[Reminiscences of Sioux outbreak]
by E. F. Fryer

On August 16,1862, I enlisted in Co,"G" 6 Regt, Minn.Infty. Volr. Our Regt.was designated to go to Washington, D.C. to serve in the South, but on Aug. 19, 1862, news of the Indian outbreak in Minnesota, reached the office of Gov. Alexander Ramsey and orders for the disposition of the Enlisted Troops within the state were changed. All troops available were placed under command of Col. H.H. Sibley, and wordered to proceed immediately into the Indian Country, to quell the outbreak, and subdue the Indians, whose attacks had been made upon defenseless citizens; their first attack being at New Ulm, Minnesota, where a great number without regard to age or sex were massacred.

They made a number of raids, which are all reported in the History of Minnesote in the Civil and Indian Wars.

Our Regt. under command of Col. Wm. Crooks was concentrated at St. Peter, Minn. Aug.24, 1862. While there an outbreak occurred at Fort Ridgley, Minn. and several companies of the 6 Regt.were dispatched to Fort Ridgley. Co."A" 6th with details from the remaining companies was sent out to pick up and bury such settlers as they could find. While on this duty, they arrived at and went into camp at Birch Coolie where on the morning of Sept.1st or 2nd, they were attacked by a band of not less than 300 Indians, who made fearful havoc among the troops.

The rest of the Regt. were then sent forward as a rescuing party with a battery of several guns, and reached Birch Coolie just after the battle , and while the Indians were in flight.This is commonly known as the battle of Birch Coolie.

Shortly after this, on Sept.19th, the command was concentrated to march into the Indian Country to Yellow Medicine River, where the Battle of Wood Lake occurred.

The personal experience I am about to relate, occurred Sept, 21,1862 while on this march. I was Regimental Quartermaster Clerk, and as such

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MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY. ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55102

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INTENTIONAL DUPLICATE EXPOSURE

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was provided with a horse to ride. The morning of Sept. 21st, the Wagon Master came to me and said his horse had a sore back and could not be used. Would I let him take my horse? Idid so without hesetation and was offered a seat in the Sutler's Wagon, which I gratefully accepted. The Army Wagon which carried the Sutler's Merchandise,was ahead in the train and the Sutler's Wagon, for personal use, was in the extreme rear of the train.

We could easily follow the track made by the troops and the long train of army wagons and having seen no indians, we scarcely gave them a thought.

The Sutler, Alex. Etter, his brother-in-law, Jim Moran, and I were the only occupants of the Wagon. The only weapon we had was a double-barrel shot gun.We stopped at a little lake for lunch, unhitched and fed the mules, and Jim went over to the lake and succeeded in shooting a small duck.

In our deliberation, we had failed to notice that the train was out of sight, so we hitched up and were getting ready to follow , when we discovered a mounted man riding toward us with great speed.As soon as he got near enough to be heard, I recognized him as the Quartermaster Sergt. of our Regt. He called as loudly as possible ,"For God's sake, boys, hurry into camp,We're going to have a fight with the Indians", He then wheeled his horse and went back as fast as he had come.

The Sutler was inclined to think he was putting up a juke on us, but it did not take many minuteato dispel that illusion, for as soon as we got well started on the trail to camp,(which was nowhere visible) we saw at a great distance on either side of the road,small objects moving toward us in great numbers, probably fifty on either side, and as they approached nearer, we could see that they were mounted Indians, making toward us on an angle to cut us off from oour camp.

v Our scout was not in sight, and altho it is a long time to remember, I think my heart must have gone pit a pat about that time. However, all's well that ends well. It seems that about a mile ahead was valley where there was a good lake for camping, so the command had gone ahead and camped at that lake.

The Quarter Master Sergt. went at once to headquarters and reported our situation to Col. Sibley, who hurridly dispatched a troop of Calvary to our rescue, and just as all hope seemed to have left us, we discovered the mounted troopsemerging from the valley, and strangeto say,at sight of them the Indians disappeared as effectively as though an earthquake had swallowed them.

There were Indians around the neighborhood of our Camp, for the next morning a march of three miles brought us to Wood Lake, where we had an engagement with the Red Demons, which was the wind up of the Indian outbreak, followed shortly by the capture of many of the hostiles and the rescue of their white prisoners, which occurred at Camp Release.

For the able manner in which this expedition was conducted, Col. Sibley was made a Brigadier General, Sept.29,1862.

by C.L. Fryer,
Lyn Avenue,
Minnesota

DEFECTIVE PAGE

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