

Sioux Massacre of 1862

by Mrs. Wallace Merritt

My grandparents, William and Margaret Jones, were early pioneers of Minnesota. They settled about eighteen miles west of Mankato, near what is now the small town of Cambria. When news of the Sioux uprising reached them, they bundled their five children and what household goods they could pack, into a wagon drawn by oxen, and started to Mankato traveling by night. Other neighbors joined them with their families and teams; the fathers and big brothers scouted through the woods around the wagons watching for the Indians.

My mother, who was seven years old at the time, said she

remembered being told to lie down with her small sister in the bed of the wagon, while her mother covered them with a quilt; they were warned not to make a sound until they reached Mankato.

The whole party reached their destination safely, and stayed there until the soldiers, who had been summoned, captured and executed thirty eight of the ring leaders among the Sioux Indians. They were placed on a stage, surrounded by soldiers and the entire population of Mankato, which was then a small pioneer town; and hung on December 26, 1862. This ended the uprising, therefore the pioneers returned to their homes, many of which they found in ashes.

This did not discourage them, however. They built new homes from logs, which their neighbors and they cut and notched; they used either sod or hand made shingles for the roofs.

Some of these houses had hewn log floors, and some only had dirt floors.

My grandfather made the entire trip to St. Paul several times with a sled and wagon to buy flour and other necessities, before a post was established at Mankato, which carried such commodities.

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