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Topic: Birch Coulee and Wood Lake Battles.

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List of maps to be traced and pictures which are important.

1. Location of Wood Lake in "The Geological & Natural History Survey of Minn." Vol. 1, plates 27-28
2. Wood Lake battle ground in Folwell's "A History of Minn." pp 117 & 184. Vol. 2.
3. Birch Coulee battleground in " " " p. 112, 392. "
4. Birch Coulee in Renville County in book listed in number 1 above, plate 38.
5. Location of Camp Release in " " " " " , plate 29.
6. Picture of Camp Release in "The Minn. Massacre" by A. P. Bonnelly, p. 141
7. Picture of camp at Birch Coulee in " " " " p. 119
8. Picture of camp at Wood Lake in " " " " p. 129
9. Picture of the Siege of Fort Ridgely in " " " " p. 61
10. ^{Lower Agency buildings} copy map opposite page 110-112 in Folwell's "A History of Minn." Vol. 2.
11. Good picture of New Ulm in 1860 in " " " " opposite p. 134.
12. Fort Ridgely with location of New Ulm in book listed in number 1, Vol. 1, plate 36.
13. Traverse des Sioux in Nicollet County in " " " " plate 36
14. New Ulm in Brown County " " " " plate 26
15. Morton & Hawk Creek " " " " plate 38.
16. Upper Agency.
 " " Folwell's "A History of Minn." Vol. 2. pages 116-117
 Arthur P. Roe's "Hist of Yellow Medicine County", p. 66.
17. Map of Fort Ridgely in Folwell's "A Hist of Minn." Vol. 2. p. 126
18. Defense of New Ulm (picture) " " " " p. 140
19. Picture of Fort Ripley
 20. Copy map in Drane Robinson's "Dakota or Sioux Indians", Pp. 374 275

Author - List of reference books ^{Date printed} Title of Book or Article

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^{Author} Franklyn Curtiss Wedger History of Renville County, Minnesota (1916) Vol. I.

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2 Volumes - Minnesota in the Civil & Indian Wars 1861-1865 (1891)

Neill Edw. D. Rev. (1882) History of the Minnesota Valley.

<u>Author</u>	<u>Date printed</u>	<u>Title of Book or Article</u>
Potter Merle	(1931)	101 Best Stories of Minnesota.
Stevens John H.	(1890)	Personal Recollections of Minnesota & its People.
Tolson W. H. C.	(1888)	Fifty Years in the Northwest.
West Nathaniel		Ancestry, Life & Times of Henry Hastings Sibley
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4 Volumes - Baerquist, Joseph A. C.	(1924)	Minnesota & Its People.
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{ Neill, Edward D. Rev. Williams, J. Fletcher		History of Washington County & the St. Croix Valley.
Turrell, Orlando B.		The Early Settlement & History of Redwood County - found in Minn. Hist. Soc. Coll. Vol. 9
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{ Moyer, L. R. Dale, O. G.	(1916)	Chippewa & Lac qui Parle Counties, Minnesota.
{ Winchell, N. H. Prof. Neill, Edward D. Rev. Williams, J. Fletcher Bryant, Charles	(1881)	History of the Upper Mississippi Valley containing 1. The Geology of the Upper Mississippi. 2. Explorers & Pioneers of Minnesota 3. Outlines of the History of Minnesota. 4. State Education.

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Vol. 3, page 280.

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Vol. 9, pages 418, 446, 451.

part. 2, Vol. 10, pages 606, 815.

Vol 13, pages 92, 151

Vol 15, pages 358, 365, 367, 758

Minn. History Bulletin

Vol. 5. pages 449, 616

The Geological & Natural History Survey of Minnesota (1872-1882)

Vol. 1.

plate 27 & 28, page 589

see also plate 29 for Camp Release

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& 365.

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& 460

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155, & 281.

Vol. 7, page 300

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Vol. 18, page 461

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Vol. 20, page 454

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Minn. State Park & Recreational Area Plan (1939), page 78.
[on Birch Coulee State Memorial Park.]

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the 64th anniversary of the execution of 38 Indians at Mankato
on December 26, 1862.

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- 1) Location of Lower & Upper Agency pages 1, 11, 18, 19, 27
- 2) what tribes comprised the "annuity Sioux of Minn." p. 1.
- 3) Major Galbraith's reasons for Indian outbreak page 2.
- 4) Treaties & agent leaving Upper Agency with troops contributed to outbreak, page 2.
- 5) Theory of civilization fund provided by treaties p. 2
- 6) Battle of Birch Coulee, relief by Col. Sibley. pp. 3, 4, 14, 15
7. Lake Shetek massacre Aug. 20, 1862 pp. 5, 6, 9, 21
8. Location of Acton & massacre Aug. 17, 1862. pp. 3, 11
9. Location of Birch Coulee memorial, Morton pp. 5, 19, 20, 22
inscription on monument incorrect p. 6
site of monument wrong - act purchasing real site p. 7
10. Capt. Grant's argument, who commanded troops p. 7
11. Dedication of shaft on Wood Lake battlefield p. 8
12. Collins' description of the battlefield, reason for calling it the battle of Wood Lake, location pp. 8, 11, 20,
Dispersal of Indians after the battle p. 8.
13. Result of battle of Wood Lake, release of captives
excellent closing sentence. Camp Release pp. 9, 21, 23
14. removal of Sioux Indians from Minn. May 1863 pp. 10
15. Death of Little Crow. July 3, 1863 p. 10
16. reports of Maj. Brown, Capt. Anderson & Capt. Grant.
seeks to clear up who commanded at Birch Coulee pp. 12 to 14
17. Names of 4 principal bands of Sioux Indians, which were known as the Upper or Lower Sioux, the agencies p. 16,
18. Outbreak - Capt. March. pp. 16,
19. Location of Fort Ridgely, state park, & monuments erected 4, 17, 19, 24
20. Traverse des Sioux, its meaning, treaty of 1851 pp. 18, 23
21. Origin of name Birch Coulee pp. 20,
22. Satterlee's compilation of lives lost in massacre p. 21,
23. Fort Ripley, Fort Abercrombie
location of various towns & agencies p. 11. 23, 26,

Indian tobacco, how made.

p. 24.

Shakopee, (24); St. Peter, (23); Henderson (26);
Hazelwood, (27); Yellow Medicine County (27);

History of the
Minnesota
Valley
by Rev. Edward
D. Neill (1882)

The agency at Redwood was about thirteen miles above Fort Ridgely, while the agency at Yellow Medicine, was located on a river of that name about fifty miles above the fort.

In 1821 a mill was constructed for the use of the garrison, on the west side of St. Anthony Falls, under the supervision of Lieut. McCabe. The mill which was constructed in 1821, for sawing lumber, stood upon the site of the Holmes & Sibley Mill in Minneapolis, & in 1823 was fitted up for grinding flour.

The Sioux or the Dakotas, the Ojibways or Chippewas, & the Hottentots - groups or Winnebagoes.

In the month of May 1835 Rev. Thomas Williamson (a physician also) & mission band, (Rev. J. D. Stevens, Alexander Huggins & their wives, Miss Sarah Page, & Lucy Stevens, teachers) arrived at Fort Snelling. On the 27th of May 1835 Rev. Williamson united in marriage at the Fort Lieut. Edward Ogden to Ediza Eda, the daughter of Capt. G. A. Loomis, the first marriage service in which a clergyman officiated in the present State of Minnesota. In June first church (Presbyterian) organized at the Fort.

On Dec. 27th 1854, Yu-ha-ga, a Dakota was the first Indian hung under the laws of Minnesota. On March 23rd, 1860, the first white person was executed & attracted considerable attention from the fact, the one who suffered the penalty of the law was a woman, Anna Bilansky, poisoned her husband.

The four tribes, the Mdewakantone, Wapatoons, Sissetons & Wapakutas, comprised the entire "annuity Sioux" of Minnesota, & in 1862 these tribes numbered about 6,200 or more. All these Indians had from time to time, from 1815 to the date of the massacre of 1862, received presents from the government, by virtue of various treaties of amity & friendship between the government & their accredited chiefs & heads of tribes.

History of the
Minn. Valley
Neill

Major Thomas Galbraith, Sioux Agent, says:
"The radical, moving cause of the outbreak, is, I am
satisfied, the ingrained & fixed hostility of the savage bar-
barian to reform & civilization. As in all barbarous
communities, in the history of the world, the same people
have, for the most part, resisted the encroachments of
civilization upon their ancient customs, so it is in the
case before us. Hostile opposing forces meet in conflict
& a war of social elements is the result, civilization
is aggressive, & barbarism stubbornly resistant, I
state as a settled fact in my mind, that the en-
croachments of Christianity, & its handmaid, civil-
ization, upon the habits & customs of the Sioux
Indians, is the cause of the late terrible Sioux
outbreak.

Treaties con-
tributed to
outbreak

These Indian treaties inaugurated & contributed greatly
to strengthen a custom of granting, to the pretended owners of lands
occupied for purposes of hunting the wild game thereon, & living
upon the natural products thereof, a consideration for the cession
of their lands to the Government of the United States. This
custom culminated in a vast annuity fund, in the aggregate
to over 3 million dollars, owing to the tribes, in Minnesota. This
annuity system was one of the causes of the massacre of 1862.

"civilization
fund"

The theory of the civilization fund, in substance,
was to break up the community-system which obtained among
the Sioux; weaken & destroy their tribal relations, & individ-
ualize them, by giving them each a separate home.

another cause
of outbreak

And notwithstanding all that has been said
as to the cause of the outbreak, it may be remarked that the
removal of the agent from Yellow Medicine, with the troops
raised by him for the Civil War, at the critical period when
the Indians were exasperated & excited, & ready at any
moment to arm for warfare upon the whites, was
one of the causes acting directly upon the Indians to
precipitate the blow that afterwards fell upon the border
settlements of Minnesota on the 18th of August, 1862.

The meeting of the Minnesota Historic Sites and Markers
Commission

History of
the Minnesota
Valley by
Rev. E. Neill

101 Best
Stories of Minn
by
Merle Potter

On
Sept 24th 1862
Battle of Birch Coulee

Acton is 35 miles northeast of the Lower Sioux agency, in the county of Meeker. Acton massacre August, Aug. 17th, 1862).

Luck & the unwillingness of Indians to engage in open warfare combined to make the Battle of Birch Coulee less disastrous than it might well have been. As it stands, it was one of the most desperate Indian encounters that ever occurred in this country.

Major Brown, had lived among the Indians for years & it was believed that any command with which he was associated was perfectly safe.

Never dreaming that there were Indians in the vicinity of their camp, & relying on the assurances given by Major Brown that that part of the country was not infested with Indians, most of the soldiers slept peacefully through out the night. But the Sioux, revealing one of those bursts of brilliant strategy that marked their ruthless campaigns, had disregarded all danger & prepared a move, which might have resulted in the sacking of Mankato & St. Peter, had it been successful. They were actually on their way down the Minnesota Valley to execute this plan when one of their scouts came in with the news that a party of soldiers had encamped nearby. The temptation to fall upon the unsuspecting encampment was more than the Indian warriors could resist, & it was decided to surround the detachment that night & make an assault at day break. Quietly, stealthily, they posted themselves around the camp, ^{and} taking advantage of the natural protection, were able to approach within a short distance of the sentinels who had been posted about the camp.

At day break, the 2nd of September 1862, the battle of Birch Coulee began. Almost instantly every horse but one was killed, & many of the soldiers were killed or wounded, most of them with only a very hazy idea of what was happening. This fusillade was continued for more than three hours, during which time about 20 were killed & sixty wounded.

The survivors, with a pick, three spades, axes, knives, bayonets & any tool that was handy, went frantically to work digging entrenchments, & before noon they had built dirt barricades.

The desperate situation was made more tragic by the discovery that, through some unaccountable blunder, ammunition had been given them at Fort Ridgely that was not the correct size for the guns. Moreover, the location of the camp, which had seemed so admirable, was shown to have practically nothing but disadvantages, to wit - stand the siege. The water supply, so near at hand, had been cut off by the Indians, who were able to fire on the expedition from the shelter of the woods & from the high ridge opposite, with little risk to themselves. For thirty-one hours the beleaguered remnants of the expedition beat off the attacks of the Indians, who circled the camp at safe distances, but refused to hazard what they had won by now making direct assault. Had relief not arrived, every man would certainly have perished.

On the morning of September the 3rd, Col. Sibley sensing that the expedition was being attacked (because the guards at the Fort could hear firing in the direction of Birch Coulee) Col. Sibley at once sent Col. McPhail to the rescue. Col. McPhail & his men, guided by the sound of the firing, made a forced march toward Birch Coulee but were met by a far superior band of Indians & forced to halt until reinforcements could be sent in larger numbers. A messenger was hurried back to Fort Ridgely; Sibley himself headed a relief party & joining forces with Col. McPhail, was able to dislodge the Indians & bring succor to tired, hungry, and wounded survivors of the battle & siege.

relief of Birch Coulee defenders.

from St. Paul
Pioneer Press

June 7, 1925

Lake Shetek measure August 20, 1862

Minnesota - Memorials and Monuments - Misc. Titles - Clipping Collection

The imposing Shetek monument is situated on the bank of Lake Shetek. Shetek ~~is~~ one of the most thriving settlements in southwestern Minnesota during pioneer days, was situated in Murray county; It is twelve miles south of Tracy & 2 miles north of Currie.

On the shores of Lake Shetek was a beautiful wooded expanse, ^{this} besides offering the best of shelter from the terrific prairie winds, was also the home of wild game & its waters teemed with fish. These things made the location suitable to the pioneer but it also held what the Sioux Indians cherished most dearly - a wilderness camping ground. The Indians were not stupid & soon saw that if the settlement continued to increase in size they would be pushed out of their homes & their forefathers had been. This thought burned within the heart of every brave & each was ready to strike at the whites for little or no cause.

The Indian tribe making its year round camp at Shetek were under the rule of Sub-Chief Pawn. A strong friendship grew up among the settlers & the Indians, therefore the settlers learned to trust Old Pawn. In spite of this friendship between them quarrels & disputes became more frequent as time went on.

The morning of August 8th, 1862, Chief Lean Bear arrived at Shetek with more braves from the Redwood section. As the Indian council was being held two young warriors came in with the scalp of two whites. John Wright & Andrew Koch. Lean Bear then realized that the climax had been reached & thought that the only course to follow would be to wipe out the settlers before they took action.

During a consultation between Lean Bear & Chief Pawn, during which there was much haggling, Pawn addressed the settlers: "Leave all of your belongings & but one team & a wagon & you may go safely to the forks on the Minn. Having faith in the chief (Pawn) the settlers gathered together their families, a few provisions & other necessities for the journey, & some fifty persons were soon started on that fateful trip.

As the settlers reached the edge of the marsh the Indians poured upon them, shooting from every side & uttering war cries. Fourteen whites & 3 Indians were killed in the slaughter. Many of the wounded would have met their doom had not a thunderstorm driven the Indians to cover. A few of the wounded whites, with the uninjured then escaped under cover of darkness. After this massacre of the unsuspecting settlers the Indians fled westward.

During this fight & massacre Lean Bear was killed. Afterward there was much argument between the men survivors as to who had killed the chief. The two men who had the best claim to having killed Lean Bear were John Eastlick & Thomas Ireland; but no one will ever be able to say with certainty as to who really killed Lean Bear.

The surviving members of the Lake Shetek settlement were scattered by the outbreak & few of them ever came back to the lake country.

The settlers who were massacred were later buried on the shores of Smith lake near Shetek. The names of all the dead were carved on nearby trees where they may be seen to this day.

Monument
erected in
1924 in mem-
ory of those
slain.

In 1924 a monument was erected in memory of those that were slain. The monument, paid for with a grant of \$1000 by the State Legislature & personal subscription was erected on a plot of ground donated by D. H. Evans. This memorial now stands in the doorway of the old William Daley home, part of the D. H. Evans farm.

Book #1

Minnesota
Memorials &
Monuments

The monument erected to commemorate the Battle of Birch Couleée of Aug. 1862 is erected on a tract of land near Morton, (this land was donated by an agricultural society, but in no way connected with the battlefield, a monument quite befitting except that it erred in stating that Capt. Grant was in command of the expedition, instead of Major Joseph Brown who is given that distinction in official records. The battle field was

Battle of Birch Coulee Sept 29, 3, 1862

Monument - Who commanded troops

See St. Paul Pioneer Press for Sunday, Feb. 4, 1923

was bought in 1896, but the monument stands as originally placed & uncorrected. The site now is but a half mile from the "corral" where the battle occurred.

Under an act passed in 1895, the real site of the battle was purchased in 1896. But never in the 27 years elapsing since the battlefield has come into its possession has the state taken a step to improve it or have removed to it the monument misplaced on the tract near Morton.

After the remnants of the force, which met disaster at Birch Coulee were taken to Fort Ridgely, Capt. Grant related, "I made my report of this expedition, & took it personally to Col. Brooke, my commanding officer. It was handed back to me & I was coolly informed that I should make my report to Major Joseph Brown, who was in command of the expedition. This was the first time I had heard of it. We had been gone 4 days, two of which we had been engaged in battle; no order had been given me by Major Brown, not an intimation he considered himself in command.

If any blame rests on anyone for selection of camps, or in carrying out any of the details of the expedition, it rests upon me. All officers, soldiers & civilians obeyed my orders.

Had the Battle of Birch Coulee not occurred, had Little Crow not been tempted to attack the little band that his scouts had espied, it is possible that the Sioux would have carried out their plans to renew the massacre that they had engaged in. The glorious resistance of the white men & soldiers in this encounter was disheartening to the Indians, and, moreover, it acquainted Sibley, with the fact that the Indians had resumed hostilities.

pictures of
monuments
where
found

Pictures of the monuments erected at Morton to commemorate the battle & the other to pay tribute to the friendly Indians will be found in The St. Paul Pioneer Press of Sunday, Feb. 4, 1923

Journal Oct 18, 1910 {Minnesota - Memorials & Monuments - Misc. Titles

Dedicate
shaft on
Wood Lake
Battlefield
Oct. 18, 1910

Wood Lake
in
Yellow-Med-
icine County.

1500 persons, many of them pioneers from various parts of the state made a pilgrimage today to the battlefield of Wood Lake, where the state monument commemorating Gen. Sibley's engagement with the Indian forces led by Little Crow, was dedicated. The site of the monument is on the farm of G. O. Homme, four miles from Wood Lake. The monument is thirty feet in height & is of red granite from St. Cloud. Cost of monument \$700.

This battle really ended the Indian War, as far as Minnesota was concerned, for the Indians gave themselves & their captives up to the troops at Camp Release soon after the engagement. Battle fought Sept. 23, 1862.

(For proceedings of the dedication ceremony at Wood Lake, when monument was dedicated - Oct. 18, 1910 - see - Minnesota - Memorials & Monuments - Misc. Titles Book 3 (Clipping collection))

from a speech
by Judge L.
W. Gollins
at unveiling of
statue.

10-18-10

On the battlefield of Wood Lake there was no timber it was all bare prairie. There were a few trees in the bottom of yonder ravine, one little tree stood near the outlet of the little stream leading into the ravine. Why this was called the battle of Wood Lake I never could discover. The Indians named this Lone Tree Lake, & it was then quite a large body of water - a meadow now. But Sibley, for some reason unknown, called it the battle of Wood Lake.

Decimated & routed, the whole body of the Sioux which had come down with wolfish ferocity to devour & slay Col. Sibley's army, vanished behind the Yellow Medicine & fled at Bull Run speed to their camp opposite the mouth of the Chippewa. Stopping only to bundle up their effects, the greater number of the warriors departed with their families for the Missouri & Devil's Lake, & some went on beyond the Canadian line.

The battle of Wood Lake closed the life of the Dakotas in Minnesota.

History of Minnesota Valley.

Lake Shetek, a beautiful lake of quiet water, some six miles long & two broad, is situated about seventy miles west of New Ulm in Murray county.

p. 249

Wood
Lake

Sept 23, 1862

The battle of Wood Lake put an end to all the hopes of the renowned chief, (Little Crow) his warriors were in open rebellion against his schemes of warfare against the whites. He had gained nothing. Fort Ridgely was not taken. New Ulm was not in his possession. St. Peter & Mankato were intact, & at Birch Lake & Wood Lake he had suffered defeat. No warrior would longer follow his fortunes in a war so disastrous. On the same day of the battle at Wood Lake a deputation from the Wapeton band appeared under a flag of truce, asking terms of peace. The response of Colonel Sibley was a demand for the delivery of all the white captives in the possession of these Indians. Wabasha, at the head of fifty lodges, immediately parted company with Little Crow, & established a camp near Lac qui Parle, with a view of surrendering his men on the most favorable terms. A flag of truce announced this action to Col. Sibley, who soon after, under proper military guard, visited Wabasha's camp. After the formalities of the occasion were over, Sibley received the captives, in all to the number of 107 pure whites, & about 162 half-breeds.

After the disaster met with at Wood Lake, Little Crow, retreated, with those who remained with him in the direction of Big Stone Lake, some sixty miles to the westward.

Of the 300 white captives in the hands of the Indians at the commencement of the war, all, or nearly all, have been retaken & returned to their friends. Much private property has been secured, & some 1500 Indians engaged directly or indirectly in the massacres, have been captured; & those who have actually stained their hands in the blood of our frontier settlers are condemned to suffer death. The number condemned was forty, but one died before the day fixed for their execution, & one, a half-breed, had his sentence commuted to life imprisonment.

Hung on
Friday Dec.
26, 1862

removal of
Sioux Indians
from
Minnesota
1863.

On the 4th day of May, 1863, at six o'clock in the afternoon, certain others of the Sioux Indians, squaws and papposes, an all about 1700, left Fort Snelling, on board the steamboat Davenport, for their new reservation on the Upper Missouri, above Fort Randall.

On the 22nd of April, the condemned Indians were first taken from the State, on board the steamboat Favorite, carried down the Mississippi, & confined at Davenport, in the State of Iowa, where they remained, with only such privileges as are allowed to convicts in the penitentiary. By these two shipments, over two thousand Sioux had been taken from the State & removed far from the borders of Minnesota. The expedition of 1863, fitted out against the scattered bands of the Sioux yet remaining on the borders of the State, or still further removed into the Dakota Territory, gave to the border settlements some assurance of protection and security against any further disturbance from these particular bands of Indians.

Death of
Little Crow
July 3, 1863

On Friday evening, July 3, 1863, Mr. Lampson & his son Chauncey, while traveling along the road, about six miles north of Hutchinson, discovered two Indians in a little prairie opening in the woods, interspersed with clumps of bushes & vines & a few scattering poplars picking berries. These two Indians were Little Crow & his son Wovwapa by his third wife.

Little Crow had returned to the State not for the purpose of fighting the white men, but to steal horses, from the settlers, & give them to his children.

Little Crow was shot twice, the first time in the side, just above the hip, the second time, in the side, near the shoulder; the last shot is the one that killed him.

His son escaped, intending to go to Devil's Lake, but was captured twenty-six days later.

Here ends this wonderful episode in our contact with the Indian race in Minnesota. It commenced with Little Crow, in this instance, & it is proper that it should end

History of Minnesota Valley. - Neill

with his inglorious life. With the best means for becoming an exponent of Indian civilization on this continent, he has driven the missionaries from his people & become a standing example of the assertion: "Once an Indian always an Indian."

Little Crow has indeed given emphasis to the aphorism of Ferdousi, "For that which is unclean by nature, thou canst entertain no hope; no washing will make the gypsy white."

location of
Wood Lake
p. 899

The town of Wood Lake is situated in the eastern part of the county (Yellow Medicine) & includes all of congressional township 114, range 39. It was here that the decisive battle of the Indian War between the forces of Little Crow & those of General Sibley, was fought. The remains of the trenches used by them, are still visible. This battle decided the fortunes of Little Crow & practically ended the Sioux war.

Until 1871, Yellow Medicine county was a part of Redwood county, but in that year a legislative act was passed establishing Yellow Medicine county with boundaries as at present defined.

Birch Coulee in Renville county
Wood Lake in Yellow Medicine county
New Ulm in Brown county
Hickton in Meeker county, 45 miles from Lower Agency.
Lower Sioux Agency was located at the present site of Spearman in Redwood county, township 112, range 34 lying south of the Minnesota river, was established in the north part of the town in 1853 under the charge of Thomas Bullen & continued in existence until the outbreak of 1862.
The Upper Sioux agency, established in 1853, in charge of Mr. Robinson, was located near the site of the present village of Yellow Medicine.
Redwood ferry in Redwood county,
Fort Ridgely, 18 miles northwest of New Ulm,

In this book appear reports of the battle of Birch
Coolie & activities of the various commands prior to said
battle, these reports were made out by Major Joseph R.
Brown, Captain Joseph Anderson & Captain Hiram P.
Grant, all of these reports were made out the day after
the battle, upon the return of these various commands
to Fort Ridgely.

Reports of
Maj. Brown
Capt. Anderson
Capt. Grant

who com-
manded the
detachment
sent out to
the agency
& also fought
at Birch
Coolie!

Brown's
report to
Col. Sibley

The report of Major Brown to Col. Sibley details
for what reasons this expedition was sent out, what they
accomplished, & a very thorough account of the battle of
Birch Coolie, including the number of volunteers & soldiers
of Capt. Anderson's company who were killed or wounded.

In his report, Major Brown said: "Captain
Anderson & his company promptly availed themselves of
the protection afforded by the wagons near him, & opened
fire upon the Indians."
"Captain Grant's company & the fatigue party
when the Indians attacked, promptly seized their arms, &
commenced firing; but the desire of this company to
charge upon the Indians & thereby expose themselves,
imprudently, lead to so many deaths & wounds. After
they took position behind the wagons but few cas-
ualties occurred, & the close firing on our side soon
caused the Indians to withdraw to the shelter of the woods."

This report detailing why Capt. Grant's
company suffered such great losses is not exaggerated.
Capt. Anderson's casualties were two killed & twelve
wounded, three of the latter only slightly wounded, and re-
ported fit for duty; among the volunteers with the expe-
dition there were five wounded, shortly after the fight
began, two of the volunteers & four others left the camp,
& are believed dead, although the body of only one was
found.

Major Brown further states, "Having received
no report from Capt. Grant, I am unable to give
the names of killed & wounded of his company, & the

Minn. in the Civil & Indian Wars. Vol. 2.

fatigue party attached to it."

The losses in Capt. Grant's company were seven killed & fifteen wounded, of the latter two died of their wounds.

It is significant to note that in this report by Major Brown to Col. Sibley, he signed it: Joseph R. Brown, Major Third Minn. Volunteer Militia, Commanding detachment.

Capt. Anderson's
report to
Maj. Brown

The report of Capt. Anderson, giving an account of the battle, how his men acted, & the casualties suffered by his company was addressed to Major J. R. Brown, as commander of the expedition.

It is interesting to note, & it may help to clarify a very disputable point, that Capt. Anderson in this report to Major Brown states: "I have the honor to report that on the morning of September 2nd, at 4 o'clock, my company, consisting of 51 officers & men, constituting a part of your command, was aroused by a report of one of the sentinels guns, instantly followed by a most deadly volley of musketry from the enemy."

Capt. Grant's
report -

important to
the discussion -

In describing the defence of the camp & the battle proper, & also his report of the expedition, in trying to clarify the disputable point of who had charge of the expedition, I quote parts of Capt. Grant's report, in which he says: "Suffice it to say, all did well, & a few such men as Capt. Anderson, Lieutenant Swan, Lieutenant Gillham, Sergeants Barnes & Gardner, Corporal Luge, James J. Egan of the Rangers & Geo. D. Redfield, a citizen, by their courage & bravery, helped others to be brave & courageous. All did well. After a night's sleep at Fort Ridgely I made my report of this expedition, & when it was ready took it personally to my commanding officer. It was handed back to me & I was coolly informed that I should make my report to Maj. Joseph R. Brown, who was in command of the expedition. This was the first I had heard of it. We had been gone four days, two of which we had been engaged

Minnesota in the Civil & Indian Wars, Vol. 2.

in deadly fight; no order had been given to me by Major Brown, not an intimation that he considered himself in command. To say that I was angry, when told to make my report to him, would only express half what I felt. I then & there destroyed my report & never made another. If any blame rests on anyone, for selection of camps, or in carrying out any of the details of the expedition, it rests upon me. All officers, soldiers & citizens obeyed my orders. I had full charge."

Statement
by James Egan
a member of
Capt. Anderson's
company.

he tells who
commanded
this expedi-
tion -

good de-
scription
of battle
of Birch
Creek
Sept 24 3
1862

The Hon. James J. Egan, a former member of Captain Anderson's company, in a statement prepared by him states: "The company to which I belonged disbanded & turned homeward. Anson Northrup's black horse cavalry did likewise, & all of the 'irregular horse' except Jo. Anderson's company abandoned the glories of war for the pleasant paths of peace. I joined Captain Anderson's company, & the next day after doing so we were ordered, together with Capt. Grant's company A, 6th Regiment of Infantry, to proceed to the agency at Redwood & beyond as an escort to a fatigue party & for observation. The whole force, including teamsters & fatigue party, consisted of 150 men under command of Major Joe. Brown, one of the oldest & most experienced Indian traders in the state. But on the way to Redwood Agency we encountered so many scenes of horror & desolation that we began to feel some inward fear. Among the grasses lay men in eternal sleep, mutilated & mangled; here along the roadside were burnt houses & the bones of human beings. "A fatal ity seemed to hang over us from the moment we started. It was a slow march, necessarily sad, & grief & sadness settled over us all. Men were among us going out to look for their relatives & friends; eager to obtain information concerning loved ones. We camped the first night (Sunday Aug. 31st) opposite the Redwood Agency, under a huge bluff. In the morning we crossed the Redwood & beheld the initial battlefield of the Indian War. The command here divided, & we, the cavalry, took the westerly side of the river. We buried the dead about the agency, & then proceeded to Little Crow's village, which we found deserted, having accomplished our purpose, we recrossed

Mem in the Civil & Indian Wars Vol 2.

the Minnesota river, & about 5 o'clock in the afternoon we found Capt. Grant's company encamped within two hundred yards of Birch Leodie, and, dismounting, we all entered into the duties usually appertaining to camping for the night. At about 4 o'clock in the morning (Sept 2nd), I heard a shot & the next thing I remember was the cry of Indians, & Capt. Anderson yelling to his men. The men were stunned, horses frightened, & terror & fear seized hold of us all. A shower of bullets continually fell upon us from all sides. Men were dead & dying in the small circle of our encampment; the horses were nearly all killed in the first half hour, & it looked as if our last hour had come on earth. Individual instances of bravery were many & some few of cowardice. About 1 o'clock in the afternoon we heard a loud report like that of a cannon. We were all startled. The movements of the Indians began to indicate something new, & after awhile again the boom of the cannon sounded in our ears. That afternoon we did not hear the cannon again, & each man coming on all hope of relief left our breasts, & each man sullenly & silently pursued his own meditations. It was a night of black despair. The agony we suffered, expecting every moment we would be rushed upon, through that long, long night, is indescribable. Gladly again we hail the moon gilding the horizon. We saw unusual movements & stir among our enemy. We expected the final hour had come when they would charge, & we were prepared - no dread of death now lingered in the heart of any. Suddenly the boom of the cannon is again heard, & again & nearer and clearer. Confusion seems to pervade our enemies, & they are in full flight. But we did not move from our holes, which we had dug for protection, until Sibley, with a few officers, came right up to us, & then, & not till then, did we feel we were saved. The scene presented in our camp was a sickening one. Twenty-three men lay dead; 45 others seriously wounded & groaning & crying for water; the carcasses of 90 dead horses lying about, & a stench intolerable emanating from the whole ground. For 30 hours we had been under fire, & tasted neither food nor water.

In 1862 there were in the State of Minnesota four principal bands of Sioux Indians - the M'pay-wa-kon-ton, Wak-pa-koo-tas, Si-si-ton & Wak-pay-ton. The first two bands were known as the Lower Sioux & the last two bands as the Upper Sioux. These designations arose from the fact that in the sale of their lands to the U.S. by the treaties of 1851 (Traverse des Sioux & Mendota), the lands of the Lower Sioux were situated in the southern part of the State, & those of the upper bands in the more northern part, & when a reservation was set apart for their future occupation on the upper waters of the Minnesota river they were similarly located thereon.

This reservation extended 10 miles on each side of the Minnesota river beginning at a point a few miles below Fort Ridgely & extending to the headwaters of the river. The reservation of the lower bands or Lower Sioux extended up to the Yellow Medicine River; that of the upper bands or Upper Sioux included all above the last named river. An Indian agency was established at Redwood for the Lower Sioux & at Yellow Medicine for the Upper Sioux.

The whole country to the north & west of this reservation was an open, wild region, extending to the Rocky Mountains.

Various things contributed to create a feeling among the Indians that it was a good time to recover their country, redress all their grievances, & reestablish themselves as lords of the land. They had ambitious leaders. Little Crow was the principal instigator of war on the whites. He was a man of greater parts than any Indian in the tribe. Flandreau had used him on many trying occasions, as the captain of his body guard, as an ambassador to negotiate with other tribes, & always found to be equal to any emergency, but on this occasion his ambition ran away with his judgment, & led him to fatal results.

The news of the outbreak reached Fort Ridgely (which was situated about 13 miles down the Minnesota river) from the agencies about 8 o'clock on the morning of the 18th of August 1862.

Capt. Marsh's command (45 men) left the fort at 9 a.m. on the 18th of August, for the Lower Sioux Agency, which was on the west side of the Minnesota River, the fort being on the east, which necessitated the crossing the river by a ferry near the agency.

about Little
Crow

Outbreak
Aug. 18, 1862

Capt. Marsh
Aug. 18, 1862

→ see also page
24 &
bottom of
this page

Fort Ridgely is located about six miles south of Fairfax State park now embraces practically 160 acres, the cemetery association (of Fort Ridgely Nat. Cemetery) owns about five acres, but this association has deeded to the state the spot where stands the monuments to Capt. March & his men, to Mrs. Eliza Muller (wife of the fort surgeon during the siege of Sept. 20-22, 1862) & to the faithful. Chippevas, as well as the land on the slope of the bluff, which was originally a part of the cemetery. This cemetery is located on the brow of the bluff southeast of the fort; it was established long before the massacre, by the government, its purpose being for the burial of such persons as died at the garrison. The first burial therein was that of Hager Movers, the trader, who died April 3, 1857.

In 1873, a monument was erected by the government in the cemetery. Here is buried the victims of the Redwood Ferry disaster, the Battle of Birch Cooley, the defense of Fort Ridgely, & other victims of the massacre.

In 1896 a monument was erected on the exact spot where the flag pole stood at the old fort in 1862, Mr. Hopkins (of Fairfax) & Col. Sheehan (defender of the Fort in 1862) selected the design & inscriptions.

In the 1911-1912 session of the Legislature a bill was passed for an appropriation to purchase the 80 acres tract that includes the site of old Fort Ridgely. In the session of 1912-1913 an appropriation was made to purchase the other 80 acres tract which includes the old National Cemetery.

At its meeting (Fort Ridgely Nat. Park & Historical Association organized Oct. 15, 1899) of 1915 it was voted to change the name from the Fort Ridgely Nat. Park to the Fort Ridgely State Park.

Fort Ridgely in section 6 of Ridgely township, Nicollet county, fort built in 1853-54, & used as a U. S. military post until 1867. Fort was named in 1854 by Jefferson Davis, then secretary of war, in honor of 3 army officers from Maryland who died in the Mexican War, Lieut. Henderson Ridgely, Capt. Randolph Ridgely & Capt. Thomas P. Ridgely. St. Peter, the county seat, first settled in 1853, is in Nicollet county.

M. H. S. C.

Vol 17

→
Ridgely
Nicollet
county
also page
24

Traverse township (Morrison county) took the name of its village, platted in 1852, commonly called Traverse des Sioux "Crossing of the Sioux", because the Minnesota river was crossed here on a much used trail from St. Paul & Fort Snelling to the upper Minnesota valley & Red River valley. The site of the Traverse des Sioux Treaty of 1851 was appropriately marked June 17, 1914 by a brass tablet on a granite boulder. (See also St. Peter Herald, June 19, 1914) This was a well known locality. Here the Sioux, in early days, were wont to cross the Minnesota on their way between the Cannon river country & Swan Lake, & the ford bore the French equivalent for the "crossing of the Sioux." also known as "The Traverse."

Redwood county was named for the Redwood river, whence also comes the name of the county seat Redwood Falls.

Lower Sioux Agency established in 1853-54, on the southern bluff of the Minnesota river in the present northwest quarter of section 8, Sherman, had several government buildings & became a considerable village before its abandonment on account of the Sioux outbreak & massacre Aug. 18, 1862. Between Crow Creek & Wabasha Creek, beside Crow Creek were the villages of Little Crow & Big Eagle. Morton village, lying mainly in Renville county, includes also a suburb on the south side of the Minnesota river in the extreme eastern corner of Hounser.

Renville county for a ten mile strip along the Minnesota river was in the Lower reservation or agency. By the Treaty of 1858, the Sioux relinquished their lands north of the Minnesota & confined their reservation to a strip ten miles wide on the south side of that river.

The ground where Capt. Marsh & his men were ambuscaded was, at & about the ferry landing on the north side of the Minnesota river, opposite the Lower Agency. From the landing on the south side two roads had been graded up the steep bluff to the agency buildings & from the north landing the road stretched diagonally across the wide river bottom to the huge corrugated bluffs, two miles or more away, at Faribault Hill. Named for David Faribault - a mixed blood Sioux & a son of old John Baptiste Faribault, & who lived at the base of the hill. At Faribault's Hill the road divided, one fork leading up the hill & over the prairie to the eastward & northwest, running along the crest of the bluff to Fort Ridgely.

=
about
counties
M.H.S.C.
Vol. 17

villages of
Wabasha &
Waconia,
adjacent
Wabasha
creek

Treaty 1858
reduced
reservation
to 10 mile strip
on south side
of Minn. River

location of
Morton

The other followed the base of the bluff down the river. Lower Agency was about 12 or 14 miles to the northwest of the Fort. Capt. March left for the agency around noon of Aug 18, 1862. Morton is in township 113, range 34, section 31, Renville

county. = It is puzzling that the officers (Capt. Dana & Colonel Francis Lee) should have selected the location they did. west of the ravine, when east of the ravine there is a piece of high land overlooking all the surrounding country, so situated as to be almost impregnable, whereas the site selected was far from being an ideal spot for a fortification. - Officers later explained this by stating that the fort was never intended for defense. Whatever the thought of the military authorities may have been it is certain that the pioneers in settling in Renville county looked upon Fort Ridgely as a possible refuge & defense in case of emergency.

The Upper Sioux Agency is located 52 miles northwest of Fort Ridgely.

20
M. H. S. Co.
Vol. 17.

Renville county - Olivia is the county seat. This county, established Feb. 20, 1855, & organized March 1 & November 8th 1866, was named for Joseph Renville, a "bois boule", he was born ^{about} near Kaposia village of the Sioux, on the Mississippi a few miles below St. Paul, about the year 1779, he died at Lac qui Parle in March, 1846. He was a friend of Rev. T. S. Williamson, who came as a missionary to the Sioux in 1835.

about
coulée

The original name of the stream in the coulée was La Croix creek, but the vicinity was known from the early days as Birch Coulée, & this was finally corrupted to Birch Cooley. This name was translated from Tampa creek of the Sioux, as it was mapped by McCollet, referring to its many trees of the paper or canoe birch, which in this vicinity reaches the southwest limit of its [Birch Cooley township] geographic range.

see page
19 also on
Morton

Morton, a railway village adjoining the Minnesota river in Birch Cooley township, platted in 1882, & incorporated in September 1887, was named by officers of the M. & St. L. Ry. Company.

Camp Pope, situated about a mile northwest from the present city of Redwood Falls, was named in honor of General John Pope. There General Sibley & his troops were encamped from April 19 to June 16, 1863, in preparation for his expedition against the Sioux in the present area of North Dakota.

Wood Lake

Trunk highway 67, R.W. 1/4 sec. 9, township 114 N, range 38 W, Sioux Agency township, Yellow Medicine county, where Little Crow's warriors fought with Gen. Sibley's troops - Sept. 23, 1862. State monument marks the site.

Map of Yellow
Medicine
County

Map of Yellow Medicine county & location of Wood Lake in "The Geological & Natural History Survey of Minnesota (1872-1882) Vol. 1, plates 27 & 28, page 589.

Location of
Camp Release

Map of Lac qui Parle county where Camp Release is located shown on plate 29 of Geological & Natural History Survey of Minnesota (1872-1882) Vol 1.

Location
Lake Shetek

Camp Release located on the west bank of the Minnesota river, across the boundary line of Yellow Medicine county, in the southeastern part of Lac qui Parle county.

Lake Shetek is situated in the north central portion of Murray county; Murray county is in the southwestern ^{part} of the state near the Iowa border.

In the compilation prepared by Mr. Satterlee, of all who lost their lives in the Sioux Massacre & murders, are summarized as follows: Citizens, including not only men but also women & children, who were killed or died from injuries, 413; enlisted soldiers killed in 1862 & others killed in the expeditions of 1863-65 against the Sioux in Dakota, 77; Total number of white people killed, 490; Indians killed, hung or died, 71; Indians imprisoned, 277, of the latter 177 Indians were pardoned at Davenport, Iowa, on January 20, 1866. It was estimated by Agent Thomas F. Galbraith, by President Lincoln, & by others, that "about 800 men, women and children, were massacred within a few days. This estimate has been repeated up to 1921 in the successive biennial issues of the Legislative Manual.

Through more than twenty years Mr. Satterlee has diligently gathered records of the victims in the massacre & in ensuing scattered murders by marauding Sioux.

Mr Satterlee came to southern Minnesota at the age of six years with his parents about a year after the Sioux outbreak & became familiar in his boyhood with narrations of the terrible Dismal massacre which resulted in the flight of all surviving settlers from the valley above New Ulm.

Birch booley p. 60, 456, 459, 460. (Renville County)

(60) Good Thunder was also the name of a Sioux, Wa-kin-yaw-was-te, in translation Good Thunder, who likewise was friendly to the whites, becoming General Sibley's chief scout during his expeditions against the Sioux after the massacre. He was converted to be a Christian in 1861, & was the first Sioux baptized by Bishop Whipple, receiving then the name Andrew. He lived as a farmer at the mission of Birch Cooley, & during many years was the warden of its Sioux church. In 1889 he was a guest of the village of Good Thunder at its celebration of the Fourth of July, when he & many of its people thought the name of the village to have been given in his honor. To make it more sure, by the speeches of that day it was so rechristened (Good Thunder Herald, Feb. 21, 1901) He died at the Sioux Agency near Redwood Falls, Feb. 15, 1901.

(History of this county, (Renville), 1916, p. 1290.) Birch boulee

Location of Birch Booley or Boulee (Minn Hist. Soc. Collections, Vol. XVII, p. 459.) * See Vol 2 M.H.S.C., pages 215-223 more

* M. H. S. G., Vol. XVII, p. 460 -

Through the work of the Minnesota Valley Historical Society, under the direction of its president, Hon. Charles D. Gilfillan, many localities in Renville & Redwood counties, of great historical interest in events of the Sioux outbreak & massacre in August, 1862, & of the war against these Sioux in 1862-1863, were carefully identified & marked in 1895-1902 by granite monuments & tablets.

Two of these monuments are erected beside the railway close southeast of Morton village, one being in memory of the soldiers killed in the battle of Birch Coulee, September 2, 1862, & the other in memory of several Sioux who were friendly to the white people, doing all they could to rescue them from the massacre.

Massachusetts
Min. Historical Society Collections Vol. 15, pp. 358, 359, 361, 365
" " " " part II Vol. 10, p. 602, 815.

22
Sleepy Eye
Brown county

Sleepy Eye, the city & railway junction in Home township, Brown county, was named, like the adjoining lake, for a chief of the Lower Sisseton Sioux. He was born near Mankato & died in Roberts county, South Dakota in 1860. The monument close to the railway station, bears this inscription, beneath the portrait of the chief in bas relief sculpture: "Ish-tak-ha-ba, Sleepy Eye, always a friend of the Whites. Died 1860."

Sac qui Parle County

Camp Release

Sac qui Parle
County

Camp Release township, first settled in 1868, organized April 5, 1871, has the site of Camp Release, marked by a monument, where the captives taken by the Sioux in the outbreak of 1862 were surrendered on September 26 to General Sibley.

Glencoe

McLeod county

Glencoe, county seat of McLeod county, was founded June 11, 1855. Named for a historic valley called Glencoe in Scotland.

Ripley Township
Morrison
County

Ripley township received its name from Fort Ripley, built in 1849-1850 on the west bank of the Mississippi in the eastern section 7 of Clough township, opposite to the mouth of Nokasippi river, which continued in use as a military post of the U. S. until July, 1878. This fort was at first named Fort Gaines, in honor of Edmund Pendleton Gaines (1777-1849) who served in the war of 1812. November 4, 1850 this fort was renamed for Eleazar Wheelock Ripley (1782-1839) who served in the war of 1812, & was a member of Congress from Louisiana 1835-1839.

St. Peter

Nicollet county

St. Peter, the county seat, first settled in the fall of 1853, was incorporated as a city January 7, 1873. It was named for the St. Pierre or St. Peter river, as the Minnesota river was called by the early French & English explorers & fur traders, probably in honor of Pierre Charles Le Sueur, whose surname is borne by the adjoining county on the east side of the river.

Traverse des

Sioux

in

Nicollet county

Treaty 1851

Traverse des Sioux (crossing of the Sioux) where treaty with the Wahpeton & Sisseton Sioux of the Minnesota valley was concluded here by Gov. Ramsey & Col. Luke Lea. This treaty was ratified by the Senate & proclaimed by President Fillmore on February 24, 1853.

about Fort
Ridgely
McClure
county

West Newton township, settled in the spring of 1856, originally included Fort Ridgely & the present Ridgely township. A principal reason for the choice of this township name was the steamboat named West Newton, under command of Capt. D. S. Harris, which made the trip from Fort Snelling to the side of Fort Ridgely in the last four days of April, 1853, bringing two companies of the Sixth Regiment, with lumber & supplies for building the Fort.

Indian
Tobacco
"Kinnee Kinnik"

Chanchayapi; - chan, wood; sha, red, ayapi, are on; Red-wood river; so called by the Dakotas on account of the abundance of a straight slender bush with red bark, which they (the Indians) scraped off & smoked, usually mixed with tobacco. This red wood is a particular sort of willow, with an under bark of a reddish color, which the Indians dry & smoke. When mixed with tobacco it makes what they call Kinnee Kinnik, & is much less offensive than common tobacco.

Northfield
&
Faribault
in
Rice county

Northfield named in honor of John W. North, principal founder of the village, he came to Minnesota in 1849, settled here in 1855; presided over the Republican wing of the convention in 1857, that framed the state constitution; & was influential in founding the University of Minnesota.

Faribault, the county seat, was named in honor of Alexander Faribault, the eldest son of Jean Baptiste Faribault. In 1834-35, he persuaded the Sioux to remove their village from the northwest shore of Cannon Lake to the site of Faribault.

Shakopee
Scott county

Shakopee, the county seat, was founded by Thomas A. Holmes in 1851 as an Indian trading post, to which he gave this name of the chief of a Sioux band living here.

Shakopee (or Shabpay, as it was commonly pronounced), meaning Six was the hereditary name, like Wabasha, of successive chiefs, in lineal descent from father to son. The first of whom we have definite knowledge is the Shakopee who was killed when running the gauntlet at Fort Snelling in June, 1827. The second, was a man of marked

ability in council & one of the ablest & most effective orators in the whole Dakota Nation, died in 1860. His son who had been called Shakpekan (Little Six), born on the site of the city in 1811, became at his father's death the chief of the band, numbering at that time about 400. He was hung at Fort Snelling, November 11, 1865, for participating in the massacres of 1862.

Sibley

Henry Hastings Sibley was born in Detroit, Mich., Feb. 20, 1811; went to Mackinaw, entering the service of the American Fur Co., in 1829; came to what is now Minnesota in 1834, as general agent in the Northwest for that company, with head quarters at Mendota (then called St. Peters), where he lived 28 years; removed to St. Paul in 1862, & resided there through the remainder of his life. He was a delegate in Congress, representing Minnesota Territory, 1849-1853, was first governor of the state, 1858 to 1860, & during the Sioux war, in 1862, led in the suppression of the outbreak, & in the next year commanded an expedition against these Indians in North Dakota. He was during more than twenty years (20) a regent of the State University; was a charter member of the Minnesota Historical Society; & was its president in 1867, & from 1876 until his death, at his home in St. Paul, February 18, 1891.

In 1835 Sibley built at Mendota the first stone dwelling house of Minnesota, in which he & his family lived until their removal to St. Paul.

Among the Sioux or Dakota people, with whom Sibley had a very intimate & wide acquaintance, he was called "Wah-ze-o-man-ee", Walker in the Pines, a name that had a potent influence among them far & near, as long as the Dakota race dwelt in the State.

Henderson
Sibley county

Henderson Township & its village, founded in 1852 & platted in 1855 by Joseph R. Brown, who is commemorated by Brown county, were named by him in honor of his mother & of her father, Andrew Henderson, of Frederick, Pa. It was the county seat until 1915, when the county offices were removed to Gaylord.

Steele county

Steele county was named in honor of Franklin Steele, a prominent pioneer of Minneapolis. He was born in Chester County, Pa., May 12, 1813; came to Fort Snelling as sutler of that frontier post, in 1838; became owner of valuable lands at the Falls of St. Anthony; & was active in improvements of the water power, & in the building up of St. Anthony & Minneapolis. Was a member of the first board of regents of the University of Minnesota, he was identified with the promotion of many public interests, but never held political office. He died in Minneapolis, Sept. 10, 1880.

Wabasha
county

Wabasha county, established October 27, 1849, commemorates a line of Dakota or Sioux chiefs. Wapashaw (variously spelled) was the name, in three successive generations, of the hereditary chiefs having greatest influence among the Mississippi bands of the Sioux. The third Wapashaw band occupied the country below Lake Pepin, his principal village being on the Rolling Stone Creek, near the site of Minnesota City.

The town (now a city) of Wabasha, which was named in 1843 for the last of these three chiefs, is situated at a distance of 30 miles up the Mississippi from his village. It was at first called Cratter's Landing, for the earliest white man to build his home there, in 1838.

Fort Aber-
crombie
in
Wilkin county

Fort Abercrombie, on the west side of the Red River opposite to McLauryville (named after the sutler at the fort; & later founded the village), was established in 1858, & was abandoned & dismantled in 1877-78, its buildings being sold & removed or torn down to be used by settlers for making their homes on the surrounding prairie. It was named in honor of John Joseph Abercrombie, its first commander, also served in the Mexican & Civil wars.

27
Yellow Medicine
County -

Yellow Medicine county, established March 6, 1871, is crossed by the Yellow Medicine river, whence the name is derived. It is a translation of the Dakota or Sioux name, "Pagutaze" - Paghihutazi - peji, including grasses & all other erect plants without wood stems; huta, root; zi, yellow; kapi, they dig; diggings of yellow plant root, or yellow medicine diggings; the Dakota name of the Yellow Medicine river

The yellow medicine is the long, slender, bitter, yellow root of the moonseed, which grows abundantly in thickets in this region. From the root of this plant came thus the name of the river & the county.

Hazelwood

Hazelwood, a mission station of Revs. T. S. Williamson & S. R. Riggs during the years 1854 to 1862, was in section 15, Minnesota Falls. Here were a mission school & numerous families of Christian Sioux, who were organized under a plan of self government, called the Hazelwood Republic.

Sioux Agency
Township

Sioux Agency township, first permanently settled in 1865 was set apart for organization Sept. 4, 1866, being named Yellow Medicine. In March, 1877, the present boundaries were fixed & the name changed to Sioux Agency. (See History of the Minnesota Valley, p. 892). The Upper Sioux Agency was on the north side of the Yellow Medicine river & about a mile west of its mouth, in the northern part of the township. It was occupied from 1854 to 1862, and became a place of considerable importance & was virtually the capital of the Indian country. This agency was located about a mile east & across the Yellow Medicine river from the site of the present Yellow Medicine City. (This city was founded in 1866, & platted June 10, 1869, & was the county seat until removed to Granite Falls in December 1874).

The mission station bearing this name, also called Pagutaze, occupied from 1853 to 1862, was in section 24 of the present Minnesota Falls township, being nearly two miles southeast of the Hazelwood Mission school.

30
Wood Lake
Township

Wood Lake township, settled in 1868, organized November 1, 1873, was named for its largest lake, fringed with timber, whence the battle fought under General Sibley against the Sioux, about four miles east of this lake, Sept. 23, 1862, has been called the battle of Wood Lake. That battle ground is marked by a monument, on the northwest quarter of section 9, Sioux Agency. The battle was followed by the flight of the hostile Sioux to Dakota & the release of the white captives, September 26, at Camp Release in Lac qui Parle county, opposite to Montevideo, likewise marked by a monument.

1. Little Crow's reasons for the Indian outbreak. p. 1.
2. Sibley's & Indians' losses at Wood Lake p. 1.
3. Little Crow's speech before the battle of Wood Lake p. 1.
4. Closing paragraph after battle of Wood Lake p. 1
5. Location of Lower & Upper Sioux Agency pp. 2
6. What tribes composed Upper & Lower Sioux p. 2
7. Reservation set apart by Treaty of 1851 p. 2
8. Spirit Lake massacre, first Indian trouble in Minnesota;
Acton massacre March 1857. p. 2.
- Spelling of Birch Coulee p. 2
9. Battle of Birch Coulee, good starting paragraph. pp. 2, 3,
10. Battle of Wood Lake.
11. Sibley's reason for not pursuing the Indians directly
after the battle of Wood Lake. (important) p. 4.

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Neill's
History of Minn.
1882
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B

There have been many theories advanced to account for the Sioux outbreak of 1862. Little Crow, in his written communications to Colonel Sibley, explaining the causes which had provoked hostilities on the part of the Indians, makes no allusion to the treaties, (of 1851) but stated that his people had been driven to acts of violence by the suffering brought upon them by the delay in the payment of their annuities, & by the bad treatment they had received from their traders, & an insufficient supply of food in the interim.

The success at Wood Lake was not achieved without serious loss. Nearly forty officers & men were killed or wounded. The loss of the enemy was much greater, a half-breed prisoner stating it at thirty killed & a larger number wounded.

In a speech to his warriors the night previous to the battle of Wood Lake, Little Crow stated the programme to be, first, the defeat & destruction of the command under Colonel Sibley, & second, the immediate descent thereafter of himself & his people to St Paul there to dispose summarily of the whites, & then establish themselves comfortably in winter quarters. That the people of Minnesota succeeded without extraneous aid, in speedily ending an Indian war of such threatening & formidable proportions, while they continued to bear their full share of the burdens imposed on the Northern States in the suppression of the great rebellion, constitutes an epoch in their history of which they may be justly proud.

put in after
battle of
Wood Lake

Minn. in the Civil Indian Wars 1861-1865 - Vol. 1
Published by a Board of Commissioners, named in an act April 16, 1889.

what tribes
composed the
Upper and
Lower Sioux

Morton is in Renville county, in township 113, range 34, section 31.

Fort Ridgely is located about six miles south of Fairfax.

The Medawakantons & Wakpaukuts are called the Lower Sioux.

The Sissetons & Wahpaukuts are called the Upper Sioux.

The treaties of 1851 set apart a reservation for these Indians composed of a strip of land ten miles wide on each side of the Minnesota river, extending from a short distance south of Fort Ridgely to the source of that river. The Lower Sioux to occupy it as far up as the Yellow Medicine River, & the Upper Sioux the northern part of the reservation. The Senate made amendments to these treaties, & this postponed their final proclamation by the President until Feb. 24, 1853, & the Indians did not take possession of their reservation until 1854-55, & many not until some years later.

Location of
Upper and
Lower Agency

The Lower Sioux Agency was located on the Minnesota river, about five miles below the Redwood River, & the Upper Agency on the Yellow Medicine River, about three miles from its mouth.

The first Indian trouble that occurred in Minnesota was at Spirit Lake, in the southwestern corner of the state, & is known as the Inkpaduta war. In March 1857, Inkpaduta's band killed a good many people at Spirit Lake & Spring Lake, on the head waters of the Des Moines, - about 42 in all, & carried into captivity four women, of which two were later killed & the other two rescued. The next murders occurred at Acton in Meeker county on August 17, 1862, & the general Indian massacre commenced the following day. At the Lower Agency nearly all of the traders & whites were slain, & several who got away before the general massacre commenced were killed before reaching Fort Ridgely, thirteen miles below, or other places of safety.

about spelling
of
"Birch Coulee"
page 736

There is some difference of opinion as to the correct spelling of this word, but it is found in this work spelled "coulee". It is well known that nearly all the names on our frontier are of French origin. The French word "couler", to run, indicates a slow, trickling stream, in a ravine, & whenever such rivulets were found, the voyageurs called the ravine a "coulee" probably a "coulee", as pronounced by them.

The battle of Birch Coulee is regarded as one of the most, if not the most desperate Indian encounters that ever occurred on the American continent, as to duration,

page 739

a good description
of this
battle by James
J. Egan one of
the participants.

(the fight continued uninterruptedly all Tuesday & Wednesday, the 2nd & 3rd of Sept.) in the disparity of numbers between the respective combatants (the whole force of defenders about 150 men, while the Indians numbered 400 or more) & severity of loss sustained by the whites, (twenty-three killed or mortally wounded & forty-five were severely wounded, the Indian losses unknown), in the desperate resistance of the besieged, who held the enemy off gallantly all this time.

Time will magnify the significance of this Birch Coulee battle, & it will be remembered that it was fought by men without experience in war, those who had just enlisted in the service & those who had never enlisted, but who, on the first signal of danger, left their stores & other places of occupation, taking their lives in their hands for the protection of their people & the state.

The authors of this book, likewise James J. Egan, who participated in the battle & gave a very graphic history of it said: "The whole force, including teamsters & fatigue party, consisted of 150 men under command of Major Joe Brown, one of the oldest & most experienced Indian traders in the state, who knew the country thoroughly."

This detachment under Major Brown, having performed their required duties, & having met no signs of Indians, encamped that Monday evening, September 1st at the head of Birch Coulee. Lulled into a sense of security by not having seen any signs of Indians, the camp was chosen for its convenience to wood & water regardless of the question of defense. The result demonstrated the danger of feeling safe or of ever omitting any precautions while in a hostile Indian country.

The reason no Indians were observed at the time by this expedition was that the hostile Indians had gone toward the Upper Agency, after leaving New Ulm & the Fork, where they concentrated all their forces & matured a plan to proceed down the Minnesota valley & then to divide the command (Indians) & attack Mankato & St. Peter simultaneously. In starting down the valley the attention of the Indians was attracted to Major Brown's detachment going into Birch Coulee. (Capt. Gant's detachment not being noticed by the Indians as they were already encamped at Birch Coulee) They stopped, & during the night surrounded the camp & in the gray of the morning opened a murderous fire upon it.

Wood Lake

Col. Sibley's losses at the battle of Wood Lake were four killed & between forty & fifty wounded. The Indians' losses, since they had no time or opportunity to carry off their dead were fifteen dead found upon the field, & one prisoner was taken alive & wounded. No doubt many others were wounded who were able to escape.

The battle of Wood Lake was an important factor in the war, as it was about the first time the Indians engaged large forces of well-organized troops in the open country, & their utter discomfiture put them on the run. This battle being quite an open fight, was rapidly conducted & concluded.

The philosophy of Indian war is to kill your enemy & not get killed yourself & they take cover when they can, better & more effectually than any other people. In all our Indian wars, with regulars or militia, I believe it would not be an exaggeration to say that the whites have lost ten to one in killed & wounded.

After this fight Colonel Sibley retired to the neighborhood of an Indian camp located nearly opposite the mouth of the Chippewa river where it empties into the Minnesota, & there encamped. This point was afterward named Camp Release, from the fact that the prisoners held by the enemy were here delivered to Colonel Sibley's command. This Indian camp was composed of Indians from the Upper & Lower Sioux, who had generally been engaged in all the massacres that had taken place since the outbreak. They had with them some 250 prisoners, women & children, whites & half-breeds.

The desire on the part of the troops to attack & punish the Indians was intense, but Col. Sibley kept steadily in mind that the rescue of the prisoners was his first duty, & he well knew that any demonstration of violence would immediately result in the destruction of all the captives. He therefore wisely overruled all hostile inclinations. The result was a general surrender of the whole camp, together with all the prisoners.

1. Boundaries of Renville County pp. 1, C
2. soil & natural resources of this county, pp. 2, 3
situation & size of county.
3. Meaning of "cooley"; Birch Cooley derives its name,
4. who were the ancestors of the present Sioux. ^{p. 3} p. 4
meaning of Dakota & Sioux.
5. Important facts concerning the Sioux. pp. 5, 6
6. Treaty with Pike 1805, treaty of 1816, 1825 p. 6
Doty treaty of July 1841, Traverse des Sioux treaty p. 7,
reservation 10 miles wide on each side of river pp. 7, 8,
7. Establishment of Fort Ridgely 1852, p. 8
8. Causes of outbreak. p. 9 to 11
9. outbreak at Afton Aug 17, 1862.
" at Lower Agency, first white killed p. 12.
10. battle of Wood Lake ended campaign; death of Little Crow; pp. 12, 13
11. casualties of massacre by Galbraith, Heard &
Flandrau (compare with A. p. 21 Satterlee's) p. 13
12. Abrogation of Treaties p. 13, 19
13. Result of Capt. Marsh's defeat p. 13
14. Battle of Birch Cooley, Sept. 24, 1862 pp. 14, 15, 21, 22
relief expedition attacked, Sibley then joining pp. 15, 16
forces with relief expedition & relieved defenders
of Birch Coulee p. 16.
15. Causes of massacre; treaty of Traverse des Sioux;
how treaty funds were distributed; civilization fund;
pp. 17 to 19.
16. Whereabouts of Little Crow when massacre started. p. 19
17. Purpose of Major Brown's or Capt. Grant's expedition p. 20.
18. Treaty of Traverse des Sioux & Mendota 1851 - p. 17.

good description of where the Agencies were located p. 8.
best description of the battle of Birch Cooley.

History of
Renville County
(1916) Vol. I
p. 252

History of Renville County.

The present boundary line of Renville County was established by an act of the Legislature passed March 1, 1866. It is as follows:

1. "Sec. 1. The boundary line of Renville county is hereby established, & shall hereafter be as follows: Beginning at the centre of the main channel of the Minnesota river on the line between township 111 & township 112 north, thence east to the southwest corner of township 112 north, of range 32 west; thence north to the northeast corner of township 114 north; thence west to the northwest corner of township 114 north, of range 32 west; thence north to the northeast corner of township 116 north; thence west to the northwest corner of township 116 north, of range 32 west; thence south to the centre of the main channel of the Minnesota river; thence down said river to the place of beginning.

At an election held November 8, 1866, Beaver Falls was made the county seat.

2. By an act approved March 2, 1867 the boundaries of the county were again established.

This would include a part of the present county of Chippewa & the following townships in the present Renville county: Wang, Erickson, Brooks, Hawk Creek, Sacred Heart, Emmet, Flora, Henryville, Norfolk, Beaver Falls, Birch Coulee, Palmyra, Dandon, Camp, Martinsburg, Wellington & Cairo.

3. In 1868 the boundaries of the county were again changed by the Legislature, & since then they have remained unchanged, except by the laws of 1870 chapter 97, two towns, viz., 117 of range 31, & 117 of range 32, were detached from Renville county & added to Mucker County.

page 256
Present boundaries of Renville county

History of Renville County.

Renville county is a country of rich, black soil, its surface is divided into rolling land & prairie, beautified by meandering streams, interspersed with stately groves, the county has advantages of location & surface which have made it one of the best agricultural & stock raising counties in the state.

The elevation of this stretch of land above the sea, its fine drainage & the dryness of the atmosphere give it a climate of unusual ^(warmness) salubrity & pleasantness. Its latitude gives it corresponding by longer days in summer & during the growing seasons about one & one half hours more of sunshine than in the latitude of St. Louis. The winter climate is also one of the attractive features. Its uniformity & its dryness, together with the bright sunshine & electrical condition of the air, all tend to enhance the personal comfort of the resident, & to make outdoor life & labor a pleasure.

While there are no large cities, there are ^{many} throwing business centers along the two lines of railroads.

It is indeed in its men & women, rather than its stores & commerce, its grains & vegetables, its live-stock & fruits, that Renville county takes her greatest pride.

Unusually blessed by nature with deep soils & abundant natural resources, & endowed with a wealth of historic & prehistoric lore, the county is indeed a fitting home for the sturdy people who have here made their dwelling place. Hard-working, progressive, educated & prosperous they have appreciated the gifts which nature has spread for them & have added their own toil & the fruit of their intellect, to the work of the elements, making the county one of the beautiful spots of the earth.

Renville county, surpassed by few lands in the state for the fertility of its soil; its bountiful supply of domestic timber & pure water; its surface of swelling lands & rolling prairies; & its adaptation to every variety of agricultural product, has furnished to the citizens material wisely improved by them for substantial wealth, good homes & sound public institutions, economically & prudently administered; where law & good order, industry & sobriety have always been upheld & observed; where the comforts and provisions for the enjoyment of life

Renoville county

are evenly distributed, & where, in the future, as in the past "peace & happiness, truth & justice, religion & piety, will be established throughout all generations.

Situation &
area of Ren-
ville county
p. 3.

Renoville county lies in the central part of the south half of Minnesota. Its southern boundary is the Minnesota river, this county being midway between Big Stone lake and Mankato, the limits of the portion of this river in which it flows southeast. The length of this county from east to west is forty-eight (48) miles, & its greatest width is thirty (30) miles. Its area is 981.31 square miles, or 628,036.58 acres, of which 6,385.69 acres are covered by water.

On the west & north lies Chippewa county, on the north lies Kandiyohi & Meeker counties, on the east is McLeod county, on the east & south is Sibley county, on the south is Medford county, & on the southeast separated from this county by the Minnesota river are Yellow Medicine, Redwood & Brown Counties.

Meaning of
"cooley"
p. 3

Birch cooley, the term coulee, also spelled coulie & anglicized to cooley, meaning a water-course, especially when in a deep ravine, was applied by the French voyageurs to this & many other streams, mostly in the country farther northwest.

Birch cooley creek is about seven miles long; the valley of this creek being heavily wooded.

p. 6.

Birch cooley
takes its name

Birch cooley takes its name from the paper or canoe birch (*Betula papyrifera*, Marshall), which occurs plentifully on this creek, some of its trees attaining a diameter of one foot, in sections 28 & 33 of Birch cooley township.

In the valley of Birch cooley, about one mile above its entrance into that of the Minnesota, are large exposures of granite, holding interesting veins. One of these veins, composed of granite & four inches wide, is traceable 250 feet, running southwest. Other extensive outcrops of granite or gneiss, partly decomposed, apparently dipping south, southeast & southwest, form the sides of this valley or ravine below the mills.

Renville county

The greatest natural resource of Renville county is its fertile soil. Waterpowers have been developed in several places. The natural groves in the ravines & along the watercourses, & the domestic groves on the prairies furnish abundant timber supply. Some quarrying has been carried on, & especially in the neighborhood of Morton some excellent granite has been obtained. Morton is the only place in the state where gneiss is quarried.

pages 21-
24

The Siouan Mound Builders (the ancestors of the present Sioux [Dakota] Indians), returning some five hundred years ago from the Ohio region (where they went after being driven out of Minnesota possibly by the Algonquians) were doubtless the builders of the mounds in Renville county. These Mound Builders are the earliest race of whose actual residence in the county there is absolute evidence. The mounds of the county are sufficient in number, kind & distribution, to present a rich field for archaeological inquiry, as well as supplying evidence that the county was well populated by this ancient people.

Meaning
of
"Dakota"
&
"Sioux"

The name "Dakota" which the Indians applied to themselves, means "joined together in friendly compact." "Sioux" is a contraction of the word Nadouessioux, the French version of the Chippewa word meaning "Little Alders," or figuratively, "enemies."

The Sioux were in many ways the highest type of the North American Indian, & were physically, perhaps, among the highest types that mankind has reached.

Wabasha, living at Ke-ox-ah (Winona), seems to have been the great overlord of the Medawakanton Sioux, & he likewise seems to have been recognized as ruler by many of the other branches of the Sioux.

On the
Indians.
pages 29-30

Renville County

All in all, the Indian, as he was before the coming of the white man, is deserving of all honor & respect. Nevertheless the methods of the most civilized & modern warfare have taught the world that between the motives of the wildest savage & the most cultured soldier there is little difference when a man finds himself fighting for existence against those whom he believes to have wronged him. The Indian's method was to torture and mutilate, to strike such terror that the enemy would forever after fear him. The civilized method likewise mutilates, terrorizes & strikes sudden death against those equally defenseless & inoffensive as were those the Indian massacred. The Indian, regarded and treated by the whites as a little lower than an animal, with even his treaty rights disregarded, struck, in the only way he knew, in behalf of the continued existence of himself & of his wife & babies, against a race whose desire for broad acres was ever driving the Red Man & his family further & further from the sweeps over which his forefathers had ranged.

Evil days indeed came for the simple chieftain of the forest, when as soon as the advancing frontier wave of civilization came the firewater, the vices & the diseases of civilized man. Neither his physical nor his spiritual organization is prepared to withstand these powerful evils of a stronger race, & the primitive red man has often, perhaps generally, been reduced to a pitiful parasite on the civilized community, infested with the diseases, the vermin & the vices of the white man & living in a degradation & squalor that only civilization can furnish.

Thus burdened with the white man's vices, his own natural mode of living suddenly made im-

6.

Renville County

possible, driven here & there by the onrush of civilization, cheated & defrauded by traders & government officials alike, the Indian has degenerated until he is now only a travesty on the noble kings of the forest who once held sway in the Upper Mississippi & the Minnesota valleys. But now the census seems to indicate that the Indian is no longer a vanishing race.

location in
1834

The villages of the Medwakantonian were on the Minnesota & Mississippi rivers, extending from Winona to Shakopee. Most of the Indians living on the Minnesota river above Shakopee were Warpetonwan. Thus, at that time, Renville county was Wapeton (spelled Warpetonwan, Wahpeton, & Warpeton) country, though the Sissetons, the Yanktons & the Medawakantons were not far away.

Page 31.

The first of the treaties was the one with Pike in 1805, by which land at the mouth of the Minnesota & St. Croix rivers was ceded to the government for military purposes.

In 1816 the Indians made peace with the U.S. & signed treaties, whereby the various tribes recognized the absolute authority of the United States.

In the spring of 1824 the first delegation of Sioux Indians went to Washington, Wabasha, Little Crow, head of the Kaposia band, & Wahnatah, were the principle members of the Sioux delegation.

The treaty of Prairie du Chien, signed August 19, 1825, was of importance to the Indians who ranged Renville county in that it fixed certain general boundaries & confirmed the fact that the present county lay entirely in Sioux territory. The second treaty of Prairie du Chien was signed July 15, 1830; the Indian tribes represented ceded all of their claims to the land in Western Iowa, Northwestern Missouri & especially the country of the Des Moines river valley. The Sioux also ceded a tract of land twenty (20) miles wide along the northern boundary of Iowa from the Mississippi to the Des Moines

Renville County

Doty Treaty
or
Traverse des
Sioux (St. Peter)
July 1841

The Doty treaty, made at Traverse des Sioux St. Peter, in July 1841, failed to be ratified by the U. S. This treaty embodied a Utopian dream that a territory of Indians could be established, in which the redmen would reside on farms & in villages, living their lives after the style of the whites, with a legislature of their own people elected by themselves, the governor to be appointed by the President. They were to be taught the arts of peace, to be paid annuities, & to be protected by the armies of the United States from their Indian enemies on the west. In return for these benefits to be conferred upon the Indians, the U. S. was to receive all the lands now what is now Minnesota, the Dakotas & northwestern Iowa. This ceded land was not to be opened to the settlement of the whites. This treaty upon failure of ratification by the Senate, failed of going into effect.

Imp.
Traverse des
Sioux treaty
of 1851
July 23,

President
Fillmore
appointed the
Commissioners

No other events or incidents in all time have been of more importance in their influence upon the character & destiny of Minnesota than the negotiations with the Sioux Indians in the summer of 1851, commonly known as the Treaties of Traverse des Sioux & Mendota. As a result of these treaties a vast region of country large enough & naturally rich enough for a kingdom was released from the sway of its owners & opened to white settlement. Prior to these events only the lands in Minnesota east of the Mississippi river were open to white settlement. The fine, fertile expanse to the westward was forbidden ground. The treaty was signed by Commissioner Lea & Ramsey & the chiefs & head men of the Sisseton & Wahpeton bands of the Sioux. A similar treaty was signed at Mendota, August 5th, by the four bands of the Sioux, the Medawakantons & the Wahpakootas. The treaties as amended were proclaimed by President Fillmore, February 24, 1853.

The reservations as outlined in the treaties embraced a tract of land 20 miles wide, ten miles on each side of the Minnesota river, extending from the mouth

Renville County

pp. 50-51

of the Little Rock (Mud Creek) westward to Lake Traverse. The dividing line between the Upper & Lower reservations was a line drawn north & south through the mouth of Hawk Creek. Thus Renville county for a ten (10) mile strip along the Minnesota was in the Lower reservation, except for a strip west of Hawk Creek. There were to be two Indian agencies for the Indians on the reservation. The Upper Agency, for the Sissetons & Wahpatons, was established near the mouth of the Yellow Medicine & the Lower, for the Medawanton & Wahpakoota bands, was placed about six (6) miles east of the mouth of the Redwood. Both agencies were on the south bank of the Minnesota river.

1852 With the establishment of the new Indian reserve, there came the necessity of a new military post in Minnesota. General Scott, then commanding the regular army in Minnesota, ordered Capt. Dana & Colonel Lee to select a suitable site for the new fort "on the St. Peter's river, ^(main) above the mouth of the Blue Earth." In the latter part of November the two officers chose a site five miles above the Rock (Little Rock), on the crest of the high bluff on the north side of the Minnesota. The new post was named Fort Ridgely, in honor of Major Randolph Ridgely, an officer in the regular army from Maryland, who died of injuries received at the battle of Monterey. Its first commander was Capt. Monroe of, of company K of the Sixth Infantry, but when Co. E, arrived in June 1853, its captain, brevet Major Samuel Woods, took command by virtue of his rank.

1846

The admission of Iowa as a state left what is now Renville county without territorial affiliation until March 3, 1849, when Minnesota was admitted as a Territory.

The state was admitted into the Union May 11, 1858.

Renville County

Birch Cooley is in Township 113, range 34.

cause of
Outbreak.

p. 114

The Sioux outbreak was the culmination of a long series of injustices towards the Indians on the part of the whites. Debauched, defrauded, degraded, forced by fear of the strength of the whites, & by misrepresentations, to dispose of their lands; herded together on reservations; treated by the whites as half-witted children, cheated by the traders & starved by the stupidity of high officials at Washington, who, in addition to the unfair provisions of unjust treaties, imposed additional conditions, arose in their might, & for a time nearly succeeded in regaining their hereditary holdings. The real causes of the final outbreak were the Treaties of 1851. The Sioux did not want to give up their land. They desired to live as they had lived through the countless centuries. In signing the treaties which relinquished their lands & condemned themselves to a practical imprisonment on a reservation, the Sioux were bowing to the inevitable.

"Soldiers
Lodge"

A soldier's lodge was composed of warriors that were not chiefs or head soldiers, & who met by themselves & conducted all their deliberations & proceedings in strictest secrecy. Their conclusions had to be carried out by the chiefs & head soldiers. If a war was contemplated the soldier's lodge decided the matter, & from its decision there was no appeal.

The Minnesota Indian payments for 1862 were greatly delayed. They should have been made by the last of June, but the government agents were not prepared to make them until the middle of August. The authorities at Washington were to blame; for some weeks they dabbled with the question whether or not a part of the payment should be made in greenbacks. The Indian commissioner & agent in Minnesota protested that the payment should be in gold. The money, all in gold coin arrived in St. Paul August 16th & did not reach Fort Ridgely, until August 18th, the first day of the massacre.

\$71,000,

Renville County.

There was a most unhappy condition of affairs on the reservation. These Indians had worked hard during the summer but their crops had not turned out well, owing to the numerous bird & insect pests, & their stock of provisions was nearly exhausted. Also the Indian was not equipped for the mode of life that was thrust upon him. He had owned these stretches of land. He had lived in contentment. Through the chase he had obtained a good living. When he gave up the opportunity of securing his accustomed daily livelihood he was accepting the promise of a great nation that in exchange for his land he would be paid certain sums for ^{his} support. He had given up his land, he had given up his mode of making a living, he had moved to the reservation, he had kept his part of the bargain (in Treaty of 1855); yet the great government was breaking its part of the bargain by every quibble & pretense possible.

The sudden change of life had brought instructions among the Indians themselves. Some seeing that the white man by trickery & superior strength, was bound to rule, urged that the Indians make the best of a bad situation & take up the white man's ways. These Indians were called the former Indians.

There were others, however, who saw that the Indian was not adapted to the ways of the whites, & saw only slavery & degradation in the ways of the former Indians, many of whom were already dying of tubercular troubles as a result of their unaccustomed mode of life. These blanket Indians, as they were called, believed in the old ways. They wanted the government to keep its promise & make its payments according to agreement, after which they wanted the government to leave them to lead their own lives in their own way. The Upper Indians were in far worse mood than their brethren at Redwood. In addition to their dissatisfaction in regard to the delay in the payment - for they needed assistance most sorely - they were incensed

Renville County.
 against the white authorities who had forbidden them to make war on the Chippewas. The latter made frequent forays upon the Sioux of the upper country, killing a number of their braves.

The officials at Washington & their representatives on the reservation were wholly & solely responsible for the great massacre. The spark which lighted the conflagration was the lawless act of a few renegades, but there would have been no blaze from this spark had not the whites, through guile & dishonesty, been gradually increasing the disgust, discontent & resentment in the Red Men's breast. In the wrongs to which the Indian had been subjected the noble settlers of Renville county were guiltless.

It should, however, be remembered that however cruel, lustful & bloodthirsty the Indian showed himself to be, base, treacherous, barbarous as his conduct was, cowardly & murderous though his uprising against the innocent pioneers; nevertheless not his alone was the guilt. The officials who tricked & robbed him, whose fidelity & inefficiency incensed him, whose lack of honor embittered him against all whites, they too, must bear a part of the blame for that horrible uprising.

Only the Upper Indians had made mischief; the Lower Indians had taken no part nor manifested any sympathy with what their brethren had done, but had remained quietly in their villages engaged in their ordinary avocations. All the Indians had apparently decided to wait patiently for the annuity money. This agreeable condition of affairs might have been established six weeks earlier, but for the unwise, yet well meant work of Agent Galbraith, who, too impotent through fear, drink & excitement for any good, should have done at first what he did last. Capt. Marsh demanded that Galbraith, issue all of the annuity goods, which for so long had been wrong fully withheld, these provisions were therefore issued to the Indians at the Yellow Medicine Agency, on the 8th & 9th of August.

imp

Renville County

The first outbreak occurred at Acton township in Meeker county, & the first victims were Mr Jones, Webster, Baker, Mrs Jones & Clara Wilson. Sunday Aug 17-62. The trouble was started by four Rice Creek Indians, who in a party of 20 Indians, some from the Lower Agency went over into the big woods of Meeker & McLeod counties to hunt. The trouble started from finding a nest of eggs in a white man's fence-corner, & an argument & a fight that ensued. The four perpetrators after stealing four horses proceeded to their village at the mouth of Rice Creek, 40 miles from Acton.

The chief of the Rice Creek band took four of the murderers to see Chief Shakopee about the matter. Although he was for war, he thought it best that they go down & see Little Crow & the others at the agency. Finally Little Crow agreed to the war, & said the whites of the Upper Minnesota must all be killed, & he commended the young murderers for shedding the first blood. The women began to run bullets & the men to clean their guns. Little Crow then gave orders to attack the agency early next morning & to kill the traders & other whites there.

The morning of August 18th, the first shot was fired & the first white man was killed at the Lower Agency & the dreadful massacre begun. James W. Lynd, ex-state senator from Sibley county, & a clerk in Myrick's trading house at the Agency, was the first one killed. The dreadful scenes that were enacted in the Upper Minnesota on that dreadful eighteenth of August, can neither be described nor imagined. Down the Minnesota river on both sides below Fort Ridgely as far as New Ulm & up the river to Yellow Medicine, the bloody slaughter extended that day. The much greater number of whites were slaughtered, however, within the reservations, & in Renville & Brown counties. During the first week, it is estimated that over 600 whites were killed & nearly 200 women & children taken captive.

The battle of Wood Lake ended the campaign against the Sioux for that year. Small war

Aug, 18, 1862
First white man
killed

Renville County

parties occasionally raided the settlements, creating scares, & excitement, but the main body of the Indians left the state for Dakota. Little Crow & a son returned in 1863, & on July 3 was killed near Hutchinson by a farmer named Nathan Samson. In 1863 & 1864 expeditions against the Indians drove them across the Missouri river, defeating them in several battles. Thus Minnesota was forever freed from danger from the Sioux.

By wise counsel & advice, Hole-in-the-Day & his Chippewas remained passive.

casualties
of
massacre
1862

Three months after the outbreak, (Nov. 1862) Indian Agent Thomas Galbraith prepared a statement giving the number of whites killed as 738. Historians Heard & Flandrau placed the killed at over 1000.

abrogation
of Indian
Treaties.

On Feb. 16, 1863, the treaties before that time existing between the United States & the Sioux Indians were abrogated & annulled, & all lands & rights of occupancy within the State of Minnesota, & all annuities & claims then existing in favor of said Indians were declared forfeited to the United States.

result of
Capt. March's
defeat at
Redwood Ferry
Aug. 18, 1862

The affair at Redwood Ferry, August 18th, was most influential upon the character of the Indian outbreak. It was a complete Indian victory. A majority of the soldiers had been killed (one officer Capt. March, wounded, & twenty-four men, including twenty-three soldiers & interpreter Quinn); their guns, ammunition & equipment had fallen into the hands of the victors; the first attempt to interfere with the savage programme had been signally repulsed, all with the loss of but one man, To-wa-to, or all blue, a warrior of the Wahpakootas. As it was, the disaster to Capt. March's command fanned the fires of the rebellion into a great conflagration of murder & rapine. Whatever doubt there was before among some of the Indians of the propriety of embarking in the massacre disappeared, & the Lower Indians became a unit upon the question.

Battle of
Birch Cooley
Sept. 24th
1862

Renville County

Gen. H. H. Sibley occupied Fort Ridgely with his relief force on the 27th of August, nine days after the beginning of the outbreak. On the 31st he dispatched a force of 150 men to the Lower Agency with instructions to ascertain if possible the position & condition of the Indians, & to bury the bodies of the victims of the massacre which might be found in route. This force, which was under the command of Major Joseph R. Brown, then acting as major of a newly organized militia regiment, was composed of Company A, Sixth Minn. Infantry, under Captain H. P. Grant; 70 mounted men of the Bullen Guards under Capt. Joseph Anderson; a detail of other soldiers from the Sixth Regiment & the militia force, seventeen (17) teamsters with teams, & some volunteer soldiers & citizens.

The command reached the agency on the first of September. Capt. Grant, with his company & the wagons, proceeded up the valley, on the north side of the Minnesota, to the mouth of Beaver Creek, thence up the creek three miles & then marched east about six miles to near the head of Birch Cooley. This command buried the bodies of Captain March's men & those of perhaps 40 citizens at various points along the route.

Major Brown & Capt. Anderson with their portion of the command (the Bullen Guards) crossed the river at the Redwood Ferry, went to the agency, buried the bodies of the slain there & went up the river, or westward, to the location of Little Brown's village, which had been abandoned a few days previously. Nothing was seen which in the opinions of Major Brown, Major Galbraith, the Indian agent, Alexander Faribault, & his son George & Jack Frazier, a half-breed, indicated that a hostile Indian had been in that vicinity for four days. Recrossing the Minnesota at a ford, they rode eastward to the Birch Cooley, where Capt. Grant's company had already encamped.

The camp selected by Capt. Grant was on an excellent site. It was upon level ground, convenient to both wood & water & less than a half mile from a road running between Fort Ridgely & Fort Abercrombie, on the Red River of the North. A growth of fairly good timber fringed the Cooley on either side, & in the channel was plenty of good running water. To the west, north & east stretched level prairies miles in extent.

Renville County - Battle of Birch Cooley

Battle
Sept 24 3
1862

This camp was made in the usual way, some 200 yards from the timber of Birch Cooley, with the wagons packed around the camp & the team horses fastened to the wagons. The horses belonging to the mounted men were fastened to a stout picket rope, between the tents & the wagons, around the south half of the tent. Captain Anderson's tents were behind these horses, & Capt. Grant's were inside the wagons which formed the north half of the camp. The camp guard posts were only about 100 yards from the corral, because no danger of attack was apprehended, since Major Brown had assured the men that no hostile Indians were in that vicinity.

When darkness had come good & black & sheltering, the Indians crossed the river & valley, went up the bluffs & prairie, & soon saw the camp or corral of the whites. Cautiously & warily they approached the camp & had no difficulty in surrounding it, for the sentinels were at such short distance from it - not more than 100 yards.

The Indians under Red Legs occupied the Birch Cooley east of the camp. Some of Mankato's warriors were in the cooley & some in the swale to the south. Big Eagle's band was chiefly behind & about the knoll to the west, & Gray Bird's was in the ravine & on the prairie to the north. The ground was most excellent for a camping ground, but badly chosen for a battlefield, because the Indians could fire from concealed & protected positions which were within gunshot of the corral or camp.

Sept. 2, 1862

As dawn was coming faintly from the east, one of the guards (Hark) noticed two Indians skulking along as fast as they could run towards the cooley, & he fired at them. As if he had given the signal instantly there was a deadly roar from hundreds of Indian's guns all about the camp, & the battle had begun.

About nine o'clock in the morning of the first day's attack the pickets at Fort Ridgely sent word that they could hear firing in the distance. Col. Sibley at once sent reinforcements, about 240 men, under command of Colonel McPhail.

Renville County - Birch Cooley.

On nearing the Cooley a large force of Indians appeared to the left, or south, of the advance. The Indians were advancing, & had well nigh surrounded the command, when Capt. Hendricks opened on them with his howitzers & drove them back. Col. McPhail then did not deem it prudent to advance further, sent two messengers back to the Fort for reinforcements, moved his force about two miles from the Cooley to a commanding position, where he formed a strong camp, & awaited the arrival of Col. Sibley with the general command.

Col. Sibley, after an all night march, joined Col. McPhail's command in the forenoon of September 3rd, moved against the Indians & by noon, without any more serious fighting, they had all been driven away from their positions about the Cooley. Recrossing the Minnesota, the Indians speedily fell back again to the Yellow Medicine.

At the close of the battle Col. Sibley conveyed the wounded in wagons to Fort Ridgely; the dead were temporarily buried on the battlefield.

causes of
massacre.

History of Renville County

By the treaty of Traverse des Sioux, dated July 23, 1851, with the Sissetons & Wapatoons, \$275,000 were to be paid their chiefs & a further sum of \$30,000 was to be expended for their benefit in Indian improvements. By the treaty of Mendota, dated August 5, 1851, the Mdewakantons & Wapankutas were to receive the sum of \$200,000, to be paid to their chief, & for an improvement fund the further sum of \$30,000. Annuities were also to be paid for a certain number of years. The several sums which were to become payable when the Indians reached their reservations, amounting in the aggregate to \$555,000. These Indians, to whom they were payable, claimed they never were paid, except perhaps a small portion expended in improvements on the reservations. They became dissatisfied, & expressed their views in council freely with the agent of the government. Up to 1857 the Indians had been on their reservations, & yet no part of the money promised under the treaty had been paid. These several sums of money were to be paid to these Indians in open council, & soon after they were on their reservations provided for them by treaties (Traverse des Sioux & Mendota) But the Indians were not consulted at all, in open council, but on the contrary, arbitrary divisions & distributions were made of the entire fund, & their right denied to direct the manner in which they should be appropriated.

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How treaty
funds were
distributed
among the Indians

Of \$275,000 stipulated to be paid under the first clause of the treaty, the sum of \$250,000 was delivered by Ramsey (then Governor of the Minnesota Territory, & acting superintendent of Indian affairs for that locality) to one Hugh Tyler, for distribution among the traders & half-breeds. And of the sum of \$110,000, stipulated to be paid to the Mdewakantons, the sum of \$70,000 was in like manner paid over to Tyler, who distributed it to traders & other claimants.

See above at star for next sentence.

The Indians also claimed that, according to a provision or section of the treaty, these sums should have been paid directly to the Indians themselves, to whom it should be due, or to the tribe, or part of the tribe, per capita. That they were compelled to submit to this mode of payment to the traders, otherwise no payment would be made, & the money would be returned to Washington; so that in violation of treaty provisions, they were compelled to comply with Governor Ramsey's terms of payment, according to Hugh Tyler's power of attorney executed to him by the traders & other claimants.

Neither were the Indians satisfied with the annual payments. They desired to receive the payment in cash. Instead they received part of it in provisions, which gave the whites many opportunities for taking advantage of them, the market value of the provisions never being equal to the amount which was taken out of the Indian fund to pay for them. The Indians rightfully felt that they should be given the money & allowed to do the purchasing themselves.

Then, too, a certain amount of the money due the Indians each year was devoted to a "civilization fund," that is, for agency expenses, erecting agency buildings, paying agents, teachers, farmers, missionaries & the like, thus making another drain on an already small sum.

see top of next page about this fund

In June ¹⁸⁵⁷ came time for the annual payments to the Indians at the agency. When the Indians gathered there to receive their money they were told no payments would be made unless they (the Indians) should go out & capture Inkpadoota. Inkpadoota's force consisted of 12 fighting men, in addition to women & children; this outlaw band had stole horses, wagons & sleds from some of the settlers & on March 8, 1857 committed the affair which is known as the Spirit Lake massacre. This command was made on the order of Indian Commissioner J. W. Denver. To the stupidity & stubbornness of this man Denver, Minnesota owes its Indian massacre of 1862. Wise men in the territory (Minn) suggested that the people of the territory be allowed to raise a troop of soldiers & go after Inkpadoota, supported by a detachment of cavalry. But these men were promptly told by Secretary of War Floyd & Commissioner Denver that no suggestions were desired & that the officials at Washington would handle the affair as they saw fit.

Thus the weeks passed as the Indians endured untold sufferings of illness & starvation. They saw their wives & children hunger & sicken & die. The grasshoppers were eating up their garden produce & their cornfields & truck fields were spoiling of neglect while they waited at the agency for the money that the government owed them.

Superintendent Bullen & Agent Hlandrau telegraphed Denver at Washington, repeatedly urging a repeal, or at least a modification of the obnoxious order. But Denver was obdurate & Secretary Floyd was haughtily indifferent.

By this treaty the Sioux relinquished their lands north of the Minnesota, & confined their reservations to a strip 10 miles wide on the south side of the river.

The treaty also elaborated a scheme for forcing the Indian to the white man's way of living. A civilization fund was provided, to be taken from the annuities, & expended in improvements on the lands of such of them as should abandon their tribal relations, & adopt the habits & modes of life of the white race. To all such, lands were to be assigned in severalty, eighty acres to each head of a family. On these farms were to be erected out of the annuities the necessary farm buildings & farming implements, and cattle were to be furnished them.

The Indians disliked the idea of taking any portion of the general fund belonging to the tribe for the purpose of carrying out the civilization scheme, & denounced the measure as a fraud upon their rights. Prior to 1857 the payments to the Indians under the treaties were made semi-annually. In that year Superintendent Bullen changed this practice to one payment a year, which, until 1862, had commonly been made about the tenth of June.

Little Crow was a pagan, believing in the gods of his ancestors, but he always showed great tolerance & respect for the religious opinions of others. At the time of the start of the murders of the settlers by renegade Indians, Little Crow was among the listeners, in the uncompleted Episcopal church, in which the services were held in Sioux by the Rev. S. D. Newman. This church was located at the Lower Agency. The numerous printed statements that the Indians were drunk when they perpetrated the murders are all false. At Jones' house, the Indians could have plundered it not only of its whisky, but of all its other contents, but this they did not do. At Baker's which was the next place visited, & where the murders of the settlers Webster, Mrs. Jones, Baker & Jones were committed, they then returned to Jones' house & killed Miss Wilson.

By the act of Feb. 16, 1863, which abrogated the treaties it was declared that because of the war & massacre, the Indians had destroyed & damaged a large amount of property, & thereby forfeited all just claims to their monies & annuities & all lands & right of occupancy within the State of Minnesota to the U. S., & that $\frac{2}{3}$ of the balance remaining unexpended of their annuities for the fiscal year, not exceeding \$100,000, & the further sum of \$100,000, being $\frac{2}{3}$ of the annuities becoming due, & payable

new paragraph
starts

"The numerous"

to go with the
abrogation of
the treaties

during the next fiscal year, should be appropriated & paid over to three commissioners appointed by the President, to be by them apportioned among the heads of families, or their survivors, who suffered damage by the depredations of said Indians, or the troops of the U. S. in the war against them, not exceeding the sum of \$200 to any one family, nor more than actual damage sustained.

On Feb. 21, 1863, Congress passed an act for the removal of the Winnebago Indians, & the sale of their reservation in Minnesota for their benefit.

By E. W. Earle
a member of
Capt. Anderson's
mounted men

Who com-
manded ex-
pedition
Maj. Brown

About noon of August 31, an expedition made up of Anderson's cavalry & Capt. Grant's company of infantry were ordered to proceed to the lower agency & settlements near, for the purpose of burying the dead & of learning something about the prisoners. The command of the expedition was given to Major Brown. There was taken along seven or eight wagons with rations, forage, ammunition & supplies.

Battle of
Birch Cooley

Sunday night we camped in the river bottom not far from Redwood Ferry. The next morning Major Brown ordered Capt. Anderson to cross the river to the agency & learn what he could there, if any thing, then to proceed up the river a few miles & cross back & meet the infantry (under Capt. Grant) in camp on the Birch Cooley. Grant's infantry, after burying the soldiers who had been killed at the ferry (Capt. March's men), were to proceed up the river to the mouth of Beaver Creek to ascend that to our home & then cross over to Birch Cooley for camp. Birch Cooley is the name of a creek about three miles east of the Beaver creek.

Chalton & I were detailed as guides & to scout for the infantry. Before noon we found a half-crazed Swedish woman, who tried to elude us. When we captured her, we learned that her family had all been killed, she herself had been wounded by fourteen buckshot in her back.

We halted & waited until the infantry came up, then we turned her over to Capt. Grant & we resumed our scouting.

We buried Mrs. Henderson & her two little girls, & a little further buried Mr. Wedge. These buried, we followed on & found the body of Dave Carrother's little boy, & then the body of young Radnor. It was now getting late, so we buried the remaining two & set out for camp.

We found the camp formed about 20 rods from the timbered banks of the Birch Creek & surrounded by knolls and ravines. The camp could not have been placed better - for the Indians. The wagons had been drawn up about 5 or 6 rods in diameter & the horses were tied to a rope stretched across the circle & fastened to the wagons. The tents were pitched inside the circle & would accommodate about 20 men each. The injured woman had been put into a covered wagon.

About four o'clock next morning, Sept 2, just as the gray of approaching dawn began to appear, one of the sentinels saw some objects running about near the camp. He fired on the moving objects & to his surprise his shot was followed immediately by a terrific warwhoop & volley.

The objects which he noticed were Indians sneaking up with bows & arrows in order to quietly kill the sentinels or guards without giving an alarm, so that the rest of the Indians would be permitted to charge a sleeping camp. The Indians directed their fire at about breast high of the tents, calculating that the soldiers would spring up at the first alarm, & many would be hit before getting out of the tents. Very few of the men had been under fire before & they immediately sprang up. Many were killed & wounded in the tents.

But as the fight continued hour after hour without any let up & our losses were severe we began to dig each for himself. To dig a ditch deep enough which would afford a good protection it was necessary to use whatever weapons were available, viz. bayonet, knife,

Battle of Birch Creek

22
Battle of Birch Coulee

a shovel, if one was lucky enough to reach one; after awhile with the help of these utensils & three shovels Capt. Grant was able to procure a trench deep enough & long enough to give protection for the whole company was finished.

There was not a bucket of water in camp, & we soon began to suffer intensely from thirst, especially as we had to bite the cartridges, thus getting powder in our mouths. Food was as scarce nearly as water. All we had to eat during the battle was raw cabbage leaf.

The firing continued all night. We were allowed no rest. We dared not sleep, even a portion at a time, for it had been noticed that when we slackened fire too much the Indians became ^{much} bolder. Morning came, Noon came & went with no promise of relief. But about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, we noticed a stir among the Indians, a slackening of their fire, & we soon were aware that many of them had left to meet a force coming to our relief. The relief expedition was not able to reach our camp because of the large force of Indians which left the attack to halt this expedition. Later this relief expedition was augmented by Col. Sibley & the rest of the garrison from Fort Ridgely. After a brief skirmish, the Indians being greatly outnumbered, scattered & fled.

Of the force of 140 men at Birch Coulee more than half were killed or wounded. Also every one of our horses were killed.

After a good hearty meal we were loaded into wagons for our return to the fort.

Birch Coulee is reckoned among the most severe battles of the frontier. The battle lasted without a moment's cessation from about 4 o'clock on Tuesday morning until 2 o'clock Wednesday afternoon, a period of thirty four hours. The woman who had lain in the wagon throughout the fight was not in the least injured, although the box looked like a sieve.

1. Conditions of pioneers before the Sioux tragedy. p. 1.
2. Treaty of Traverse des Sioux 1851 pp 2-4
3. Indian raid on government warehouse p. 6.
4. Standing Buffalo warns the military. pp 6, 7.
5. Capt. March forces Galbraith to issue provisions. p. 7.
6. Lieut. Sheehan returns to Fort Ripley, Acton massacre. p. 7
7. Plans for the massacre, after interview with Little Crow p. 8
8. Attack on Fort Ridgely Aug. 20-22, 1862
complement of fort. p. 8,
9. Colonels McPhail & Marshall with 175 men augment
garrison. Aug. 27 p. 9
10. Attack on New Ulm, Aug. 19, 1862 p. 9
first attack Aug. 19, second attack Aug. 23,
New Ulm abandoned Monday, Aug. 25, 1862 p. 10
11. Fort Abercrombie - description of buildings; p. 11, 12
attack on the fort Sept. 3 & 6.

p. 2 - good discussion on Indian Treaties.

O. G. Wall
Recollections
of the Sioux
Massacre.

D

Before the Sioux tragedy was enacted, the pioneer had come, & on the borders founded his home in a land of promise. Clustered about him were dear ones who, in this land of freedom & health, shared the joys & hopes that pervaded every breath inhaled. Here was the opportunity for willing hands & honest hearts - the one place where the shackles of poverty could never enslave those willing to work. Gradually the covered wagon gave way to the shack as a temporary abiding place, & the latter to the more comfortable yet modest home of the settler.

Small fields gave forth bountiful harvests; gardens were rich with their treasures; schools were being founded; & churches organized, though widely scattered; herds were increasing from small beginnings, & for the first time in life the dream of an independent home, with its comforts and promises, was being realized.

But intrigue had secretly & systematically laid the foundation of wrongs which should overthrow these bright hopes; which should rob these new homes not only of all their possessions, but of life itself, & leave blackened ruins, the skulls & crossbones of erstwhile happy homes. The grafter in the Indian department, entrusted with power & authority, was willing to imperil the whole frontier for the sake of plundering the Indian, who was no match for the conspirators acting as the servants of the government.

written by a member of Capt. Marsh's company, also stationed at Fort Ridgely in 1862, & was on Sibley's expedition.

Thus the Indian was taught to look upon the white race as his conniving, secret enemy, willing to violate sacred pledges & solemn obligations, & ready to take, under one pretense or another, the lion's share of the sums pledged to him by the government. In fact for these acts of bad faith & the repeated disappointments resulting, the government itself had come to be regarded by the Indian as unworthy of confidence. Worst of all, white people indiscriminately had been brought under the ban by the misdeeds of government employees & avaricious traders, who had sown the wind that ripened into the whirlwind with which the border was swept without distinction.

Treaty of
Traverse des
Sioux (Saint
Peter) of 1851

We need turn no farther than to the treaty of Traverse des Sioux (Saint Peter) of 1851, to have our eyes opened to the methods in which the Sioux massacre had its conception & in which, continued, it had its birth. The crimes committed against the red race, in what assumed to be honorable treaties, & in the carrying out of the terms of those treaties, would not have been tolerated for a day by whitemen.

When the Traverse des Sioux treaty was consummated it was supposed by the Indians they would receive the purchase price of their lands, but to their consternation the traders ^{gathered} like vultures & presented claims for goods sold to the Indians on credit for nearly \$400,000, or a sum considerably in excess of the amount the Sioux were to receive, & the monstrous claims of the traders were recognized by the

Indian authorities. Added to these were charges for removing the Indians from the lands they had ceded by treaty to within new boundaries.

Claims for depredations upon traders & settlers by lawless Indians had been filed with the Indian Department, & on ex parte evidence, or none at all, were allowed, & the amount ordered deducted from the sum total of payments to be made, thus robbing the law-abiding to make good for alleged offenses committed by lawless Indians.

By these various claims, hundreds of thousands of dollars, provided by the U.S. Treasury, were used to pay questionable claims, & the Indian found himself possessed of neither land nor money.

At the time of this treaty, Hon. Alexander Ramsey was Superintendent of Indian Affairs, & a member of the Treaty Commission.

The \$300,000 treaty money was paid to the traders. The Indians were wild with indignation, & it was ^{with} difficulty they were restrained from slaughtering the officials of the Treaty Commission, in attendance at the great council (chiefs) of December 1852 at Traverse des Sioux.

One of the claims allowed by these officials out of the treaty fund at this council was that of \$55,000 to Hugh L. Tyler, a man utterly unknown to the Indians, "for assisting to get the treaty measure through the United States Senate, & for necessary disbursements."

In accordance with the terms of that treaty of 1851, the Indians concerned assembled at the Yellow Medicine Agency about the first of July, 1862, to receive their annuities.

Each day witnessed the influx of large bands of Indians, until all had reached this modern Mecca.

Dreaming not of disappointment, happiness reigned throughout the great throng. But a single foreboding disturbed the spirits of these wanderers of the plains, & that was, that the hated grasping traders would intervene to rob them of their annuities. The trader who always "stood in" with the agents & other Indian officials, was the bogey of the red man. As the anticipated day of payment drew near, the Indian dread of his time honored enemy (trader) increased. Lieutenants Sheehan & Gere acceded to the request of the Indians to meet the braves & chiefs in council. Confiding their misgivings to the young officers, they besought their intervention at the making of the payment of the annuities. Inasmuch as the traders were allowed to sit at the pay table & take the money of the Indians, the council implored the officers to prevent this, & the Indians were magnificently disappointed when told by the officers that they were powerless to restrain the traders without authority to do so from the agent.

Days ripened into weeks, but the promised annuities came not. The civil war was at white heat. Gold was in great demand, & paper money fifty percent. below par. Indian superintendents & agents were not above temptation. There was a fortune in the clever conversion of the gold provided, into paper, & it was said the gold was converted into currency at a handsome profit. That the fatal delay in making the Indian

payment was due to speculation, was off-asserted, never denied & generally believed at the Fort & the Agencies. To this delay, whatever may have been its cause, was the outbreak largely attributable.

Broken promises & hunger together, when an Indian is the victim, will undo more confidence in a day than many earnest missionaries could inspire in a year. The assembled Indians were kept in waiting for several weeks, during which time hunger became widespread & starvation actually threatened. In fact famine was only averted by the killing of dogs & ponies, & the digging of roots.

No doubt had the gold payment been promptly made in good faith at the appointed time, the murdered settlers & the hapless traders would have been spared to work out the ordinary problems of life undisturbed.

The policy of dalliance went heedlessly on. There were provisions in abundance in the Government warehouse, belonging to the Indians, but they were withheld to be delivered at the time of payment of the annuities.

On the morning of August 4th two Indian messengers entered the little military camp & informed the soldiers (100 men) the Indians were coming down to make a demonstration; the Indians had come, not to make war, but to forcibly take what they had peaceably pleaded for in vain for nearly two weeks, provisions, of which they knew there was an abundant supply, belonging to them. Mah-ka-tah, leader of the raid, rushed to

6
warehouse, & broken open the door. The Indians quickly effected an entrance to the warehouse, & were removing flour; when they were halted by Lieutenant Gere & his men, who quickly trained a cannon on the warehouse door; Lieutenant Sheehan & a squad of his men then quickly cleared the warehouse of the Indians.

The Indians were wrought to the highest pitch of excitement & determination. The miracle is that the massacre that was deferred just two weeks was not here & now begun.

The chiefs pleaded the necessities of their people, & urged that the provisions stored in the warehouse belonged to the Indians, & that they were unjustly withheld from distribution at a time of great suffering. The officers then advised the Indian Agent, Galbraith to make an issue of provisions. The Agent realizing that the moment was one of great danger acted upon the suggestion, but the issue was wholly inadequate to the occasion & the Indians did not desist until the military assumed a threatening attitude by forming a line of battle for the protection of the warehouse. The Indians then withdrew peaceably to their camp.

The Indians were displeased & angry, & held a stormy council after their withdrawal to their lodges.

The decision of the council favored immediate hostilities, the entire council being committed by the action of the majority. By this vote it is a matter of wonder the massacre was not at this time precipitated. That it was not was due to the dogged persistence of Standing Buffalo (chief of one of the Sisseton bands) & his friends & supporters. The council at an end, Standing Buffalo went

to the military camp & reported that war had been decided upon; that he had opposed the result because he was among those who stood for peace & forbearance, but having participated in the deliberations of the council, was bound by the decision. He warned the military to be on the alert.

Lieutenant Gere was then dispatched to Fort Ridgely on the 5th of August to confer with Captain Marsh & acquaint him with the dangerous condition of affairs at the Upper Agency. After the arrival of Marsh & Gere back at the Agency, a council of Indians was secured by Agent Galbraith & Captain Marsh, at which it was agreed that the stock of annuities, consisting of provisions & other stores should be issued at once; that the Indians should repair, after receiving their allotments, to their homes, to be recalled again on the arrival of their money. The issue began on August the 7th & continued for two days.

Smarting under their hard ships & the long succession of broken promises & disappointments, the Indians spread away to repopulate the vast plains, but they were filled with wrath.

Captain Marsh on the 17th of August issued an order for the return of Lieutenant Sheehan & his detachment to their head quarters at Fort Ripley. The massacre at Acton occurred the very same day, but Lieutenant Sheehan was unaware of this fact however, until a courier sent by Marsh on the 18th, overtook him as he had gone into camp between New Auburn & Glencoe. By the time Sheehan & his command reached Fort Ridgely the battle at the Red wood Ferry had been fought & Captain Marsh & a large number of his men had been killed.

Therefore the Indians stung with bitter disappointment nursed his wrath sullenly. He believed his people the victims of premeditated fraud, & judged the whites as a race by those with whom he had come in contact about the agencies.

The Indian
camp was
4 miles above
Redwood.

The horrible Sioux massacre was inaugurated in the town of Acton, Meeker county (17th Aug)

The warriors then went to Little Crow, who lived about two miles above the Agency, he yielded to their demands, & joined in the plans for the massacre of the traders & others at the Agency.

At about 10 o'clock in the forenoon, August 18th, 1862, came the startling news of the horrible massacre begun three hours before at the Redwood Agency.

Twenty-five men of the refugees together with the one hundred & fifty-four officers & men of the garrison raised the Fort's defenders to about two hundred men.

Fort Ridgely viciously attacked about 1 P.M. August 20, 1862. There was no attack at any time on the Fort during Thursday, August 21st. The second attack on the Fort began shortly after noon on Friday, August 22nd. The number of attackers were three times those of Wednesday's attack. The battle on Wednesday raged until nightfall, when the savages withdrew to the depths of the dark valleys, full of vengeance, but groined in the hot game of war for the day. The fight of Friday continued until night closed in, when the Indians withdrew, with a howl of rage, but fairly vanquished.

But had the attack been prolonged, or had the foe returned to renew it, the garrison must inevitably have been lost. The Garrison could not know, unfortunately, that Little Crow's retreat into the dark valley, as the sable of night enveloped his vanquished host, signalled his departure from the Fort forever.

Instead of relaxing, vigil must now, if possible, be greater than before, with the defense of the Fort depending upon the cannon, the half-dozen rounds of slug iron cartridges per man, & the bayonet. And so the strain, testing man's ability to retain his reason, continued for still four & a half days longer, or for a total of nine days.

At last, on the morning of August 27th, unheralded, Col. Samuel McPhail & William R. Marshall rode into the garrison at the head of one hundred & seventy-five citizen-soldiers, & the long siege was raised, the reinforcements coming from St. Peter under cover of night, & thus escaping detection or attack.

New Ulm is located seventeen miles below Fort Ridgely. The first attack on New Ulm began on the afternoon of August 19th. The defense of the town was under the direction of Judge Glandreau. The second attack on the town began between the hours of 9 & 10 of the forenoon of Saturday, August 23rd. The defense force under Judge Glandreau numbered about three hundred effective men, neither well nor uniformly armed, however. The non-combatants of the town numbered from 1200 to 1500 people principally women & children of the town & of the country immediately surrounding. The number of Indians in the attack was over 650. This second battle of New Ulm lasted nine or ten hours.

After the conflict had raged for hours the defenders became hardened to battle. Not only were the lives of hundreds of helpless women, children & aged & infirm, in the hands of these valiant defenders, but far-reaching consequences to the whole border were involved in the contest, & as the conflict lengthened, the defenders more & more forced the fighting, until at length, with nightfall, the Indians withdrew, defeated, for they had failed of their purpose. This battle was one of the most important events in the history of Minnesota, & will ever hold a place among the early-day frontier tragedies of the state.

After dark a new & less extended defensive line was formed & barricaded, & all buildings outside of this line, some forty in number, were burned. Thus the town, for the first time, was in good condition to resist attack, & the wisdom of this precautionary measure was apparent when the savages renewed the attack the following morning, only to abandon it definitely by noon.

Pestilence threatening, & ammunition & provisions becoming well exhausted, it was resolved to abandon New Ulm, & on Monday, August 25th, the venture of successfully reaching Mankato was made.

To remove the women & children, & the 80 wounded men, a train of 153 wagons was made up. Though for a time abandoned, New Ulm was not again the scene of conflict or important molestation, after their defeat at Fort Ridgely & New Ulm, the Indians were beginning to sorrowfully abandon the hope of re-entering the Mississippi valley.

Wall-
p. 140.

Fort Abercrombie

Like Ridgely, Abercrombie was a fort in name only. The post consisted of three buildings, - barracks - officers' quarters & commissary. When the news of the outbreak reached this distant frontier post, steps were taken to hastily put the garrison in a defensible condition by the construction of earthworks & other barricades. Abercrombie, situated on the west bank of the Red River, in what is now Richland County, North Dakota, did not learn of the outbreak until the 20th. of August. The post was garrisoned by Co. D, Capt. John Vander Horck, Fifth Minnesota Volunteer Infantry. The Indians desperately attacked the fort at 5 o'clock of the morning of September 3rd, which attack they continued until about noon, but they were repulsed by the gallant men of Company D, & retired after sustaining a severe loss in numbers. Capt. Vander Horck while on a tour of the picket line before daylight was shot & seriously wounded by a guard who mistook him for a foe; First Lieutenant Carvian was ill, & while Second Lieutenant Groetch had commanded with ability, it was discovered when this first engagement was over that but 350 rounds of ammunition for the old Harper's Ferry muskets, with which the men were armed, remained. A force was at once organized to manufacture cartridges, by opening canister intended for the howitzers, thereby sufficient ammunition was thus made for the infantry without seriously depleting the supply of the artillery.

On the morning of September 6th, just at the break of day, the Indians launched a furious attack upon the Fort with greatly increased numbers, the

Abercrombie

attack lasting ten hours, during which time the fighting was at times hot & furious, but aided by the howitzers, which were splendidly manned, the garrison had defiance to the enemy & drove him from the field with heavy loss. Though reinforcements did not arrive until September 23rd, the Fort was not again attacked in force, though the garrison was practically in a state of siege for weeks. Co. D lost five men, one killed & four wounded, in the two engagements.

The defense of Fort Abercrombie was heroically sustained though the strain endured severely taxed the officers & men, but they proved equal to every demand & every expectation.

1. Location of Upper Sioux Agency, also Lower Agency p. 1.
2. Location of Birch Coulee & Wood Lake battleground p. 1.
3. Treaties of 1858, consummated at Washington. pp. 142.
4. Provisions in treaties for "farmer Indians". pp. 243.
5. Reservation boundary 1851-1858 p. 3
6. Fort Ridgely; its location, reason the Indians wished to capture it. p. 3
7. Location of the buildings of the Fort defense of & number of casualties. p. 4.

Fort Ridgely some 20 miles above New Ulm. p. 3.

The upper Sioux agency was beautifully situated on the north bank of the Yellow Medicine River about two miles from its junction with the Minnesota if measured along its curving bed, but not much, if any, more than one mile in a direct line. Situated in Yellow Medicine County.

[For map see Folwell's History of Minnesota, Vol. 2, p 116 & 117] It was located in the southwest quarter of section 29 township 115, range 38. [See map in Arthur P. Rose, History of Yellow Medicine County, 66] The upper agency on the Yellow Medicine River was thirty miles above the lower agency which was situated in Redwood County near the Redwood Ferry on the right bank of the Minnesota River some six miles below the mouth of the Redwood River.

Map of the location of the buildings of the Lower Sioux Agency in Folwell's, A History of Minnesota, pp 110 & 112, & of the Upper Sioux, in the same book, pages 116 & 117 & see map opposite page 110.

Birch Coulee battleground, north of the Lower Sioux Agency, ^{on the opposite shore of the Minn. River between Beaver Creek & the Redwood Ferry} (Map showing exact location of battleground will be found in Folwell's, A History of Minnesota, page 112)

Wood Lake battleground located south of the Upper Sioux Agency, ^{west of the Minnesota river & near the Lac qui Parle trail.} (Map showing location in Folwell's, A History of Minnesota, pages 117 & 118)

Some of the accounts of the two battles are often discordant in minor particulars & not infrequently in regard to matters of first importance.

The lower Sioux Agency was in section 8, township 112, range 34 west

Henderson in Sibley County, in the southeast part, near Le Sueur County.

Although the Dakota tribes had receded the ten mile strip on that side of the river four years before (July 19, 1858) their hunters had not ceased to wander over & to camp on it. In the spring of 1858 delegates of chiefs & braves, appropriately selected from all the bands were taken to Washington by Agent Joseph R. Brown & amid the

pp 218-29
Folwell's
A History of
Minnesota
Vol. 2.

allurements of the capital city they were induced to agree to a pair of treaties for the cession of their lands, nearly a million acres, as then estimated, on the north bank of the Minnesota river, at a price to be fixed by the Senate. It is highly probable & there is some evidence that the Indians were again allowed to think that they would be placed beyond want. The two treaties, framed in exactly the same language except as to the descriptions of the lands, provided, according to bad usage, for the payment of debts due to the licensed traders from individual Indians, fixing a maximum sum which might be allowed by the chiefs in open council. The treaties were signed on July 19, 1858, but two years ran by before the Senate by resolution awarded the Indians the sum of thirty cents per acre (The Sioux agent Joseph R. Brown & the Senate committee on Indian affairs had recommended & held out for the payment of 1.25 per acre) for land worth five dollars per acre. On March 3, 1861, Congress appropriated in payment for the ceded lands, to the lower Sioux 96,000 for 320,000 acres, & to the upper Sioux, 170,880 for 569,600 acres. When the traders' claims allowed by the Secretary of the Interior had been paid, the lower Sioux had virtually nothing coming to them & the Upper Sioux, perhaps one-half of the amount voted (Do you wonder that Indian blood boiled?) when the Indians after three years of waiting found their lands gone & the beggarly proceeds largely absorbed by traders, there was a degree of exasperation among them which white men under similar circumstances might rightfully have exhibited. Up to the outbreak this matter was a perpetual source of wrangling, dissatisfaction, & bitter, ever threatening complaints on the part of both the upper & lower bands (Sioux).

One of the leading provisions of these treaties was for the allotment of 80 acres of land to heads of families & to single persons above the age of 21 years - the land to be inalienable for a period to be determined and, in the discretion of the President, to be patented to the allottee. [The agent Joseph R. Brown believed that the Indian could be guided into paths which would lead to the abandonment of savage life, to the adoption of fixed abodes, & to the cultivation of the soil. It was doubtless at

Special notes.

his instance, that the civilization clauses were written into the treaties. In 1859 an extensive & sudden change was noted at his ^(Laramie) Brown's agency. Over 200 men, mostly heads of families, had discarded the blanket, had had their hair cut, had donned white man's clothes, & were locating on the lands allotted to them by the treaty of 1858. With their families, 700 were thus counted as "Farmer Indians." Major Bullen, northern superintendent, reported with enthusiasm on the experiment as an "assured success." What Joseph R. Brown could not do with ~~that~~ for the Sioux Indians could not be done. The exigencies of party politics cause the retirement of Major Brown, from the Sioux agency early in 1861; a calamity, this, for the Sioux nation & for the United States. Into his place came Thomas J. Galbraith, a man of character & ability, who obtained the appointment not on account of actual qualifications for the position but because he had been a staunch Republican wheelhorse in late political campaigns.

The reservation boundary (1851-1858) extending on both sides of the Minnesota river, beginning at a point on the north shore of Lake Traverse in central Traverse county, thence running southeast to a point midway in Big Stone county, thence southeasterly through the southern portions of Lac-qui-Parle & Chippewa counties, thence southeasterly through northeastern part of Renville county, through the southwestern corner of Lincoln county to Fort Ridgely (which is situated some twenty miles above New Ulm & near the head of ordinary navigation of the Minnesota river) then due south to a point in the south central part of Brown county, thence northwesterly through Redwood, Renville & Yellow Medicine counties to the junction of Lake Traverse & the Minnesota river.

Fort Ridgely, some twenty miles above New Ulm, was the base of operations & supply of the white soldiers of the Great Father. To seize & occupy this strong hold would transfer that advantage to the Sioux nation and this place captured, it would be easy to sweep down the valley & wipe out, Mankato, St. Peter, Henderson, Shakopee, & all settlements down to the defenses of Fort Snelling. Fort Ridgely had been established in 1853 soon after

Location of
Fort Ridgely
pages 126, 127
Folwells.
Vol. 2.

special notes.

the removal in that year of the Sioux to ^{the} reserves set apart in under the treaties of 1851. The site was on the north bank, some $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the river, a bottom of nearly that width intervening. The plateau is 150 feet above the valley. Ravines of erosion with steep slopes forming excellent cover, surround the place except to the northwest where the open prairie extends [For a map with the location of the various buildings comprising the fort, see Edwells' A History of Minnesota, p. 126]. The principal buildings were grouped around the sides of a parade about ninety yards square, the two story stone barracks on the north & a large one story building adjacent for quartermasters' use being the only structures which were proof against musketry. The officers quarters were to the right & left of the parade, in the rear of the barracks was a row of log houses in which families of civilian employees were lodged. The commodious house of the commandant stood on the south side of the parade near the western angle. Back of this at some distance was a large log barn or stable, adjacent to which were stacks of hay which made good cover for attack. First attack on the fort took place on ^{Wednesday} August 20th 1862, the second concerted attack was begun ^{afternoon of} at one o'clock on the ^{Friday} the 22nd of August. About four o'clock the assaulting party was dispersed & they scattered to the rear out of range, & the "grand affair" was over.

The defense of the place was conducted with so much discretion that but three lives were lost & thirteen persons wounded. At the time the post was in the command of Lieutenant Vere because Captain Marsh the post commander left the post with a detachment of his Company C of the 5th Minn. Infantry for the scene of the massacre near the lower Sioux Agency.

1. Opening statement leading to massacre. p. 1
2. Gov. Ramsey appoints Sibley commander p. 1.
3. Effect of the battle of Wood Lake (imp) p. 1 & 2
4. Battle of Wood Lake. Sept. 23. p. 4
5. Release of the white captives & capture of Indians p. 5, 9
6. Chief Big Eagles description of the preparations made for the battle of Wood Lake p. 6
7. Indians' plans for the ambuscade foiled p. 7
8. Battle of Wood Lake. pp. 9, 10, 11, 13, 14
9. Camp Release, situation p. 12
10. Death of Little Crow p. 12
11. Start of expedition from Fort Ridgely Sept. 18 p. 13
12. Who was Isaac V.D. Heard p. 13
13. Third Regiment p. 14
14. Other Day one of Sibley's scouts p. 14.
15. See also # 11 super. The campaign against the Indians ^{Sept. 18} p. 16
16. See also # 8 super. Wood Lake (use with # 19, page 19. pp 16-17, 20
17. Friendly Indians secure possession of captive whites pp. 17-18
18. Courage of friendly Indians, Paul Standing Buffalo. p. 18.
19. Return to Fort Ridgely after Birch Coulee, & training & reinforcing of the expedition (use before writing battle of Wood Lake.) p. 19
20. After battle of Wood Lake, reason for Sibley's delay in attacking Indians. p. 21

pp. 16 & 17 good description of Battle of Wood Lake & deploying of the forces.
 Destination of Little Crow after defeat at Wood Lake. p. 12.

1.
Minn. Hist.
Soc. Collections
Vol. XIII, p.
92, 151.

Battle of Wood Lake

In the midst of the lurid light of the flames of the great Civil War, another woe came to the people of Minnesota. A merciless & vengeful enemy, with instinctive secrecy, suddenly burst upon the unsuspecting settlers, & commenced an orgy of butchery of men, women & children. It began at Acton, in Mucker county, & spread southward till 18 counties of the State were made hideous with the savage war-whoop of the naked & painted Indians, who, with rifle, scalping knife, & torch, wreaked their fiendish passions upon the unresisting & unsuspecting people, & made of a valley, a carnival of hell.

Alexander Ramsey, then governor, in this alarming crisis, turned to Henry Hastings Sibley, as the proper man to lead a military force against the savage foe. Sibley understood the Indian language, their character, their mode of warfare, their purposes, & had thorough knowledge of the country. His movements seemed slow & conservative because of unpreparedness; yet the results of his first campaign disarmed all censure. He relieved Fort Ridgely, saved the most of Major Brown's command at the bloody action at Birch Coulee, reinforced the retreating column of Colonel Flandrau from New Ulm, protected Mankato, St. Peter, Henderson & Glencoe, prevented further outrages to an extended frontier, & fought the important battle of Wood Lake, September 23, 1862.

This battle broke utterly the prestige of Little Crow & his allies & expelled them forever from the state, released three hundred helpless captives at Camp Release, took one thousand five hundred prisoners, & put four hundred

Sept. 23,
1862

Battle of Wood Lake

twenty-five Indian cutthroats & murderers in iron. The results of the victory were of immense value to the state & to the whole country. One important feature of these results was the confiscation of the large Indian reservation south of the Minnesota river & its opening to settlement & civilization.

In response to President Lincoln's second call for volunteers, the Seventh Regiment Minnesota Infantry was organized. Of this regiment, William Rainey Marshall was commissioned by his friend, Governor Ramsey as lieutenant colonel, August 28, 1862. He at once began a military career which was conspicuous for courage, even to audacity.

His first military act was in joining a party of improvised soldiers under Colonel McPhail for the relief of Fort Ridgely. He was then ordered to join General Sibley & march to the relief of Captain Grant at Birch Coulee. He had now gathered five companies of his regiment, which, in the confusion incident to the fierce Indian raid, had been widely scattered, & on September 22, 1862, he marched toward Wood Lake, in the battle at which place Colonel Marshall bore a conspicuous part.

After the crushing defeat at Wood Lake by General H. H. Sibley, Little Crow fled into Dakota, from whence he returned the following summer (1863), for the purpose of stealing horses & provisions from the Minnesota settlers.

Sibley had gone into camp about one & one half miles south of the Yellow Medicine River, & the Indians were camped on that river. A consultation was then had as to how it was best to attack Sibley's command, the council being held in the evening. Little Crow's plan was to quietly advance under cover

1862

M. H. S. C.
Vol. 15, p. 367,
1863

M. H. S. C.
Vol. 10, pp. 606,
607, 815,

Battle of Wood Lake

of the darkness until the guards fired, & then rush in, and, as soon as the troops rose up, to halt, fire one volley, charge forward, & massacre them.

M. H. S. C.
pp. 605, 606,
607.

1862.

The friendly Indians were by this time becoming much stronger, & getting together formed a camp west of the mouth of the Chippewa river.

At this camp it was reported to us that the so-called Medawakanton soldiers (hostile Indians) were coming to attack us, & we determined to defend ourselves. About twenty men, with Mago-ma-ne as spokesman, were selected to go & meet the Medawakantons & tell them that they must come no farther, but go back & that, if they persisted in coming on, they would fire on them.

These men went to meet the Medawakantons, & forming in line waited for them to come. When they got near, Mago-ma-ne commanded them to halt, & said to them, "If you come any nearer we will shoot. You have brought about the destruction of everything we had to live on. Do you also want to make captives of us? No, you can never make us your captives. Go back." So they went back, without coming any farther.

The friendly Indians later moved their camp about a half mile to the westward. It was at that time that the hostile Indians decided they were ready to go & meet General Sibley's command, ordering every body to go, & making the threat that those who did not go would be punished by their soldier's lodges, & that now was the time to wipe out General Sibley's command, which they said they intended to do.

Duplication
see bottom of
page 1.

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Battle of Wood Lake

Duplication
see page 1
bottom of page

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The Two Stars spoke & said, "I do not think your plan is a good one, because if the attack is made at night only a part of us will go, & many will not go. Your plan therefore would fail."

The reason for Two Stars saying this was, that, if the attack was made in daylight, the friendly Indians would have an opportunity to let the troops know what was planned. Thus the plan of attack was argued until daylight. (Two Stars being a member of the tribe of friendly Indians)

When the morning came, some of the soldiers who were going for potatoes were fired upon by the Indians & chased back into their camp, & two companies of soldiers came out & drove the Indians back. Then all the hostile Indians rushed in & drove back the two companies of soldiers, & killed three of them before they reached their camp. Afterward the Indians surrounded the camp, & fired on the troops from all sides. As soon as the soldiers were ready, however, they came out of the camp & pursued the Indians, killing many of them. The Indians then withdrew & went back to their camp, & next morning fled to the northward.

At Wood Lake, September 23rd, the attacking party of Indians was "nearly 500" as stated in Colonel Sibley's report. (Vol 2, page 254) His command numbered at least 1,000 men, infantry, cavalry, & artillery; & the

Battle of
Wood Lake
Sept. 23, 1862

M. H. S. C.
p. 815, 816
1862

Battle of Wood Lake.

attack was made upon the camp early in the morning. There were no non-combatants. The loss of the whites was five killed, & thirty-one wounded.

In this decisive battle of Wood Lake, General Sibley, by good management, strategy, & his thorough knowledge of Indian character, was enabled to not only effect the release of the white captives, nearly 250 in number, but to take prisoners about 2,000 men, women & children of the enemy. He then constituted a military commission, with Colonel William Brooks as President, by which the Indian warriors, to the number of more than 400, were tried, 303 condemned to death for murder & massacre, & others to various terms of imprisonment from one to ten years, for pillage & robbery. The execution of the condemned was prevented by the order of President Lincoln, at the earnest solicitation of some Quakers in Pennsylvania, & so-called "humanitarians" in New England, very much to the disgust & dissatisfaction of the people of Minnesota. Finally, General Sibley was ordered by the President to execute 38 of the criminals convicted of rape & massacre of the whites, which was done on the 26th. of December, 1862, at Mankato, the whole number being hanged on one scaffold.

During the campaign of 1862, Other Day was employed by me (Gen. Sibley) as a scout, & he rendered good service in that capacity, as I advanced with my column of troops in search of the hostile Indians. At the crossing of the Red Wood River, Other Day being some distance to the front, dismounted from his horse to examine the inside of a deserted house. After gratifying his curiosity, he issued from the building just in time to perceive his horse, bestrode by two savages, disappearing in the woods. He fired an ineffectual shot at the daring thieves, & rejoined the command on foot, in a very unwieldy state of mind. I remarked to him, that I little expected any

M. H. S. C.
Vol. III
p. 280.

Trial & hanging
of the Indians.

M. H. S. C.
Vol. III
page 101
1862

Battle of Wood Lake.

of my chosen scouts to allow themselves to be outwitted as he had been, & the quiet rebuke mortified him exceedingly, but he said he deserved it, & would endeavor to regain my good opinion whenever opportunity should offer. The pledge was promptly redeemed, for at the battle of Wood Lake, a few days afterwards, which broke the power of the enemy, Other Day was conspicuous for his daring, & incurred great danger, not only from the fire of the savages, but from our own troops, who repeatedly discharged their muskets at him, mistaking him for one of the hostile Indians. He brought to me, with a triumphant air, two horses which he had taken during the action.

M. H. S. C.

Vol. 6

pp. 397-399

1862

(Chief Big Eagle's
Story of the Sioux
Outbreak of 1862)

When we learned that Sibley had gone into camp at the Wood Lake, a council of the sub-chiefs & others was held & it was determined to give him a battle near there. I think the lake now called Battle Lake was the old-time Wood Lake. As I understand it, there once were some cottonwoods about it, & the Indians called it 'M' da- chan'-Wood Lake. The larger lake two miles west, now called Wood Lake, was always known to me by the Indian of 'Hinta hawk-pay-an wo-ju' meaning literally, 'the Planting Place of the Man who ties his Moccasins with Basswood Bark'. We soon learned that Sibley had thrown up breastworks & it was not deemed safe to attack him at the lake. We concluded that the fight should be about a mile or more to the northwest of the lake, on the road along which the troops would march. This was the road leading to the upper country, & of course Sibley would travel it. At the point determined on we planned to hide a large number of men on the side of the road. Near the lake, in a ravine formed by the outlet, we were to place another strong body. Behind a hill to the west we were to be some more men. We thought that when Sibley marched out along the road & when the head of his column reached the farther end of the line of our first division, our men would open fire. The

Battle of Wood Lake.

men in the ravine would then be in the rear of the whites & would begin firing on that end of the column. The men from behind the hill would rush out & attack the flank, & then we had horsemen far out on the right & left who would come up. We expected to throw the whole white force into confusion by the sudden & unexpected attack & defeat them before they could rally.

The night Sibley lay at Wood Lake his pickets were only a short distance from camp - less than half a mile. When we were putting our men into position that night we often saw them plainly. I worked hard that night fixing the men. Little Brown was on the field too. Mankato was there. Indeed, all our fighting chiefs were present & all our best fighting Indians. We felt that this would be the deciding fight of the war.

The morning came & an accident spoiled all our plans. For some reason Sibley did not move early as we expected he would. It seemed a considerable time after sun-up when some four or five wagons with a number of soldiers started out from the camp in the direction of the old Yellow Medicine agency. We learned afterwards that they were going without orders to dig potatoes over at the agency, five miles away. They came on over the prairie, right where part of our line was. At last they came so close that our men had to rise up & fire. This brought on the fight, of course, but not according to the way we had planned it.

The Indians that were in the fight did well, but hundreds of our men did not get into it and did not fire a shot. They were out too far. Those of us on the hill did our best, but we were soon driven off. Mankato was killed here, & we lost a very good & brave war chief. The whites drove our men out of the ravine by a charge & that ended the battle.

Battle of Wood Lake.

We retreated in some disorder, though the whites did not offer to pursue us. We lost fourteen or fifteen men killed & quite a number wounded. Soon after the battle I, with many others who had taken part in the war, surrendered to General Sibley. Afterward I was tried & served three years in the prison at Davenport & the penitentiary at Rock Island for taking part in the war.

M. H. S. C.

Vol. II

pp. 255, 217

(From a paper
by the Rev.
Dileon H. Pond)

Were not those christian Indians, who, encouraged by General Sibley, effected the deliverance from bondage & death, or treatment worse than death, of hundreds of captives at Camp Release? Did not the leaders of that band bear christian names, given to them in the holy ordinance of baptism. Who are they who have composed the band of faithful "scouts", three long years standing on our frontiers to protect our citizens from the scalping-knife of the worshippers of the Taku-wakan, but christian Indians.

Definition of the
Dakota word
"wakan"

(In the very significant Dakota word wakan, is contained the quintessence of their religion. The word wakan signifies anything which is incomprehensible. The more incomprehensible the more wakan. The general name for the gods in their dialect is this, Takai-wakan. Whatever, therefore, is above the comprehension of a Dakota, is God. Wakan is the one idea of divine essence).

On the other hand, who led the murderous bands in the work of destruction? "Little Crow" & his wakan associates, who, from old time, had been the open & determined enemies of the christian religion & most zealous & devoted worshippers of the Taku-wakan.

Even those of the pagan party who surrendered themselves to our military authorities, felt that the Wood Lake battle was the result of the strife between

Battle of Wood Lake.

their medicine men & "God Almighty," & from that day, in their minds, the doom of their gods & of their representatives were sealed. They soon cast away even the symbols of their divinities, & a large portion of them began to seek to know how to worship the God of the Bible.

M. H. S. Co.
Vol. IX
pp. 418,
1862.

Wood Lake.
Sept. 23, 1863

A few short removes now brought us to what proved to be the end of our journey, Camp Release. As soon as the tepees were set the squaws & Indians commenced raining bullets.

The expected battle was fought on the 23rd day of September at Wood Lake, eighteen miles distant from our camp, the Indians making the attack on General Sibley's forces. A day or two before the battle there was a disagreement among the Indians. Some of them, I think, were in favor of surrendering to Sibley. But a large majority were opposed to it; therefore the captives they had were nearly all left with those who wished to surrender.

While the battle was raging, the squaws went out with one-horse wagons to take ammunition to the warriors & to bring in the dead & wounded Indians. The hostile Indians had returned to their camps before sunset on the day of the battle, & it was evident to us by their appearance that they had met with defeat.

Morning came with bright sunshine on the day of our deliverance, the 26th of September. About ten o'clock in the morning, to our great joy & admiration, the glimmer of the soldiers' bayonets was first seen & pointed out to us by the Indians, before we could see the men.

While the soldiers were pitching their tents, the general (Sibley) sent orders for us to remain

Battle of Wood Lake

in the tepees until he came for us.

The tepees were set in a circle. After about one & a half hours, General Sibley marched his command inside of this circle. The captives were then taken into this circle & delivered to the general in military style. None but those who have passed through the terrible experience can never know the varied feelings & emotion which the deliverance produced.

"The Minnesota Massacre" by A. P. Connolly, a member of the Sixth Minnesota who fought at the battles of Birch Coulee & Wood Lake & also various battles of the Civil War.

1862.

Battle fought
Sept. 23, 1862

After our return to Fort Ridgely & a few more days of preparation, the command was put in splendid marching condition, & "forward" was the word for the rescuing of the captives & if possible the capture of the renegades. We met the Indians next at Wood Lake & had a sharp battle with them early in the morning. (A picture of the soldiers' camp at the battle of Wood Lake appears on page 129 of this book.) They had come down in force to annihilate us, but we were glad to meet them in broad daylight on the open prairie & receive them with "open arms to hospitable graves." We were just up from a good night's sleep & had partaken of a generous supply of Old Java & hard tack, & felt abundantly to defend ourselves. Besides we were veterans now, for we had profited by our baptismal fire & had an old score to settle with the Indians, & we settled to our entire satisfaction.

Our sappers had gone out to repair a bridge that had been burned, & the temptation was too great for some of the younger warriors. The plan of the Indians was to surprise us as we were crossing the river; but the young bucks, when they saw a few of our men, wanted their

Battle of Wood Lake

scalps so bad they opened fire. The "long roll" was sounded, & we stood to arms. Little Crow knew that Colonel Sibley was aware of his tactics, & was determined to remove him if he could by detailing about eighty of his best warriors to do the work, & at this battle of Wood Lake they tried hard to reach him, but he was too watchful to be caught napping. A detachment of the Third Minnesota, under Major Welch, & the Renville Rangers charged upon the Indians in one direction, & the Seventh Minnesota, in command of Col. William R. Marshall, in another, while the battery, under command of Captain Mark Hendricks, did effective work also. The Sixth Minnesota, under command of Colonel William Brooke, routed the Indians from a deep ravine on the right flank of our camp & probably saved Colonel Sibley from being captured by the picked men sent out for that purpose by Little Crow.

The conflict lasted more than two hours & was decisive. The Indians offered to surrender if Colonel Sibley would promise them immunity from punishment, but this was sternly refused. They fled in dismay, not being permitted to take their dead & wounded from the field. So confident were they of success that they had brought their women & teams to take back the pillage after the Indians had loaded themselves with glory & scalps - but, they got no glory & lost their scalps.

The battle was a very decisive one & very discouraging to the Indians, who suffered a loss of 175 in killed & wounded, while our loss was fifty-seven killed & wounded. The engagement lasted two

Battle of Wood Lake, Sept. 23, 1862.

hours, & after the dead were gathered up & buried & the wounded cared for the column was again ready to move. This battle developed the fact that the Indians forces resisting our advance were composed in part of the Medawakantons & Wahpekutas of the Lower & Wahpetons & Sissetons of the Upper Sioux & Winnebagoes, half-breeds & deserters from the Renville Rangers.

Camp
Release

The military camp at this point was designated Camp Release, (situated north of Wood Lake, on the Minnesota River, better than half way between the Yellow Medicine River & Lac-qui Parle River) so named from the nature of our mission in releasing the people from their Indian captivity. The manner in which they were rescued & the Indians captured reflects greatly to the credit & sagacity of Colonel Sibley & his advisors. In the liberation of the captives he gained the gratitude of the nation & a merited promotion, for it was at Camp Release that he received a notification of his promotion to the rank of General.

[Picture of Camp Release on page 141, The Minnesota Massacre, by Alonzo P. Connolly.]

Destination
of Little Crow
& his followers
after defeat at
Wood Lake

In the State of Dakota, is the celebrated Minnewakan, or Devil's Lake. The immediate shores are part timber & part prairie; but a mile beyond, the country is one vast rolling prairie, destitute of trees, & dotted over with little lakes of salt water.

To this neighborhood Little Crow & his followers, after the defeat at Wood Lake, Minn., wended their way & encamped, where they were joined by nearly all the Minnesota Sioux who had not surrendered or been captured.

Little Crow, was later killed near Hutchinson, Minnesota, in August 1863. While this was being done in Minnesota, a military train five miles long was in pursuit of him up in Dakota; & the news did not reach General Sibley

Battle of Wood Lake

for two weeks. The description given of this Indian was so accurate, that the General said it was no other than Little Crow. This again was corroborated by his son, who was some weeks after captured in a starving condition.

Thus ended the ignominious life of Little Crow, the great Sioux chief who had influenced his people to believe that the time had come for them to reclaim their lost empire.

Isaac U. D. Heard was a member of Gen. Sibley's expedition against the savages in 1862, from its arrival at St. Peter in August until its return in November, & acted as the Recorder of the Military Commission which tried some 400 of the participants in the outbreak.

Heards -
History of the
Sioux War,
1862-63

who was Heard
the author

pages 167-178

On the afternoon of the 18th of September the camp at Fort Ridgely was broken up, & the expedition, disgusted with the long inactivity, joyfully started on its upward march after the foe. As crossing above might be attended with an ambuscade, an abut was constructed near the fort, & the expedition then ferried over.

On a fence near the Redwood River the Indian scouts left a message of defiance, telling us to come on, & that the braves were ready for us at Yellow Medicine. They also amused themselves with firing several bridges to impede our progress. These were smoking when we came up, but not materially injured.

On the evening of the 22nd we camped on the Lone Tree Lake, two miles from Wood Lake, & two from the Yellow Medicine River. Next morning, between 6 & 7 o'clock, as we were taking our breakfast, several foraging teams, with their guards, when about a-half mile from camp, were fired upon by Indians, who lay concealed in the grass. The 3rd regiment, under Major Welch, hurried out, without orders from the commander of the expedition, crossed a ravine, & was soon engaged with the foe. The Third were ordered

Battle of Wood Lake.

back into camp; & just then the enemy appeared in great numbers on all sides, & were gathering in the ravine between the regiment & the camp. The battle, which was known as that of Wood Lake, had now begun.

Captain Hendrick's cannon now opened fire as did the howitzer. Then Hendrick's boldly advanced his gun to the head of the ravine, & Lieutenant Colonel Marshall, with three companies of the Seventh, & Captain Grant, of the Sixth, charged amid a shower of balls, through the ravine, & put the foe to rout. The contest lasted for an hour & a half. The number actually engaged on each side was about 800, many of our men being held in camp in reserve. Our loss was four killed & between forty & fifty wounded, among the wounded was Major Welch, who was shot in the leg early in the fight while bravely leading his men forward. The command then devolved upon Lieutenant Olin, who distinguished himself by his gallant conduct.

The Third Regiment (this regiment was surrendered by its officers at Murfreesborough, during the Civil War) & the Renville Rangers, under Captain James Gorman, bore the brunt of the fray, & sustained most of the losses. A small body of the enemy threatened another portion of the camp, but were successfully repelled by Major McLaren & Captain Harvey B. Wilson.

Other day one of Sibley's scouts, took with his own hand two horses from the enemy, & slew their riders. He was often in their midst, & so far in advance of our men that they fired many shots at him, in the belief that he was one of the foe. No person on the field compared with him in the exhibition of reckless bravery.

Battle of Wood Lake.

Had the Indians been a unit in their feelings the battle would have continued much longer, but the Upper Indians, as soon as they found the day was going against them, abandoned the field, & were followed by the others.

Fifteen Indians were found upon the battle field, & a wounded one brought in as a prisoner.

After burying our dead & remaining one day at Wood Lake, we marched to the Indian camp near Lac-qui Parle.

Battle of Wood Lake.

Wall, O. Garnett
 Recollections
 of the Sioux
 Massacre
 (1909)

pp. 135-139

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19

Colonel Sibley, having overcome as far as possible the defects of equipment, provisions & means of transportation, just one month from the day of the outbreak, or on September 18th, the march was taken up for an offensive campaign, the entire force moving down to & across the Minnesota River by ferry, a mile from Fort Ridgely. The command proceeded with great caution up the west side of the Minnesota, camping below the Redwood Agency on the afternoon of the second day. The fifth day out, the 22nd of September, Wood Lake was reached, a shallow body of water about two miles from the Yellow Medicine Agency. The following morning, there being no signs of a forward movement, a party of the Third Minnesota started with teams on a foraging expedition, & had proceeded nearly a mile in the direction of Yellow Medicine when they were fiercely attacked by a large force of Indians. Major Welch, commanding the Third, hastened with his remnant of a regiment, about 270 men in all, to the rescue of the foraging party, & became hotly engaged. The fighting Renville Rangers could not keep out, & were soon in the midst of the conflict. But all this was unauthorized, & instead of supporting Welch, he was ordered to fall back to camp. Welch, reluctantly yielding under orders, was hotly pressed by the exultant savages, & sustained serious loss

in the retrograde movement, himself receiving a broken leg. In this enforced retreat, made amid bitter curses on the part of the soldiers, it was necessary to cross a small creek, which flowed through a narrow, deep ravine. Taking advantage of this confusing hindrance, the Indians poured in a merciless fire, & it was here Welch received his serious wound, & that many of his men were killed or wounded, but the men assisted by the Renville Rangers, were able to save their wounded from falling into the hands of the Indians.

At last the Sixth & Seventh Minnesota men, were put into action, with their fighting spirit at fever heat. Lieutenant Colonel William R. Marshall, with his five companies of the Seventh, joined the Third & Renville Rangers in a gallant charge that sent the enemy flying. The Sixth & the artillery rendered effective assistance at various points, once the order was given, & all combined, gallantly passed the battle of Wood Lake over to history with victory complete.

The march from Wood Lake was resumed on the 25th, a day having been spent on the scene of the battle to bury the dead & study the movements of the enemy. On Friday, September 26th, the command reached the Indian camp nearly opposite the point at which the Chippewa enters the Minnesota River. The friendly Indians had secured

possession of the white captives (about 250 in number) taken by Little Crow during the massacre, the warrior chief now finding his time taken up with the serious matter of self preservation. The captives had suffered agonies indescribable & indignities revolting & unspeakable, by the side of which death would have been merciful. The sound of cannon at Wood Lake, to them as sweet as æolian strains, told of the near approach of their deliverers, & gave them a new interest in life, yet, the nearer deliverance came the greater became the danger that the whole captive mass would be butchered. The red-handed assassins among the Indians were determined this should be done. The brave men among them, the "friendly Indians", who would hazard their own existence in the final struggle to save the captives, were favored by the anxiety of those who had blotted out a thousand lives, to escape to places of personal safety. This was indeed a strong factor in saving from annihilation the helpless captives. They were thwarted only by the courageous Paul who had the moral support of Standing Buffalo & other influential leaders, & who would have fought desperately had the final issue been forced. The main body of Indians who had instigated & prosecuted the war on the whites, having pushed northward for personal safety, Col. Sibley rode into & took possession of the Indian camps & the captives, who were overwhelmed & prostrated when the

hour of their deliverance finally came.

Ballberg -
War levy of
the Sioux
pp. 95-97

Battle of Wood Lake

After the battle of Birch Coulee, the survivors of the burial expedition were taken back to Fort Ridgely. General Sibley & his men had had another proof that hostilities with the warriors were not yet at an end.

Upon their return to the Fort, Sibley & his men began earnest preparations for a march into the heart of the Indian country. Exchanged prisoners from the Civil War front were on their way to reinforce the large body of militia who by this time had become quite well versed in the tactics of an Indian War. On the 18th of September the expedition set out upon the Lac qui Parle trail for the Yellow Medicine country.

During the time of these preparations, the scouts had made several trips into the interior with the hope of meeting some of the friendly Indians. These attempts had been unsuccessful while their own hazards were multiplied, & they decided to wait until the main body of the troops could follow up. They were engaged to advance ahead of the columns of Sibley, & take notice of any activity of the Indians either to the right or left. This was to prevent a surprise attack upon the long column of soldiers & train of provisions that spread out for miles along the historic trail.

At Birch Coulee, Little Crow had intimated that they would meet the soldiers in battle in the region of the Yellow Medicine to decide the issue between them.

Battle of Wood Lake

It took some time for the movement of the troops & provisions, but finally they reached the vicinity of the Yellow Medicine. They pitched camp at Wood Lake for the night & looked forward to an encounter with Little Crow the following day. The scouts had reported Indians here & there observing the movements of the troops, & General Sibley was well aware that they were watched by day & night. The camp ground at Wood Lake afforded excellent facilities for water & grazing & all were pleased to get every advantage this afforded before the tussle with the warriors.

On the morning of September 23rd, scouts were bringing in news that larger bodies of Indians had been seen at various places in the neighborhood.

Several of General Sibley's men, on a foraging expedition, wandered without orders some distance away from the camp & unexpectedly came upon a large body of savages. This opened prematurely for both Little Crow & Sibley, the battle of Wood Lake. The struggle was short but severe. When the intense encounter was over that day, the warriors were routed by the invincible militia of Sibley. The defeat was disastrous for Little Crow. No longer was it possible for him to hold his people in line. Great dissension had broken out before, & now that his cause was lost, even those who had been forced into his columns withdrew. Under the flag of truce Sibley again took up communication with the wily chief (Little Crow), but the terms offered were not accepted.

Battle of Wood Lake.

After the battle of Wood Lake, Sibley displayed much prudence in not marching in upon the Indian camps. If he had done this there is no question but that all the captives of Little Brown would have been killed. Chief Wabasha sent a note to Sibley, wherein he asked for protection, & assured him that the friendly Indians would do all in their power to save the captives, if he would deal with them in a generous way. In a return message Sibley stated that if the friendly Indians would choose a spot where the prisoners could be released, he would do everything in his power to protect them from the fury of the disappointed warriors.

Several days later there was great joy in General Sibley's camp when the important message reached him that all the captives had been gathered for release by friendly Indians & were at that time concentrated in their camp, with an invitation to come forward & take charge of them.

General Sibley advanced immediately with officers & scouts close about him, & a scene was enacted which had a far-reaching effect upon the future history of Minnesota & the fate of the Sioux Indians.