

The Story of Minnie (Wilhelma) Busse.

Minnie was the 10-year old daughter of Gottfried Busse who brought his family from Wisconsin and settled at Middle Creek (near present Redwood Falls) in 1862. He did not get along well with the Indians and was move^{or}less in terror of them, and had expressed a fear that they would kill him. On the morning of August the 18th, the son August was sent to a neighbors on an errand, and quickly returning related that the family had all been killed and the bodies lay about the yard. All was confusion and Busse took his family into the cornfield where they were probably safe. But when a band of whooping Indians came round the corner of the field he became excited and leaving his hiding place started for the woods followed by the family. He had a child in his arms and the wife another, followed by August, Minnie and Amelia. They were overtaken and the father, mother and the two infants were shot to death, and the others taken prisoners. From here the story is told by Minnie:

"When the folks were shot down I expected to be killed and I shut my eyes to keep out the bloody sight and awaited my fate. An old Indian came and took hold of me and said I was not to be killed. They also had August and Amelia. He told me to come along but I refused to go until I had seen that my parents were really dead, This he allowed me to do and I then followed not caring whether I lived or died. We were taken to the Indian camp where there were many others. I was told to keep out of sight as the other Indians might kill me. This Indian's family consisted of one wife and an older woman who may also have been his wife, many Indians have more than one. Then there was a well grown girl and a boy about my age, who delighted in telling me the Indians were going to kill me. The mother protected me but when she was gone they made life miserable. I never will forget my feelings when the goods

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of our family and neighbors was seen there. One day the young wife appeared wearing my mother's dress. I suppose she wanted me to see how nice she looked in white folks clothes, but it was too much, I broke down and cried heartily, so she never put them on again. Our oxen were in the camp and August was compelled to drive them, and care for them. After a few days we were all put in the wagons and a wild procession started across the prairie up the river, ^{one} running and all shouting and yelling till we came to a new camping place. Several times we moved up the river in the same wild manner. When other Indians came about I was compelled to lie down and be covered with blankets. On one of these moves there was a cute little girl in our wagon, who could only tell that her name was Henrietta. As we were going along she suddenly cried "Why, there is Louis". I called to Louis (Kitzman) to come and see if he knew her. He said "Yes, that is my little cousin Henrietta Krieger". Her father and mother had been left for dead but the mother recovered. Other members of her family fled to the fort. We had to eat what ever the Indians did, and without salt, and to sleep in our clothes on the ground. All was dirty and so disgusting, and I told August I was going to run away. He said if I left the camp I would surely be killed, and that Gen. Sibley and hundreds of soldiers would soon set us free. I found many of the people who belonged to the German Evangelical church where I went to Sunday School, and they told me of the murder of our preacher Rev. ^{Christian} Seder, and our superintendent Gottlieb Mannweiler, and of many in their own families. Oh, it was a doleful tale of horrors. One day I found my father's hymn book and I tried to sing the old hymn:

How tedious and tasteless the hours
When Jesus no longer I see, etc.

but I broke down and could not sing a word for crying. After several moves we ~~came~~ came to a large camp where all the Indians had assembled as the soldiers were coming up the river. During the battle of Wood

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Lake we heard the cannon and the old squaw would jump up at every shot and cry "Akicita!" that is soldiers, and she was terribly scared. The next day the soldiers came in sight, and the stars on the flags were as welcome as the stars of heaven. Then Gen. Sibley came into the camp and looked us over. Soon we were all placed in wagons and taken to St. Peter. One of the saddest scenes of my life was the visit of people trying to find their relatives or friends. Many were reclaimed but others sadly departed alone and in tears. This was in strange contrast to those who had found ^{there} living relatives whom they had been told were killed. But we had no one to come to us. And after a time we were given over to a man who lived near Hutchinson, who worked us nearly to death and kept all the money sent us for our losses. I think less of him than my Indian captors who treated us much better."

M. P. Satherlee