind tan, a few scratches and a hungry stomach. To have the opportunity to get out and to eat a hearty meal that has been cooked over the open fire is something that you will long remember. As you sit quietly eating your lunch, you will hear the gay chatter of the red squirrel as he pauses now and then in his work of cutting pine cones from the branches of the giant trees. To be able to watch him work a hundred feet above the ground is real interesting and as you watch him work, you might wonder what he will do with his great store of pine cones. As a matter of fact the squirrel is thrifty and when fall comes he not only stores enough food for his winter's supply but he will also store a bounteous surplus. Sometimes, you will see him quietly sitting on a log or stump with a pine cone in his paws which he nibbles on to get at the rich oily seed inside. The squirrel is industrious, thrifty and even mischievous and gay. You wonder why I discourse about the squirrel so much. In pine cone picking the squirrel plays an important part and you must learn to know him quite well before you can use him to your advantage.

When all the hazel nuts have fallen seems to be the watchword of the pine cone pickers. During the season that the hazel nuts are ripening and fall^{ing} to the ground, Mr. Squirrel is very busy caching the nuts and does not pay any attention to anything else until the hazel nuts are all gone. He then starts with the pine cones but he does not wait for the cones to fall but climbs to the top of the tree and cuts them down himself. He runs out to

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the ends of the limbs on the tallest trees and with a deft movement with his front feet and teeth cuts off a cone as neatly as though it were cut off with a sharp knife. He cuts perhaps from fifteen to twenty cones per minute. After he has cut off most of the cones from a tree, he climbs down and picks up a cone with his teeth and carries it off and hides it. Maybe he will bury it under some nearby log or in the leaves and sometimes he will find a hole or a hollow stump which he will fill up with the pine cones. Sometimes he will cache the cones several rods from the tree and at hiding he is an expert. You can watch as he buries a cone under some leaves and when he has gone to make another haul, try and find the one that he has just hidden. You will be surprized as he has not disturbed any of the leaves. He may put only one cone in a spot and then again he may place a whole basket full of cones in a pile, especially under a pile of slashings or underbrush.

If you are an inexperienced pine cone picker, about the only thing you can do is to walk around until you find a squirrel that is working in a tree. All you have to do then is to pick up the cones as fast as he cuts them down. This is a slow system and you will not be able to gather more than ~~one~~ bushel per day. Some inexperienced pickers play the part of the squirrel. They climb the tree, cut off the cone and drop it to the ground after which they gather up the cones in sacks.

The Indians living on the Cass Lake Indian Reservation were the first people to engage in picking pine cones and during the picking season usually earned much money. Then the White man started in the business to such an extent that the picking season is shortened to just a few days as the cones come in from all directions. The demand

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for pine cones is limited. The Federal Forestry Department being about the only buyer of pine cones. Sometimes the state forestry departments of some of the east states send out buyer to Cass Lake to buy up cones and with hundreds of men and women picking cones, it does not take long to fill the demand.

GBS

SOURCES OF INFORMATION.

The writer was one of the fastest pine cone pickers that ever went into the business of pine cone picking.

REMINISCENCES AND ACTUAL EXPERIENCES
in the
"SIOUX" MASSACRE OF 1862 IN MINNESOTA.
.....

I was born in the State of New York, my father and members of his family being interested in the lumber industry.

At an early age, my father believing that greater opportunities were to be had in the then "far West" decided to emigrate to that part of the country. He moved to the (then) Territory of Minnesota in February 1857. Father bought what was then known as "school land". This was near the entrance to what was known as "The Big Woods". This consisted of dense woods extending for miles in all directions. Father built us a small home and we settled in what we intended to be our future home.

There were very few neighbors. White people were scarce; but the Indians were numerous and became almost daily visitors.

These were both "Winnebagoes" as well as "Sioux". The two tribes being on friendly terms as well as intermarried, we saw and became acquainted with many members of both.

My two elder brothers became Indian Traders at the Reservation not far distant. The young Indian children became my companions and playmates. Very soon we acquired their language and soon could converse quite fluently in their tongue. Both my parents were very kind to the Indians and many of their head men or "Chiefs" were among our acquaintances. "Red Cloud", "Little Six" or "Shakopee", "Big Fish", "Big Bear", "Little Fish", "Little Thunder", and "Little Crow" - leader of the Massacre, were well known guests. Indeed, my father taught "Little Crow" to both read and write. Our garden always supplied corn, potatoes, etc. to the little bands, and many a fine string of fish was given in return.

I well remember one day a party of Indians and their families had camped near and on our land. Mother walked over and with her knitting sat on the end of a fallen log, conversing with old "Oxseke", one of the squaws, who was cooking a meal over a huge kettle hung between two posts, a fire burning underneath. She had put in potatoes and corn (from our garden) when a warrior seeing a large bird in a tree near by, with a well directed shot, brought it to the ground. Another shot killed a squirrel. Both were in "Oxseke's" hands for dinner. Picking off the feathers, and leaving legs, claws, head, and without drawing, it went into the kettle. The squirrel followed, after only being skinned. Mother, watching the culinary proceedings, lost her appetite and by sundry nods and winks tried to have me decline. No, I wanted some of that "stew" and I can truly say that I have dined at some of the finest hotels of both Paris and London, but I never tasted

anything just like that. When I got home mother served "dessert" in the form of a hickory stick vigorously applied, for my act of disobedience. I ate with the papposes, I slept in their "teepees", I learned to love them dearly, I wore a pair of beautifully beaded moccasins, little two fringed tunic - gifts from old "Oxseke", and could hardly be told from one of them, I was so tanned.

Soon those happy days of my childhood passed. War clouds began to darken the sky. The Civil War broke out. Troops were called for. My two elder brothers responded. We soon saw a difference in the attitude of the Indians. They became less frequent visitors, failed to answer questions, were sullen and morose. We could not understand. We were not aware that rumors were going from tribe to tribe inciting them. Spies from the South were coming thru. The able-bodied men and boys from the North had gone to war, only defenseless women, children, and old men were left - just the opportune time for an uprising. Father had gone East on business. Mother and two little brothers and myself were alone.

We had acquired quite a little stock - two cows, some fine hogs, and poultry. It was Sunday morning, August 17th. Mother and the boys had attended to the chores, and breakfast had been eaten, the remnants were still on the table. A little log cabin had been built in which a good missionary came through, holding services once a month with "Sabbath School". That was a great event in our lives. Mother had just gotten my two brothers ready, and I was standing on a chair being dressed, when we heard a loud "halloing", and rushing to the door saw a man riding on a horse covered with lather, and riding for life. He called, "The Indians have broken out and are killing everything in their path. Fly for your lives!", and he was gone. Mother hastily finished dressing me. Then she ran to the bed, stripped off both pillow cases, and going to the table, poured in every mouthful of food. Rushing into the pantry, she added what eatables she could grasp, and putting them also into the cases, gave each of the boys one. Then seizing her shawl, and taking me by the hand, we ran out.

Down the road came every imaginable stampede - men running with perhaps a gun in one hand, and a child on the other arm; women carrying an infant in her arms and a hatchet, axe, or powder horn; children running, trying to carry some weapon or a little food - all bent on one object, to get away from the Indians. As we ran out of the door, an old scout came rushing from the bushes near by, dangling a stick on which was a bloody scalp. He had just finished its owner near by, i.e., an Indian spy. He exclaimed to mother, "That tanned redskin won't never lift another topknot."

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We had two very fine hogs fattening in a pen near by. Mother ran to the pen (it was made of rails) saying, "The Indians shan't have our hogs without the trouble of catching them", tore down the pen and let the hogs out. That was the last we ever saw of them. Our cows had been milked and had gone to their feeding grounds. We joined the other settlers, which soon became a mob. Some men, more brave than others, were for trying to make a stand. Others kindled fires by the roadside and were warming bullets. Men were loading two-horse wagons as fast as possible, putting in anybody of the women and children, anything to save life. Sometimes children were put into one wagon, the mother in another, as there was room.

An old man and wife - a Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler - friends of ours, helped us into their wagon; continuing until filled, he drove away. We had gone about five miles, whipping the horses into a run, when the team began to tire out. Mother fully realizing the situation told Mr. Wheeler to stop and let her and us children out. They expostulated. Mother was firm. She said, "Your team is about exhausted, they can go but little farther unless you lighten the load. Perhaps you can escape alone, with us all you cannot, I am going to get out." She did so, and taking us three children, she plunged into the woods.

After walking some way, we came to a low place - a marsh, tall grass and rushes were growing very thick. Mother took us in and hid us in the grass and rushes. The water was very low, very muddy. After resting a while, mother explained it to us all. She said, "Children, I am going back after Spot." Spot, by the way, was one of our cows. We had raised her from a calf. She was a perfect pet. We used to play around her, ride on her back, crawl under her, and make her one of us children. She would follow like a dog. Mother said, "I must go. I will try and get Spot; you will all starve to death unless I do. We have but little food, and no one knows how long we will have to make it last." She added, "If I do not come back when the sun goes down, you will know that I am dead. If I never come back, hide days. Travel that way", pointing to the East, "nights, and perhaps your father will find you." After kissing each of us and commending us to God's care, she left us.

Oh! that day. Never daring to raise our heads, for fear of an Indian tomahawk, never daring to speak, only in a whisper, the long day dragged on. Submerged in water and mud, snakes, insects, mosquitoes - oh! would the day ever end. Just as the sun was setting, my little brother looked up, and seeing moving objects whispered, "Down, down for your lives, there's more'n nineteen hundred Injuns right onto us." Oh! how my little heart beat. How terrified we were. Looking again, we found that my brother's boyish imagination had magnified one woman and a cow

into nineteen hundred Indians. It was, yes it was our blessed mother, and she had old Spot with her. It was getting twilight. Mother, children, and cow plunged into the deep woods. We found a nice dry spot and rested for the time.

Mother, after leaving us, started back toward our home. When she heard the Indians firing in one direction, she would turn in the other. She ran into a little knot of men who were preparing to make a stand. They were waiting for some others to join them. They were mounted, and among others, was a fine stallion. He was the property of a Capt. Wilson. Mother told her story, and asked for the loan of the horse. He said, "Madam, he would kill you; he has never had a woman on his back." Mother explained that in her youth, she had been a fearless rider. She begged for the use of the horse. Remember, it was a mother begging for the lives of her childrer. At last he consented. They muffled his feet, and muzzled him so he could not neigh if he heard or saw the Indian ponies. Mother knew the feeding-ground of the cattle. Making her way there at last, she heard the sound of old Spot's bell. Riding to her, she cut the strap, and started back with her toward the camp. Returning the horse, she came directly to us.

We now commenced our wanderings. We subsisted on berries, wild crab apples, hazel nuts, etc., together with wild plums, which grew in abundance. At night, mother would make Spot lie down, and then place us against her belly and sides for warmth. In the mornings, she would milk in our mouths. We had no cups or dishes of any kind. In our wanderings, we came across others, mother always taking the lead, and they always relying on her council. She shared Spot's milk also.

The first sign of civilization was, one morning we spied a roof and chimneys. It proved to be Hershey's mill at Morristown. In that, we, with other refugees, were housed. We looked like nothing human. Haggard, dirty, torn, almost naked, scratched by thorns and brambles, swollen eyes almost shut from insect bites, we found that we had been twenty-one days and nights wandering. In fact, twenty-one days and nights of Hell! Mother had thus saved eleven lives. Her portrait hangs in Section 9, #15 in the Territorial Pioneer Hall at the State Fair Grounds. She was the best and the bravest woman I ever knew. In her "Obituary" she is referred to as "One of Minnesota's Heroines."

When we returned, it was to find only a scene of ruin and destruction. I can assure you that old Spot was one of our especial cares. She was fed, petted, and cared for the rest of her life, and on her death (from old age) we interred her with heavy hearts, and many a tear was shed over and to her memory.

(By Mrs. Julia E.F. Lobdell)
(written in 1933.)

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA.

SUBJECT: Personal Reminiscences of
Early Minnesota.

SUBMITTED BY: F. Curtiss-Wedge

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Oct. 12, 1936.

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Susan Bahr,
(Mrs. Gust Bahr)
253 Hoffman Street,
St. Paul, Minnesota.
Full Blooded Sioux Indian.

The Hazelwood Republic
Williamson and Riggs Missions
Plight of Friendly Indians during the Uprising of 1862.

Not until Susan Waumdisun, a full blooded Sioux Indian girl, was sufficiently advanced in school to study United States history of the Civil War period, did she learn the meaning of the hushed voices and air of tragic mystery in her home when in answer to her childish questioning, she was told evasively of "something terrible" which had happened in Minnesota to cause the exile of her father and mother from the beautiful stretches which had been their heritage for countless centuries.

Clad in the full costume of her people, replete with

leather, beads and feathers, Mrs. Bahr attends the annual meetings of the Territorial Pioneers at the Minnesota State Fair, and sometimes is induced to give an aboriginal war dance and tribal song. Later she appears in her conventional clothes as the educated, cultured and jolly grandmother that she really is.

As she sits with the notables of the State, the picture of her father Henry Waumdisun looks down upon her from its honored position among the portraits of the men who helped to make the territory.

This Waumdisun (Eagle Quill) was one of the Mdewakonton Sioux who ranged the upper Mississippi and who in the first half of the nineteenth century were located in bands scattered from the mouth of the Minnesota to Winona. He took as his bride, Nancy Wakinyan-Towin (Blue Feather), of the same blood.

As a young man he became a Christian, joined the Hazelwood colony of Williamson and Riggs at the Upper Sioux Agency near the mouth of the Yellow Medicine, and established a home after the manner of the white man. Of such a family in 1859 it was written. "The men heads of families, have discarded the blanket, have had their hair cut, have donned white men's clothes, and are located on lands allotted to them by the treaties of 1858. A decent bed is substituted for the dirty buffalo robe in former use. Instead of a group with wooden bowls, horn spoons and perhaps a butcher knife, seated on the floor near a kettle of ducks, fish or hominy, the family may be seen surrounding a table decently furnished, on which, with other articles of well cooked food,

is often well baked bread, and sometimes butter".

To the happy home of Henry and Nancy, one bright August morning in 1862, there came the soldiers with the news that the Sioux were in revolt, many whites had been killed, and the friendly Indians must be moved out at once, both as a reassurance to the whites and for the protection of the Indians themselves.

They remained under guard at Fort Snelling with the wives and children of many of those engaged in the revolt, and the next spring were shipped to Fort Armstrong at Rock Island, hundreds of the captured hostiles being included in their number. Waumdisun and his wife were in time sent to the Santee Reservation in Northeast Nebraska.

The Waumdisun was attached to the Williamson and Riggs Mission, and was frequently taken by the Rev. Alfred Riggs under the auspices of the American Board of Home Missions to the Eastern States where he made many an eloquent plea for assistance in Christian effort among his people. He died in the spring of 1897.

Susan was born on the reservation, August 10, 1874, and received an excellent education in the Mission school under the principalship of the Rev. Mr. Riggs, later becoming a teacher in the school herself.

In the meantime, Gust Bahr, who had been brought from Germany to Iowa as a boy of three years by his parent, Mr. and Mrs. Otto Bahr, had moved as a youth to northeast Iowa and there grown to manhood. After Waumdisun died, Gust with others went to the home of the widow to make arrangements for the use of her farm. In the exchange of information through

the interpreter, Gust disclosed that he was a bachelor and learned in turn that Nancy's family consisted of a daughter who was a teacher in the Mission. In due time arrangements were made for renting the land on shares. Living near by the young man often visited at the home, and performed many acts of kindness for the two women dwelling alone, and in time wooed and won the daughter. In 1898 they were married at the Mission.

For a while they farmed successfully, raising cattle and chickens. But the drouth came, there was no feed and the family decided to move to the Minnesota of which Susan had heard so much. Accordingly in 1922, they located in St. Paul, where Gust secured employment at his trade of tractor grader operator.

There are four children. Mabel married Leo LeClaire and lives in Texas. Bertha is in Los Angeles. Daniel, who is married, and Floyd, the youngest, 18 years of age, are now working at Red Wing. There are three grandchildren.

"Why Grandma, with all those feathers and everything, you look just like an Indian", was the greeting the costumed Susan received from her little American-German-Norwegian grandson, in whose own veins flows the ancient noble strain of the Mdewakonton Sioux, once possessors of the countless millions of acres now teeming with the activities of white civilization.