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Buffalo, Minnesota

August 26th, 1933.

Minnesota Tourist Bureau
Contest Board
Room 113
State Capitol
St. Paul, Minn.

Dear Sirs:

This story is intended to present details of an actual attack on a family during the Sioux uprising. The true perspective of the period depends upon the possession of such details as these.

The story may be found in the "History of Wright County, Minnesota," by Franklin Curtiss - Wedge, vol. 1, pp. 149-153. It is also briefly recorded in "Minnesota in Three Centuries," vol. III, p. 408. It is thought by the authors of the latter work that Little Crow was one of the fine Indians who attacked the Bustins, and that possibly Little Crow's son, Wo-wi-nah-pa (the Appearing One,) and Little Crow's son-in-law, Hinkpa (or Inkpa, the End) were also among the five. To the extent which these historians are accurate, this story is essentially correct.

Yours very truly,

Paul H. Elmen

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TOMAHAWKS ARE RED

by Paul H. Elmen

Reporter, the "Wright County
Journal-Press."

Buffalo, Minnesota.

TOMAHAWKS ARE RED

WHEN the Sioux, outraged by the usurpation of their hunting grounds at the hands of an invading race, took the warpath in 1862, romance picked its light feet from the Minnesota hills. Where, now, is the glamour of the red man? Where is the colorful Indian, picturesque first Minnesotan? Death stalked the clearings, and there was terror in the underbrush. Little Crow's tomahawk dripped red.

Long before Groseilliers and Radisson carried the rococo civilization of the Outside into the primeval Northwest territory, Indians ruled the Big Woods in savage majesty, and there went padding between ten thousand lakes the tread of mocasin soles. The red man squatted close to the camp fire in snug comfort. Wrapped in red blankets, braves chattered long tales of far-away happy hunting grounds; others, with a more practical bent, laid plans to hunt deer and provide venison for the winter. Veteran hunters sucked at their long-stemmed pipes with the slow, quizzical smiles of old men.

Long Knife swaggered off to his canoe. There was a tight band of beads around his paddle-arm. Waving Fern, hiding around the bend, coquettishly twisted an envelope of color into soot black hair while she waited for the paddle-blade of her lover, flashing silver in the moonlight.

A Sioux night: camp fires, gratuitous decorations, a birch-bark canoe gliding Indian-quiet to the bend, and the subtlety of soft doeskin on brown shoulders!

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But it is 1862, now, and romance has gone. Little Crow and his braves have sharpened their tomahawks.

* * *

I N JUNE of the following year, 1863, after a winter of almost constant terror, the Dustin family decided to leave the scene of Indian scares and move from Marysville to Moore's Prairie. They went in ox-cart. High on top of the meager household goods sat Mrs. Jennette Dustin, aged fifty-four years; her son, Amos Dustin, aged about thirty; his wife, Mrs. Kate Dustin, aged twenty-four; and the three children, Almeda, six, Robert, four, and Leon, two. Amos Dustin had a rifle leaning against the seat at his side.

Late in the afternoon of June 29, the Dustins had reached a point two and a half miles west of what is now Howard Lake. The oxen plodded as though they, too, knew the splendor of Minnesota in early summer. Long fingers of sunlight poked through the leaves, painted spots of brightness on the forest floor, and edged them with a filigree of shadow, faintly thin and small. All the while something of apprehension hid in the paleface hearts—their was suspicion in the quick sidewise glances, in the sound of rustling leaves. There were uneasy starts and jerks as the cart creaked up and down over forest roots.

"Whoa!" Amos Dustin pulled the oxen to a halt. "Look! Down the trail!" Instantly he thrust the reins into his wife's hands. In a flash the rifle was in his hands.

Five Sioux blocked the trail. Frightened, the yoke of oxen swung the wagon into a fallen tree, tore loose from their traces, and lumbered away.

Whooping savagely, the Indians drew their bowstrings and sent a shower of arrows into the wagon. Amos Dustin, an arrow buried in his stomach, toppled from the driver's seat. His body fell protectingly, even in death—over his daughter, Almeda. Mrs. Jennette Dustin beat desperately with her cane, but an Indian quickly subdued her. Drawing their knives, the Sioux cut off both her hands, mutilated her nose and lips, and tore out her heart. As she lay on the floor of the wagon, they shot her quivering body full of arrows. Robert screamed. A bowstring twanged and the screams were silenced forever.

An arrow pierced through the back of Mrs. Kate Dustin and protruded about a half inch below her breast bone. A second arrow imbedded itself in her shoulder. The five Sioux lifted her from the cart and beat her savagely. Then, the blood-glint gone from their eyes, the Indians tossed two-year-old Leon into the underbrush, took clothing, provisions, trinkets and an emptied bed-tick, and disappeared over the hill.

The Sioux were brave, they say, but the pioneer mother was brave, too. Mrs. Kate Dustin helped Almeda from under the gore-spattered body of her dead husband. She searched out Leon from the underbrush before starting for help. Step by step, the arrow still protruding from her breast, she stumbled through the woods carrying Leon and leading Almeda by the hand. Night came with its weird melodies of forest sounds, and a spirit that did not know when it was suppressed carried her on. She had lost the way. There was a confusion of darkness and strange sounds, an arrow buried in her chest, Almeda and Leon (how much she had dreamed and planned for them—now she could die for them!) and the hope that there were settlers

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just over the hill. Dawn sifted through the forest. No longer able to carry Leon, she swayed and fell to the ground. How soft the earth felt to her pain-seared body!

When the oxen returned to Waverly, two men set out to follow the trail. They found the wagon with its bloody story. Searching the woods, they found the unconscious body of the pioneer mother, guarded by her two children. They took her back to town, and three days later she died.

* * *

A SOLITARY wagon, ambling down a forest lane, is casual as a Sioux, lounging in his teepee. A line of wagons is sinister, like an Indian-file of braves in warpaint. When the news of the Dustin massacre spread over the countyside, frightened settlers joined in an ominous line of ox-carts and prepared to leave for the nearest fort.

Spread the news! Tell the settlers to hurry to the line! Tomahawks drip red tonight. Here hearts were not ashamed of fear. In those lines were men who would have shot it out with a whole tribe of Indians (and there were men who could drop a gopher at fifty paces.) But in the carts there were wives, sons, daughters. Tell them to hurry! And a man cannot fight back when there is only an arrow stabbing through the night. Send them scurrying! To the fort!

In such a setting Minnesota was born. Labors were long, and she was suckled at the breast of danger. Times were hard, and yet the tragedy of not being a Minnesota boy during those adventurous days is exceeded only by the tragedy of not being a boy at all.

ENCLOSURE

DR. A. D. KINGSLEY

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MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

191

Massacre of the Dustin family took place
between Smith Lake and Thomas Lake in 1863 June
some where near 23.

7073 The Dustin massacre The particulars of this pitiful
slaughter concerning which many erroneous statements
have been published are gathered with much care from
surviving members of the family and neighbors who
assisted in the search for and burial of the victims.
In the spring of 1864 Mrs. Janeette Dustin and
family came here from New York and took a claim
on section twenty four in the present town of Mayfield
now known as the Bland farm. About two years
later they sold this claim to Mr. Beattie and located
on what is known as the Jensen farm not far from
Hartness and later, to a claim on Horse Prairie
near Haskins farm a few miles from the village
of Lakeview. Mrs. Dustin was the widow of Isaac Dustin
who died about three years before her coming to
Minnesota. The children, known to them as the
Dale's Arabella and an older daughter the wife of
A. D. Kingsley an early settler at Waverly Mills and
a son of Thomas Lake.

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DAKOTA CONFLICT OF 1862 MANUSCRIPTS COLLECTIONS
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MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

191

Massacre of the Gustafson family took place
Between Smith Lake and Hawer Lake in 1863 June
some where near 23

1073 The Gustafson Massacre The particulars of this pitiful
slaughter concerning which many erroneous statements
have been published are gathered with much care from
surviving members of the family and neighbors who
assisted in the search for and burial of the victims.
In the spring of 1864 Mrs. Jennette Gustafson and
family came here from New York and took a claim
on Section Twenty-four in the present town of Hargrave
now known as the Beland farm. About two years
later they sold this claim to Mr. Beattie and located
on what is known as the Quinn farm not far from
Hentrose and later to a claim on Haver Prairie
near Stockholm. Some five miles from the village
of Lockport Mrs. Gustafson was the widow of Peter Gustafson
who died about three years before her coming to
Minnesota. The children Thomas & John & the
Dais Anabella and an elder daughter the wife of
A. D. Kingsley an early settler at Waverly Mills and
now of French Lake

INTENTIONAL DUPLICATE EXPOSURE
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DAKOTA CONFLICT OF 1862 MANUSCRIPTS COLLECTIONS
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3 3 1

On June 1863 Mrs. Dustin visited her daughter Mrs. Hingley then at Hamerly Mills and ~~was~~ nursing her during an illness of two weeks ~~at home~~.
On the 29th of June she started for home with her son Amos his wife and three children who were about to settle near the other at Moor Prairie. She went with an ~~at~~ ~~team~~ and a common lumber wagon and late in the afternoon when near Smith Lake were attacked by a party of Indians who killed Mrs. Jennette Dustin Amos and her son Robert. In the wagon in which all were riding at time of the attack Mrs. Amos Dustin formally Miss Kate Miller was shot in the back with an arrow which passed through her body protruding from her breast. She fell forward and was left for dead. Amos her daughter then a child of about seven years was hidden in the wagon partly beneath the dead body of her father and escaped notice. The youngest son Abner then a child some three years of age was taken from the wagon and left upon the ground unhurt where he was thus left is only accounted for by the settlers of that time upon the hypothesis that the starvation or destruction by wild beasts to which he was thus exposed afforded the most cruel torture with which to draw their work of blood. After committing the parties of the murdered and plundering the wagon the Indians departed leaving the dead and dying to their fate. Mrs. Dustin started with her two tender Indian children to seek the shelter of some friendly cabin.

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MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

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Poor suffering mother wounded bleeding and faint clinging to her orphaned babies though racked with cruel pain and with the fatal arrow yet piercing her flesh. What name the intensity of a mother's love could sustain her in this terrible hour of fear, and pain and honor. But even this power could not long withstand the fatal drain and with failing sight and sense she wandered from the pathway and then in the dim old forest stranded by the murky shadows of night. The weary suffering mother lay down to die at the time of the attack the team being frightened had left the road, broken loose from the wagon and started back, stopping at the residence of Mr. A. C. Cochran whose suspicions were aroused and who not leaving from the family proceeded next morning to the mills. Summoned Mr. A. D. Kingsley Henry Leammers and others and all proceeded westward along the route taken by the family the day previous. A little west of Howard Lake and not far from the margin of its waters a dog belonging to the family was discovered and soon after

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3 3 2

On June 1863 Mrs. Dustin visited her daughter Mrs. Kingley then at Harwood Mills and remained nursing her during an illness of two weeks more or less.
On the 27th of June she started for her home with her son Amos his wife and three children who were about to settle near the other at Harwood. She went with an outfit and a common lumber wagon and late in the afternoon when near Devil Lake were attacked by a party of Indians who killed Mrs. Jennette Dustin Amos and his son Robert. In the wagon in which all were riding at time of the attack Mrs. Dustin formally Mrs. Kate Miller was shot in the back with an arrow which passed through her body protruding from her breast. She fell forward and was left for dead. Amos her daughter then a child of about seven years was hidden in the wagon partly beneath the dead body of her father and escaped notice. The youngest son John then a child some three years of age was taken from the wagon and left upon the ground unhurt who he was thus left is only accounted for by the settlers of that time upon the hypothesis that the starvation or destruction by wild beasts to which he was thus exposed afforded the most cruel torture with which to close their work of blood. After mutilating the bodies of the murdered and plundering the wagon the Indians departed leaving the dead and dying to their fate. Mrs. Dustin soon rallied and summoning all her strength started with her two younger children to seek the shelter of some friendly cabin.

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191

Poor suffering mother wounded bleeding and faint clinging to her orphaned babies though racked with cruel pain and with the fatal arrow yet piercing her flesh. What gave the intensity of a mother's love could sustain her in this terrible hour of fear, and pain and horror. But even this fervor could not long withstand the fatal drain and with failing sight and sense she wandered from the pathway and there in the dim old forest shrouded by the murky shadows of night, the weary suffering mother lay down to die. At the time of the attack the team being frightened had left the road, broken loose from the wagon and started back, stopping at the residence of Mr. A. E. Cochran whose suspicions were aroused and who not seeing from the family proceeded next morning to the mills, summoned Mr. A. D. Kingsley Henry Lamme and others and all proceeded westward along the route taken by the family the day previous. A little west of Harwood Lake and not far from the margin of its waters a dog belonging to the family was discovered and soon after

INTENTIONAL DUPLICATE EXPOSURE

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DAKOTA CONFLICT OF 1862 MANUSCRIPTS COLLECTIONS

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The two children children who were wandering about in search of water. Near by in a clump of willows lay the suffering mother still conscious and in the full possession of her mental faculties. Soon her they learned the fate of the others, and messengers were dispatched to Waterbury and Rockford to notify the settlers and also claim their assistance. The murdered victims were removed to the old Norway Mills and buried in a beautiful grove on the right bank of the stream forming the outlet to Little Norway Lake near the present residence of E. H. Brownell. Mrs. Duster was taken to residence of Mr. Cochran and given every possible attention but to little purpose. The fatal wound had done its work. She lived to tell the story of the bloody tragedy but the day after being found, death more merciful than her murders kindly ended her suffering. She was buried with the others and with them lie also the remains of Mrs. Kinsley Harlow children and Nathan Duster who died from the effects of exposure while searching for Indians after the murder of his friends. Timothy Dallis and Strabella were not disturbed. They were at the house.

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