

Wheaton, Minnesota
July 31, 1933

Mr. George H. Bradley,
St. Paul, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Bradley;

The experiences of my mother's people in captivity during the Sioux Outbreak have been told and retold so many times that in "entering the lists" in the contest for the trip to Itasca Park, I deemed it best to take a new tack and submit something about the shabby treatment of Standing Buffalo-something I have wanted to get "off my chest" ever since the visit of his son Jules Standing Buffalo some five years ago.

As some of the facts do not conform with the ideas of some of our historians, I want to state that they are drawn largely from Indian sources. I am related to the Sisseton Indians and have heard these matters discussed many times by those who were there. The statement of A.J. Campbell in his testimony in the Sisseton claims that he had been sent by Sibley to Standing Buffalo before the Battle of Big Mound and had returned with the answer: "Those Indians say they are going to fight" do not loom so large in importance with me as it apparently did to Dr. Folwell and other historians. In the first place if it had been true it is a safe bet that Gen. Sibley would have mentioned it in his report instead of stating "many professed a desire for peace", again, it is an unsupported statement and contrary to all previous reports on the subject, and again it is improbable that Gen. Sibley who knew the Indians and exercised diplomacy in his dealings with them, would have used a lower Sioux mixed blood on the mission, when there were many much nearer to Standing Buffalo who were available. Then, too, the reports of those engaged in the battle from the Indian side is all heresay evidence. Standing Buffalo's people were too far away to ever give their version of the affair.

I am enclosing a pamphlet on the family outbreak experiences, thinking it may interest you. I am also enclosing a postal card. Will you please acknowledge on it the receipt of my entry and advise if it is within requirements, as I have never seen the rules governing the contest.

Very truly yours,

Geo. G. Allanson

Stirring Adventures
---of the---
Jos. R. Brown Family

Description of Old Manse Near Sacred Heart,
Minn., and Events After Its Destruction



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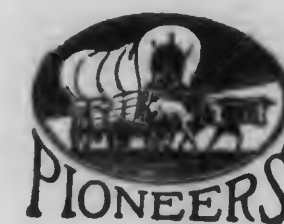
DAKOTA CONFLICT OF 1862 MANUSCRIPTS COLLECTIONS
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY. ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55102

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Joseph R. Brown

—Written by—
G. G. Allanson
Wheaton, Minn.



—Published by—
Sacred Heart News
Sacred Heart, Minn.

Cuts furnished through courtesy of Minnesota State Historical Society.

Note: The Sacred Heart News is printing certain articles written by G. G. Allanson of Wheaton, concerning the stone house erected on the bluff above the Minnesota river in 1861 by Maj. R. Brown and of the stirring events which befell the Brown family when they were taken captive by the Indians.

Picture if you can this old stone mansion as it must have appeared in 1861, three stories high and containing nineteen elegantly furnished rooms. Nearly every resident of this community has taken, at some time or other, the narrow winding road below the bluffs south of the river which lead past the present remains of the house. Too few realize the history bound up in the house and its location, the history which was made by brave pioneers of this section of Minnesota during the outbreak of 1862. It is for this reason that the publisher of the News feels that these articles by Mr. Allanson will prove most interesting.

Mr. Allanson's mother was a daughter of Major and Mrs. Jos. R. Brown and information gained from his mother has furnished material for his interesting manuscript.

For those of our readers who are not familiar with reasons for the bloody outbreak of 1862, in which so many pioneers were massacred, we

are quoting from the pages of a Ren-ville County History.

"Before the outbreak in 1862 there had been a most unhappy condition of affairs at the reservation. The Indians had been eagerly awaiting a payment due since the 10th of June. The Minnesota Indians payments for 1862 had been greatly delayed, and the authorities at Washington were to blame.

"Efforts have been made by many writers to show that the condition of the Indians was no worse than that of the white settler, that the Indian had a better chance to prosper than did the white pioneer. But the circumstances were much different. The pioneer came because he expected to become more prosperous here than he had where he came from. The Indian had no such hope, he had owned these stretches of land and he had lived in contentment.

"When he gave up the opportunity of securing his accustomed daily livelihood he was accepting the promise of a great nation that in exchange for his land he would be paid certain sums for his support. By July 18, 1862, the Indians had eaten nearly all their dogs and everything else of eatable character and there was actual starvation. The officials at Washington and their representatives on the reservation were solely responsible

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for the great massacre. Possibly for such is human nature, the Indians, smarting under untold wrongs, may have considered the possibilities of driving out the whites and resuming their ancient freedom. The spark which lighted the conflagration was the lawless acts of a few renegades, but there would have been no blaze from the spark, had not the whites, through guile and dishonesty, been gradually increasing the disgust, discontent and resentment in the Red Men's breast."



Present remains of the historic old stone mansion erected for Maj. Jos. R. Brown in 1861, on the bluff overlooking the Minnesota river. The ruins may be seen on the Strandjord property located approximately eight miles south east of Sacred Heart. The Brown home was originally most luxuriously furnished, and when fired by the marauding Indians, the house itself survived the fire. Here on the beautiful Minnesota in Renville county stands one of our most interesting historic ruins.

The first picture is taken from the south close up and the second is taken on the hillside above the ruins, looking southward. That there remains so much of the mansion is due to the good workmanship of the builders and not the good grace of the pioneer farmers who made use of the native granite in the walls after the house was burned by the Indians in 1862. There are many barn basements in the locality which contain granite taken from the ruins.

Historians tell us that as early as 1833 and 1834 that this intrepid explorer and adventurer, Jos. R. Brown went to the mouth of the Chippewa in the Minnesota. He was in his later years when he chose a site for his frontier home, intending to spend his last days there. Anyone who visits the beautiful site where the house was located, may well imagine why he chose that location, of all possible sites.



At the time of the Indian trouble my mother was living with her parents, Major and Mrs. Jos. R. Brown in a large stone house, situated on the Minnesota river, between Redwood and Yellow Medicine Indian agencies, twenty-three miles from the former and eight from the latter and on the opposite side of the river (about 8 miles of where Sacred Heart now stands).

It was some 60 feet long by 30 feet wide, three and one-half stories high, and contained 19 rooms—the upper half story being fitted as a billiard room and study by Major Brown. The house was built against the sidehill so that the second story could be entered from that side from the ground. While on the opposite side, facing the river, there was a full length porch and full length verandas for each story.

The house was built in 1861 from granite quarried and lime made and kilned right there. The builder was a man named Leopold Wohler, and it is a splendid tribute to his workmanship—that after having been

subjected to the heat of the burning of the wood work by the Indians and the storms of some sixty years, the portions of the walls not carried away are firm, and the hard plaster clinging to them as smooth and hard as though made yesterday. The house was elegantly furnished, the furnishings having been shipped from New York to Saint Paul and transported from there by wagons.

Travelers passing through the county, officials having business at the agencies and settlers who were beginning to flock to the rich agricultural lands of Kandiyohi county, who stopped there, always found the latch string out and were cared for without money and without price in true frontier style.

The young people, army officers and employees at the agency, were wont to gather at the house, for my grandfather had a large family, all fond of a good time, and this house, situated as it was, away beyond the border of civilization, was the scene of many festivities. Casper Drew, an old Scotchman, who had frequent

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occasion to visit my grandfather on business, named it "Farther-and-Gay," as he said, after a distant but festive castle in Scotland, though I suspect the old gentleman was a little confused and referred to Fotheringay Castle, where Mary Queen of Scots, was confined before her execution.

Although a lover of home, and never happier than when with his family, my grandfather's exceedingly active public life had deprived him largely of this pleasure, and I believe the building of so large and substantial a home not only was an expression of his faith in the future of Minnesota, but was the culmination of a plan to eventually retire from active life and end his days surrounded by his children, for he had filed their script so as to locate the lands of all his children on the Indian reservation adjacent to the stone house.

Alas for human plans! With the coming of the Indian outbreak he was again drawn into the vortex of activity, was appointed to the rank of major, commanding the whites, and was severely wounded at the battle of Birch Coulee and was for several years with Sibley in expeditions against the hostile Indians.

In the summer of 1862 all the members of the family were at home except my grandfather, who was in New York, engaged in perfecting a tractor, which was propelled by steam, an invention of his own.

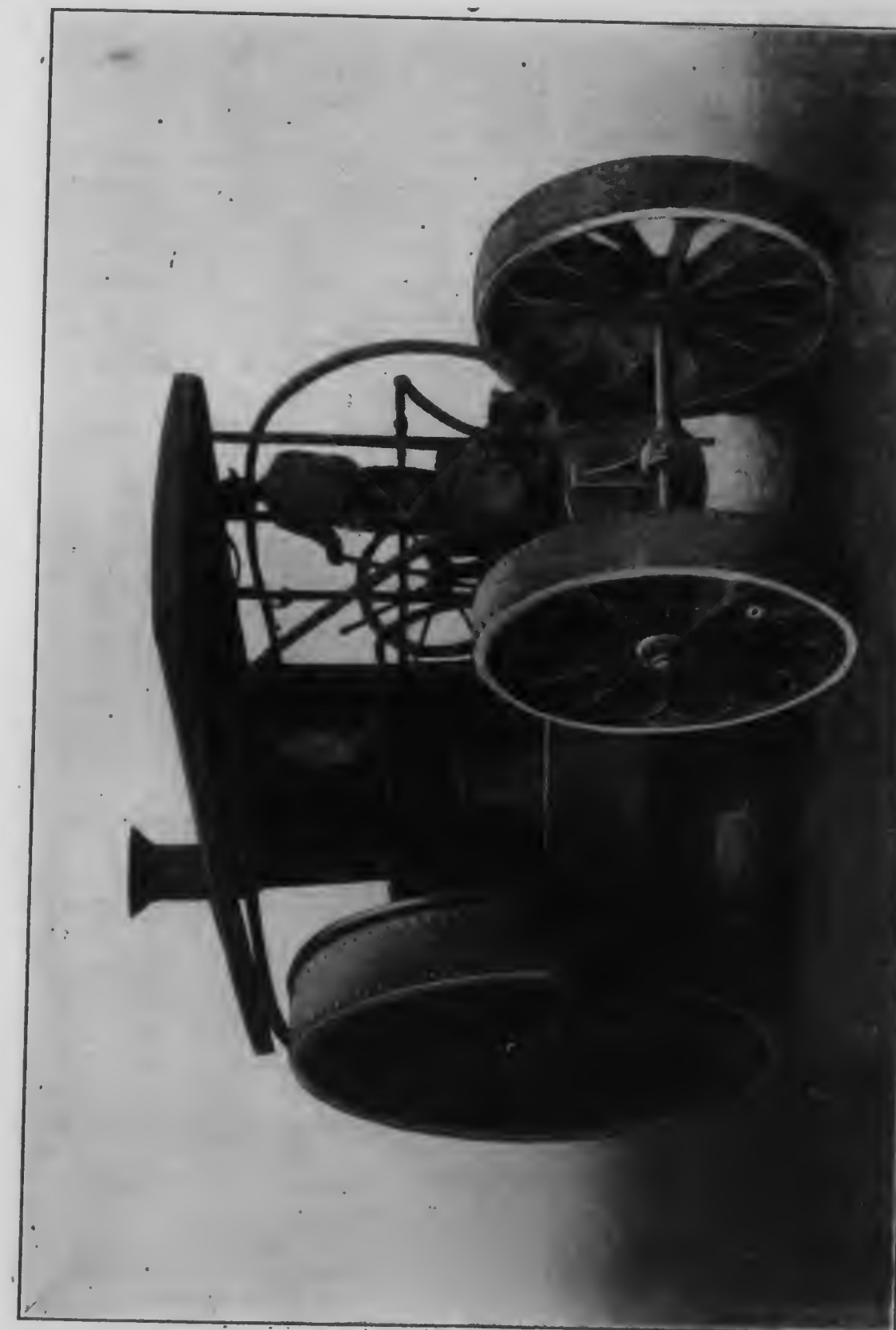
There was the oldest daughter, Lydia, and her husband, Charles Blair, and their two children; Angus Brown and wife; Ellen, Samuel J. Emily and Amanda (twins), Augusta, Joseph R. Jr., Sibley, and little Susie.

My mother, Ellen then a girl of 20 was just back from attending a sisters' school at Georgetown, D. C.

and Samuel J., 17 years old, back from Shattuck college to spend his vacation at home. He was a tall, strong, athletic fellow, straight as an arrow, and his wonderful physique stood him in good stead some four years later when serving as inspector of scouts. At that time outposts were established here and there along the danger zone as "eyes for the soldiers" to protect the settlers from hostile invasion. Receiving word that there were indications of an intended raid from the hostile Indians he started out on horseback to warn these different outposts to be on the lookout, was overtaken by one of the terrific blizzards which were the bane of the early prairie inhabitant, and after undergoing hardships which would have killed one less hardy and determined, succeeded in fighting the elements and staving off almost certain death until he reached a place of refuge—an experience which has left him a helpless invalid all his life.

But to return to my story. On August 18th my mother and her brother, Samuel, crossed the river at their ferry and drove up what is now the Sibley trail, towards Hazelwood—the Williamson and Riggs mission—to deliver the family washing to an Indian woman. On the way they passed the village of Little Dog, an Indian, who warned them to turn back and tell their mother to leave with them at once for a place of safety, as the lower Indians were killing everybody at the lower agency and intended to sweep the country as far as St. Paul. He also told them he was giving them warning at the imminent peril of his own life.

It is hard for buoyant, vivacious youth to believe a tale like this. It was a beautiful day with just a little of the tang of early fall; the birds



Jos. R. Brown's Second Steam Wagon

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were singing and all nature seemed in tune, and it did not seem in all that region that there could be any who wished harm to others. They kept on, and as they were passing the agency they met George Gleason, the government clerk, who chatted with them. He said he was going to the settlement that day with men James W. Lynd and Mrs. Wakefield for vacation visits, and promised on their return that he and Mr. Lynd would visit at their home for the fall hunting, fishing, horseback riding and a general good time. He had not heard of any trouble. Poor fellow, that was the last time they saw him alive. He and his party, with the exception of M's. Wakefield who was taken prisoner, were killed by the Indians that very day.

After completing their errands and visiting a number of people, one of whom seemed to have heard of impending trouble, they started on their return journey. They were again accosted by an old Indian woman who whispered to them that there was danger and to warn their mother. They returned home without further incident and reported to their mother what occurred. That night they held a family consultation lasting way into the night. The young people pooh-poohed the idea of trouble with the Indians, but M's. Brown was frightened. She knew the Indians, knew that many of them were in want, that the buffalo and other game had "vamoosed" with the coming of the whites, and that supplies supposed to be furnished the Indians at stated intervals for lands they sold, were sometimes held up for months by government red tape, while the Indians were in dire want; that treaties made by them in good faith were not being carried out for this reason.

After they had all gone to bed she locked and bolted the outside

doors and then retired. They had been in bed but a short time when there was a loud pounding at the door and someone calling. Blair opened the window and asked: "What do you want at this time of night?" The answer was, "For God's sake hurry, the Yonktonnais have broken out and are burning the stores and killing everybody at the agency. I have barely escaped with my life!" It was old Peter Roulliard, a Canadian Frenchman, who had married an Indian woman and lived with the Indians for many years. The hired man, Lensman, was awakened and dispatched for the horses, which were running loose on the prairie, but he was unable to catch them, so he went to the cattle yard, where there were some hundred head of cattle and cows, yoked up three pairs of oxen and hurriedly hitched them to three lumber wagons. By this time five or six neighboring families had arrived—two Ingalls girls, Leopold Wohler and wife, Garvies Cook and a number of others. These were given two of the outfits and Mrs. Brown and family occupied the other. Angus Brown and Charles Blair waited to catch a horse apiece and then followed on horseback. My mother gathered a few of her most precious belongings hastily and wrapped them in a cloth, and just as she was leaving the house the old clock boomed 4 o'clock. It was a last farewell. The house was shortly afterwards destroyed by the Indians, and she had not been back there since our trip there in 1918. The surroundings have not changed much, except that roadway has been cut in front of the house, which at that time gently sloped toward the river and where a fountain was then in the course of construction with the conduit pipes and fixtures all on the ground.

Peter Rouilliard had, of course made

a mistake, and Little Dog was right. It was not the wilder Yonktonnais, but the Mdewakantons who lived in closest proximity to the whites who were perpetrating the massacre, and the course they took over the hill toward Ridgely brought them into the very midst of hostile territory. If they had waited but half an hour longer, John Other Day stopped at the house, intending to take them with the other sixty-two whites he was conducting to safety.

They had driven about six miles when suddenly it seemed as though every blade of grass on the prairie had turned into an Indian in hideous war paint. They had been hidden in the grass with tufts tied about their heads for concealment, and soon surrounded the wagons. My grandmother grasped the situation and knew something must be done at once, so she stood up in the wagon, waved her shawl and cried in a loud voice, in the Dakota language, that she was a Sisseton and relative of Wannatan, Scarlet Plume, Sweet Corn, Ah-Kee-Pah, and the friend of Standing Buffalo, and she expected protection. Among the Indians were Cut Nose, Shakopee, and Dewanniye, three of the most blood-thirsty and cruel of Little Crow's band. They were about to make short work of them, when one of the Indians whom my grandmother had saved from freezing the previous winter, recognized her and jumping into the wagon, pointed to her and said: This woman saved my life and I will save hers now." By making the best of this diversion among their captors and threatening them with the vengeance of the entire bands of Sissetons and Wahpetons, should harm befall any of them, she succeeded in saving not only the lives of her family, but of the others as well.

The Biblical promise, "Bread cast

upon the waters will return after many days" was never more clearly exemplified than in the case of the Indian whom my grandmother had saved from freezing to death in the winter of 1861-62. One morning after a terrible two days storm, my grandmother, from the hillside back of the stone house, noticed on the knoll which they were accustomed to call the Half way Mound some distance across the river, and about midway between the two agencies, a moving object which her experienced eyes told her was a man in great distress. He would move forward a few staggering steps, fall down, then struggle to his feet again and make another attempt. She at once dispatched some of the men with horses, who brought him to the house, not only saving his life, but by exercising the utmost care, gleaned by long experience of frontier life, and by taking the frost from his frozen feet and hands, gradually with cold water and snow, saved those members as well. It was this Indian, a brother-in-law of John Mooers, who when the family and neighbors in their three wagons were surrounded by the blood-thirsty Indians under Cut Nose and Shakopee, showed his gratitude and stayed their hands in the very act of using their up-lifted tomahawks.

These Indians, even without their threatening attitude were a terrifying spectacle-naked except for breech clouts, their faces and bodies daubed with paint and smeared with blood, their hands and weapons bloody. Cut Nose who had one of his nostrils cut off some years before in a fight with John Other Day, was especially hideous and repulsive looking. Some of them were mounted, their horses having been concealed behind a knoll when the wagons drove up. The Indians did not give up their prey with-

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out a struggle. There was considerable haranguing over the matter. They finally agreed to spare the family including Blair and Lonsman, but said they would kill the other white men and insisted that my uncle, Angus, would have to shoot one. This he positively refused to do. My grandmother pleaded, argued and threatened their captors with the dire vengeance of the Sisseton and Wahpeton bands should harm befall any of her friends for the knowledge of Indian character telling her that should slaughter once begin it would not terminate until all of them were killed, added the eloquence of desperation to her plea and her benefactor backing it up and threatening to support her wishes with his life if necessary. She finally carried the point and the men were ordered to get out of the wagons and leave, except Blair and Lonsman, who were allowed to stay, the latter to drive the oxen and do the chores for my grandmother. One incident occurred which promised to precipitate a massacre. When the men were ordered to leave, they started off briskly, but Leopold Wohler soon discovered he had forgotten his boots and returned for them. This made the Indians very angry and one rushed up to him, threatening to kill him if he did not hurry. He grabbed one boot and started off, and returned again for the other. The Indian again started for him very much enraged. He left again, but had gone but a little ways when he remembered that in his excitement, he had not kissed his wife goodbye. He returned again and bared his breast saying, "Shoot me, but I shall first kiss my wife." The audacity of this act so completely paralyzed the Indians that they stood thunderstruck while he embraced his wife and departed unmolested.

My uncle Angus and Charles Blair who were riding horses were ordered to dismount and give them up and get into the head wagon with the family. They then started for they knew not where, being ordered to follow the Indians. Every little while one of the Indians would ride ahead a little ways, then whirl and dash back to the wagon with a whoop and yell and gun cocked and levelled, but my grandmother put up a brave front and when she refused to be intimidated, he soon desisted. Downie, one of the most hideous looking of their captors, rode up to the wagon, snatched my aunt's hat (Mrs. Blair's) from his head and putting it on his own, back end to, with two long ribbons floating down in front, pranced about on his horse chanting a war song in which he said the Indians would now have a good time and if they were killed it was all right, that the whites were trying to starve them to death, and were with holding the payment for that purpose and he would prefer to die fighting, as become a warrior rather than starve to death. He jerked off Lonsman's vest and put it on inside out. Lonsman became very angry at this and demanded its return. The poor fellow had his savings, all he had in the world sewed up in the lining. He made quite a fuss, but was finally quieted. A little further on they came upon four dead bodies, three men and one woman, all horribly mutilated. They had been killed by this same party and Cut Nose took particular delight in describing the slaughter in the minutest detail, holding up a badly lacerated thumb to show where one of the men had bitten it, while he was working the knife into his breast. They went on in what seemed an interminable journey behind the slow moving oxen with few stops until they came to the

river. Here my grandmother had another fight on her hands. The other wagons had disappeared. It had proven an impossibility to maintain her guardianship over and to keep in touch with their passengers and the fate of the white women could only be too well conjectured. She was determined that none of the members of her family should be separated or taken out of her sight, and when the Indians proposed to separate them for convenience in getting across, she strenuously opposed the plan and the Indians, impatient to get on, left them in disgust. They crossed the river and relieved of the nerve-racking presence of their captors, soon reached the home of John Mooers. He was the mixed-blood son of the old fur trader, Hagen Mooers. Other captives including Mrs. Robertson and family were also there. My grandmother gave a sigh of relief for they were now in the home of one who had frequently enjoyed the hospitality of their home and she had every reason to believe, would reciprocate, but alas, her belief was short-lived. Mooers soon appeared and informed her that he was sorry but the house was full and it was dangerous for him to harbor the white men and he couldn't help them. So there was nothing for it, but to return to the wagon and start out again. They had just started when it commenced to rain. They passed a poor white woman with six children, the oldest not more than ten years of age. She carried two in her arms, two on her back and two more trudging on behind. When they offered her a ride an Indian who was with her threatened them and ordered them to move on. The rain soon began to come down in torrents, a perfect deluge, with almost constant vivid lightning and heavy thunder. They

tried to cover the children, but soon all were drenched to the skin. It seemed as though even the elements were against them. Is it any wonder that my grandmother, at this stage, lost heart and for the first time that day broke down and commenced to cry? Her nerves had been at a tension all day. She had made a plucky fight, not only in the incidents mentioned, but all through the day. They had proceeded in this way some distance, bedraggled and disheartened, when an Indian woman standing in the doorway of a small building, beckoned to my grandmother and came out to the wagon.

The storm was by this time over and the sun shining brightly. The woman said, "Where have you been my daughter? I have been looking for you all day." This for effect for many Indians were traveling back and forth to and from Little Crow's camp below. The woman was a stranger to my grandmother, a veritable good Samaritan, her great heart moved to pity by their apparent distress. For the desire to aid the distressed, allied to the mother instinct, which lives in the breast of every good woman, is confined to no particular novel or palace, with the savage or Christian.

The woman knew that Lonsman's presence would endanger the lives of the rest if he was permitted to enter the house, as the Indians were particularly vindictive against the Germans, Eya-sica, or "bad language" as they called them, because most of the new settlers who had driven out the game by their coming were foreigners. So she showed him a way through a corn field and some timber to the river whence he could find his way to Fort Ridgely. Honest, simple hearted that he was, he said he had not harmed the Indian and was not

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afraid of them and went off up the road in the other direction whistling a lively tune. The little dog, Lion, which had followed under the wagon all day, at his heels. The next day the dog returned to the family then at Little Crow's village, and was greeted with tears and lamentations for they were then more than sure that Lonsman had been killed.

Years after the outbreak my mother learned through Wm. Dretchko, then sheriff of Sibley county, that Lonsman was living on a farm near Green Isle, Minn., and in a subsequent visit from him, learned the story of his escape. He had travelled along the road until he came to an Indian camp. Practically all the men were away on the warpath. He entered one of the tepees and found one of the Indian women alone, who welcomed him cordially, got him supper of which he ate heartily, not having had a bit to eat all day and then lay down on a buffalo robe and slept soundly until morning. After breakfast the woman gave him an axe and motioned him to cut some wood in the timber near by. While he was at work some excitement arose at the other end of the camp, everybody running in that direction. Thus left alone, he dropped the axe, ran into the woods and made his escape. He went back to the old house, captured and tied the legs of a pig, which he threw on his shoulders and walked to Henderson, some sixty miles.

But to return to my story, the woman invited the family into the house and got them something to eat, which strengthened and cheered them wonderfully as they had nothing to eat since leaving home at four o'clock that morning, and that they had munched while hurriedly preparing for their departure. It chanced that a young Sisseton, Otayahe, whom they

knew, was passing the house. They called him in. It was then getting dark and taking his advice my grandmother determined on a bold stroke, though she took the step with many misgivings. She had heard that Little Crow was the leader of the outbreak, although Wabasha had always been the head chief of the lower Sioux, so she planned to appeal to him for protection. The two boys, Angus and Samuel donned Indian dress and with Otayahe, the young Sisseton, undertook the dangerous mission. It meant passing through the camp and crowds of boisterous blood thirsty Indians, singing, shouting and boasting of what they had done and intended to do to the whites, into the presence of one, who might promptly order them killed. So you can imagine there was considerable anxiety until their return and considerable relief when they reported their mission successful. Little Crow had sent one of his trusted head men to conduct them to safety. It was well he did so, for they were frequently intercepted and threatened, but upon their guide explaining matters and adding that he would defend his charges with his life if necessary, they were allowed to proceed. They reached Little Crow's house in safety and were cordially welcomed. They were given robes and blankets and told to go upstairs and sleep. Despite the hard day they had spent, sleep was impossible. Used to a comfortable bed my mother, who greatly missed her soft feather pillows, took a highly decorated bag, filled with a variety of things from its hanger on the wall to use in its stead. This proved to be the chief's medicine bag or sacred medicine, as it was called considered very sacred as a "Mascot" and the arbiter of their fortunes in war or chase by the Indians.



Little Crow

As the old chief did not know it was used as a pillow he escaped the shock the knowledge would have given him. At any rate, my mother is of the opinion that if it was not a better mascot than a pillow it did not amount to much. When the noise down stairs had ceased Little Crow came quietly up the stairs until his head and shoulders appeared above the floor, beckoned to my grandmother and asked if they were comfortable and needed anything and began to tell her of the trouble that had come upon his people. He appeared very sad. He said some of his young men

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had murdered some whites, that they, with a large number of relatives and friends had come to him before day-break the next morning while he was still in bed and wanted him to push the movement of a war against the whites, saying it had always been the policy of the government to punish the entire tribe and not the individuals in a case of this kind and they would all suffer anyway. That he strongly opposed it at first but when he saw he could not stop it, he entered into the project and was bending all his energies to its success. He said it was bound to come anyway as the Indians had no redress for injuries done them, but were made to pay dearly for any injury real or imaginary, mostly the latter, done by any Indian against the whites. He expected to involve all the Indians including the Winnibagos and Chippewas and clear all their ancient hunting grounds of the whites. His kindness to my grandmother was no doubt due to his knowledge of her influence with the chiefs of the upper Sioux, whom he wished to embark in the undertaking. He said it would be difficult for him to protect Charlie Blair, should the young men who were desperate and thirsting for blood, learn of his presence. He gave Blair an outfit of Indian apparel, painted his face, and took off his own moccasins and gave him. He then cautioned them to be as quiet as possible and went down stairs.

Late that night a mixed blood named Campbell came to see Little Crow. Their conversation was plainly audible through an open stove pipe hole up stairs. He said it was rumored there were strangers at Crow's house, including a white man and he came to find out about it. Crow told him it was true, but that they were his friends and Sisseton's. The man

said the Sissetons had no claim on the lower Sioux, that the mixed blood of that tribe were no better than the white people, that they should be killed and suggested putting them into a building and setting fire to it. He wanted Little Crow to call a council over the matter at once. The chief said it was too late for a council that night and made the man leave. He then came softly upstairs, told the conversation which they had already overheard and after talking the matter over they came to the conclusion that it would be better for all of them, for Blair to make his escape in the darkness. His Indian disguise was made more complete, he was given a few crackers, all they had. Then Little Crow summoned his head warrior whom he could trust, who escorted Blair to the river through a ravine which ran up near the house. Blair reached Fort Ridgely after a week of privation and suffering but the hardships endured proved too much for his frail constitution and he died of consumption the following February. Little Crow told my aunt, Mrs. Blair, "Your mother is a good woman, I have known her many years. In sending your husband away I am risking my life for her, and all of you tonight. Be brave, your husband shall live." My mother and I visited Little Crow's house which was still standing in 1920 in a good state of preservation. The house and the surroundings, she said, looked just about as they did when they were taken there as prisoners except there were no cultivated fields. She pointed out the ravine down which Crow permitted my uncle, Chas. Blair to make his escape. I learn that the house has since disappeared, whether burned or torn down, I do not know. It is too bad the state does not take over these

old land marks before they are destroyed.

The night passed miserably. It was impossible to sleep with the fear that at any moment they might be attacked and killed. However, it passed without further incident. The next morning they were delighted to see the face of good old "Aunt Judy" "Hogatonwin" whom they had known for many years. She was an upper Indian, was married to Little Crow's trusted head warrior, mentioned before. Aunt Judy had prevailed on Little Crow to let her take them to her daughter's tepee. She equipped them with complete outfits of Indian dress. Good soul, many a time did she deprive herself to see that they were well supplied with all the comforts she could give them and she exercised the utmost vigilance to see that they were not molested. On the 23rd. Aw-Kepa, came down from Yellow Medicine with my grandmother's half brother, Gabriel Renville, to take them to their relatives. My grandmother was afraid of what might happen if Little Crow and his warriors who were away in an attack on New Ulm, should return and find them leaving without his permission. Aw-Kepa said he was not taking orders from Little Crow and to get ready to leave and he would protect her. They left the next morning in one wagon, Aw-Kepa driving and Renville heavily armed on horseback.

Aw-Kepa was in many respects a remarkable man. He had earned his chieftainship through his valor, as he had been one of the greatest warriors among the upper Sioux. At the time he was induced by Major Brown to adopt the habiliments of civilization, he had 19 eagle feathers to his credit, each representing an enemy fairly killed in their frequent battles with the Chippewas. He had

a wonderful knowledge of the medicinal virtues of herbs and roots and when he lived across the river from Henderson, Minn., at a place still called Indian Coulee after his camp. Some of the older settlers still tell of remarkable cures made by him. They called him Dr. Renville or the Indian doctor, many in early days preferring his services to that of the resident white physician. Once during their captivity while the hostiles still greatly outnumbered the friendlies, Little Crow surrounded by his retinue taunted him on the fact that his people had not killed any whites and were therefore cowards, adding that he should have made way with the Sisseton mixed blood ~~Wago~~ ^{Wago}. Aw-Kepa arose to his feet, his eyes flashing, and said the Sissetons did not war on unarmed men, helpless women and young children, that when the Sissetons went to battle it was against armed men; that if there were cowards it was those who would attack the helpless and only cowards would boast of it. "And furthermore" and here he advanced and shook his finger under Little Crow's, "if you had touched but one hair of the heads of these my grandchildren, you would not have been here to boast of it, for I would have gone throughout your camp tomahawking you and your braves like slaughtering beaver on dry land."

On the way to Yellow Medicine they passed the body of poor George Gleason lying in the road.

On reaching the Agency they moved into the Dr. Wakefield residence. This building is still standing, now occupied by a family named Olds, as a farm residence. They reached this haven just in time, as three days later a little boy was born to Mr. and Mrs. Angus Brown. Poor little mother, it was only the next day, the

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28th that Little Crow's whole band moved up and they were forced to abandon the comforts of the house and move to a camp near Hazelwood Mission. She was carried on a feather mattress in the bottom of the wagon. The Indians burned the big government warehouse and also the building my mother remembered so well, where they had resided some years before while my grandfather was Indian agent. Two camps were made about a mile apart, one occupied by the upper or friendly Indians the other by the followers of Little Crow. They were fortunate in being in the friendly camp with relatives, the other camp. Here occurred something which, despite all the horrors and blood curdling incidents, which they encountered, seems to be as firmly fixed in my mother's memory as are the more thrilling incidents of their captivity from the joy it brought, as any that occurred. It was the return to them of the family washing which she and my uncle Samuel had delivered to an Indian woman the day before the outbreak. Used to the refinements, cleanliness and comforts of civilization and forced to live in tents with open fires to cook on and only the clothing they had on to wear and buffalo robes spread on the ground for beds, only one who has passed through the experience can fully sympathize with this feeling of joy at receiving clean apparel and she always added in telling the incident, a worry as to whether the woman had ever been paid for the washing.

Here too, they had a good scare. My grandmother was given a tent for her family which was placed but a short distance from that of her stepfather, Aw-Kepa. She was over there visiting one evening, the older boys were also out and only Mrs.

Blair and her two little children, my mother and her younger brothers and sisters were in the tent. My mother had just finished frying bread, French toast, set the skillet full of hot grease on the ground near the entrance and they seated on robes eating when a strange Indian considerably the worse for liquor came in and squatted at the doorway, their only exit. He said he was going to take my mother with him for his wife with her sisters to wait on him. Made other insulting remarks and putting his hand down preparatory to rising, placed it in the center of the hot grease. He jumped with a yell of pain and my aunt, Mrs. Blair, always sympathetic with anyone in pain, put down her baby and rushed to cover the burn with flour and relieve the pain. The younger ones lost no time in taking advantage of the Indian's move from the exit and rushed over to Aw-Kepas tent. He was not there but his wife, grandmother was. Now a woman's favorite weapon handled by one who, knows how to use it is just as effective in one language as another. The man's burn was a bad one, but nothing to the scorching roast he received when she reached there and he literally seemed to shrivel up as he slunk away in the darkness without a word.

The camps were moved frequently to afford continued pasturage for the horses, the two camps, however, being kept separate. Little Crow's horsemen would come over and encircle their entire camp shooting and yelling, then the friendlies would return the compliment. The former were endeavoring to force the latter into joining them, the latter to secure and save the captives.

There is an ancient institution among the Sioux called the Soldiers' Lodge, organized in cases of emer-

gency. All members of the tribe who have earned their spurs and prove themselves warriors have a voice in the councils. Its deliberations are secret and directors are usually appointed to devise ways and means to handle the emergency for which it is formed. From its mandates there is no appeal and all the tribe are bound by it. The upper Indians

formed a soldiers lodge of their own in opposition to that of Little Crow's band and refused to be governed by him. The feeling between the two camps became more and more tense and my grandmother was appraised several times of plots to massacre the family during the night and friends would come and faithfully guard their tent all right. My mother



Fleeing From The Indians
Massacre of 1862

says she does not think her mother slept a wink for almost a week preceding their rescue, for whatever time of night she awoke, she could see her mother seated at the curtain to the tent, the point of danger, keeping a vigilant watch over her charges.

By listening to the conversations of the Indians they were kept pretty well informed as to the plans of the hostiles and events that were transpiring. One day word was brought of the Birch Coulee fight, their informant telling of the plight of the soldiers surrounded by the Indians. It is said by the soldiers who fought at Birch Coulee that the death screams and struggles of the horses and mules were something terrific, and the

Indians no doubt purposely mislead their ~~troops~~ in ascribing these sounds to the wounded soldiers. They were also told that Major Brown had been killed and one can imagine the sense of helplessness and heartsickness this information caused them. Major Brown who had been intercepted by a telegram at Chicago on his trip east, and hurried back to hear of the outbreak, the destruction of his home and capture of his family, had been persuaded by his old friend General Sibley who was in command of the campaign against the Indians to accept an appointment as Major and lend his experience and knowledge of Indians and their methods to the cause as the best means of saving

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Samuel J. Brown

the family. He was in command of the detachment at Birch Coulee, was wounded by a bullet which touched the spinal cord and rendered him unconscious for a short time, but was soon up again cheering and encouraging his men.

Other news they learned was that Little Crow planned on evading the white forces by pushing on to British Possessions with his captives where pursuit and their rescue would be practically impossible. In this, however, he did not take into reckoning the attitude of Old Red Iron. Red Iron was an old Wahpeton chief who then had a village near the spot now marked by a monument as Camp Release. As Little Crow's forces approached this spot a band of horse-

men left the village and could be seen approaching single file led by Red Iron himself. Soon they stopped and one of the warriors arose in his saddle and waved a blanket, the Indian way of requesting a conference. Little Crow sent out a similar group to meet them. Red Iron informed Little Crow that he would not permit the hostiles to pass through his territory without a fight, that he was at peace with the whites, was not in sympathy with the war waged by the lower Sioux against them and wanted no depredation for which he would be responsible in his territory. So Little Crow was compelled to stay where he was and await the coming of the white soldiers or fight Red Iron's band and have enemies in front and behind him. He chose the former, but decided to take the soldiers by surprise, not awaiting their attack but ambushing and attacking them in the ravine near Wood Lake.

On September 22, criers went through the camps ordering all Indians to leave to meet Sibley's forces at Yellow Medicine ravine and gave them battle. The friendlies took advantage of their absence to dig rifle pits in and about their own tepees and to bring the captives who had been left in charge of the old men and women over to their camp. Little Crow met Sibley's forces at Wood Lake, was thoroughly whipped and, what excitement at their return. They would come dashing by ones and twos into their camp on horseback, with no semblance of order, making a great hubbub and getting ready to flee with their families. Little Crow gave orders to charge the friendlies camp and kill all the captives but no one paid any attention to him. He had lost prestige and each of his followers was too intent on saving himself and family.

By the next morning all who had not sneaked over to the friendlies camp to pose as innocents, had fled northward. My mother has often said that the happiest sight she ever beheld was that of the soldiers' bayonets glistening in the sunlight as they marched into Camp Release with drums beating and colors flying. Flags of truce were in evidence in all directions as the Indians had been impressed with their importance in showing they were friendly. Old Betz, a good old Indian woman, who had kept a rag for that purpose for many a day, had attached it to a stick and was vigorously waving it close to their tent. It was not as white as it might have been, but its meaning was there just the same. My grandfather was the first one my mother saw as he came hurrying over to them ahead of the troops, and what a meeting it was, they alternately laughing and crying for very joy. They were taken to Fort Ridgely where they were kindly received. Some years ago I drove to the site of the old fort with my mother and we expected to see it. My mother was almost moved to tears when she found the structure so bravely defended and where noble, kindhearted, Mrs. Mueller had received them and mothered them and had done her best to make them forget their long weeks of captivity, had been ruthlessly torn down for the building material it contained. The state has erected a massive stone monument but the old fort, bullet ridden and dilapidated through it was, would have been a better monument to those who defended it and those who found it a refuge in times of need than could the most expensive stone that could be reared in the place.

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The hardships and heartaches incident to the Indian outbreak of 1862 were not all confined to the whites, and this article is written to do justice to the memory of an Indian who was a true friend of the whites during that trying period and deserves a far better place in history than he has been accorded.

The west shore of Traverse Lake with the land gently sloping toward the south and west was a favorite planting ground of the Dakotas and there were a number of Indian villages in the vicinity. The Little Minnesota river rising in the Coteau des Prairies flows to within a stones throw of Traverse Lake, then abruptly turning away from it meanders through the full length of this valley and delivers its waters into Big Stone Lake. The plateau between the river valley and Traverse Lake resembles the tail of an otter and for that reason the entire region was known to the Indians as "Ptancinta" or the Otter's Tail. Located in a bend of the river in the prettiest part of the valley was the village of the Sisseton chief, Standing Buffalo. While the Indians led more or less a nomadic life to keep in touch with the buffalo and other game they had these spots which were recognized as their permanent villages.

Some wiseacre once promulgated a statement that has passed into proverb among the thoughtless, viz: "There is no good Indian, but a dead Indian," and likewise old Sitting Bull, disgusted with the false promises of pseudo treaty makers, made the declaration, "All white men are liars." These statements were no doubt drawn from the bitter experiences of those who made them, and made in good faith, but both were mistaken. There are good Indians and bad Indians, just as there are trustworthy white men and white men who would lie, steal, or perpetrate any crime on the calendar for a nickel, and when the time of our final accounting arrives and the sheep are separated from the goats, I do not believe any racial group will be in a position to claim much of a monopoly of either.

Standing Buffalo was in every respect a good Indian. He was beloved by his people, loyal to his friends, one who had the reputation of never breaking a promise, and a wonderful military leader. During the Sioux uprising Little Crow made repeated overtures to get him to join the hostiles but he emphatically refused and remained staunchly loyal to the whites. He upbraided Little Crow in open council and frankly told him that any attempt to lead his forces across Sisseton territory would mean war.

After the Battle of Wood Lake Gen. Sibley wrote Standing Buffalo and other Sisseton chiefs accusing them of letting Little Crow and the hostiles escape through their territory also admonishing them to remain in their villages and not to come to him as the whites were very angry and could not distinguish between them and those Indians who had killed their relatives. Now Little Crow had not passed through the Sisseton country. He and his men had fled north and crossed the Red River near Abercrombie, north of the Sisseton territory. However, experience had taught the Sisseton chiefs that if the whites thought they had connived in the escape of Little Crow, it would do no good to protest, as they would act first and investigate afterwards. Many of our citizens of German descent who recall their experiences during the World War can sympathize with the position of these friendlies, for in the hysteria of the times all Indians looked alike to the avenging white man, and Indians in the custody of the troops had been set upon at New Ulm and Henderson with rocks and clubs, and but for the bravery of that gallant soldier Col. Marshall, who frequently interposed his own body to prevent blood-shed, many would have been killed, even those Indians who had risked their own lives in conducting white friends to safety. The chiefs therefore decided their safest and wisest course was to abandon their villages for the time

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being and go out into the more remote trans-coteau country with their followers.

It was in his campaign of 1863, that Gen. Sibley came upon their camp adjacent to those of other bands who were hunting buffalo. Gen. Sibley at once sent Joe Laframbois to Standing Buffalo assuring him that the friendly Indians would be protected, and inviting him to a conference to arrange the details. The loyal Sissetons, overjoyed at this termination of their exile hastened toward the troops while the hostiles hung back preparing to flee should occasion arise. In this way Standing Buffalo's people were almost up to the soldiers, when Little Fish, a renegade of Inkpaduta's outlaw gang, sneaked up and shot and killed Dr. Weiser, surgeon of the 1st Mounted Rangers. This precipitated a battle. All Indians looked alike to the attacking soldiers, so that Standing Buffalo's people taken completely by surprise, bore the brunt of the attack. It is said by eyewitnesses that Napoleon, Alexander or any of the great military men of history could not have handled the emergency or covered the retreat of his people, many of them women and children handicapped with camp equipment, in a more gallant, efficient or masterful a manner than did Standing Buffalo. Though forced by the suddenness of the attack and the hot pursuit of the soldiers to abandon much of their camp equipment, he deployed his men in protecting the women and children so as to have earned the encomiums even of his pursuers. The Sissetons had done all that was humanly possible to forestall and prevent what had occurred. They had warned Gen. Sibley to keep himself and officers out of danger of assassination by the hostiles, and to have had his people induced to come within striking distance at the invitation of the whites and then set upon and ruthlessly slaughtered seemed to Standing Buffalo an unforgiveable act of treachery. He resolved to have no more to do with Uncle Sam or his soldiers, but to take the remnant of his people to the country of the "Long Knives" who carried out their treaties with their Indian subjects and never warred with them.

It was a pathetic, pitiful little band, heartsick and weary who resolutely turned their backs on the homeland they loved and which had been the burial place of their people for many generations. With some of their best men slain, wounded to be cared for, poor in camp equipment, much of which had been sacrificed in making their escape, and poorly prepared to meet the coming Canadian winter, it was a sad trek to the northland and full of privations and hardships. The devoted little band was well received in their new home, was given a reservation and in the years that have ensued, the simple virtues and sterling honesty of Standing Buffalo gained him a high place in the esteem of the people of Canada. Because of the helpful support of him and his people during the world war he was given a life membership in their national Red Cross organization, the presentation being made with appropriate ceremonies. He died in July 1921, and under an imposing monument on a hillside overlooking the beautiful Qu'Appelle valley, this old warrior, who deserved better than he received, lies at rest from the world's turmoils and rancors.

Geo. G. Allanson,
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