

Yerington Nev.

August 24th, '33

Minnesota Tourist Bureau

Room 113

State capitol, ST Paul Minn.

Dear Sirs:- A recent number of a weekly paper from my old home town Winnebago came to my desk last evening and I happened to see an account of the Jubilee pageant celebration at Itasca Park and of the contest on Indian Massacre incidents. I am not eligible because I am not living in Minnesota at present. However my nativity in the state with nearly 40 years of resident in the Southern part and then 8 years at Laporte just previous to coming out here in 1929 makes me wish that I were there again. How I should like to be at the Pageant.

I am enclosing a copy of an article which I have written out of my father's experiences and if they are of any value in any place, you are welcome to them

Most Sincerely yours

C. S. Marston

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Pastor Yerington Baptist Church

O.S. I crossed out the first paragraph thinking that it could be eliminated from the article and thus would bring it about within the 1000 word limit.

#1

Reminiscences the Indian Massacre of 1862

The announcement of the Jubilee celebration at the head waters of the Mississippi river and of the contest in writing narratives of incidents of the time of the Indian war inspires me to write of my father's experience of those days. As I came West in 1929 I am not eligible for the contest but I am sending my contribution hoping that perhaps it may be of value somewhere. Especially since I lived for eight years at Laporte ^{previous to 1929} and am well acquainted in Hubbard county. I wish that I might be there to see the pageant.

It was in 1859 that my grandfather, Samuel Marston and his family traveled by emigrant train from Northeastern Iowa to find some new spot where they ^{could} build their homes and make their fortunes in the more sparsely settled sections of Southern Minnesota. Like all true pioneers these humble folks who had but recently come from Eastern Canada had no hesitancy in facing the daring uncertainties of a new country and were willing to work and sacrifice and build where-ever fortune seemed most opportune.

The vicinity of the new community of what was Winnebago City seemed an inviting place, and they decided to stop there and seek a home. For two years they lived on a farm two miles South of town near what is now highway No 5. During this time grandfather was busy hunting a good place for a homestead. Such a location was found six miles Northeast of Winnebago City and one mile West of Bass Lake. And in the Spring of 1862 the family moved onto the homestead and began to build a home. Ground was broken; a crop sown and the first work of a homestead settler started. Little did the folks dream that ere a single Summer of homestead life should pass they would experience the excitement of an Indian uprising.

#2

My father, Perrin Marston, was but seven year old when ~~his~~ his folks began living in this new neighborhood of pioneers. The experiences of that first Summer were such ^{as to} initiate well ~~that~~ the young lad into the membership of that honored group called "pioneers."

The first recollections of Indians was with the friendly Dakotas whose agency was not far away and who in their hunting trips often traversed the homestead following a well beaten path which led from the lake on the east to the Blue Earth river on the West. First impressions thus were of friendliness and ~~that~~ warmth. It was quite in contrast to the fear that was aroused, and justly so, when a messenger brought the news that the treacherous Sioux were on the war path, and were coming down the Minnesota river and at that time were fighting at New Elm.

It was not surprising that grandmother and the children watched with fear and trembling as a company of four or five Indians coming from the way of the lake turned off their trail and started toward the cabin. It was only the openness and leisureness with which they approached that prevented a panic on the part of the homesteaders. Oh, what a relief, when it became apparent that the ~~visitors~~ visitors were friendly and that they were only in search of milk and ~~other~~ other eatables.

In August of that first year on the homestead, the Sioux massacre was on in all its bloodthirstyness. A second report had come to the settlers stating that New Elm had fallen and that the Indians were headed for Mankato. The indications were that they might capture ^{place} that there were no soldiers ~~there~~ on the ground and nearly all the able bodied men were away to the Civil war. The chances for self defense were poor indeed. They too if Mankato succumbed, the Indians would have a clear sweep before them. There was little to stop them before they reached Winona and the Mississippi river.

ENCLOSURE

#3

It looked as though the settlement was doomed. Whatever was done, must be done at once. The only thing was to attempt to flee. Grandfather went to Winnebago City to get my Aunt and Uncle, Mr and Mrs George Spickerman. A few things were gathered together and they together with a few others started to get away. ~~When~~ When they arrived at the Marston shanty, it was found that there were forty families encamped in the yard. Early the next morning the entire caravan started to move toward the Northeast. Their hope was to go past ahead of the Indians and to keep ahead until protection could be secured.

That night the company camped on the shores of the Little Cotton River several miles Northeast of Old Mapleton and a few miles beyond what is now Mapleton. It was an anxious night. But before time to break camp in the morning ~~at~~ news came that soldiers from Fort Snelling had arrived at Mankato. This brought a feeling of encouragement to the settlers. Some wanted to turn back. Others wanted to go on. Many did go on and never came back. They cast their lot in older and more settled sections of the "Pioneer West". But a few families, my father's included, ~~to turn~~ back to their claims. They went back courageously ~~d~~ determined to take whatever came.

Thus closes the first chapter of our reminiscence. It is a retold story of course, for it was still sixteen years before the writer first saw the light of day in father's home on this same homestead. But though father was himself so young when the Massacre occurred, the experiences were so nerve racking and the fear so great that ~~d~~ an indelible impression was made upon his memory as vivid as though it all happened just "a week ~~ago~~ ago".

I have often heard father tell about the shooting of a man while cutting hay. ~~He~~ He lived across the river and West of Garden City. It was the happening of a roving band of outlaw Indians who were passing through the country some time after the outbreak.

#4

The story of the trial of the captured Indians after the uprising; the reprieve of all but forty of the number by President Lincoln and the subsequent hanging of 38 at Mankato were commonplace narratives with father.

I heard these so much in my boyhood that they seemed almost as though they were my own observations. Needless to say they all helped to make history of the massacre and especially narratives by personal experiences almost like second nature to me. ~~How clearly, I see that picture of the hanging of 38 Indians framed and hanging in my uncle's (a Civil War veteran's) home;~~

That framed picture of the hanging of thirty eight Indians, ~~on~~ hanging in the sitting room of my Uncle's home; conversations with friends of the older generation who were among the soldier band who drove off the Indians and squelched the uprising; the ~~passing~~ passing of the spot where the Indians paid the penalty of their crimes, these ~~have all helped to make the Indian Massacre of 1862~~ as well as father's recital of his experiences have all helped to make one of a succeeding generation feel as though he were part and parcel of it all. It inspires him ~~to show his children and~~ to point with at least a ~~family~~ ^{Pioneer's} pride, to the monument just ~~the~~ North of the Calpaugh house in Mankato and say; " That marks the place where the 38 Indians were hung after the Outbreak of 1862."

C.S. Marshall

ENCLOSURE