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Litchfield, Minnesota,  
June 18, 1923.

To the Minnesota Historical Society,  
St. Paul, Minn.

Gentlemen:

I regret that circumstances have intervened that have hindered me from sending the diary of Sibley's expedition in 1863 against the Sioux in North Dakota referred to in a former correspondence. I also regret that I am not a real member of your society and situated to go with you next Friday and Saturday to the Redwood Falls conference.

I notice in the program that the chapter called "The Cause of the Sioux War" by Dr. William Worth Colwell will not be read, as Dr. Colwell will not be able to attend, so I am writing a very brief chapter on that subject as seen by, and understood, as a result of my personal interview with prominent persons at the agency at Yellow Medicine during the Friday, Saturday and Sunday preceeding the Redwood tragedy the following Monday.

About two weeks before this time at the occasion of paying their annuities, the discounted greenback was offered instead of the gold, which was their due.

The most of these dues had been promised the traders to liquidate accounts, and the traders refused the discounted money, as they had sold them the goods on a gold basis.

They had flocked to the agency with their families and were without means of subsistence, became hungry and angry and held up the soldier guard and took by force a large quantity of provisions from the warehouse. The smell of food and hunger caused them to loosen their hold upon the military and to listen to peaceful council. Mr. Galbraith, their agent, pacified them by a conciliatory speech, and on assurance that their gold would be forthcoming. He immediately made a war speech and enlisted all the young men, (some 48, I was told) and accompanied them to St. Paul. I need not enlarge upon the temper that this would naturally engender in the Indian mind. The eldest daughter of the former agent, Joe Brown, at a Sunday dinner at her home, the Sunday of the "First blood" at Acton, Meeker County, told me that the Indians said that when the "Great Father" was so hard up as to take all the young men away from the agency to fight the Southern enemies and only old men and women and children were left in Minnesota, it was a good time for them to take their own. She further said she did not blame them.

At the same time, some fifteen adventurous characters had gone over some 60 to 75 miles to Meeker County to settle a personal grudge to one Jones in Acton, and within the same hour that I had the conversation with Miss Brown, a highly educated and accomplished daughter of the former Indian agent for more than 25 years; the massacre of the Jones family was taking place. These Indians went back to Redwood that night, and insisted that the contemplated war be begun at once, and the massacre of the village of Redwood occurred the next forenoon.

The Indians had stored in their minds a large stock of grievance. They had been reduced from a wild independence to a state of vassage to a dominating race. They saw that race in a desperate struggle among themselves that was absorbing all their energies. The war spirit was on. Their government agent, who had married into their race, talked their language and had been their adviser for more than 25 years, had been deposed, and a stranger put in his place. The government had failed in paying their annuity. Their passions were aroused by talk of whites who had little sympathy with "Black Republican War," and possibly by southern agents, this, and opportunity to strike, was what caused and precipitated the Sioux War.

Yours truly,

(Signed) E M Eastman

Litchfield

Minn

P. S If worth while, this may read at your conference at Red Wood