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Papers.

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P. 456

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

Birch Coulee township organized April 2, 1867, & its former village, platted in June, 1866, but burned in 1871, were named for their small stream "Coulee" is a French word meaning the bed of the stream, even if dry, when deep & having inclined sides. The original name of the stream in the coulee was La Croix creek, but the vicinity was known from the early days as Birch Coulee, & this was finally corrupted to Birch Coulee, now the official name of the township. (History of this county, 1916, p. 1290) This name was translated from Tampa creek of the Sioux, as it was mapped by Nicollet, referring to its many trees of the paper or canoe birch, which in this vicinity reaches the southwest limit of its geographic range.

M. H. S. C.
Vol. 15, pp 358,
359,

Let us note that the Sioux were prairie Indians & there is no record of their selecting a battle ground in timber. Birch Coulee & Wood Lake were fought on the prairie. The opening tragedy of Birch Coulee is a sample of what Captain Strout might have met had he camped in the open prairie.

M. H. S. C.
Vol. X, part II
p. 815

At Birch Coulee on Tuesday, September 2nd, the attacking force of Indians was about 400; the defenders only about 150. During Tuesday night the Indians were reinforced by about 500; but the determined resistance of the day before, & the approach of relieving parties, prevented any serious attack after such reinforcement. There were no non-combatants. The whites lost twenty-three killed & forty-five wounded. Captain Hiram P. Grant, commanded in that battle.

p. 602,
1862.

It was now reported that many soldiers had got together at Fort Ridgely, & Little Crow with about four hundred men started for the Redwood Agency. About this time a detachment of soldiers had been to the Redwood Agency, & on their return camped at Birch Coulee. They were

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

attacked that night by this party & were fighting until day light. During that fight a mixed-blood ran out of the soldiers camp, but was killed as soon as he got among the Indians, after that a large party of soldiers came from Fort Ridgely, which stopped the fighting, as we were told.

Some who had been at that battle said they thought they recognized Major Brown's voice, & it caused me to think much, for we had his wife & children with us. I then went to our soldiers lodge, and, taking my place there, said that as it had been reported that many had been killed at the battle of Birch Coulee, we ought to send a party to investigate & find out, if possible, about how many were killed. My reason for this was that I wanted to come to some conclusion as to whether Major Brown was dead or alive. Two were then selected & sent to investigate the battle ground of Birch Coulee.

Our men came back the next day. They reported that they had been to the battle ground, & there were more than ten graves, but that they could tell nothing about how many were buried in each grave.

The Indians were repulsed at New Ulm by the forces under Colonel Flandreau; at Fort Ridgely, & at Birch Coulee successfully, & finally completely beaten in the decisive battle of Wood Lake, on September 23rd, by General Sibley.

Four or five of our best scouts were sent across the valley to follow the movements of the soldiers, creeping across the prairie like so many ants. It was near sundown, & we knew they would soon go into camp, & we thought the camping ground would be somewhere on the Birch Coulee, where there was wood & water. The scouts followed the soldiers carefully,

M. H. S. Co.
Vol. III.
page 280.
1862

M. H. S. Co.
Vol. 6
pp. 393, 394

(Chief Big Eagles' story of the Sioux Outbreak of 1862)

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

& a little after sundown returned with the information that they had gone into camp near the head of Birch Coulee. At this time we did not know there were two companies there. We thought the company of mounted men (Capt. Anderson's) was all, & that there were not more than seventy-five men.

It was concluded to surround the camp that night & attack it at daylight. We felt sure we could capture it, & that 200 men would be enough for the undertaking. So about that number was selected. Nearly all the Indians had double-barreled shotguns & we loaded them with buckshot & large bullets. After dark we started, crossed the river & valley, went up the bluffs & on the prairie, & soon we saw the white tents & wagons of the camp. I led my men up from the west through the grass & took up a position 200 yards from the camp behind a small knoll or elevation. Red Legs took his men into the coulee east of the camp. Mankato (Blue Earth) had some of his men in the coulee & some on the prairie.

Just at dawn the fight began. It continued all day & the following night until late the next morning. Owing to the white men's way of fighting they lost many men. The white men stood up and exposed themselves at first, but at last they learned to keep quiet. We could crawl through the grass & into the coulee & get water when we wanted it, & after a few hours our women crossed the river & came up near the bluff & cooked for us, & we could go back & eat & then return to the fight. I only saw two dead Indians, & I never heard that any more were killed. We had several men wounded, but none very badly. I do not remember that we got any re-enforcements that day. If we got any, they must have come up the coulee & I did not see them.

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

About the middle of the afternoon our men became much dissatisfied at the slowness of the fight, & the stubbornness of the whites, & the word was passed around the lines to get ready to charge the camp. We did not know that Major J. E. Brown was there; if we had, I think some of our men would have charged any how, for they wanted him out of the way. (Some years ago I saw Captain Grant in St. Paul & he told me he was in command of the camp at Birch Coulee.)

Just as we were about to charge word came that a large number of mounted soldiers were coming up from the east toward Fort Ridgely. Mankato at once took some men (about fifty) from the coulee & went out to meet them. Mankato floundered his men around so, & all the Indians in the coulee kept up a noise, & at last the whites began to fall back, & they retreated about two miles and began to dig breastworks. Mankato followed them & left about thirty (30) men to watch them, & returned to the fight at the coulee with the rest.

The next morning General Sibley came with a very large force & drove us away from the field. Those of us who were on the prairie went back to the westward & on down the valley. Those in the coulee went down back southward to where their horses were, & then mounted & rode westward across the prairie about a mile south of the battlefield. We then went back across the river to our camps in the old villages, & then on up the river to the Yellow Medicine & the mouth of the Chippewa, where Little Crow joined us.

For some time after the fight at Birch Coulee the greater part of the Indians remained in the camps about the Yellow Medicine & the mouth of the Chippewa.

The Minnesota
State Park &
Recreational
Area Plan

1939

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

Birch Coulee State Memorial Park is situated two miles north of Morton in Renville County, where on September 2, 1862, one of the principal battles of the Sioux outbreak was fought. A portion of the area was purchased by the state in 1889 & later a gift increased the area to eighty-four acres. The park is divided into two areas, the upper fifty acres, comprising the battle field & separated by a coulee from the lower area, which is being developed for picnicking, because of a fine stand of deciduous trees. The upper section has been set aside as a memorial cemetery for war veterans, but except for one grave in the southeast corner & a narrow roadway, is a solid field of alfalfa.

Birch Coulee is chiefly valued as a historical area, but it is also an important day-use area for local communities, particularly for picnicking purposes. On state-owned property, but some two miles from the park, are two granite monuments, one erected by the state in 1894, commemorating the battle of Birch Coulee, the other privately built, honoring six Sioux Indians, who remained friendly to the white during the Uprising of 1862.

M. N. S. C.

Vol. IX

pp. 396, 397

Cause of
Indian Massacre
of 1862

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee.

Little Crow's village was situated ^{across the Minnesota} about ~~six~~ ^{nine} miles from the valley of Beaver creek, near its opening into the wide Minnesota river valley. His warriors numbered about eight hundred. These Indians, with their families, by reason of the scarcity of buffaloes & other wild game, were largely dependent upon their annuities. They were supplied with provisions from the commissary stores at the Lower Sioux Indian Agency, near Little Crow's village; & they also received their annuities from the agent at this point. Little Crow was all the time, working upon his warriors in such a manner as to keep them excited & bloodthirsty.

Reports came that some of the Indians had made a raid upon the commissary stores at the Upper Agency; but little attention was paid to it, thinking it only a rumor.

The annuity was to have been paid in June; but, owing to the civil war that was then raging between the United & Confederate States, the money was delayed. The Indians were compelled to ward off starvation by digging roots for food. Many of the Indians had pawned their guns for provisions. This manner of dealing with the white man was not satisfactory to them; & especially to be compelled thus to part with their guns was very hard.

Knowing the treachery of the Indians, none of us (the settlers) should have been surprised when this desperate outbreak overwhelmed us; & yet, when the eighteenth day of August, 1862, came, with its cloudless sky, not one of the scattered settlers was prepared for the carnage & death which these cunning plotters designed for them. So secretly had each Indian performed his allotted part in the working up of this

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee,
terrible tragedy in which they were to be the heartless
actors & we the helpless victims.

Many attempts have been made to give the
causes of that Sioux outbreak in 1862. Whatever
were the grievances of the Sioux, although many &
great, there was no justifiable cause for that
uprising & indiscriminate massacre of the in-
nocent white settlers, men, women & children
without mercy. Yet we cannot afford to ignore
the fact that there was much at that time, as
there had been for years before in the management
of Indian affairs, that was exasperating to the
Indians & increasingly provoking & vexatious to
them.

It had been previously announced to them,
in 1861, in council at Yellow Medicine Agency, Minnesota,
that the "Great Father (the President) at Washington was to
make them all very glad."

They had already received their annuities for
that year, but were told that the government would
give them a further bounty in the autumn. Some of
the Indians were pleased with this offer, but others
demurred & complained to the general superintendent,
asking him, "Where is the promised extra gift to come
from?" The superintendent could not or would not
tell them, only that "it was to be great & make them
very glad."

By such words the four thousand upper
Sioux were encouraged to expect great things. After
all, the promised "great gift" was only \$10,000, instead
of \$20,000 that had been expected. When distributed
among so many it would be only about \$2.50 to each
one of them. To say the least, that was a great mis-
take; for more than four thousand disappointed &
chagrined Indians had to be fed all that long & severe

M. H. S. C.
Vol. IX

pp. 432-435

(Causes of
the Outbreak)
(1862)

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

The first attack, in force, began at the Lower Sioux Agency, on the Yellow Medicine reservation, about twelve miles above Fort Riggely, where the hostile Sioux murdered or frightened away the whites, robbed & plundered the homes, warehouses & stores, & then burned these buildings. This they did all the way up on both sides of the Minnesota river as far as Lac qui Parle.

The settlers at that season of the year were generally engaged in harvesting their crops, all unarmed & totally unprepared for that awful crisis, when they were suddenly stricken with terror indescribable. Many of them were shot down in their fields & dooryards. Their families were horribly murdered or taken captives, by the hostile Indian warriors, & some of them suffered worse than death.

Sudden & unexpected as was the outbreak, yet some of the white people, & some of the friendly & loyal Indians, were enabled to make their escape from the impending fury of the hostile savages. Many were overtaken & murdered, while attempting to reach some place of refuge & safety.

Various estimates have been made of the number of white people killed by the hostile Sioux in 1862. The most probable number, all told, was not far from five hundred, including the soldiers who fell in the battles at the Lower Agency, New Ulm, Birch Coulee & Wood Lake.

That entire portion of the upper Minnesota valley, including the whole or large parts of some fifteen or twenty counties of our state, was fearfully desolated, & for the time almost entirely depopulated. Nor has it yet, in 1899, fully recovered.

check

p. 446

1862

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

The mission stations, the United States Indian agencies, churches & schools, were all broken up, the buildings were burned, & the people were either murdered or frightened away. Some of the women & children were taken captive by the hostile Sioux, & while in captivity were in constant fear of death.

Very few, if any, of the Christian Sioux, who were then connected with the Presbyterian mission churches among them, were found guilty of participating in that outbreak & the murder of the white settlers in Minnesota. And it is worthy of record here that all the white people who were rescued & saved alive were directly or indirectly saved by the Christian Indians, who in so doing greatly jeopardized their own lives & those of their families.

A promising event is the recent organization of the Renville County Birch Coulee Memorial Association. A great Memorial Day celebration was held at the Birch Coulee State Park, with Mr. Robert K. Boyd of Eau Claire, an old soldier who participated in the battle, & Mr. Willoughby M. Babcock, curator of the museum for the Minnesota Historical Society among the speakers.

In a pamphlet entitled *Two Indian Battles* Mr. Robert K. Boyd has attempted the vindication of two men whose military careers have been subjects of dispute for many years. Of the controversy that has raged since 1862 over the command at Birch Coulee, however, he is able to speak with some authority, for he took part in the struggle & is the author of a pamphlet describing it. His conviction is clear that Captain Merim P. Grant & not Joseph R. Brown was in charge of the

Minn. History
Vol. 7, p. 300

Sept. 1926

Minn. History
Vol. 9, p. 304-
305.

Boyd states that
Capt. Grant com-
manded the burial
party.

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

troops whose camp was attacked by the Sioux on September 2, 1862; & his implication is strong that the primary responsibility for the disaster belongs to Colonel Henry H. Sibley, who sent out the expedition.

Minn. Hist.
Vol. 8, p. 107
205,

Under the heading of "Documents" in the North Dakota Historical Quarterly, are published several letters by a Civil War soldier, Levi Carr. The first is dated at Fort Ridgely on June 30, 1862; the second & third are from the same place on October 26 & September 11, 1862, & are printed in the order indicated. In the letter of October 26, Carr wrote of the battle of Birch Coulee, "The first fight that we had with the redskins was about 12 miles above the fork of the Minnesota river. There were 44 of our company & the captain making a total of 45 & 21 got back alive. That was surely a great slaughter. I have never heard balls whistle so in my life before & to hear the horrid yells of the savages thru the woods would make your blood run cold. But the next time we gave them hell for we were at the fort & we had a little better chance.

Among the measures before the 1927 legislature that failed to become laws were the following: a bill for the state to acquire eighty acres of land at Birch Coulee, the site of the famous Indian battle in 1862, & thus to broaden the relatively small piece of ground owned in that vicinity by the state at present into an imposing park to be named "Birch Coulee Battle Field State Memorial Park," a bill to establish a "Sam Brown Memorial Park" at Brown's Valley.

Minn. History
Vol. 10, p. 219
1929

Battle of Birch Cooley or Birch Coulee

A member of laws passed by the 1929 legislature relate to the preservation & marking of historic sites in the state. An act to establish the Birch Cooley Battle Field State Memorial Park provides that the site in Renville County where one of the fiercest conflicts of the Sioux War took place shall be set aside as a "state memorial park in commemoration of the heroic deeds & sacrifices of Minnesota's pioneer citizens & her soldiers & sailors of all wars."

Minn. History
Vol. 12
297-301
(By Robert K.
Boyd)

The object of this sketch is to give accounts of a military expedition sent into the region of the Sioux Outbreak to bury the bodies of victims of the massacre & of the battle of which the members of this expedition participated at Birch Cooley.

Composing this expedition, which was sent out by Colonel Sibley were; an infantry company commanded by Captain Grant, a burial party of twenty men detailed from his regiment, a small cavalry force of newly enlisted men under Captain Joseph Anderson, Major Thomas J. Galbraith & his half-breed scouts, & some volunteers, citizens, teamsters & others, and Major Joseph R. Brown, a former Indian agent who had spent his life on the frontier. The writer, then a boy of seventeen, was one of the burial party.

We started in the forenoon of August 31, thirteen days after the beginning of the Sioux Outbreak & the battle of Redwood Ferry, & marched about 12 miles that day, burying a number of bodies & making our first camp at the place where Birch Cooley reaches the Minnesota Valley, about

Battle of Birch Cooley or Birch Coulee
a mile from the ferry

Grant, after burying the bodies at the battle ground, went with his force up the north side of the river valley. He then buried some victims of the massacre near Beaver Creek & made camp near the upper range of timber on Birch Cooley, where Brown & Anderson, (who had taken a party or force across the Minnesota River to bury the victims at the agency on the south bank) party joined them & all had a good supper.

On this expedition there was no occasion for Grant to give orders to Brown nor for Brown to give orders to Grant, the work of each being entirely different from that of the other.

The battle, which commenced at this camp ground at break of day on Tuesday, September 2, was a very serious disaster, twenty-three men being killed or mortally wounded & a large number disabled.

There had been no disputes, arguments, or lack of harmony among the officers or among the men up to the close of the battle, but sometime later a disagreement arose as to who was in official command of the expedition. Grant claimed that Sibley sent him into the field as commander, but Sibley held that Brown was in command, & all official reports were made accordingly. Throughout his life, Grant claimed that he was in undisputed command at Birch Cooley, but that he was unjustly treated, since Brown gave him no orders & was in no sense the commander.

When a monument was erected at Morlan to commemorate the battle, it was inscribed with a statement Captain Grant was in command, while Major Brown's name appeared simply as "J. R. Brown." There is a strong sentiment in favor of moving the monument to the battle-ground site, where it rightfully belongs. The site is now included in a public park, about eighty acres in extent. If the monument is moved, I think that because of the inscription the old dispute will be revived.

I do not believe that Grant was willfully in the wrong. Neither do I think that Brown or any of his associates would knowingly lend themselves to a conspiracy to rob Grant of his rightful position as an officer. When Sibley sent out the expedition it is likely that he failed to define Grant's position clearly, or Grant may have misunderstood Sibley & gone away with a wrong impression - such mistakes occur in every rank of life.

I only knew of Grant & the officers of his company, & knew nothing of Brown. At our first camp Grant was busy riding around & giving directions. At the second camp most of the work was done before the Brown and Anderson party joined us; & I only know that Brown was with us after the battle, when I heard that he was wounded.

The officers were all close friends, & during the battle they worked in harmony & each did his best. From the time when they left Fort Ridgely up to the night before the battle they had worked apart,

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee
& the question of who was in official command.
probably had not entered their minds.

Then the only thing to be considered is the monument, & my views on this subject can be given in a very few words. The name of Grant as commander should be erased, & the inscription should be changed to read that the expedition was under the joint leadership of Brown & Grant. Such a statement will not reflect on the reputation of any man living or dead.

The Minnesota
Massacre - 1862

By G. P. Connolly
who fought in
the Civil War &
the Indian Massacre

The great War of the Rebellion was on & many of the sons were in the Union Army at the front. In addition, the Sioux Indian outbreak occurred & troops were hurriedly sent to the frontier. Company A, Sixth Minnesota Infantry, & detachments from other companies were sent out to bury the victims of the Indians. This duty performed, they rested from their labors & in an unguarded hour, they, too, were surrounded by the victorious Indians & suffered greatly in killed & wounded at Birch Coulee, Minnesota, on September 2 & 3, 1862. The men who gave up their lives at this historic place, have been remembered by the state in the erection of a beautiful monument to their memory & the names inscribed thereon are as follows. Sergeants John Collyer, Wm Irvine; corporals Wm M. Cobb, and Private Cornelius Boyle, George Coulter, Chauncey King, Henry Rollean, Wm Russell & Henry Whetler, all of Company A, Sixth Minnesota; Sergeant Benj. S. Terry, of Company B, Sixth Minnesota; & Sergeant Robert Baxter & corporal Richard Gibbons, of the Mounted Rangers.

But I will digress for a time & look into the causes leading up to this cruel Sioux war that cost so many lives & so much treasure. There is a great diversity of opinion on this question; but in the abstract, & before we enter upon the active campaign against them, let

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

us look at it & see if the blame does not to a great extent rest more with the government than it does with these people. The Indians were innocent of the white man's avaricious propensities & the practice of "give & take" (& generally more take than give) was early inaugurated by the sailors of Columbus & the nefarious practice has been played by a certain class of Americans ever since. Soon their suspicions were aroused & friendly intercourse gave place to wars of extermination. The Indian began to look upon the white man as his natural enemy. Soon after American Independence had been declared, the Indians became the wards of the nation. The government, instead of treating them as wards & children, has ^{uniformly} allowed them to settle their own disputes in their own peculiar & savage way.

A writer says: "If they are wards of the government, why not take them under the strong arm of the law & deal with them as with others who break the law. Make an effort to civilize them. Send missionaries among them instead of thieving traders, implements of peace, rather than weapons of war; Bibles instead of scalping knives; make an effort to Christianize instead of encouraging them in their savagery & laziness."

There is not a sensible, unprejudiced man in America to-day, but knows that the broken treaties & dishonest dealing with the Indians are a disgrace to this nation; & the impress of injustice is deeply & justly engraven upon the savage mind. The lesson taught by observation was that lying was no disgrace, adultery no sin, & theft no crime. This they learned from educated white men who had been sent to them as the representatives of the government, & these educated gentlemen(?) looked upon the Indian as common property, & to filch him of his money by

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

dishonest practices, a pleasant pastime.

The Indians were circumscribed in their hunting grounds by the onward march of civilization which crowded them on every side & their only possible hope from starvation, was in the fidelity with which a great nation kept its pledges. 'Tis true, money was appropriated by the government for this purpose, but it is equally true that gamblers & thieving traders set up fictitious claims & the Indians came out in debt & their poor families were left to starve. Hungry, exasperated & utterly powerless to help themselves, they resolved on savage vengeance when the propitious time arrived.

"The villainy you teach me I will execute," became a living bloody issue. This did not alone apply to the Sioux nation, but to the Chippewas as well. These people have always been friends of the whites, & have uniformly counselled peace; but broken pledges & impositions filled the friendly ones with sorrow, & the others with anger. Our Indian system has presented a fat field so long as these wards of the nation submitted to being fleeced by unprincipled agents & their gambling friends, but at last the poor Indian is aroused to the enormity of the imposition & the innocent whites had to suffer.

The Sioux warriors possess minds of a high order & can reason with a correctness that would astonish many of our so-called statesmen, yet they are called savages & are associated in our minds with tomahawks & scalping knives.

Shall we, then, mercilessly condemn the poor Indians because, driven from pillar to post, with the government pushing in front & hostile tribes & starvation in their rear, they have in vain striven for a bare

Battle of Birch Landing or Birch Coulee
existence? Whole families have starved while the
fathers were away on their hunt for game.

America, as she listens to the dying wail
of the red man, driven from the forest of his child-
hood, cannot afford to throw stones; but rather
let her redeem her broken pledges to these helpless,
benighted, savage children, & grant them the pro-
tection they have the right to expect, nay, demand.
Let the government make amends, & in the future
mete out to the dishonest agent such a measure
of punishment as will strike terror to him & re-
store the confidence of the Indians who think they
have been unjustly dealt with.

A gambler could kill an Indian & all he
had to fear was an Indian's vengeance (for the
civil law never took cognizance of the crime); but
if an Indian, filled with ruin, remorse & revenge,
killed a gambler, he was punished to the full ex-
tent of the law. In this one thing the injustice
was so apparent that even an Indian could
see it; & he made up his mind that when the time
came he would even up the account.

The provisions of the treaties for per-
iodical money payments, although carried out
with substantial honesty, failed to fulfill the
exaggerated expectations of the Indians, & these
matters of irritation added fuel to the fire of
hostility. Nothing special has been discovered
to have taken place other than the general dissat-
isfaction referred to, to which the outbreak of 1862
can be immediately attributed. This outbreak
was charged to emissaries from the Confederate
of the South, but there was no foundation for
these allegations. The main reason was that the

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

Indians were hungry & angry; they had become restless & busy-bodies among them had instilled within them the idea that the great war in the South was drawing off able-bodied men & leaving the women & children at home helpless. Some of the ambitious chiefs thought it a good opportunity to regain their lost country & exalt themselves in the eyes of their people. The most ambitious of the lot was Little Crow. After the battles of Birch Coulee & Wood Lake, in September, 1862, he deserted his warriors, & was discovered one day in the settlements picking berries upon which to subsist. Refusing to surrender, he was shot, & in his death the whites were relieved of an implacable foe, & the Indians deprived of an intrepid & daring leader.

When news of the murders at Acton, on the 17th of August reached the Indians at the Upper Agency on the 18th, open hostilities were at once commenced & the whites & traders were indiscriminately murdered. George Spencer was the only white man in the stores who escaped with his life, although he was twice wounded. Similar events occurred at the Lower Agency on the same day, when nearly all the traders were butchered. All the buildings at both agencies were destroyed, but such property as was valuable to the Indians was carried off.

After having massacred the people at the agencies, the Indians at once sent out marauding parties in all directions & covered the country from the northeast as far as Glenroe, Hutchinson, & St. Peter, Minnesota, & as far south as Spirit Lake, Iowa. In their trail was to be found their deadly work of murder & devastation, for at least one thousand men, women & children were found brutally butchered, houses burned, & beautiful farms laid waste. The settlers, being accustomed to the friendly visit of these Indians, were taken completely unawares & were given no opportunity for defense.

(conflicting)
(as to number)

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

Lower Agency in Redwood County, while the Upper Agency was in Yellow Medicine County.

Little Crow was an Indian of no mean ability. He was the commander-in-chief of the hostile tribes, & wielded a powerful influence among all the tribes of this great Sioux Nation. He was a powerful man, & felt his lordly position; was confident of final success, & very defiant at the outset.

Governor Sibley, the hero of these Indian campaigns was commissioned by Governor Ramsey as Colonel of Volunteers, & assigned to the command of the expedition to protect the panic-stricken people & liberate the captives. He was selected because he had spent many years of his life among the Indians as a trader, he spoke their language, he knew them personally, & knew their characteristics. He knew the Indians, & they knew him & respected him.

Colonel Sibley with his staff & companies A, B, & E. of the Sixth Minnesota Infantry left Fort Snelling to relieve Fort Ridgely, which was then in a state of siege. Before the Fort was reached the Indians took alarm & suddenly retreated upon our approach, after having done all possible damage to men & property.

Burial party
sent out

A small command ^{numbering 153 including infantry, cavalry & teamsters} was organized comprising Company A, of the Sixth Minnesota, together with two men each from the other companies to accompany a burial party, with instructions to properly bury all bodies, and, if possible to ascertain the fate of Captain Marsh & his thirty men, who had gone out to intercept the Indians in the direction of the Lower Sioux Agency, at the Redwood Crossing.

who com-
manded

The expedition was under the ^{immediate} command of Captain H. P. Grant, of Company A. Major Joseph R. Brown, better known as "Old Joe Brown" was in charge.

Battle of Birch Coolie or Birch Coulee of the scouts. He had a cool head, but no fighting qualities; had been an Indian trader for years, raised an Indian family, & knew a great deal about Indian signs & customs. In this particular case, however, the Indians fooled Joe.

Burial of
the massacred
& the men of
Capt. March's
command.
1st day out

2nd day out

The first day out we found & buried about fifty citizens, & at night went into camp in the river bottom near Redwood Crossing. The next morning we found Captain March & his comrades, but none of them answered to "roll-call". Nearly all had been scalped, & were minus guns & ammunition. We buried the soldiers side by side, with their captain at their head, & marked the place by a huge cross.

We went into camp the second night near Birch Coolie, & sixteen miles distant from Fort Ridgely. Birch Coolie is a deep gorge running north & south in Redwood county. What was then a bleak prairie is now a beautiful farming community, & Birch Coolie a thriving village.

Joe Brown's
assurance to
the soldiers.

Old Joe (Major Brown) said: "Boys, go to sleep now & rest; you are as safe as you would be in your mother's house; there is not an Indian within fifty miles of you." At that very moment five hundred Indians were in the immediate vicinity watching us, waiting for the proper time to attack, which, with the Indians, is about four o'clock in the morning.

Soon the soldiers slept, little dreaming that the lurking enemy & death were so near. The awakening to some was in eternity.

The battle of Birch Coolie fought September 24th, 1862, has never taken its proper place in history, but with the exception of Little Big Horn, in 1876, it was the hottest & the most desperate battle fought during the war.

written by
a member
of Company H
6th Minn. Inf.

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee
of the Rebellion or any of our Indian wars. In com-
parison to the number of men & horses engaged (155 men
& 96 horses), I know of no conflict, the one above re-
ferred to excepted; where the casualties were as
great as they were here.

The Indian custom is to make an attack about
four o'clock in the morning, so this relief (the guards) had been
especially cautioned, & soon after the guard was placed
one of them thought he saw something moving in the grass.
It proved to be an Indian, & they were slowly moving in ~~up~~
~~on~~ us, their intention being to shoot the pickets with
arrows, & as noiselessly as possible push in & destroy
us in our confusion. The sentinel fired at the moving
object, & instantly our camp was encircled by fire and
smoke from the guns of five hundred Indians, who
had hemmed us in. The fire was returned by the pickets
as they retreated to the camp, & although there necessarily
was confusion, there was no panic. Quicker than I
can write we were out, musket in hand. We soon broke
for the wagons, however, which were formed in a circle
about our tents, & this afforded us some little shelter.

It is a wonder that we were not all de-
stroyed amid the confusion that naturally would follow,
but we had cool heads among us, & none were cooler
than Old Joe Brown (Major Brown) & Captain W. P. Grant, of
Company H, who was immediate command.

Location of
camp.

The camp was miserably located, being
commanded by the deep ravine on one side & by a mound
on the other, so that the Indians were well protected
from our fire. Had the instructions given by General
Sibbey been followed, which were ~~to~~ always to encamp
in open & level prairie, there would have been no such
destruction of valuable lives, but the spot was chosen
for our camp because it was near wood & water,
& the Indians were supposed to be fifty miles away.

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

A brisk fire was opened by the boys, & soon the cartridge boxes were being depleted. Ammunition was called for, & upon opening a box, to our dismay we found it to be of too large a calibre. In loading up our ammunition a mistake had been made, & we found ourselves in this unfortunate dilemma. We went to work cutting the large bullets down, but this was a slow & unsatisfactory process. We used jack-knives, spoons, bayonets, & the one shovel & pick we could find to dig our intrenchments with. In time we had very good pits dug, & with the assistance of the dead bodies of our horses had ourselves tolerably well protected.

With the wounded horses rearing & plunging, the men groaning & calling for help, the hurried commands, & the unearthly yells of the Indians about us, this baptismal fire was trying to the souls of raw recruits, as most of us were. We were encircled by fire & smoke, the bullets were doing their deadly work, & it really seemed as though no man could escape death.

Upon the first fire of the Indians two men fled from the camp, one a citizen, who was with us, & the other a soldier. The citizen we found afterward on the prairie, dead. He was the last of his family, for we had buried his wife & two children just the previous day, before going into camp. The soldier, a Swede, returned, but he was so paralyzed with fear that he was like a dead man during all his memorable thirty-six hours, & the poor fellow afterwards succumbed to sickness.

names of those
killed

The word soon went the rounds: "College is dead, Irvine is dead, Baxter, Coulter, Benicke, King & a score of others are dead, & nearly all are wounded."

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

It was only a few minutes after the first fire when we realized all this, & it verily looked as though the little command would be wiped out of existence. During all this terrible fire old Joe Brown walked about seemingly unconcerned, until a bullet went through the back of his neck. He came to the ground as quick as if shot through the heart, for it was a bad wound but with it all he continued to give instructions. Nearly all the damage was done before ten o'clock, for up to that time we found ourselves with sixty killed & wounded, out of 155, & ninety-five horses dead out of ninety-six. The horses saved our little encampment as soon as they fell their bodies formed a good barricade for us, & this & the overturned wagons were our only protection. The day wore on, & all we could do was to assist Surgeon J. W. Daniels with the wounded & keep the Indians at bay. Dr. Daniels proved himself a cool-headed, brave man, never flinching for a moment. Where duty called he was found, & he immortalized himself with the boys.

The great fear of the wounded seemed to be that we would be obliged to abandon them to their fate, since we had no means of transporting the wounded, & their fears were not without foundation, for it looked as though we would be driven from the camp.

The one thing, aside from cowardice on the part of the Indians, that saved us from assault was the fact of our having several half-breed scouts with us, who talked back & forth.

Private James Auger of our company was the spokesman. He was a Canadian Frenchman, but had lived among the Indians, knew them well, & spoke their language, & as he went so would all the other Indians

Battle of Birch Booley or Birch Boulée
& half-breeds who were with us.

The picture of the Battle of Birch Booley, showing the arrangement of the soldiers camp & the position of the Indians will be found ^{on page 119} in a book entitled "The Minnesota Massacre" written by a participant in that battle, A. P. Connolly.

On the second day, at about sunrise (Sept. 3), we discovered a large body of Indians closing up nearer to us, when one of their number, came within twenty rods of us. He was on a white horse, & carried a flag of truce. He held a conversation with Augé, our interpreter, & tried to persuade him to leave us & bring the other half-breeds with him.

Augé then called to the Indians & said: "We want come over to you; we will stay with the soldiers, & if you come we will kill you if we can. You are cowards to kill poor women & children, & if we catch you we will treat you as you treated them."

We felt relieved to know that our half-breeds were loyal. We did not know whether we could trust our half-breeds or not & were instructed to fire on them to kill if they made the slightest move to desert us. Our firing had been heard at Fort Ridgely, sixteen miles away, & the Colonel dispatched two hundred & fifty men, with one howitzer, to our relief.

Just at sunset the second day we saw two horsemen come to the edge of the woods across the Booley, but the Indians also saw them, & chased them back. Colonel McPhail, who was in command of this relief, ordered the howitzer to be fired to give us courage, if the little camp (that the horsemen reported that they saw) proved to be ours. A shout went up at this welcome sound just as the sun went down.

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

Old Joe Brown, who had been disabled early in the day, called out from his tent: "Captain Grant, instruct the men to be watchful; we are in a bad fix; the Indians will hate to lose our scalps, now that they are so near their grasp; give them a few shots occasionally, assure the wounded men that we will not leave them, & keep the pick & shovel busy." We disposed of ourselves for the night as best we could. Every man was on guard & nearly all had two rifles fully charged & bayonets fixed. The watch-word, "wide-awake", went the rounds every few minutes, & there was no sleep during all that live-long night.

Just before midnight the clouds began to gather, & we felt cheered to think we would soon have rain. We were sorely in need of water, for we had not tasted a drop since the night before, & the wounded men were nearly famished with thirst & burning with fever. As the sky darkened Captain Grant called for a volunteer to go to Fort Ridgely for relief. James Auge, now a corporal volunteered to go, & by this act proved himself a truly brave man. The fact of its not being carried out was no fault of his.

The remaining horse was saddled & the corporal had his instructions. He had his foot in the stirrup when the clouds rolled back from the full moon, & it was almost as light as noonday. The Indians, ever on the alert, saw the preparations & opened fire anew upon us, and, long before they ceased, our good horse was pierced by six bullets, & the project was abandoned. At four o'clock the Indians opened up a terrific fire, which they kept up for an hour. We had ourselves so well protected that in this fusillade they killed but one man and wounded another.

We heard nothing of the relief detachment, & as

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

About one o'clock the same day we discerned the glimmer of the polished rifle in the distance. We had no glass, but the anxious eyes strained to see what it was, & the dark outline of a moving mass told us reinforcements were coming. The chiefs, by waving their blankets & shouts, called-off their warriors. They waved their tomahawks, shouted, fired, & finally galloped off on the prairie. Before the main body of the Indians left, however, they rode very close, & gave us several parting volleys. The wounding of a few of our men was all the damage they did at this time.

Right joyful were we when the reinforcements arrived. Colonel Sibley was the first to arrive, & when he rode up to our barricade, & saw the terrible loss of life he looked as though he had lost his best friends. His heart bled at the sight, & the tears he shed spoke volumes. A detail was at once made to bury the dead side by side in a temporary grave, dinner was cooked for the remainder of the command & the wounded were put in ambulances, tents were "struck," & we took up the line of march for Fort Ridgely, which we reach sometime during the night. Our tents had been so completely riddled with bullets that they were condemned as useless, & were finally sent down to Fort Snelling & placed on exhibition for a long time. We had determined to die together, & if ever soldiers stood shoulder to shoulder we did on this bloody spot, where our nerves & courage were taxed to the utmost. We shared our shelter & encouraged one another, & no man shrank from duty. Company A, so nearly wiped out, was ever afterwards considered the "Old Ironsides" of the regiment.

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

The sound of the battle at Birch Coulee was heard early in Sibley's camp at Fort Ridgely. He promptly dispatched a relieving party consisting of three companies of the Sixth Infantry, fifty mounted rangers, & a section of artillery, under the command of Colonel McPhail. McPhail ignorant of the location of Brown's camp, moved his command back of the east branch of the coulee, & sent back to Ridgely for reinforcements.

Upon the arrival of McPhail's message, Sibley at once sent out his whole remaining force of six companies of the Sixth Regiment & two companies of the Seventh, & not long after midnight they came into McPhail's camp.

At daylight they attacked the Sioux, perceiving themselves outnumbered, gave up the attack on Brown's camp & fled.

Maj. Joseph
R. Brown
in command

In the foregoing account Major Brown has been recognized as the person in command of the Birch Coulee detachment, although that distinction has been claimed for another, Captain Hiram P. Grant of Company A, Sixth Minnesota Infantry. Even if documentary evidence were lacking, it might be presumed that Sibley would have selected for the duty his old & trusted chief, (Major Brown) who was particularly qualified by age, experience with the Sioux, & intimate knowledge of the terrain. With such a person available it is not credible that he would have entrusted the control to a young man (Capt. Grant) who had had no experience with frontier life or with Indians, & whose commission as an infantry captain was only a fortnight old. It is both affirmed & denied that Major Brown, being a civilian or merely an aide-de-camp on staff duty, could not really exercise command over the troops & that he did not in fact exercise command. The matter may be dismissed with the reflection that, when

Battle of Birch Coulee, or Birch Coulee
 the unfortunate outcome of the expedition, resulting
 from gross lack of judgment & foresight, is con-
 sidered, one may well wonder why either party to
 the controversy should desire to win its cause.
 Admirable as was the behavior of the men who made
 the gallant defense at Birch Coulee, nobody now
 considers it a victory in any sense. The innate
 cowardice of the Indians alone save the whole
 personnel from massacre.

Folwell's -
 A History of
 Minnesota
 pp. 386-391

The Birch Coulee Monument Controversy.

The Minnesota Legislature of 1893 provided by law for
 the erection of an appropriate monument on "the land on which
 was fought the battle of Birch Coulee," made an appropri-
 ation of \$2,500 for the purpose, & committed the execution of
 the work to seven commissioners named in the act. In the
 spring of 1894 it became known that the commissioners had
 not been pleased to give to the phrase quoted above its
 literal & obvious meaning but had selected a site for the
 monument a mile & three-quarters south of the battle-
 ground & three-fourths of a mile east of the village of
 Morton on the Fair Grounds of the Renville County Agricultural
 Society. Morton lies on the left bank of the Minnesota two
 miles about the mouth of Birch Coulee. Protests were
 soon heard. Later the public was informed that there were six
 reasons which had governed the board in changing the
 location for the monument. The attorney-general, it is said,
 had advised the commissioners that the change of site
 was within their discretion. As no injunction was sued
 for, the monument which was of Rockville granite forty-six
 feet high & of a conventional design, was erected in the
 summer of 1894, & the third day of September was appointed for the

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee dedication

One of the published letters to the press supporting the commissioners in their location of the monument was that of Captain Hiram P. Grant, who signed it as "commanding the forces at Birch Coulee". This called out from Mr. Samuel J. Brown, a son of Major Brown, an elaborate response, in which he marshaled the documentary evidence of his father's right to be recognized as the commander of the expedition. The principal citations were: (1) Colonel Sibley's report of September 4, 1862; (2) Major Brown's report of the same date; (3) Captain Anderson's report to Major Brown, also of the same date; (4) Sibley's letter to his wife, also of the same date; (5) Colonel Glandrau's narrative; (6) Judge Egan's statement; and (7) the accounts of the historians, Mrs. McConkey, Heard, & Neill. All these, if examined, will be found to concur in representing Major Joseph R. Brown as the commander of the expedition. Mr. Brown further asserted that his father was a duly commissioned major in the state troops & that he did in fact command as such, while Captain Grant, not having been mustered in, was technically a civilian. Captain Joseph Anderson declared in a letter to the Pioneer Press that during the whole time that the detachment was out he recognized & obeyed Major Brown as "the rightful & only commander" and that he received no orders from Grant.

To these allegations Captain Grant replied that he had been mustered in as a Captain on August 16, while Brown held no commission entitling him to command & that Brown's Third Regiment of Minnesota Militia had never existed. Major Brown, he said, obeyed his orders just as other civilians did. He remarked that Colonel William R. Marshall in his account of the battle made no mention of Major Brown but spoke of the expedition as being under Grant's command. Grant embodied in his reply three letters in support of his contention. One of them, dated May 25, 1894, was from Colonel William Brooks, who commanded the Sixth Minnesota. Brooks stated that he made the detail of

Who commanded
at the burial
party

Col. Brooks
seeks to verify
who commanded

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Couleé

Captain Grant's company by direction of Colonel Sibley, & that "Captain Hiram P. Grant, of Company A, being the ranking officer, was placed in command of the whole detachment. He received his instructions & orders from me." The second letter, dated June 15, 1894, was from Major Timothy J. Sheehan & was based on his minutes made at that time. He related that on the evening of August 31 he was at headquarters of Colonel Sibley when a detachment was ordered to be detached by Colonel Brooks & placed under the orders of Captain Grant. Major Brown, who was present, requested permission to accompany the force to look after his family, still in the hands of the Indians. In the third letter, which was written to Grant by a company clerk, the statement was made that Major Brown gave no commands during the battle. Grant also noted that General Sibley had made no denial to his claim published in the St. Paul newspapers years before (Pioneer Press, July 16, 1894).

Later Captain Grant declared his willingness that the legislature should make an investigation of his claim & closed by saying: "So help me God, Major Brown did not give me an order."

In 1895, a joint committee of the two houses of the State Legislature in a unanimous report declared that the commissioners (the seven commissioners appointed by the legislature of 1893) had erred in their choice of a site & in inscribing on the monument the name of Captain Grant as commander of the forces. Upon the recommendation of the committee, the Senate & the House passed a bill providing that the adjutant general should have the monument moved onto the land on which the battle of Birch Coulee was "actually fought," & the inscriptions corrected to conform with the truths of history. That said inscription shall show that Major Brown, of the state militia, was in general command of the state's forces & that Captain Hiram P. Grant, of Company A, Sixth Regiment of Minnesota Infantry, & Captain Joseph Anderson, of the "ullen Frontier Guards" (cavalry) were in subordinate commands at & in the battle of Birch Coulee.

Thirty years have passed & the monument still looks out over the Minnesota valley from its sightly bluff near

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

Morton & the inscriptions remain unchanged.

Sibley's in-
tention.

Later studies have brought to light, Sibley's intention to place Major Brown in charge of the expedition seems beyond question. Still, his order for the dispatch of the detachment does not mention Major Brown. Colonel Brooks, who had a military education, may naturally have inferred that, since no commander had been designated, the ranking officer named would have charge & may have so informed Captain Grant. At the same time, it may be presumed that Colonel Sibley, not yet versed in the customs of the service, thought that, as he was sending out merely a burial party, he deemed it unnecessary to name Major Brown in an order for the detail of the military escort. There was no expectation of a battle.

important

As if to remove doubts as to Brown's military status, Colonel Sibley on September 20, 1862, by authority conferred by the Governor of Minnesota, appointed Joseph R. Brown "to be Major to rank as such from the 25th day of August," without assigning him at the time to any particular arm or command of the service.

Birch Coulee battle ground situated north of the Minnesota River while the Wood Lake battleground is situated south of the river.

Map containing location of Birch Coulee & Wood Lake may be found opposite page 392 in Fehrnell's A History of Minnesota.

{	25	Soldiers killed at Redwood Ferry, Capt Marsh's men,
	19	" " at Birch Coulee
	7	" " at Wood Lake

this from a report by Marion P. Satterlee in Satterlee, Victims of the Indian Massacre.

He also states that 357 citizens were killed in the massacre & 90 soldiers killed in the military operations.

Heard's
History of the
Sioux War
1862-63
pages 131-137

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

On Sunday, the last day of August, Captain Grant's company of infantry, seventy men of the Bullin Guard under Captain Anderson, & a detail of citizens & other soldiers, together with seventeen teamsters with teams, numbering in all about one hundred & fifty men, were dispatched, under command of Major Joseph R. Brown, to the Sower Agency, for the purpose of burying the dead, & ascertaining, if possible, the whereabouts of the enemy.

Captain Grant, with the infantry, had interred the dead on the Fort Ridgely side of the Minnesota river, including those at Beaver Creek, & had encamped during the afternoon ^(of Tuesday) on the same side of the river where they were joined in the evening by Major Brown & his detachment.

On Wednesday morning, sentries from Fort Ridgely sent word that they could hear the report of guns in the direction of the agency. Colonel McPhail, with fifty horsemen, Major Mc Laren, with one hundred & twenty-five infantry, & Captain Mark Hendricks, with a mountain howitzer, were at once sent forward to their relief. The musketry still continued to be heard, & in a few hours the sullen boom of the howitzer indicated that the second detachment had become engaged. The tents were ordered to be struck and taken into the fort, & the entire command to put themselves at once in readiness for marching. Just as the sun was setting, the whole force was in motion. Accompanying it was Sergeant Jones, with two pieces of cannon.

After a slow, weary march of thirteen miles, the darkness, which had now become intense, was lit up by a bright flash, followed by the quick roar of the howitzer; & guided by its repeated discharges, we found ourselves at the camp of the second detachment. During the afternoon they ^(second detachment) had advanced within three miles of where Major Brown was supposed to be; had been attacked by Indians, & had thought it better to

relief detach-
ment sent from
Fort Ridgely

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

choose a position & wait for re-enforcements. At early dawn the entire force was in motion. As we neared the head of Birch Coulee tents could be seen through the trees, & speculations were rife as to whether it was Brown's camp or that of the Indians, as they have tents very similar to our own.

The Indians were soon seen swarming through a belt of woods toward our column from the direction of the tents. Failing to draw our forces into the wood, they advanced nearer, and throwing themselves down behind eminences which would afford protection, poured a rapid fire into the column. Skirmishers were at once thrown out, who, with quick discharges, drove them back, & the bursting shells from the cannon soon put them to rout. They retreated rapidly down Birch Coulee, & crossed the river at the agency.

Casualties at
Birch Coulee.

The tents proved to be those of Major Brown, & the scene presented was most horrible. The camp was surrounded by the dead bodies of the horses, over ninety in number. The tents were riddled with bullets. Ditches were dug between the tents, & the horses & the dirt piled on them so as to form a breastwork. Within this circuit lay 13 of the soldiers dead, & a number wounded, many of them mortally, & a few feet distant were more dead bodies. Among the wounded were Major Brown, Captain Anderson, Agent Galbraith, & Captain Redfield, of Colonel Dibble's staff.

The place selected by this burial party for a camp was chosen because of its accessibility to wood & water. In fact, a worse spot to repel an attack could not have been found. It was within gunshot of the head of the wooded ravine on one side, & of an elevation on the other, from behind which an attacking party could command the camp with safety to themselves.

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

Ten sentinels were placed around the camp, the first night, with orders to keep a strict look-out, & to give the alarm at once in case of any suspicious appearance. The remainder, fatigued with the hard marching which they had endured for the past week, & with the labors of the day, for they had buried 54 victims of the outbreak, retired for a well earned rest.

Battle of Birch
Coulee begins.

Just as it began to grow a little gray in the east, one of the sentinels thought he saw something creeping toward him in the grass. He fired at it, & before the echoes of the report died away, a volley from 300 guns, within a hundred yards of the slumbering camp, raked the tents "fore & aft." For more than three hours this firing was kept up with scarcely an intermission, & in that fatal three hours some twenty men were killed or mortally wounded, some sixty severely wounded, & over ninety horses killed. The Indians kept up a perfect rain of lead upon the soldiers camp; the tents were riddled with balls. During a lull in the firing the men in the camp had dug enough holes in the ground to protect them from shooting at a distance. When they were relieved by Colonel Sully they had been thirty-one hours without food or water, with but thirty rounds of ammunition to the man when they commenced, & with less than five when relieved. This was the most severe battle of the war in proportion to the number engaged.

The Indians who staged this attack on the soldiers at Birch Coulee, comprised 349 warriors under Gray Bird, & one hundred & ten more, under Little Crow. At the time these warriors, with a long train of wagons to carry their plunder, were going

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee
 down the river on the reservation side (the north shore)
 to plunder New Ulm, & then to attack St. Peter and
 Mankato. When the warriors arrived at the lower
 agency they caught sight of Major Brown's horse-
 men winding up the ravine to Grant's camp.
 When the runners for the Indians returned & informed their
 chiefs that the whites had encamped, they at once re-
 solved on the attack which followed at Birch Coulee.
 After the dead were buried the command re-
 turned to the fort, carrying the wounded with them.
 Colonel Sibley, in his report of the battle said: "That the
 command was not destroyed before I arrived to
 rescue them from their perilous situation may be
 ascribed chiefly to the coolness of nerve displayed
 by Major Brown & Captain Anderson, both of whom were
 severely wounded." Captains Grant & Redfield, &
 Lieutenants Turnbull, Gillam, & Baldwin, behaved
 with great gallantry, as did all the men during
 the trying ordeal.

Disastrous as this affair was, it
 saved New Ulm from total destruction, & Mankato
 & St. Peter, which were now left ^{almost} defenseless, from
 attacks which would necessarily have been attended
 with great loss of life & property.

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

Wall & S.

Recollections
of the Sioux
Massacre -

pp. 129-134

Burial party
sent out
Sunday, Aug. 31

Who commanded
the burial party

On Thursday morning, August 28th, Col. H. H. Sibley entered Fort Ridgely at the head of a column of about 1200 men. These with Colonel McPhail's men already at the Fort, & accessions that followed rapidly made up an army sufficiently large to warrant offensive operations, though the equipment of these troops was grossly inefficient.

Preliminary to other operations, a detachment was sent out on Sunday, August 31st, with the Lower Agency as the objective point. This was still, as of old, the rendezvous of the Indians. Mainly, the expedition had for its purpose the interment of the men who fell at the ferry (Redwood) & the Agency, & of others, & to discover, if possible, the body of Captain Marsh. The detachment for this purpose was composed of Co. A, Sixth Minnesota Volunteer Infantry, Captain Hiram P. Grant, & the Buller's Guards, mounted, Captain Joseph Anderson. The detachment was under the general command & guidance of Major Joseph R. Brown, a noted Indian trader & frontiersman, & embraced about a hundred & fifty men, exclusive of seventeen teamsters, who had charge of as many wagons containing equipage. In burying the score of corpses that had been exposed for ten days in a summer's sun, the little expedition put in a day of trying experiences by the time of reaching the Redwood ferry, & went into camp at night, (having seen no sign of Indians) in the Minnesota bottoms, just

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

east of the agency. Monday morning, Captain Anderson crossed the Minnesota, & after burying the dead at the Agency, proceeded up the west side of the river, while Captain Grant scouted about the country to the eastward, the two detachments rejoining each other at night (Sept. 1st) at Birch Coulee, a location other than which there could have been nothing more unfortunate from a military standpoint. The site had Major Brown's approval, & there being confidence in his judgment, he having lived for years among the Sioux, & knowing every rod of ground of the surrounding country, the men bivouacked, knowing they were in the enemy's country, but little suspecting the frightful catastrophe that awaited them.

The location of the camp, as stated, was unfavorable in the extreme, being in a depression where in event of attack the men would be at the mercy of the enemy.

About daylight of September 1st, the rattle of musketry was heard, & indicated plainly that Captains Grant & Anderson were hotly engaged by the enemy. A relief column was at once organized to go to the assistance of the Grant-Anderson detachment. This consisted of Col. Samuel McPhail, with fifty horsemen, Major Robert Mc Laren with one hundred infantry men, & Captain Mark Hendrix with a mountain howitzer & the necessary gunners to man it. The movements of the relief column had been detected by the savages, & a strong force of Little Crow's warriors was thrown against the

Battle of Birch
Coulee begins

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

McPhail - Mc Laren forces, to prevent their reaching Birch Coulee, which the Indians knew must soon fall into their hands if relief could be prevented.

The relief detachment made excellent use of its howitzer in many ways besides pouring shot into the ranks of the Indians; the sound of the cannon gave heart to the desperately oppressed force at Birch Coulee, three miles distant & admonished Col. Sibley that a hot fight was in progress.

Lieutenant Shuman was dispatched by Colonel McPhail of the relief detachment with a request to Colonel Sibley for reinforcements.

Col. Sibley, in response, at once put his entire force on the march, leaving Fort Ridgely at sundown on Tuesday evening, September 2nd. The exact location of the Grant-Anderson force not being known, & the night being very dark, Col. Sibley awaited daylight where he found McPhail & Mc Laren, moving his entire force forward at dawn. A march of three miles led to the horrifying death-trap that passed into history as Birch Coulee, a place that furnished one of the bloodiest pages of the Sioux massacre, as well as one of the grandest exhibitions of courage & endurance under the most adverse conditions ever recorded.

At dawn on Tuesday morning September 2nd, the camp of Grant & Anderson was surprised & fiercely attacked at short range under cover of the brush & hills surrounding. The effect upon the

Col. Sibley's
command goes
to the relief of
the burial party
Tues. Eve. Sept. 2

Battle of Birch
Coulee

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

little command was appalling. The rain of bullets dealt consternation & death to the unprotected camp. The storm increased as the savages warmed up to their work, & emboldened, forced their way to newer & nearer points of vantage. It seemed that not a living creature could long survive the almost blinding cross-fire to which the men were subjected. There were ninety horses in the little camp, & nearly all were down, dead or groaning in death agonies, within thirty minutes after the firing of the first shot by the Indians. One-fourth of the men had already fallen, dead or wounded, & yet the fire grew hotter.

The panorama surrounding the men was such as to daze their senses. The belching guns of the savages formed an encircling line of fire. The men must return the fire to prevent a charge, which would have swept the little remnant of soldiery from existence in a twinkling.

If they would withstand the awful storm of bullets, they must dig, for without trenches there was no protection, & they did dig, using the three spades & one shovel available, & their swords, bayonets, pocket-knives & fingers, even. But hours passed before ^{fairly} adequate protection was secured, many a man's pit proving to be his grave. All day long the pitiless rain of shot fell upon the helpless men from all sides, imprisoning them in their little trenches from which they bravely fought beneath a scorching sun without food or drink or relief or the ability in any way to communicate a knowledge of their distress beyond the cordon of savages.

Battle of Birch Coulee or Birch Coulee

On & on, hour by hour, the battle raged, until darkness relaxed in a degree only, the savage grasp.

Night came none too soon, for the ammunition with which to resist longer was practically exhausted. The long vigil, surrounded by the dead & the moaning, helpless wounded, whose entreaties were almost beyond human endurance, ended at dawn when Col. Sibley & his men rode into camp as the Indians fell back among the protecting hills & valleys of the Minnesota.

The scenes that met the gaze of the relieving party was a sickening one. Twenty-three men, black & discolored by the sun's rays, lay stark & dead in a small space; forty-five others, severely wounded, & groaning & crying for water; the carcasses of ninety dead horses lying about, & a stench intolerable emanating from the whole ground. The tents of the camp literally cut to pieces, while the wagons, riddled and splintered, told of the awful ordeal through which the survivors had passed.

A picture of Birch Coulee & Good Indian Monuments at Morton Minnesota will be found in Wall's Recollections of the Sioux Massacre, ~~page~~ in back of book

5 Summary

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4 B

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12 D

4 E

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Good description
of Little Crow
on p. 17
read

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2. Old Wapashaw & Little Crow, Jr. p. 2.
3. Virtues, tribal conditions & religion of Dakotas. p. 2
4. "Northwest Territory" & "Louisiana Purchase". p. 3.
5. Beginning of massacre, Mon. Aug. 18, 1862. p. 344
6. Good poem by Capt. Chittenden. p. 5
7. Facts on Treaties of 1837 & 1851 p. 6.
8. Appointment of Sibley to lead expedition. p. 7.
9. Col. Sibley leaves Fort Snelling. p. 8
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13. Col. Sibley's belief as to the captives & the letters from Little Crow. p. 9
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18. Release of captives at Camp Release description of release of the captives p. 12-13
19. Guesses on number of Indians participating in the battle of Wood Lake p. 13
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Whatever other tribes occasionally tarried in portions of Minnesota, yet the region belonged, by hereditary possession, to the Sioux or Dakotas, as their peculiar hunting ground.

The divisions of the Dakotas are:

1) Mde-wapantonwans, "Village of the Spirit Lake" a name derived from a former residence at Mde-wakan, "Spirit or Sacred Lake", "Mille Lacs", in the country now claimed by the Ojibwas (Chippewas). These were distributed into seven principal villages. Three of these were on the western bank of the Mississippi (Chief Wapashaw), at Red Wing (Chief Wacota); at Kapiocia (Chief Little Crow). The rest were at different points on the Minnesota, 25 or 30 miles above Fort Snelling, viz: Magayata "Governor"; Black Dog, 3 miles from the mouth of the river; Pine-a-shaw, "Good-road" seven miles; Wajapaw, "Eagle-head", 14 miles; Shakopee, 25 miles. In all 2,000 souls.

2) Wahpetons "Leaf Shooters", claiming the country on the Cannon river, a roving band, divided by two chiefs, Wah-mew-di-poo-ta, the "Red Eagle", & Ta-saw-ga, "the Bone". Between 5 & 6 hundred.

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3) Wahpetonwans "Village in the Leaves", a name derived from their former residence in the woods, but now dwelling in Lac qui Parle & Little Rapids, 1200 population.

4) Sissetonwans, "Village of the Marsh". They occupied the Minnesota valley from Traverse des Sioux to Little Rock, claiming the Swan Lake country on the one side, & the Blue Earth region on the other side, of the Minnesota river, the great body of them moving northward & westward, & making their cornfields around Lake Traverse & Big Stone Lake; a population of about 2,500.

5) Shanketonwans, one of the "End of the Village" bands, estimated at about 4,000 souls. This band was divided into the Hunk-pa-ti-lane, the Pah-bak-se or "Cut Heads", the Wah-zi-ku-te, or "Pine Shooters", & the Ki-yuk-sas, or "Dividers", i.e., "Law-Breakers". Their range was along the James river & on the north of the Missouri as far as Devil's Lake.

6) Shanketonwans, the other lodge of the "End of Village" bands, estimated at about 240 lodges, or 2,400 souls. They were usually found west of the Missouri & the two related bands were described by the general name Yanktons.

7) Titonwans, "Village of the Prairies", claiming about 1,250 lodges, or 12,500 souls. They lived on the west side of the Missouri, & reached to beyond the Black Hills. They were divided into seven bands.

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For an open-
ing to report.

Of all these, "Old Wapashaw", was the hereditary chief of greatest influence among the people of the lakes, his word being law, not alone with his own band, but with all other bands belonging to the same division. Mdewakantonwagne, "Little Crow, Sr.", father of "Little Crow, Jr.", was also held in high esteem by his band at Kaposia, & favored the progress of the red man toward the white man's civilization as a matter of necessity. At their first acquaintance, all the Dakota bands, notwithstanding the fact that they were the most warlike & passionate of all the Indian tribes upon the continent, were friendly to the whites, & it was a rare occurrence for the latter to be molested in person or property while traversing their country. Although of warlike disposition, their relation to the white man was ever that of amity until provoked to deeds which justice & kindness could easily have averted. In some respects they were in advance of the white man's boasted Christian culture, especially in the observance of the rules and laws of natural morality. They were so honest that it was regarded as disgraceful for a warrior to steal; & the thief was deemed unworthy to be a warrior, & ostracized because of his propensities. Female chastity was a notable characteristic among the Sioux bands, & the violator of this virtue was an outcast subject to all insult & humiliation. The care of orphans & widows was felt to be a duty. As to their religion, it was that of inferior form known to untutored tribes, being, in large part, of the fetich sort. The Dakotas' impressions of a life beyond this were at best but shadowy, uncertain, & unsatisfactory.

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Such were some of the chief virtues, & such the religion & tribal condition, that characterized the Dakotas in their primitive state, before their demoralization began, in 1837, when the United States acquired lands east of the Mississippi, & the Dakotas became proteges, by treaty, of a "paternal government" whose officials swindled them at every step, corrupted them at every point of contact, enraged them to deeds of revenge, & made them heirs of the white man's crime & abominations.

By Nathaniel West.

Sibley married Sarah Jane Steele at Fort Snelling
May 2, 1843. The Rev. Ezekiel Senn, post chaplain performed the ceremony.

The entire region east of the Mississippi river & north & northwest of the Ohio river, is what is known as the "Northwest Territory"; this was established by royal charter (James Oglethorpe) of the 23rd of May, 1609. Constituted the boundaries of Virginia. This territory was ceded, March 1, 1784 to the United States.

The Louisiana Purchase, (Oct. 21, 1803) included all the region west of the Mississippi, & north from the Gulf of Mexico, up to the British line, & out of which have sprung the great states of Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, with a portion of Louisiana & a portion of Minnesota. Minnesota therefore was formed out of the Northwest Territory & the Louisiana purchase.

On the morning of Monday, August 18, 1862, as if a volcano filled with lava of fire & blood had suddenly discharged its contents on the earth, the Sioux massacre burst upon the breast of Minnesota, terrific & unexampled, covering her soil with the blood of her children, and amid horrors of devastation & death, spreading anguish & consternation on every side. The very hour when, dreaming of "Peace & Safety," sudden destruction came. In that moment, when her citizens were congratulating each other at being so far removed from the scene of civil war, a merciless & furious enemy perfected a plan with marvelous secrecy, which, in an instant, let loose upon her unsuspecting settlers about a thousand warriors of the most warlike of all the Indian tribes upon the continent, reveling in a carnival of indiscriminate & cruel butchery, killing men, women & children, saving only girls of tender years, & comely females, to minister to their brutal appetites. Many of the young were ravished in the presence of their dying parents, & in various instances the torch was applied to the dwellings in which the victims had met their fate, before they ceased to exist. Over an area of some 20,000 square miles, embracing no less than 18 counties with a population of about 40,000 souls, the wild

"Northwest
Territory"
May, 23rd 1609
ceded
March 1, 1784

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p. 248.
Beginning of
massacre
Aug. 18, 1862

by Nathaniel West

war-whoop of the naked Indian, hideous in plumes & war-paint, the torch, the tomahawk, the scalping knife, the rifle, the arrow, & all the unchained passions of men incarnate with the desperation of revenge, asserted their fundish supremacy. Over this vast territory, the sky, at night, was illumined with a lurid reflected glare from the conflagration of burning homes below. Homes, beautiful a moment ago, now sank out of sight, in their ashes, forever. The moan of the dying & shriek of the helpless filled the air. In a week, & mostly within forty-eight hours, hundreds perished in excruciating pain, many hundreds were maimed sufferers from the outrage, & thousands, who were comparatively well-to-do, were thrown, as paupers, on the charity of individuals, or on the bounty of the state. An estimated \$2,000,000 worth of property was destroyed in a belt of two hundred & fifty miles, & in ten counties nothing was left. What remained to testify to the indescribable barbarity & unsmothered hate of the savages, in their descent upon a peaceful & prosperous community, was a vision of wide spread desolation, dotted with hundreds of dead bodies, strewn every where; useless, & rotting in the sun.

As a result of the horror, reason reeled in many cases & for some who had seen this infliction of brutalities upon their household, nothing was left but stupefaction at first, mechanical motion next, and, at last the maniac's wild stare, & the maniac's sad wail.

The following ^{sal} poem is worthy of preservation, because of its theme. The incident on which it is founded was a deeply touching one. When Col. McPhail & his command were coming up the Minnesota valley to raise the siege of Fort Ridgely, Charles Nelson, a Swede, having walked twenty-five miles, joined the expedition. His dwelling had been burned to the ground the day previous, his daughter Jennie outraged & brutally murdered, his wife Dela murdered & ~~her~~ body horribly mutilated & his two sons Hans & Otto, believed murdered, because the last he saw of his two sons was their trying to escape through a cornfield with the Indians.

in swift pursuit. Returning with the troops, and passing by the ruins of his home, he gazed wildly about, and, closing the gate of the garden asked: "When will it be safe to return?" His reason was gone. Captain Chittenden, of McPhail's command, while sitting a few days after under the falls of Minnehaha embodied in verse the sad tragedy, & has given to the world the following lines:

1. "Minne-ha-ha laughing water,
cease thy laughing now for aye,
Savage hands are red with slaughter
Of the innocent today.

2. I'll accorde thy sportive humor
With their last despairing wail;
While thou'rt dancing in the sunbeam,
Mangled corpses strew the vale.

3. Change thy note, gay Minne-ha-ha;
Let some sadder strain prevail -
Listen, while a maniac wanderer
Sighs to thee his woe-ful tale.

4. "Give me back my Lela's tresses,
Let me kiss them once again!
She, who blest me with caresses,
Lies unburied on the plain!

5. "See yon smoke, there was my dwelling;
That is all I have of home!
Hark! I hear their fiendish yelling,
As I, houseless, childless, roam!

6. "Have they killed my Hans & Otto?
Did they find them in the corn?
Go & tell that savage monster
Not to slay my youngest born.

7. "Yonder is my new-bought reaper,
Standing 'mid the ripened grain,
E'en my cows ask why I leave her
Wandering, unmlked, o'er the plain!

8. "Soldier, bury here my Lela;
Place me also 'neath the sod;
Long we lived & wrought together -
Let me die with her - O God!

9. "Faithful Fido, you they've left me,
Can you tell me, Fido, why
God at once has thus bereft me?
All I ask is here to die.

10.
"O, my daughter Jennie darling!
Worse than death is Jennie's fate!"
* * * * *

Nelson, as our troops were leaving,
Turned & shut his garden gate.

(also see "The Maniac" in "The Dakota War-Whoop". p. 195
see also pages 75 to 81,

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In the first place, the bands implicated had, under pressure, been induced to transfer, by treaty, in 1837, 1851, & again in 1857, to the federal government, the possessory rights to all their immense lands, east & west of the Mississippi, soil that contained the graves of their fathers who had preoccupied it from time immemorial, & to consent to a removal to a reservation, & be generously provided for by a magnanimous government, with all the instrumentalities & provisions requisite to render them happy, self-sustaining & contented. The treaties

Note [There is not, to-day, an old citizen of Minnesota who will not shrug his shoulders as he speaks of the dishonesty which accompanied the purchase of the lands of the Sioux. - Heard's Sioux War, p. 35.]

ON Treaties

guaranteed that every promise made them should be faithfully performed. There was a general & intense disappointment when they found themselves deceived & transferred from their own magnificent country, a paradise on earth, abounding in forests & lakes which teemed with animal life, to an open prairie from which the buffalo, the elk, the deer, & other game, had been driven, & where they must, perforce, depend almost entirely upon the trader, and the government for their daily bread. To aggravate their discontent, the provisions of the treaties were basely disregarded, annuities frequently suspended, in whole or in part, upon the slightest pretext, by the Indian bureau, & payments deferred for months after their maturity, thereby causing incalculable suffering to these wards of a great nation false to its promises & to its trusts.

Also these annuitant Indians had, ^{assembled} at the two Indian Agencies of Redwood & Yellow Medicine upon a call from their agent (the government Indian agent), with the expectation that the annuity money, articles of food, & the clothing due them, would be forthcoming, as he was advised by the commissioner of Indian affairs at Washington. But these famishing & starving Indians were doomed to bitter disappointment, by the culpable & inexcusable delay of the government officials. Therefore, nothing was left

7-
for the Indians to do - their wives & children dead, & dying,
for want of food - but die themselves, or exact, even
at the cost of their own lives, a fire-lit, vengeful,
bloody, & brutal atonement for all the wrongs inflicted
upon them. The moment was opportune. The United
States were involved in a terrible strife. Many men had
enlisted & gone to the seat of the war, the President was
calling for many more volunteers; the Sioux Indians
knew all this; Agent Galbraith had gained, not keeping
his promise to pay the Indians, the two Indian Agen-
cies had both been depleted of men to help the "Great
Father". [Bishop Whipple had said "Our Indian system
is a system of organized robbery & a disgrace to the nation."
apart from other grievances, this state of things was
enough to drive the warriors to desperation, & when
the Acton murderers of a few whites, Sunday, August
17, 1862 returned to their camp, they frankly admitted
their crime & implored their kindred to protect them
from arrest & punishment, & make common cause
with them against the whites. That night, the warriors,
with their chiefs assembled, & formed the plan of de-
struction & murder, so faithfully executed, August
18 & 19, 1862 - an epoch of the most inhuman & re-
morseless butchery ever enacted on the American continent.
From this time on the massacre began in all its fury.

The man, for this momentous crisis in the
history of the State was the Hon. Henry Hastings Sibley,
ex-governor of the state. To him all eyes were instinctively
turned. His perfect knowledge of the Indian tribes and
character, their habit of life, & mode of warfare, his
familiarity with the Sioux & French languages, the
Indian respect for his person & name, all pointed him out
as the man of all men to be intrusted with the main com-
mand of the military forces of the state, & of her expedition

against the hostile bands.

The outbreak & massacre at Redwood Agency occurred Monday, August 18, 1862, & on the same day Capt. Marsh & his men were ambushed & almost half of them were slaughtered at the Redwood Ferry.

The defenses of New Ulm, August 19th & 23rd, & of Fort Ridgely, 20th & 21st, were among the most brilliant exploits of the Indian War. That by Col. Flandrau, in the defense of New Ulm, most fortunate, indeed, prevented, at that critical moment, the massacre from penetrating into the interior of the state.

To Colonel Sibley's mind, the objects of the expedition were (1) the defeat of the Indians in some decisive engagement, (2) the release of the captives, (3) the punishment of the guilty murderers & criminals, (4) the driving of the Sioux from the State. He pursued the only course a wise, safe, humane, & successful commander could have taken.

Col. Sibley left Fort Snelling, with four companies of the Sixth Regiment, ^{on Wed. Aug. 20th} and arrived at St. Peter, 120 miles away, on Thursday evening, August 21st, yet contending with many difficulties, such as, the shortage of rifles, ammunition, transportation, commissary supplies, & mounted men, Col. Sibley was able to move after Little Crow & the Indians on Monday, August 25th, 1862, with a force totaling 1,400 men. This force reached Fort Ridgely, Thursday, August 28th, much to the joy of the brave garrison who had so ably defended the fort.

Col. Sibley ordered Maj. Brown to advance up the Minnesota valley, with a detachment of 150 men, to bury the dead, relieve any survivors of the massacre, & "feel after" Little Crow. His instructions were most explicit, viz., not to separate the force under any circumstances, nor go into camp near a mound or ravine, but only on the open prairie, with pickets thrown out.

(Insert here where the detachment divided, & selection of site

Sibley com-
missioned
Tues. Aug. 19,
1862, to com-
mand the
Indian expe-
dition

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Aug. 30, 1862

expedition
to bury
the dead &
scout -

Major Brown

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By Nathaniel West

Battle of Birch Coulee fought Sept. 2 and 3rd, 1862. No less than ninety horses had been killed, thirteen of his detachment slain, three mortally wounded, & forty-four more or less injured. For thirty-one hours had been without food or water, & yet continued to repel the foe. The wonder is that every man was not massacred. This battle was the severest & bloodiest of all the actions thus far, in the Indian campaign. The Indians who participated in this battle had left Yellow Medicine, & vicinity, with the avowed intention of attacking Mankato & St. Peter, but on the way had noticed the detachment that Major Brown was with & decided to wipe it out first & then continue on; happily for the inhabitants of these two towns, the Indians met with signal defeat at Birch Coulee, for it saved Mankato & St. Peter from the destruction contemplated by the savages.

After burying the dead, & placing the wounded in the wagons, Col. Sibley returned to Fort Ridgely to prepare for a final advance upon Little Crow's camp.

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Col. Sibley believed, & this belief was substantiated by various reports, that had an attack been made by him upon the Indians while in their own camp, or before they had deserted it, it was their determination to tomahawk every captive in their possession. Col. Sibley's one, first, & paramount, aim was to secure the release of these suffering people, & not precipitate the sacrifice of their lives. Any impression given to Little Crow that no mercy would be shown would be the signal for another indiscriminate massacre, any act by which he could avert a calamity so dire, he felt bound in humanity, & before God, to practice. Hence the leaving of a note on the Birch Coulee battle field, the retreat to Fort Ridgely, & the invitation to Little Crow to communicate if he had any communication to make. After the captives were released, it would be time to tell Little Crow what his fate would be.

While at Fort Ridgely, Col. Sibley received two notes from Little Crow, explaining why the Indians commenced the war, & that he had in his camp many prisoners; a letter was also received from two friendly Indians (Wabashaw & Tappie) in Little Crow's camp, a note, stating the position that they were in because of their friendliness towards the whites; & also suggested that Col. Sibley appoint some place where they could assemble with their friends & families, & all the prisoners that they

By Nathaniel West

could get.

With the increase of dissatisfaction in Little Crow's camp, the outraged war party, stung by defeat, might rise any moment & extinguish in death the unhappy captives still in their power. Such was the critical or delicate position which confronted Colonel Sibley. By an indiscretion on his part the same result might ensue. Impatient & unreflecting men could not understand the seriousness of the situation. Standing tongues, far away from the scene, & minds incompetent to understand, accused him of remissness, negligence, cowardice, & even of desire to be friendly with red-handed miscreants, he was howled at on all sides, even the suggestion of his removal as commander of the expedition having been made. Unmoved by calumny, & undaunted by threats, he consulted his own superior judgment, & walked towering over those whose tongues were afterward silenced, to their shame, when they saw the success of his plans. Thus his true knowledge of the perilous situation will ever vindicate the wisdom of his correspondence with Little Crow, & repel the insinuation charge of timid inaction & guilty delay.

Col. Sibley & his troops left Fort Ridgely, Sept. 13, 1862, in search of Little Crow.

Little Paul, Red Iron, Standing Buffalo, & 100 Dissenters were determined to fight Little Crow himself should any attempt be made to massacre the captives, or place them in front of the coming battle, & ready to sue for peace on such terms as Col. Sibley might grant. Also at this time there was great dissension in Little Crow's camp.

Little Crow full of apprehension, was watching & waiting to make one desperate last resistance, & win or lose all in one final engagement.

When the sun was low, Sept. 22, 1862, Col. Sibley's entire command (1600 men & five pieces of artillery) encamped on the high prairies near Wood Lake, three miles from the ford of the Yellow Medicine. On the morning of Sept. 23, at half-past seven o'clock, the Indians suddenly attacked a foraging party of teamsters, half a mile distant from the camp,

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The guards returned the fire. This precipitated the decisive battle of Wood Lake, where the power of Little Crow was broken. The battle raged furiously two hours. At length the Indians, unable to endure the murderous fire, broke, & retreated in haste, bearing off many of their wounded. The casualties of the troops were fifty-four killed & wounded, the Indians' loss being vastly greater. A large portion of Col. Sibley's force was held in reserve, & also guarding the camp. The Upper Indians, as soon as they saw the battle was going against Little Crow, abandoned the Lower Indians to their fate, and retired from the field.

Had the cavalry force under Col. Sibley been effective, he had only 25 mounted men but had persistently asked for at least 200 cavalry, these had been promised him, but were never provided. A second campaign, the following year, had not been necessary. Three hundred mounted men had sufficed to pursue & destroy every one of Little Crow's miscreant bands. As it was, however, the battle of Wood Lake, fought before any help from Stanton (Secretary of War), Halleck (Major General in War Dept. at Washington), or Pope (Major General in command of the new "Military Department of the Northwest") arrived, was decisive & conclusive of the Sioux War. Its importance & time-liness to the state were inestimable. If the engagement at Birch Coulee saved Mankato & St. Peter, the engagement at Wood Lake saved the State of Minnesota. It broke the prestige of Little Crow & dissolved the combination of Indian tribes, to renew the widespread horror the massacre he had initiated August 18th, 1862. It made Standing Buffalo the enemies of Little Crow. It released the Upper Sissetons the enemies of Little Crow. It brought peace, joy, happiness, & protection, to the hearts & homes of Minnesota.

After this decisive battle, Little Crow fell back to a point near what afterward became "Camp Release," & remained there till hearing of the advance of Colonel Sibley.

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after burying the dead & caring for the wounded, Colonel Sibley broke camp, and, on the morning of the 25th (Sept. 1862), crossed the Yellow Medicine river, and, marching five miles, bivouacked on the open prairie, Sept. 26, 1862, at the spot subsequently known as "Camp Release". Little Crow, despairing of success, had fled with some two hundred of the hostiles toward the Yankton Sioux on the James River, leaving behind him the rest of his bands, the captives, the friendly element, & the Renville Ranger deserters, all in his camp. In this camp were one hundred & fifty lodges, of friendly Indians, and the white captives.

Accordingly, at 2 P.M., Sept. 26, 1862, Col. Sibley, against the remonstrance of his staff, who feared treachery, & accompanied by a few officers & two companies of infantry, proceeded straight to the Indian encampment. Leaving the soldiers outside, he entered the Indian camp with his officers. The captives were then turned over to him, a worse accoutered, or more distressed, group of civilized beings imagination could picture. On the persons of some hung but a single garment, while pitying half-breeds & Indian women had provided others with scraps of clothing. Some seemed stolid, as if their minds had been strained to madness & reaction had brought vacant gloom, indifference & despair. They gazed with a sad stare. Many were hysterical, bordering on convulsions, laughing & tears coming mingling, mixed with such that they were in the hands of their preservers. The captives were then escorted outside the camp where they were placed under the protection of the troops & taken to the soldier's encampment. The only white man found alive at the Indian camp was George H. Spencer, who was saved from death by the heroic devotion of his Indian comrade, but yet badly wounded.

To shout at such a time, to sing, to weep, to laugh, is a relief! Tears, smiles, & embraces, from swelling hearts of gratitude and love, all flow together, delivered & delivered rejoicing in the same glad jubilee. What

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emotions struggled for expression in the breast of Colonel
Sibley, what in the breasts of the delivered ones, only he &
they knew to whom the anguish & the joy were mutual.
Col. Sibley's proudest, noblest title is not "First Delegate
from the Territory of Minnesota," not "First Governor of the
State," not "Colonel Commanding the Indian Expedition,"
not "Brigadier General in the Army," nor "Brevet Major
General," but this one word, "Deliverer of Minnesota's
captives" from the grasp of the red man, & who but
for him had perished in their chains. If there is one
spot upon the soil of Minnesota worthy to be consecrated as
a Mecca for her sons, one acre on her breast on which
a monument might tower, heaven-pointing & sky-piercing
to the blue, it is that spot called "Camp Release," where
Minnesota's "Ebenezer" should be raised in memory of
God's mercy to the captives & to the state, delivered by
the faithful Sibley & his brave men, September 23 and
September 26, 1862.

p. 274.

Rough guesses at the number of Indian warriors con-
centrated for the battle of Wood Lake, have been reported:
"The Indians were 780" - Dakota War, Whoop, p. 219, by Mrs. Mc
Conkey; "Indians to the number of eight hundred, well armed," -
Adjutant General's Report, Executive Documents, 1862; "The number
actually engaged on each side was about eight hundred" - Heards
Sioux War, p. 175; Major General Pope, in his dispatch to General
Halleck, at Washington, September 23rd, says there were "2,000 warriors."
Colonel Sibley's force being "1,600 men & five pieces of artillery."

Em release of captives, see: (1) Private notes of Colonel
Sibley on the Indian War of 1862. See also, Rebellion Record, Vol. X III,
pp. 679-680, 687, 694.

Next was the appointment of the military com-
mission to try the half-breeds & Indians engaged in the Sioux
raids & massacres. About 425 Indians & half-breeds were tried
303 were sentenced to death & 18 condemned to various terms of
imprisonment. By President Lincoln's orders 38 were hung at Mankato, Dec. 26, 1862.

p. 282

Thus ended the military expedition entrusted by
Governor Ramsey to ex-Governor Sibley. In an almost incredibly short
period of one month & six days, from August 20th to September 26th,
Col. Sibley had organized the expedition in the midst of obstacles almost

by Nathaniel West.

insurmountable, fed the perishing multitudes at St. Peter, sent reinforcements to Colonel Flandrau, relieved Fort Ridgely, fought the battles of Birch Coche & Wood Lake, released 300 helpless captives, taken the whole Indian camp, and chained 425 warriors in irons. In one month & ten days, more, Sibley had organized a military commission, tried the 425, convicted 321, had captured in all over 2,200, sent 1,800 to Fort Snelling, besides conveying 425 to Camp Lincoln. The whole campaign was terminated & its judicial results achieved (the trial & sentencing of the Indians), all eyes now directed to the general government, awaiting its formal sanction of what had been done. Major General Pope, in command of the Military Department of the Northwest, was thus enabled to dispatch the news to Washington, saying, "The Sioux War is at an end."

note p. 284

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"The Indians have not been without excuse for their evil deeds. Our own people have given them intoxicating drinks, taught them to swear, violated the rights of womanhood among them, robbed them of their dues & insulted them. What more would be necessary to make one nation rise against another? And yet how many curse this people & cry 'Exterminate them!' Love ye, as a nation, those bring a curse upon ourselves & future generations?" — From "Forty Years Among the Sioux," by Rev. S. R. Riggs, p. 178

This was in answer to the question — Were they all worthy of death? — meaning the Indians condemned to death by the military commission.

Ancestry, Life & Times of Henry Hastings Sibley - by Nathaniel West

With the end of this military expedition, three of the ^{four} main objects of the said expedition had been accomplished, namely - (1) the defeat of the Sioux, (2) the release of the captives, (3) the trial & the punishment of the guilty Indians, the fourth, the driving of the Sioux from the State, remained yet to be realized. Congress, during February, March & April, 1863 took efficient action to put into execution the fourth object when it legislated the abrogation of all existing treaties with the Sioux bands, or Dakotas, in the state. The removal, also, of the Sioux bands outside the limits of the state, & with them, the removal of the Winnebagoes also, the sale of their reservation for their benefit, was enacted, both tribes to be transported into distant but contiguous territory. In this way, no less than one million acres of their land was now thrown open to public sale at the government price, which was of immense value to the settlers in the state.

Col. Sibley, conversant with the Indian policy of the government & what the Indians had suffered, he was the last of men to hold that the outbreak was without excuse, or that the thirty-eight who swung from the scaffold were sinners above all who dwelt in Minnesota. He thought, wisely, that the just punishment of crime is no defense of the causes by which the crime itself was provoked, & that the terrible massacre, was a judgment of Heaven for oppression & wrong, which, from the foundation of the government, had not ceased to merit divine displeasure. The guilt of the massacre was a divided guilt & at the white man's door lay a heavy responsibility, from which no argument of "public policy against individual right," nor "law of progress," "superior race," and "Christian civilization," could ever excuse.

p. 294

Private Notes
by Gen. Sibley,
pp. 344.

With his eyes full on the facts, he could say that the Indian policy of the United States Government toward the red man was "one of the foulest blots on our national escutcheon". Therefore, even in the hour of execution, he felt that the Indian, though guilty, and rightly punished, yet died the victim of the white man's avarice, injustice & wrong.

Sibley in his private notes states: "The volume containing the long list of treaties negotiated within the last century affords conclusive evidence of the violation of public faith. I will venture to assert that not one of the numerous treaties has ever been scrupulously fulfilled by the United States Government. The poor savages have been beguiled, time after time, by promises, made only to be disregarded, to relinquish their possessory rights to the lands of their fathers. Congress has often assumed to make radical changes in these so-called treaties, without obtaining the previous assent of the other parties (Indians) to the contract, & Congress has almost uniformly failed to make the stipulated appropriations within the appointed time. Agents, incompetent or dishonest, have, as a general rule, been charged with the disbursement of the funds, & with the distribution of goods & provisions, & what was not appropriated to private use has oftentimes been doled out to the recipients unequally. The government has been guilty of utter indifference to the fate of these so-called wards of the nation, has pursued no settled policy looking to civilizing & preserving them from the numerous baleful influences which were sure to work their destruction within a brief period. Unfortunately for the poor creatures, high & low government officials, & members of Congress, as a general rule, cared little for appeals made in their behalf by their few philanthropic friends."

Camp Pope - at the mouth of the Redwood, 25 miles beyond Fort Redgely, & 150 miles from St. Paul

Sketch of
Sibley's 2nd
military expedition

1. Good opening sentences before describing
 & giving facts of the outbreak of 1862. p. 1
2. Amnesty takes in Minn. in 1862 p. 1
3. Note discussion on massacre p. 1-2-3
4. On Captain Marsh. p. 3
5. Effect on inhabitants by massacre. p. 3-4

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p. 362

Minnesota & Its People by John H. Stevens. (1890)

I come now to the Sioux Massacre of 1862; not to write a history of its momentous events; but to present a brief narrative of some of the incidents that made such a painfully vivid impression upon the frontier settlers of the Northwest; presenting, as it does, an exhibition of the darkest passions, & the perpetration of crimes the most revolting that a savage nature can conceive. It was infamous in its conception, fiendish in its execution, & fearfully disastrous alike to the whites & Indians. There are those who freely express their conviction that no reference to the immediate precipitator of that massacre can be complete, correct & just, that does not include, among the other numerous causes, the statement that the leaders engaged in it thought the Union of the states would be destroyed, & that then was their opportunity to repossess the lands they had ceded to the government. The withdrawal of the troops from the frontier, the battles disastrous to the Union arms, the seemingly financial embarrassment that delayed the payment of their annuities, gave plausibility to those ideas. The combined result was the massacre of 1862, that was one of unparalleled mutilation, murder & rapine.

The Dakota annuity tribes in Minnesota at the time of the outbreak were the Medawakontons, Wapatoons, Sissetons, & Wapakutas, numbering in all about 6,200 persons. Their annuities aggregated about \$55,000. These tribes were connected with wild bands scattered over a large extent of country, including Dakota & west of the Missouri to the Rocky mountains.

Now the opportune moment seemed to have come. The whole effective force for the defense of the entire frontier, from Pembina to the Iowa line, which included the soldiers stationed at Forts Ridgely, Ripley, and Abercrombie, amounted to about two hundred men. At this time I wish to quote from this author, and then I will elaborate more fully on what seems to be incorrect assertions, I quote, "Whatever the cause

p. 363

Minnesota & Its People

John H. Stevens (1890)

of the tragedy, the execution (the massacre) was the result of a conspiracy under the guise of a 'Soldiers' Lodge', & matured in secret Indian councils. In all these secret movements Little Crow was the moving spirit."

p. 364.

"This attack (at Acton) seems to have been unauthorized & premature, for on the same day a council was held, presided over by Little Crow, at Rice Creek, some forty miles distant, at which it was decided that a general massacre of the whites should commence the next morning. The final decision was made about sundown & early the next morning the entire force of warriors of the Lower tribes, painted & armed, were scattered over a region forty miles in extent, ready for the slaughter."

From material written by the various historians & writers, & also from statements made by a number of Indian chiefs who participated in the outbreak, there is no foundation or confirmation of the statement that the massacre was the result of a conspiracy under the guise of a 'Soldiers' Lodge', & that it matured in secret Indian councils.

The statement that the attack & massacre at Acton, in Meeker county, on Sunday, August 17th, 1862, was unauthorized & premature, has been many times substantiated. But in all the material written about the Outbreak of 1862, I find no confirmation of this writer's assertion that on the same day that the murders at Acton were being committed, that Little Crow was presiding over a council some forty miles distant. The fact of the matter is that at this time Little Crow had been deposed as a chief, & that he was at the time in his own village.

When the murderers, the Rice Creek renegades, returned & informed their chief what they had done, he immediately set out for Shakopee's village with the miscreants to seek advice from Shakopee, this chief perturbed by the events, & not knowing what to say, went.

Minnesota & Its People

with the murderers & their chief to Little Crow's village, for the purpose of getting his advice on the best course to pursue. Little Crow fearing the wrath of the whites, & not wishing to turn the participants in the murders over to the soldiers, & also realizing that further payments of the annuities would be stopped, therefore decided that a general massacre of the whites should commence the next morning in the vicinity of the Lower Agency. Also it may be borne in mind that the miscreants after committing the murders at Acton, were many miles from their village, that they first returned to their village & informed their chief of what they had done, then they were taken to Shakopee's village, & from there to Little Crow's village, situated near the Lower Agency, therefore it was well past midnight or Monday morning, August 18th, when the meeting with Little Crow ended & the decision for a general massacre was made. Very little time then remained, between Little Crow's final decision & the start of the general massacre.

p. 367

Near Birch Lake Peter Pereau, Andrew Bahlke, Henry Keartner, old Mr. Colosen, Frederick Cloosen, Mr. Pigaur, & Mrs. William Vitt were killed.

p. 368

This writer asserts that Capt. Marsh took a detachment of 46 men, & started for the agency. [There have been various estimates of the number of men comprising Marsh's command, some say forty-four, others say forty-six, while one writer states that his command numbered forty-nine]

p. 369

This writer states that Capt. Marsh was struck by a ball (rifle) in attempting to swim the river to intended safety, & that he then sunk to rise no more, while the true facts are that in attempting to swim the river to safety, Capt. Marsh, when over half-way across, was seized with the cramps, & that all efforts to save him were futile.

p. 375

Thousands of panic-stricken inhabitants at once deserted their homes, & were destitute of the necessaries of life. As the fugitives poured along the various roads leading to the towns below, on Monday night (Aug. 18th) & Tuesday

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(Aug. 19th) indescribable terror seized the inhabitants; & the rapidly accumulating tide, gathering force & numbers, as it moved across the prairie, rolled an overwhelming flood into the towns along the river. As no wisdom could direct it, no force resist it, so no pen can describe it. It was gloomy, chaotic, terrific.

1. Effect of civilization on the Sioux p. 1.
2. Treaties of 1851 & 1858 p. 1.
3. Dissatisfaction of Indians at terms of treaties & non-fulfilment. p. 1+2
4. Number massacred & soldiers killed. p. 2

The Indian Races of North & South America - Charles De Wolf Brownell

p. 709

The Sioux massacre, had it occurred in a time of peace, would have moved the nation more profoundly than any event in our history, but coming as it did in the midst of one of the most fearful civil wars the world has ever seen, it lost half its horrors. When fathers, brothers & sons were falling by the tens of thousands in our very midst, the slaughter of a few hundred settlers on our frontier seemed comparatively small.

The Sioux or Dacotah Indians, always a warlike tribe, gradually changed their savage character, as civilization advanced, & for years they lived in peace with their white neighbors. Having receded step by step before the tide of immigration, selling their lands to the government, until by the last treaties (1851 & 1858) they yielded all their possessions in Iowa, Dakota & Minnesota, except a tract a hundred & fifty miles long, on the Minnesota river. For the convenience of these Indians, two stations were established, one 14 miles above Fort Ridgely, on the Minnesota river, called the "Lower" or "Redwood Agency," & the other at the mouth of the Yellow Medicine river, known as the "Upper" or "Yellow Medicine Agency."

The Indians indignant at the frauds perpetrated upon them by unscrupulous traders & government agents, refused for a long time to receive their annuities, & finally did so only after the government had agreed to make it right with them.

Things had gone on in this way until at the outbreak the annuities amounted to scarcely fifteen dollars a piece to those entitled to receive it. This was not sufficient to keep them from starvation, & the winter previous to the massacre many actually died from want. Other & slighter causes, but such as an Indian keenly feels, incensed them against the whites. Also the outbreak of civil war among us naturally excited in their hearts the belief that the day of revenge was at hand.

The very night before the outbreak, a large council was held only 15 miles from the lower agency, in which it was

p. 711-712

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determined to go the next day to the Agency & demand the money due them, thence to Fort Ridgely, if refused, to St. Paul, & if necessary, to resort to violence to secure their rights. It will thus be seen that the whole nation was resting on the bosom of a volcano, which at any moment might burst forth in a deluge of fire. Still, notwithstanding this apparent preparation of a sudden uprising, the time & manner of its occurrence seemed purely accidental.

Acton
massacre

Aug 17, 1862

Relate the Acton massacre, shooting down of Jones & his wife, & Baker & Webster.

Never were people so suddenly awakened from a dream of security, & plunged into such hopeless terror, as the inhabitants along the Minnesota, & through out the adjoining country, during the 3 or 4 days after the massacre at the Lower Agency.

The Indians frenzied by their own deeds, & with all the long slumbering fires of their savage nature fully aroused, they committed every act of atrocity that a devilish ingenuity could suggest.

from p.
709 on

Dwight Massacre by J. T. Headley - Ch. I to be found in Indian Races of N. & S. America" by Brownell

Headley relates that 644 whites were massacred & that 93 soldiers had fallen in the efforts to repress the outbreak.

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Dakota County by W. H. Mitchell (1868)

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1862

1865

1871

The Early Settlement & History of Redwood County. - Orlando B. Turrell

Redwood county had previously formed a part of Brown county, & earlier Blue Earth county. The act creating Redwood county was passed by the legislature of 1862, & a second act changing & defining its boundaries & providing for its civil organization was passed in 1865. At later dates the counties of Lyon, Lincoln, Yellow Medicine, & Lac qui Parle have been formed from the territory originally included in this county. It has had its present area since 1871.

Between 1856 & 1858 the Federal government through the influence of various persons established Indian reservations to enable the Indians to have a fixed home & adopt the habits of civilization. One of these reservations was the Sioux Indian reservation on the west bank of the Minnesota river a ten mile wide strip extending from a short distance above New Ulm to Big Stone Lake.

There were over 6,000 Indians on this reservation at the time of the outbreak of 1862, known as the "Annuity Sioux Indians", divided between the upper agencies at Lac qui Parle & Yellow Medicine & the Lower Agency in what is now the town of Sherman in Redwood county.

At the Lower Agency the government buildings, with the trading posts of Forbes & Myrick, formed quite a village. In that vicinity about 800 acres of land had been broken up & cultivated, comfortable brick houses had been built & altogether the outlook was promising for the success of the effort to lift the red man to a higher plane of existence. Therefore, this county, previous to its settlement by the white man, has a history of settlement & cultivation as well as of razine, plunder and blood.

The Redwood River rises in Lincoln & Pipestone counties & flows easterly across this county in the Minnesota, below Redwood Falls.

1. Burial party sent out Aug. 31. & Battle of Birch Creek. p. 1.
- 2) battle of Wood Lake. p. 1.
3. number of whites & soldiers killed p. 2.
4. Damage at the Lower Agency p. 2.
5. Treaty of 1837. p. 2.
6. " of 1851, its provisions & effect. p. 3.
7. settlement of Indian accounts under the Treaty of 1851. Indians dissatisfied p. 4.
8. Indians arrive in June at Redwood Agency for their annuities p. 4.
9. Indians given provisions at Redwood Agency & all left for their homes by Aug.
- 7 - troops return to Fort Ridgely on August 11th. p. 5.

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P. 202

Aug 31
Sept 1-2-3
1862.

Commanded
by Maj. Joseph
R. Brown

Birch.
Coulée

Early History of North Dakota - by Col. Clement A. Lounsberry.

August 31st a burial party was sent from Fort Ridgely to bury the dead at Redwood Agency & such other bodies as might be found. After burying a large number, they camped at Birch Coulée on the night of September 1st, in an extremely unfavorable position, & were surprised by the Indians at day break, September 2nd, the battle lasting all day & until late in the evening. The command numbered 150 men, exclusive of 17 teamsters, commanded by Major Joseph R. Brown, whose wife & children were then captives in the hands of the Sioux, who had put a price upon his head. The troops were Company A, Sixth Minnesota, under Capt. Hiram P. Grant, & the Bullen Guards under Capt. Joseph Anderson. There were seventeen wagons parked about the camp, these being turned over & used as a barricade. Ninety horses connected with the camp were shot within fifteen minutes after the battle commenced, & the wagon box in which Mrs. Justina Kreiger (a wounded refugee) lay during the battle, was literally shot to pieces, although the seriously wounded Mrs. Kreiger only sustained five slight wounds. At the close of the engagement 26 soldiers lay dead, & 45 wounded were suffering in fearful anguish for want of attention, & especially for water, which there had been no means of securing.

Sept 23

Wood Lake

P. 203

September 23rd, the last of the series of battles during the uprising, was fought. A large force, consisting of the Third, Sixth & Seventh Minnesota, & the Rinville Rangers, supported by artillery, & commanded by Col. Sibley, gained a decisive victory over the Indians, resulting in the surrender of two hundred & seventy captives on September 26th, just forty days from the beginning of the outbreak. Here sixteen Indians were buried from those killed in the battle, but many of the dead & most of the wounded were carried away.

After the battle of Wood Lake the fighting spirit took its departure from the greater portion of the Indians in the hostile camp, & as the soldiers advanced, they displayed flags of truce.

by Col. Clement A. Lounsberry

p. 206

The number of citizens killed during the outbreak was 644, 32 of whom were in Dakota. The number of soldiers killed at the several battles was 93, making a total loss of life of 737. To this list of casualties must be added the many wounded

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all of the dwellings (excepting two Indian homes), stores, mills, shops, & other buildings, with their contents, & the tools, implements & utensils upon the Yellow Medicine Agency were destroyed or rendered useless. The value was 425,000

at the lower Redwood Agency, the stores, warehouses, shops & dwellings of the employees, with their contents, were destroyed, together with eight houses belonging to the Indians & occupied by them, & a new stone warehouse nearing completion. The value was 375,000. Adding to this the destruction of fences, loss of crops, & of lumber & supplies, the loss to the Indians on the reservation alone was not less than a million dollars.

The loss of property & crops destroyed belonging to the settlers was even greater.

Picture of
Little Crow

p. 190

p. 192-193

Treaty of
1837

Under the treaty of 1837, the Sioux ceded all of their lands east of the Mississippi, & all of their islands in said river to the United States. They were to receive 300,000 to be invested for their benefit at 5 per cent interest; 110,000 to pay to relatives & friends of the Sioux having not less than one-fourth blood; 40,000 for the payment of the just debts of the Sioux Indians interested in the lands; an annuity of 10,000 in goods to be distributed among them; & to continue for twenty years; 8,250 annually for twenty years for the purchase of medicines, agricultural implements and stock, & for the support of a physician, farmer & blacksmith; 10,000 for tools, cattle & other useful articles; 5,500 annually for twenty years for provisions, & 6,000 in goods to be delivered to the chiefs & braves signing the treaty upon their return to St. Louis.

Fifteen annual payments had been made under this treaty when the treaty of 1851 was signed.

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History of North Dakota by Col. Lounsberry.

Under the treaty of Traverse des Sioux & Mendota, signed in 1851, the Sioux were to receive \$3,303,000, of which \$2,748,000 was to be permanently invested for their benefit, the Government paying thereon 5 percent interest for a period of 50 years. The interest was to be applied annually, for agricultural improvement & civilization, for educational purposes, for the purchase of goods & provisions known as their annuities, & for an annuity in money amounting to \$11,000.

The appropriation for the fulfillment of the treaty of 1851, covered these several amounts & the sum of \$495,000 to enable them to settle their affairs & pay their just debts, & the expense of their removal to other lands, & for their subsistence for one year after reaching their new home. The appropriation also provided for the sixteenth payment under the treaty of 1837.

It was the custom of the traders to make advances to the Indians in the way of arms & ammunition for their hunting expeditions, for blankets & clothing & other necessary articles, to be paid for on their return from the hunt. Therefore there were large sums claimed to be due from the Indians, including balances running back to the treaty of 1837. Some were due from deceased Indians, & other sums from dishonest ones, who had defrauded the traders or attempted to do so. A portion was for supplies furnished them as a tribe, for cattle, etc.

Under the treaty, Congress had provided that no portion of the money appropriated should be paid to attorneys, & yet there was paid to one Hugh Tyler, the sum of \$55,250 for "discount & percentage." ostensibly the payment was made by the full bloods & traders from the sums awarded them, but there was a feeling among the Indians that this money had been wrongfully taken from them. Tyler came among them as a special agent of the Interior Department, & disbursing agent accom-

4
p. 195

anying the commission which made the treaty, by Col. Lounsbury

The Indians were not satisfied with the settlements made under this treaty; they could not understand why the tribe should pay individual debts or losses incurred in dealing with deceased or dishonest Indians. They felt that they had been deprived of their land, & were being defrauded of the money they were to receive for it.

Congress after full investigation by a committee accepted the accounts, filed with Governor Ramsey and authorized their settlements.

p. 196

The annual appropriation for 1862 was \$150,000. While it should have been available July 1st, it was not made until July 5th. The requisition of the Indian Office for the money was made July 25th, & in due time the money was sent from the U. S. Mint, & reached Fort Redgely on the evening of the outbreak. The amount so sent was \$71,000, that being the amount allotted for annuities. There were also annuity goods in the warehouse on the reservation, which it was the intention to distribute at the time of the payment of the money annuities.

p. 196

By July 1st, the Indians had arrived in large numbers, at the Redwood Agency. They had come from their hunting grounds & from their homes, & were prepared to stay for a few days only, anticipating the payment of the annuity money, & ^{also} the distribution of the annuity goods in the warehouse on the reservation. Two weeks later, the money not having arrived yet & the provisions not having been distributed by the agent in charge at the agency, the Indians in camp about the agency, were suffering from lack of food & their condition was unendurable. As late as August 4th, the plight of the Indians being grave, which condition made them very wild & unmanageable, the military commander, Lieutenant Sheehan finally persuaded the Indian agent to act & issue food to them, but this issuance of provisions was wholly inadequate in quantity to appease and allay the suffering of the Indians.

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History of North Dakota

by Col. Clement Lounsbury

1862

The Indians then withdrew & scattered to their homes and held a council, at which it was decided to commence a war at once, but Standing Buffalo, a chief of the Sissetons & a few others, protested, & it was finally agreed to wait a little while. All the Indians having disappeared by the evening of the 7th, the soldiers on guard about the Redwood Agency, on August 11th, returned to their station at Fort Ridgely.

But the Indian hearts were bad. As they roamed over the country in small parties, the events of the past few weeks were under almost constant discussion, & the voice of the majority of every party was for war. But the council had decided to wait & they waited.

Aug. 13, 1862

The next is the affair on Sunday August 17th, 1862 at Acton, in Meeker County,

1. Winitia money arrives day to date p. 1
2. Acton murders p. 1
3. Outbreak begins, Monday, Aug. 18th p. 1
4. Ambush of Capt. March's command p. 1
5. Effect on Indians by March's defeat. p. 1
6. Location of New Ulm & the attack p. 2
second attack on the city, description of the
defense - & its abandonment. p. 2-3
7. First attack on Fort Ridgely p. 3
(Wed. Aug. 20 - Thurs. Aug. 21, Frid. Aug. 22)
8. Maj Brown's expedition Aug. 31 p. 3
to bury the dead, etc.
9. who selected the camp & battle of
Birch Coulee pp. 3-4
10. scene about the camp when re-
lieved by Col Sibley & Col McPhail p. 4.
11. Col. Sibley leaves a note for Little Crow. p. 4
12. Sept. 18, 1862. Sibley leaves Fort
Ridgely to pursue the Indians p. 5
13. Battle of Wood Lake p. 5
14. Camp. Release p. 5
- 15 Execution at Mankato - Dec. 26, 1862. p. 5

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bk. XXVI
pp. 137-144
bk. XXVII
pp. 145-152

p. 137

History of Washington County & the St. Croix Valley. — by Rev. Edward D. Neill J. Fletcher Williams.

While the exciting events of the Civil War were occurring, and attracting the attention of our citizens, a fearful storm was gathering in an unexpected quarter, & soon burst upon our state with appalling fury. The Sioux Indians, of whom several thousand were living on reservations in the western portions of Minnesota, had been for several weeks (since June 14th) collected at the Yellow Medicine Agency, to receive their annual payment. The 70,000 in gold coin, which was to pay the Indians their annuities, as soon as it could be got ready, was sent by special messengers, and arrived just one day too late. Meantime the Indians were waiting impatiently for their money (annuity) & for the provisions & other supplies which were to be given them when the payment was made. They were almost destitute of food, & many were suffering from hunger. In this discontented condition, they were ready to listen to bad counsel.

Aug. 17, 1862

Then events of Sunday, August 17th, at Acton, Meeker County.

Aug. 18, 1862

p. 138

At sunrise Aug. 18th, the massacre commenced at the Lower Sioux Agency, near Redwood. The first victim of this hellish plot was James W. Lynde, a clerk in the trading house of Nathan Myrick. Other white persons in & near the houses at the agency, were either killed or wounded, within a very short time. At this point the Indians ceased their carnage, in order to plunder the stores & government warehouses, & this delay enabled Rev. S. D. Heyman & some other whites, to escape to Fort Ridgely, spreading the alarm as they went. Meantime, the whites at the upper, or Yellow Medicine Agency, some thirty miles distant, were in ignorance of these dreadful scenes, & of the danger which threatened them.

Monday
morning Aug.
18th 1862.

Ambush & massacre of Capt. Marsh's command at the Redwood ferry opposite the Agency. Out of the forty-four of his command, twenty-four were dead, including Capt. Marsh, who was drowned while attempting to swim across the river with the rest of his command. Heyman got over in safety, & made their way to the fort about dark. Some of the wounded also managed ultimately to escape, a few reaching the fort three days later. Thus ended the battle of Redwood ferry, the first engagement of the war.

p. 139

Flushed with this easy victory in their first encounter with the troops, the Indians now considered that the way was clear for their bloody war of extermination. They scattered in every direction, carrying death & torture to the homes of all settlers within reach. After the murder of the inmates of a house, pillage was the next step, & the torch was then generally applied to it. Often times the wounded victims, unable to escape, being burned to death.

p. 140

History of Washington County & the St. Croix Valley.

p. 140

Day after day the columns of smoke rising here & there showed where the warlike bands of demons were plying their work of destruction, while night after night the sky along the frontier was lurid with the light of burning homes.

Aug 18th, 1862

Monday noon, August 18th, 1862, the messengers & guard in charge of the 70,000 in gold, reached Fort Ridgely, & remained there during the siege.

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The town of New Ulm is situated on the south bank of the Minnesota River, thirty miles from St. Peter, and eighteen miles below Fort Ridgely.

Tues. Aug 19, 1862

Precautions against attack from the hostile Indians were taken none too soon. About 4 o'clock on Tuesday (Aug. 19th), a party of Indians attacked the town, burned several buildings on the west edge of town, & kept up a continuous fire on the defenders within the barricade. When reinforcements from St. Peter arrived, the savages were compelled to retire, about dark, several having been killed. After the battle on Tuesday, no attack was made on the town until Saturday morning, August 23rd. During this interval of quiet time was spent in erecting barricades, & other works of defence.

p. 143
Aug. 23, 1862
Saturday

About ten o'clock on Saturday, the second attack on the town occurred, being carried out by a larger force of savages. The enemy, from their great numbers, were able to surround the town, & soon poured into it a fire from every direction. The battle raged furiously & without intermission until dark. Many of the defenders were wounded, & several were killed. The enemy left a dead on the field, besides many killed & wounded carried off. & had gained, so far, no great advantage.

p. 144

After a consultation of those in command of the defence of the town, it was deemed necessary to contract the lines of defence toward the center of town. To do these, most of the buildings, not situated in the center of the town were burned. At dawn on Sunday (Aug. 24th), the Indians feebly renewed their attack. In order to get near enough to the barricade or buildings to do any damage, the Indians were forced to pass over an open space in the face of the defender's rifles, there not being anything to seek behind because of the burning of the buildings in the outer part of town. Therefore they kept up a fire at long range for three or four hours, but as it made

Sunday
Aug. 24, 1862

S 977.6

W 28.1

History of Washington County etc.

no impression they ceased the attack about noon & left in the direction of the lower agency.

Aug. 25, 1862

Evacuation of the town on Monday, August the 25th. In the attack on New Ulm, ten whites were killed and about fifty wounded.

Aug 29, 1862

Aug 21, 1862

First attack on Fort Ridgely about three o'clock on Wednesday, the 20th, of August. The next morning the attack was renewed about 9 o'clock & lasted hotly for an hour, when the savages retreated, but again attacked the fort about 6 P.M., when another engagement took place & lasted about an hour.

That night, Little Crow ^{with his forces} returned to the Lower Agency, where he found the upper Indians, whom he had sent for.

Friday, Aug

22nd, 1862

With these reinforcements, the Indians, about noon on Friday, commenced a determined & furious assault on the fort. For five hours the battle raged hotly, the defenders pouring volley after volley into the attackers, forcing them to retreat. About dark the fire ceased. At dawn there were no signs of Indians about the fort, & the garrison breathed free.

Aug. 31, 1862

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While waiting at Fort Ridgely for proper supplies & equipments, & before undertaking any offensive campaign against the Indians, Col. Sibley sent out, on August 31st, a detachment to bury dead bodies, rescue any fugitives that might be found, & make reconnoissances. This detachment consisted of part of Co. A, Sixth Regiment, Capt. H. P. Grant, about seventy mounted men under Capt. Joseph Anderson, & a fatigue party - about one hundred & fifty (150) in all, accompanied by seven teen teams. The whole force was in command of Maj. Joseph R. Brown, who was perfectly familiar with the country, & with Indian warfare. On the first day's march 16 dead bodies were found & buried. The next day (Sept. 1st) the force separated into two detachments. During this day fifty five mutilated bodies were buried. In the evening the whole force went into camp at Birch Coulee (or Coulee) in a spot selected by Major Brown. No Indians had been seen that day. [This is the first time that Major Brown has been credited with selecting the camp site at Birch Coulee, every other writer & historian has stated that the camp site was selected & the camp set up ^{already} by Capt. Brown when Maj. Brown returned & joined the rest of his command.]

Thurs

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P 977.6
W 28.1

p. 149
Sept. 2, 1862

Battle of
Birch Coohee

History of Washington county

By Rev. Neill & J. Fletcher Williams

Just before daybreak on the 2nd the camp was aroused by a volley of firearms & the yells of Indians, who had crawled unperceived within a few yards of the encampment. For a few minutes terrific volleys were poured into the tents, cutting them into shreds & wounding or killing a number of men and horses. The soldiers, sheltering themselves as well as they could behind wagons, dead horses, etc., returned the fire.

The firing in the still of the morning was heard by the sentinels at Fort Ridgely, fifteen miles away, & a detachment of troops under Col. McPhail, at once pushed off to their relief. When within three miles of Birch Coohee, they were met by such a large force of Indians they could not advance, & sent a courier back for reinforcements. Meantime the troops of Major Brown's command lay all day in their rifle pits, which they had dug with the implements at their command, keeping the Indians at bay.

As soon as the courier reached Fort Ridgely, a large force, with some artillery, commanded by Colonel Sibley, went to the relief of McPhail's & Brown's troops. Col. Sibley after joining forces with McPhail's command pushed on to Birch Coohee, dislodging & driving the Indians from their positions after keeping the defending troops under fire for thirty hours, without food or drink.

The camp was an awful scene, when relieved. Twenty-three men had been killed outright or mortally wounded, forty-five badly wounded, & all of the horses, numbering about ninety killed. The dead were buried on the spot, & the wounded carried back to Fort Ridgely in wagons. Thus terminated the most bloody battle of the war, & one which spread gloom over the State.

Before leaving the battle field of Birch Coohee, Col. Sibley left the following note attached to a stake:

"If Little Crow has any proposition to make to me, let him send a half-breed to me, & he shall be protected in & out of camp."

W. N. Sibley
"Col. Comdr. Mil. Exped'n"

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W. 28, 1

History of Wash. county,

Col. Sibley had reason to believe that their repeated defeats had discouraged the foe, & negotiations could be made with the disaffected Indians, & those tired of fighting, for the release of the prisoners. This note bore good fruit very soon.

The same courier who brought Little Crow's letter also brought one privately from the chief Wabasha, & Taopi, a Christian Indian. They asserted that they were forced into the war, & were now anxious to make peace, & if a chance offered they would come in & give themselves up, with all their prisoners. Col. Sibley in reply urged them to do so, & promising them protection, adding that he was now strong enough to crush all the Indians who held out.

Sept 18, 1862

Col. Sibley, after the arrival of the Third Regiment & the supplies & ammunition he had needed, broke camp, on September 18th, & started in pursuit of the Indians at or near Yellow Medicine. On the morning of Sept. 23rd, while

Sept. 23
Wood Lake
==

encamped near Wood Lake, the Indians suddenly attacked the force. After a very spirited fight, in which the Renville Rangers & various companies of the Third, Sixth & Seventh Regiments participated, the Indians were forced to flee. The battle lasted an hour & a half. Col. Sibley's losses were four killed & fifty wounded. The Indians lost quite a number - thirty, it is said - fifteen being found dead on the field. After burying the dead, Col. Sibley marched toward Lac qui Parle, near which place Wabasha had notified him he would meet him & deliver up the prisoners.

Sept. 26,
1862
Camp
Release.

On Sept. 26th the column arrived at the camp where the friendly Indians had the prisoners & made their own near by. It was opposite the mouth of the Chippewa River & was named by the soldiers "Camp Release." Col. Sibley without delay visited the Indians & demanded the captives. They were at once produced, nearly two hundred & fifty in number.

Execution of guilty Indians at Mankato, Dec. 26th, 1862

- 1) Facts about the various Little Crow p. 1
- 2) Location of the various Sioux tribes pp. 1-2.
- 3) Facts about the Upper Agency p. 2.
- 4) Location of Fort Ridgely. p. 2.
- 5) Little Crow warns, but two of the outbreak p. 3
- 6) Facts about the ferryman p. 3
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- news reaches the Upper Agency - Little Paul,
Oherday, Lorenzo Lawrence, Twastars & Renvilles
warn the missionaries & agency employees. p. 4
- 8) New Ulm attacked, Indians fire some buildings
14 whites killed - 60 wounded, 190 buildings burned p. 5
- 9) Battle of Birch Cooley, & the Indian bands
who participated, in this engagement. p. 5
- 10) The three Sisseton chiefs who refused
to participate with Little Crow in the outbreak pp. 6 & 7
- 11) After Birch Cooley, Col. Sibley returned to
Fort Ridgely to await provisions & drill the troops p. 6
- 12) Sibley's camp at Wood Lake p. 7
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- 15) Destruction of Indians after the battle p. 8.
- 16) Location of Birch Cooley township & who
was the original owner of the land. p. 8
- 17) Good Description of Little Crow p. 9

Dakota or Sioux Indians by Doane Robinson (1904)

(1805)

Wapasha, chief of the Wappekutes, had his home at Winona. Wapasha III, Wapasha & Big Eagle stood for peace.

p. 76.

Sept. 23, 1805

Little Crow (the second of that name) whose home was at Kaposia (present site of city of St. Paul), on the 23rd, Monday, made the first treaty ever entered into between the U.S. government & the Dakota Indians, by which the Mdewakantonians relinquished to the government a tract nine miles square for military purposes. Genl. Zebulon Pike made treaty.

Little Crow was the name of a dynasty rather than a man.

1. First Little Crow visited the English in Canada during the revolution.

2. Number 1, was the father of that Little Crow so much in evidence in recent pages of history & whom Pike made head chief of the Dakotas. He continued in office until his death at about 58 years of age in 1827, or thereabouts (Chatan Wakowamani).

3. He was succeeded by his son, Wamde Tanku, meaning "Big Eagle" who was chief until some time in the middle forties when his death resulted from an accidental gunshot wound & he was followed by his son Taoyatiduta, meaning "his red people."

4. This Little Crow, of the war of the Outbreak was a son of number 3.

There was no trouble with the whites during the reign of Little Crow, number 2 & 3. Number 3 reigned for about 20 years. Taoyatiduta, the eldest son of number 3 was made chief because the other two sons had been killed in a fight with the Chippewas.

p. 252-3

1862 was an epochal year in the history of the Dakota nation & before entering upon its story it may be well to briefly review the situation & condition of the various bands at this time. The Mdewakantonians & Wappekutes at the Lower Agency had been located on that reservation nine years & schools & churches were provided for their accommodation and advancement. They had about 200 acres of ploughed lands and annually grew a considerable quantity of corn, vegetables, & other crops. There were all told 3,213 of them. They had never become deeply interested in missionary work & but few of them

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were professors of religion. Bishop Whipple had an Episcopal mission there & John P. Williamson a plant for the American board. The government had provided them a saw mill & a grist mill, blacksmith & carpenter shops, so that they were equipped with all of the ordinary conveniences of a civilized agricultural community. The government had already provided some of the more progressive Indians with houses & Agent Galbraith had completed arrangements to erect about 90 others, & before August many of these were completed & occupied. Little Crow, having great influence with the wild Indians, in June of 1862 agreed with the agent that in consideration of the building for himself of a good brick residence he would settle down to work & would use all of his influence to bring the idle young men of his bands to the ways of industry. Little Crow was to dig the cellar & do the necessary hauling of lumber & material. He was engaged in this work & the carpenter had completed all of the preliminary work for Little Crow's house when interrupted by the outbreak.

At the Upper Agency there were 175 families of farmer Indians, Christians, who wore citizens' clothing, living upon their lands, many of them in good houses & having about 1300 acres of crops. These farmers were both Sissetons & Wahpetons. The Upper Indians totalled 4,500. Everything indicated that they were fast becoming an independent self supporting people. (Report of Agent Galbraith, for 1862)

At this time (1862) Fort Ridgely, situated upon the east side of the Minnesota River, 13 miles below the Lower, or Redwood agency, which was on the west side of the river, was under the command of Capt. John F. March of Co. B, Fifth Minnesota volunteer infantry.

These were the circumstances preceding the 18th of August, 1862, when the outbreak began. It will be seen that the situation was tense. The annuity money had not arrived & the Indians believed it never would come. The authority of the government was despised. Indians five years before had defied authority, committed the most horrible

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p. 269-270

A History of the Dakota or Sioux Indians - Doane Robinson.
crimes, & the government had made only the most weak and ineffectual effort to punish him. The Sissetons had defied the troops & broken into the warehouse & had been re-warded & not punished for what they had done. The government had a terrible war (Civil War) on its hands & its armies were being defeated in every engagement. If ever they were to recover their lands & their old time freedom of action now was the time. Little Crow, at the Lower Agency, was at the head of the malcontents, but it was not his intention to take any action as long as there was hope of the annuity money's coming. He proposed to fasten upon that great & then fire & blood, the tomahawk & the scalping knife were to have their sway. An incident unforeseen precipitated the conflict before the money came.

Q. 272 -
273.

Of all the lifelong friends of Little Crow's among the white settlers & employees at the agency, Little Crow had the decency to give warning to but two of them before the blow fell & to these only at the last moment & the general massacre had commenced before they got away. These favored two were Philander Prescott, the government interpreter, & the Rev. S. D. Hinman, the Episcopal missionary. Rev. Hinman escaped to Fort Ridgely, but Prescott, who was nearly 70 years of age, & had lived 45 years with these Indians & married to one of them, was overtaken several miles from the agency & murdered.

Q. 274

One of the most heroic circumstances among the many acts of heroism among the whites that day (Aug. 18th) was the conduct of Martelle (his name spelled different by almost every writer or historian), the ferry man across the Minnesota upon the road from the agency (lower) to the fort. He refused to leave his post as long as there were any whites upon the west side of the river seeking safety. Martelle was murdered & his body horribly mutilated by the Indians, soon after ferrying the last of the whites across the river to safety.

Dakota or Sioux Indians.

- by Doane Robinson

copy map on page 275.

unp-map
copy
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all day of the 18th the massacre kept up on the lower reservation. No house in the valley was left unvisited, no household visited was spared. Finally, when death & destruction was strewn broadcast throughout all of that section Little Crow bethought him of the Upper & Western tribes & fleet runners were despatched to call to the work all of the Dakotas. The runners reach the Upper Agency before midnight of the 18th. Then came the manifestation of the value of the work accomplished by the missionaries during the long years of darkness & discouragement. Instantly the "Cuthaivs", the Christian Indians, were alert. Simon, Little Paul, John O'therday, Lorenzo Lawrence & all of that noble band, Solomon Two stars, & the Revowilles, men who in that awful hour won undying fame for themselves. They immediately warned the missionaries & the agency (Upper) employees of their great peril. These Christian Indians were determined to protect their good white neighbors from the savage vengeance of their own people even at the cost of their property and their lives. To John O'therday, was entrusted the safety of the agency people & the refugees, early the next morning (the 19th of August) he led them, sixty-two in all, across the Minnesota to safety, & after a weary journey he landed them safely upon the lower Minnesota. The other Christian Indians in the meantime turned their attention to the safety of the missionaries, the Riggs & the Williamsons, & later escorted them to a place of safety.

p. 279

At New Ulm the Indians succeeded in setting fire to & destroying many buildings in the lower part of the town. Judge Flandrau, who was then in command of the defenders, drove the Indians from that part of town & ordered the burning of the remaining buildings outside of the barricade. The Indians, without the shelter of these buildings, then deemed the siege hopeless & withdrew at once to Little Crow's where another council was held. The whites lost 14 killed & sixty (60) wounded, 190 buildings were

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65971 a Dakota or Sioux Indians.

by Doane Robinson

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1862pp. 284-
285Maj. Brown
in commandBirch Coulee
Sept 1862

p. 287

were burned in the village, many of them substantial & valuable.

On August 31st Major Joseph R. Brown was sent out by Colonel Sibley with one company of the Sixth under Captain Grant & 70 men of the Cullen Guard under Captain Anderson with instructions to go to the Lower agency & to visit the country as far north as Beaver Creek to bury the dead & discover the position of the enemy. The first night this command camped on the Minnesota bottom opposite the agency. The next morning Major Brown with a detachment went across the Minnesota river to the agency & looked over the ground there & Little Crow's village & came to the conclusion that no Indians had been about there for four days, & that they had gone to Yellow Medicine. Major Brown recrossed the Minnesota & at sunset joined Captain Grant who had gone into camp near the upper timber of the Birch Coulee, 3 miles from the agency. The camp that night was made on the smooth prairie about 100 feet back from the timber with the wagons parked around the camp & the horses tied to the wagons. It was about twelve miles from Fort Ridgely. At the attack on the detachment at Birch Coulee there were four chiefs with their bands; Big Eagle's, Red Legs', Grey Bird's & Mankato's. Little Crow was not with these Indians, he having set off with a strong party to harass the settlements northeast of the agency about Forest City & Hutchinson. The firing at the coulee being heard at the fort, Colonel Sibley sent McPhail with a detachment to reinforce Brown. Mankato & his band were at once detached from the force attacking the soldiers at Birch Coulee & went to meet Col. McPhail's command. This relief expedition of McPhail's numbered about 200 men & artillery, who dared not advance but sent to the fort for reinforcements. Sibley at once set out with his troops reaching McPhail's camp at midnight. The Indians then withdrew & went back to Yellow Medicine where they joined Little Crow's force which had returned from their raid to the northeast.

By Doane Robinson

at the battle of Birch Coulee there were fourteen killed & twenty-six wounded. The Indians lost but two killed and five or six wounded.

P. 288

Luckily for the Sissetons, after the attack on the warehouse, at the Upper Agency on August 4th they had returned to the Big Stone & went out onto the Shyenne for a buffalo hunt, & so during the period of the greatest excitement were beyond the zone of its influence.

1862

After the return of the two war parties, which occurred on the night of the 3rd of September, councils were frequent in the camps & the band of ^{the} friendship was constantly augmented in number & the hostiles lost in a corresponding degree.

These lower bands, who had established their camp on the Yellow Medicine, near the site of the Hazelwood mission, had in their possession 270 captives 104 of whom were white women & children.

Little Paul, an Upper Indian demanded time & again that the captives be turned over to him that he might restore them to their friends at Fort Ridgely, but the hostiles determined to keep them & take their chances.

After the Battle of Birch Coulee, Colonel Sibley returned to Fort Ridgely & remained there, disciplining & arming his men & hoping to get Little Crow to peaceable surrender the captives, until the 18th of September, when he moved out with his command. He crossed the river at the ferry & moved up the road to Yellow Medicine. The progress of this force was forever watched by Little Crow's scouts who kept their chief informed, who at this time had moved his camp up as far as Red Iron's village, at the mouth of the Chippewa. On the evening of the 22nd Sibley had reached Lone Tree Lake, since called Battle Lake, two miles south of the Yellow Medicine agency & three miles east from Wood Lake, where he encamped. Little Crow had determined to meet him at Wood Lake & make a bold resistance there.

Little Crow anxious to unite all of the Upper Indians & his own warriors to drive Sibley back, against sent for the Upper chiefs & Standing Buffalo, Scarlet Plume and Wanatan came down. They replied to Little Crow that they were

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Dakota or Sioux Indians by Doane Robinson

opposed to the war, that they always had kindly feelings toward the white people, & therefore it would not be advisable for them to be enemies of the whites. After writing & dispatching letters to Col. Sibley, the three Sisseton chiefs returned to the buffalo hunt on the Shyenne. This left about 250 friendly warriors & 800 hostiles in the joint camp at Red Irons where the captives also were when the battle of Wood Lake came on.

p. 293.
Camp at
Wood Lake

The forces of Col. Sibley, on the night of September 22nd, camped on the open prairie just northeast of Battle Lake & about a mile south of the edge of the bluff which forms the south bank of the Yellow Medicine. This bluff is about 300 feet high & is covered with small timber. The adjoining prairie where the military ^{was} encamped is rolling & a shallow draw makes down through it from Battle Lake to the river. The Indians had gathered in the timber on the side of the bluff.

In council that night (Sept 22) Little Crow called the Indians to take over the plan of action. His plan was for the Indians to crawl towards the outer guards under cover of the darkness, shoot the guards, then raise up in a body & rush upon the sleeping soldiers & massacre them. He had assured the hostile Indians that this plan would assure them an easy victory & lots of plunder, especially provisions. Solomon Two Stars, a friendly Indian, at the behest of Gabriel Renville, arose & denounced Little Crow's plan with withering sarcasm & denounced it as most preposterous & cowardly, "so cowardly as to be unworthy of a Dakota brave & of the great chief who proposed it." He was earnest, persuasive & forceful that the hostile Indians were filled with distrust of their leader. As a result of this speech by Two Stars Little Crow's plan was abandoned & in its stead it was agreed to attack the camp at day light in the morning.

from Gabriel Renville's narrative, p. 294
Monthly South Dakotan,
March & September, 1903.
p. 295.

Wood Lake
Sept. 23, 1862

At the close of the council Gabriel Renville passed the word about for the friendlies to assemble in a ravine farther west & it is said that so industrious were they that by morning out of more than 1,000 warriors in the vicinity only 300 actually took part in the battle. Therefore during the engagement (Wood Lake) the friendlies gathered on the prairie west of the battle field & out of gunshot & took no part in the fight. And after the battle these friendlies at once

by Doane Robinson.

entered into correspondence with Col. Sibley through Simon & John Othertday, who were with the army.

p. 295.

Little Crow, realizing that everything depended upon the result of this encounter, fought his men desperately & with admirable valor throughout the engagement, which lasted two hours when the Indians were compelled to withdraw. Four white soldiers were killed & forty wounded. The Indians lost thirty, killed & a large number wounded, among the killed was the chief Mankato. (From Sibley's report)

p. 296

After the battle, the Indians retired to the camp of Red Irons. In the meantime Little Crow's force was constantly diminished by desertions to the friendly. He was desperate & would no doubt have destroyed the captives had not the friendlies, now strong enough to do so, afforded them protection. Little Crow with a portion of his hostile army left camp, on Wednesday morning, the 24th.

p. 297

Two days later, the 26th, he was at Fort Abercrombie where he made an attack upon the garrison but was repulsed. Leaving the vicinity of the fort, he & his band retreated, leaving their camp equipage, blankets, etc., which the soldiers burned. Thus at the beginning of the winter the proud chief who six weeks before set out, with high boasts of power, to drive the whites from the state of Minnesota, passed out into the wilderness empty-handed, naked, held in horrible hatred by all of the white friends, with whom he had associated from his birth & detested by the Indians of his own tribe.

Sept. 25th,
1862.

By strong representations of friendliness, Colonel Sibley had sufficiently secured the confidence of the friendly Indians so that generally they remained to meet him when he came up. Col. Sibley found the captives as well & in as good condition as could be expected & they received him with indescribable joy.

Copy map
on p. 275
also map
on p. 321

Birch Cooley township - location S.E. 1/4 of S.W. 1/4 of Sec. 4, T 112 N., R. 34 W.

This village site was surveyed June 17, 1866. The original owner of this land was Louis La Croix, Sr.

Battles of Big Mound, Dead Buffalo Lake, Stony Lake
(July 24, 1863) (July 26, 1863) (July 28, 1863)

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p. 341.

He was the
4th Little Crow
known to history
in the direct
line of
succession

see page 1

From his boyhood Little Crow was an outlaw, disreputable in his habits, untruthful & deemed irresponsible & unsafe even by his own people. So bad, indeed, did he stand, that it was the intention of his father to disinherit him & confer the chieftanship upon a younger brother, but that brother was killed by the Chippewas in 1842 & in consequence when his father was called suddenly to die, from the effects of an accidental gunshot wound, he left the chieftanship to this son with great misgivings & reluctance, & with many admonitions for his reformation & advice for his future conduct of the office. He continued, as he came into power, adroit, treacherous, cruel, diplomatic, eloquent, disreputable, mistrusted by the white men who knew him intimately; feared & followed by the Indians who had no affection for him. He was regarded by all of the better Indians as an unsafe & ambitious counselor, even within his own band & the neighboring bands held him in real aversion. So bad did the Indians consider his counsel that they seceded him from the chieftanship, & it was to avenge this humiliation which his neighbors had put upon him that he railroaded them into war, against the better judgment & earnest protest of almost all of the men who had arrived at years of discretion, but having with the political finesse of which he was master gotten the impetuous & reckless young men to his way of thinking the same old men, not free from the traditions & customs which from time immemorial had held their people in thralldom, were unable to stand out against the demands of the warriors & so were carried into the war which from the beginning they felt must end in disaster to their people.

Most, if not all of the Sissetons & Wahpetons who remained in Minnesota after the battle of Wood Lake volunteered under Sibley as scouts during the ensuing war.

In Vol. 9 M. H. S. Ball - The Sioux outbreak in the year 1862, etc., by Rev. Moses W. Adams

With the rapid & marvelous increase of the white population coming by immigration into Minnesota during the ten or twenty years previous to the Sioux outbreak of August, 1862, there was at the same time the concentration, more & more, of the native Sioux or Dakota Indians, on well-defined & smaller reservations.

To this end, new treaties were made by the federal government, providing for the sale of their best & most desirable lands; and provision was made by treaty stipulations to induce the lower bands of Sioux on the Mississippi & Minnesota rivers to remove from the lands which they had so long occupied, to lands farther westward. This change was the result of the treaty of 1851, at Traverse des Sioux.

These treaty stipulations were not altogether satisfactory to the Indians, this, together with the remembrance of former treaties & their failure to realize the stipulated benefits thereof, & their oft-repeated wrongs, all combined to make them feel uncomfortable & restless.

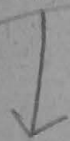
If the treaty stipulations had been honestly carried out, the Sioux would have been satisfied for the time, & possibly the outbreak would have been forestalled, Minnesota saved from so great a sacrifice of life & property, & the national government a vast amount of trouble & expense. Yet we cannot afford to ignore the fact that there was much at that time, as there had been for years before in the management of Indian affairs, that was exasperating to the Indians & increasing by provoking vexations to them.

It has been intimated, but a substantiation of the charge has not been made, that sympathizers with the Southern Rebellion, taking advantage of these unfortunate circumstances & of the national troubles, worked upon the fears & hopes of the dissatisfied & restless Sioux to make them more & more uncomfortable & unreconciled to the state of things. That these in their party strife & over-disloyalty to the Union, no doubt carried the matter further than they thought to do; & so kindled they kindled a fire, wild

Notice

my own ob-
servation.

E. Norrbom.



& destructive, which they could not control or extinguish. This writer states that the Indians who committed the murders at Acton in Meeker county, on Sunday, August 17th, 1862, were given liquor by a white man & were intoxicated when they committed these murders; this charge has been refuted by all the historians & writers who have given the facts of the Acton massacre. I believe this is the first time a person revealing the events of this massacre which precipitated the Sioux War & Massacre has stated that the Indians participating in the murders at Acton were intoxicated. This writer also sets out the fact that these murderers reported to their chief Little Crow what they had done at Acton the day before. From other writers the true facts are, that first these murderers returned to their own village & reported to their chief, who then told them to Shakopee who informed them that they should go & consult Little Crow. Then Shakopee & their chief went to Little Crow's village & consulted him about the best course to pursue, i.e. whether they should surrender the murderers to the whites or continue with the massacre, but Little Crow intimated that the murders had been committed sooner than he had intended, but now that it was already begun & blood was spilled, the war must go on.

This writer remarks that Col. Sibley on sending out the detachment that fought at Birch Coulee, gave orders that on Sunday night they should encamp at the mouth of Birch Coulee, nearly opposite the Lower Agency, & that on Monday after finishing the burial of the dead, that they go into camp for the night at the Birch Coulee crossing of the old Lac qui Parle road. [This report of Rev. Adams is very inconsistent with the statements & writings of other writers & persons who were with this expedition, for the reason that Col. Sibley gave no orders to the commander of this detachment where to make camp at night. This writer was with Capt. Grant & his men on this expedition, but returned to Fort Redgely, on Monday afternoon (Sept 1) after finishing the burial of the dead about the mouth of the coulee & in its vicinity.

1. page 1 very good material for opening,
before facts & results of the outbreak are
given p. 1
2. Predicament of Little Crow upon
learning of the murders at Acton p. 1-2
3. Effect of massacre on Upper Indians p. 2
4. Old Day warns the whites &
leads them to safety - Riggs & Williamson p. 2.
5. Location of Lake Shetek & massacre p. 3
6. Upper Sissetons savage in the Red River Valley.
& murder several at Breckenridge - Abercrombie p. 3
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8. Hole-in-the-Day, Chippewa chief advocates
a junction with the Sioux p. 3
9. Aug. 31, 1862, Sunday - Maj Brown's note
Capt. Grant's command leaves Fort Ridgely p. 4
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massacred & the number of soldiers killed in
every battle p. 5
13. members of the military commission
which tried the Indians p. 5

Sioux War & Massacre of 1862 & 1863 by Isaac V. D. Heard

Thus on the 17th of August, 1862, we find the instinctive hatred of this savage & ferocious people, who are able to bring into the field thousands of well armed warriors, the most expert & daring skirmishers in the world, fanned to a burning heat by many years of actual & of fancied wrong, & intensified by fears of hunger & of cold. We find this feeling belligerent, & manifesting itself in acts through the possibilities of success. We see the authority of the chiefs & older men set aside, (for they were accused by the young Indians who formed the "Soldiers' Lodge" with bribery to the interests of the whites,) & the energetic & turbulent spirit of youth assuming the direction of affairs. We see violence determined upon if a certain contingency should happen, (the failure to pay the annuity) & the more violent declaring for a general war. We find on the reservation the stores of the hated traders filled with goods which they have long sought to obtain, & within easy access the unarmed people upon whom rage & mania for the "feather" may wreak itself in slaughter.

What shall happen now when the wronged are friendly & cruel by nature, & the hated ones are of another race & within their power. Little did the peaceful settlers, who were quietly pursuing their toils, & gathering into their garner for the coming winter the summer's bounteous harvest, what fury, suffering, hardship & desolation was in store for them.

All seemed alike to be ignorant of the existence of the magazine whose explosion awaited but the spark - ignorant of the dark & lowering storm which threatened to burst with malign fury over their happy homes.

Crow had not yet arisen. He was awakened by their noise, & sat up with his blanket around him, & they told him what had transpired, & asked what they had better do. The exigency of the occasion was startling, & so fully alive was he to the perils to which a decision either way would expose him.

that, the perspiration came out in great beads upon his forehead. It was evident that the minds of those before him were made up, & that they would be joined by all the youngmen of the tribes. Suspicion of bribery by the whites had already attached to him & defeated his election for speakership, & his influence was fast waning. This nettled his scheming, ambitious spirit, & he knew that if he fell in with this movement his eloquence & superior intellect would secure him the leadership of the nation.

61. But, on his various trips to Washington, he realized the great danger of a hostile collision with the whites. But the fear of imminent personal danger which his refusal might then incite - the dream of possible success - the mad excitement of the hour, decided him, & he said: "Trouble with the whites is inevitable sooner or later. It may as well take place now as at any other time. I am with you. Let us go to the agency, & kill the traders & take their goods."

This author states that Capt. March started for the agency with 48 men. Nearly half of this number fell at the first fire, & those who were not killed outright perished by the tomahawk.

9.76. The Upper Indians having been informed of the massacres at the Lower Agency assembled together in council to determine what action should be taken; the council breaking up in a row, the Yanktonais, Sissetons & a few of the Wahpetons moved toward the houses of the whites for an attack.

Then Other Day, who had failed to persuade the Indians in council to remain friendly with the whites, took his wife, who was a white woman, & went to the homes of the whites to warn them of their danger, & then assembled them in a warehouse at the Agency, determined to defend them to the last. The next day he guided this group consisting of 62 men, women & children, across the river to safety at a settlement. Also friendly Indians helped the people at Mr. Riggs' place, (42, including the missionaries, Riggs and Williamson) located six miles above the Upper Agency to make their escape.

970.3
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The Sioux War & Massacre by Isaac V.D. Heard.

The Lake Shetek settlement was about 75 miles west of Mankato, & numbered about 45 persons, men, women & children. They were attacked by Lean Bear & his bands of White Lodge & Sleepy Eye. Ten of the party were taken captives, about 20 escaped, mostly severely wounded, & about 15 were killed. Lean Bear was killed here by one of the settlers, a Mr. Duly.

On the same day, while the second battle of at New Ulm was progressing, the Upper Sissetons commenced their ravages in the valley of the Red River of the North, murdering several persons at Breckenridge, & threatening Fort Abercrombie.

Tens of thousands of acres of crops, the fruits of hardy labor, into which the sickle had just been put, were abandoned to destruction. Battle, wantonly shot down, lay rotting upon the prairies beside their owners, others roamed, scared & wild, through the cultivated fields. From Fort Abercrombie to the Iowa line, a frontage of 200 miles, & extending inwardly from Big Stone Lake to Forest City, an area of over 20,000 square miles, the torch & the tomahawk asserted themselves supreme. Here & there armed parties from the interior settlements ventured a little distance forth for the burial of the dead, & to watch the movements of the foe; but, with this exception, in this vast district there was no white person save the flying fugitive, hiding himself by day, & shivering with affright at every sound & at every shadow that fell upon the grass.

Hole-in-the-Day, a wise, brave, & distinguished chief of the Sissetons, openly advocated a junction with the Sioux, & likewise urged an exterminating war in the councils of his people, & he himself had a personal encounter with the whites, in which shots were exchanged.

Only the sufferer - only he whose home has been consumed, his wife dishonored before his eyes, & the arms of his child unlinked forever from his neck, & heard the dull thud of the tomahawk as it sunk into their brains; only he who has been wounded unto death, & in his concealment felt upon his cheek the hot breath of his foe - only he can adequately appreciate the horrors of the frenzied protest of the savage Sioux against civilization's irresistible march.

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Sioux War & Massacre of 1862-1863 by Heard.

Aug. 31, 1862

On Sunday, the last day of August, Capt. Grant's company of infantry, 70 men of the Bullen Guards under Capt. Anderson, & a detail of citizens & other soldiers, together with seventeen teamsters with teams, numbering in all about 150 men, were dispatched, under command of Maj. Joseph R. Brown, to the Lower Agency, for the purpose of burying the dead, & ascertaining, if possible, the whereabouts of the enemy.

Sept 2 & 3
1862

Battle of Birch Coolie - 23 men were killed or mortally wounded, 45 more severely wounded, & the remainder had been hit or received bullet holes in their garments.

1862

On the afternoon of September 18th, the camp at Fort Ridgely was broken up, & the expedition, disgusted with the long inactivity, joyfully started on its upward march after the foe.

Sept. 22nd

Battle of Wood Lake fought.

The Sioux War & Massacre Heard

The expedition from Camp Release soon reached Mankato, near which a permanent camp for the winter was established, called "Camp Lincoln".

The following is Mr. Dalbraith's figures:

Citizens massacred: In Renville county, including Reservations, 221; in Dakota Territory, including Big Stone Lake, 32; in Brown County, including Lake Sisseton, 204; in the other frontier counties, 187 - 644. Soldiers killed in battle: Lower Sioux Agency, Capt. Merch's command, 24; Fort Ridgely & New Ulm, 29; Birch Creek, 23; Fort Abercrombie, Acton, Forest City, Hutchinson, & other places, including Wood Lake 17 - 93. Total $644 + 93 = 737$.

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The Military Commission, which organized, to try summarily the mulatto, mixed bloods & Indians engaged in the Sioux raids & massacres, consisted at first of Col. Brooks, Lieutenant Colonel Marshall (who was later relieved by Major Bradley), Captains Grant & Bailey, & Lieutenant Olin. Isaac V. D. Heard acted as recorder, Major Forbes of Col. Sibley's staff, acted as provost marshal, & Antoine Frenier as interpreter. All the prisoners were arraigned upon written charges assembled & furnished by the Rev. S. R. Riggs. He obtained it by assembling the half-breeds, & others possessed of means of knowledge, & interrogating them concerning suspected Indians. Rev. Riggs' long residence in the country, extensive acquaintance with the Indians, & his familiarity with their language, eminently qualified him for the position.

Some people have thought that the haste with which the accused (over 400) were tried must have prevented any accuracy as to the ascertainment of their complicity. Many of the prisoners confessed the fact of their participation in various battles or in the murder of the settlers, therefore their cases need ^{only} occupy a few minutes. Furthermore the officers comprising the court were well known to the community as respectable & humane gentlemen. They

resided a long distance from the scene of the massacres, & had no property destroyed or relatives slain. Before entering upon the trials they were solemnly sworn to a fair & impartial discharge of their duties. The fact that in many instances the punishment of imprisonment was graduated from one to ten years, & that in nearly one quarter of the cases the accused were acquitted, argues anything but inattention to testimony & blind condemnation.

If the question of the innocence of any of the accused existed, it was called to the attention of the court, & in no instance was there suggestion made of any defensive testimony but what the court had it produced, & gave it due weight & consideration.

Little Crow
origin of
name

Little Crow was a nickname bestowed upon the chief's grand father by the Chippeways from wearing a crow's skin upon his breast, & the name descended to his grandson, Little Crow formerly lived at Kaposia, 4 miles below St. Paul, & his band was called the Lightfoot Band.

Camp Atcheson, near Devil's Lake

Sibly
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Henry H. Sibly was born at Detroit in 1812. In 1834 he commenced his residence at Menota, at the mouth of the Minnesota River, as an employee of the Amer. Fur Co., where he has ever since resided. He was the first delegate to Congress from the Territory of Minn., & the first governor of the State. In person he is tall, portly, & commanding. His attention to whatever he undertakes is systematic & unwearied, & his reputation for honesty & courage unquestioned.

The federal government is never awakened to the corruption, inefficiency, & want of knowledge which pervades the Indian Department until some awful catastrophe shocks the public heart, & then it quickly relapses again into its accustomed lethargy.