JOHN NAIRN FAMILY

John Nairn
born 22 Sept. 1828 in Coldingham, Scotland
came to America in 1852, settled in southern Minnesota ca. 1857-9
escaped Sioux Indian massacre near New Ulm, Minn., Sept. 1862
moved to home of brother, James, Sept. 1862, in Burlington, Iowa
moved to Omaha, NE, 1865
moved to Sioux City, Ia., 1868
lived in Sioux City/Salix 1868-1894; owned Nairn's Mill
died 11 April 1894 in Salix, Ia.

Magdalen(e) Nisbet Nairn (Mrs. John Nairn)
born 27 Jan. 1827 in Coldingham, Scotland
married to John Nairn in 1852 in Coldingham
came to America 1852
died 17 July 1909 in or near Salix, Ia.

Children:

Cecilia Douglass Nairn
born 20 June 1852--Coldingham, Scotland
died 27 Feb. 1874--Sioux City or Salix, Ia.

Infant boy
born 20 Feb. 1854--place unknown
died 20 Feb. 1854-- " "

James Nairn
born 7 Mar. 1856--place unknown
died 8 Oct. 1862--Burlington, Iowa

Margaret Robertson (Maggie) Nairn Redwood Falls?
born 11 Nov. 1859--probably near Ft. Ridgely, Minnesota
died 31 July 1926--probably in ~~Sioux City, Ia.~~ Iowa City, Ia.

William John Nairn
born 7 July 1862--probably near Ft. Ridgely or New Ulm, Minn. Redwood Falls?
died 7 May 1881--Sioux City or Salix, Ia.

Elizabeth (Bessie) Nairn (Mrs. Robert H. Countermine) (my grandmother)
born 11 Nov. 1868--Sioux City, Ia.
died 4 Mar. 1919--Sioux City, Ia.

This manuscript was written by John Nairn sometime between 1862 and 1894. I do not know how it happened to be written or if it were published.

There are two typed copies of the manuscript here. The second was typed ca. 1926 by John Nairn's niece, Sarah Jeffrey Buckley, who found the manuscript in the possessions of John Nairn's daughter Margaret after Margaret's death in 1926. The first copy is one that I typed, as Sarah's copy was nearly unreadable.

I did not know of the manuscript's existence until 1981. After my cousin Dorothy Buckley died that year, it was found in her possessions. My cousin, Dr. Elizabeth Russell of Mt. Desert, Maine, gave me a copy.

I would like very much to find a copy of the original handwritten manuscript.

Mrs. Ronald L. Troy
15009 Westchester Circle
Omaha, Nebraska 68154

A History of the Sioux Massacre

The personal recollections of the late John Nairn

The material for this paper is derived from personal recollections of life among the Dakota Indians, and covers a period from 1854 to 1862.

The popular mind has ever regarded the Sioux Massacre as only an outburst of savage fury, entirely without excuse, which is but a partial view.

I propose to lay before you an impartial statement of the situation as it existed, covering the period above stated; and it may throw some light on this subject hitherto somewhat obscure, and in a measure help us to understand the causes in operation leading to a revolt of this section of the Dakota people.

Fort Ridgely, in Minnesota on the St. Peter river, an outpost of civilization in 1854, was constructed to control the roving Dakota bands of Indians who had about this time been removed to their reservation on the Minnesota or St. Peter river. The Reservation extended from Fort Ridgely to its source and covered a territory ten miles in width on each side of the stream. The country west of the river had been chosen by the Indians for their camps and fields, the river thus forming a barrier between themselves and their hereditary foes the Chipewas, who occupied the country near the sources of the Mississippi to the East and North. Fort Ridgely was built to the east of the Minnesota; the Lower Sioux Agency, as the crow flies, about twelve miles further up the river on its western bank, and about ten miles south of the Redwood or Cha-sha-sha, a tributary of the Minnesota, from which the Agency derived its name, Redwood.

About thirty five miles to the North of the lower agency, near where the Yellow Medecine river falls into the Minnesota was built the upper agency and named "Yellow Medecine" after the river, and by the Indians "Pay-zhe-hoo-taze".

Around the lower agency were gathered the Mississippi and Lower Minnesota bands known as the "Medi-wa-con-tan" and "Wah-pa-cuta" or "Leaf Shooter". They were divided into about five principal bands, each having a nominal hereditary chief, through whom all business with the government was transacted. They thus possessed a certain kind of influence over the bands but no authority. Authority was only exercised by the principal men (?) or soldiers of the band. They were chiefly trappers and hunters of small game, and expert with firearms.

The Yellow Medecine Indians were known as "Sisseton" and "Wah-pa-ton" and occupied the country from the Yellow Medecine north to the British possessions, and followed the buffalo as far west as the Missouri River.

The Sissetons were hunters of the plains, knowing comparitively little of the use of fire arms, which they seldom used, the bow and spear being the favorite weapons in their hunts. "Ta-tan-ka-na-zha" or Standing Buffalo" was their head or principal chief. Once a year they appeared at Yellow Medecine in full force to receive their annuities. They came with all their possessions, horses, dogs, wives and children, a promiscuous but picturesque company; not a wheel in the whole procession, travoys or poles tied together near the ends, crossing the animals' backs; dogs being harnessed as well as the horses, on which were carried every conceivable kind of camp furniture, their babies and supplies. The horses also usually carried an Indian lady, riding man fashion,

and enveloped in an exceedingly soiled buffalo skin and like the famous Brion Olin, with the "fleshy side out and the hairy side in". There were also in the procession many dignified and solemn gentlemen dressed as history describes the first red men. They rather appeared to be passengers, and took but little interest in the various duties of the camp, over which the ladies had full sway.

The Wah-pa-tons in their social life and habits more nearly resembled the Lower Sioux, occasionally trapping and hunting small game although depending mainly on the buffalo for their supply of meat. Their principal villages were five miles North of the agency, near where were the Presbyterian missions. At this place was the Hazelwood Republic, an organization hitherto unknown to the public, conducted by the Indians themselves, where they were trained in the formula of the republic and taught the principles of civil government as a preparatory step to becoming citizens of the United States, one of the great aims of their missionary teachers. At the agencies were small communities of white people, employees of the government, some of them having families residing with them. At the Lower Agency the Presbyterians had built a house of worship. The Episcopalians occupied a government building in which were held religious services, and also used as a school house, where the white children of the agency might attend. The corps of agency employes consisted of physician, farmer, blacksmith, warehouse clerk and a carpenter who acted as master mechanic and general overseer of the mechanical department embracing mills, building, bridging, etc. Under the farmer and carpenter often a large force of men was employed. In close proximity to and in sight of the agencies, the traders had erected their stores and warehouses, where large stocks of general merchandise were carried.

The Sissetons had no particular grievance against the government, as their hunting territory was not encroached upon. They seldom came in contact with white people, except traders. Among the Indians of the lower agency a feeling of discontent and dissatisfaction was observable soon after their removal and was intensified by the frequent change of their superintendents and agents, who were generally men who were densely ignorant of the Indians, and unqualified by either training or knowledge for the responsible duties they assumed. It was unfortunate that the government had no established system of dealing with the Indians. A drifting, careless policy had been inherited and continued apparently without consideration.

The relation of the Indians to the government was anomalous, and independent semi-civilized foreign people, in possession of large tracts of land within the territorial limits of the United States, and whose claim to the territory over which they roamed had never been questioned. Their independence was acknowledged when the government went into treaty relations with them for the surrender of portions of their land when wanted for the spreading population. They were allowed to manage their own affairs and permitted to carry on a never ending predatory warfare with the neighboring tribes, which was a scandal to the government and a hindrance to their civilization. Each new agent was allowed to formulate his own policy, or drift without one, which was the commoner way. In several instances, without a common education and without preparation such men were invested with the control and management of thousands of wild, untutored men, and the handeling of great sums of their money; a most responsible and delicate position, but which some pot-house politician (?) was considered as possessing the necessary qualifications. On a salary of $1000 a year some agents would rise from poverty to affluence and retire with a fortune. It was considered the correct thing for an incoming agent of this kind (?) to introduce himself to the Indians at a general pow wow and air his knowledge of Indian ideas,

which were thought to be imaginative and poetical, and supposing that something in the same line from their new father would be immensely pleasing and recommend (?) him to their favor. The red man would be informed that his white father was a great man and had been sent by their "great father" at Washington to do them good, that he hoped they would live in peace and harmony, and it would be mighty pleasing to him to see the smoke from the wigwam of his red brother ascending and mingling with the smoke from the wigwam of the white man, and he hoped to smoke with them the pipe of peace and so on. An Indian crotor (?) in reply would at once launch out into the wrongs of the Indians, scoring, critisizing and condemning the course of the retiring agent and the faithlessness of the government, almost knocking the breath out of his white father by his knowledge of treaty and agency affairs, abolishing and annihilating the preconceived notions of his white father, clipping his soaring wings and landing him on the earth among pork (?) and flour.

The chiefs of the Lower Sioux, with two exceptions, were quiet, sensible men and all well understood in what relation they stood to the government. The two exceptions were Little Crow and Little Six or "Sha-ko-pee". Little Crow was restless and ambitious, of more than ordinary intelligence, and by his eloquence and energy, dominated and in a measure controlled the actions of the different bands. Little Six, so named because of his short stature, was chief of a large band who were considered the worst and most dangerous of all the Indians. He was a garrulous old fellow, who was much concerned about the comforts of living and expended his eloquence on the beauties of a good feast and plenty to eat. His son, however, was a tall scowling ruffian, whose after actions in no wise belied his looks. There was one other band of Indians related to the Wah-pa-ku-ta; or rather only a band of outlaws, recruited by the other criminals, hiding from justice, headed by "Inkpaduta" or "Scarlet Tail" or "Scarlet End" who had gained great noteriety by his killing of the Spirit Lake settlers.

This family, although belonging to the annuity Indians, never appeared openly at the agency or directly received anything from the government and after the Spirit Lake raid, courted the shade as much as possible.

During the Buchanan administration an old Indian trader of some ability was appointed agent and inaugerated an entire change in the conduct of the agencies. He was well acquainted with the Indian character and needs, and tried on his own responsibility, to better their condition. Up to this time nothing had been attempted to improve their material or intellectual condition. Previous to, and up to this period the Indians had lived in their original tribal communities. Each band cultivated a large communal field, annually divided by themselves into parcels suitable for each family. The agency farmer fenced and plowed the field. It was then planted to corn and cultivated by the Indian women. During the communal period but little of any other crop was raised; a few beans, squashes, sometimes melons and occasionally a few potatoes. A radical change was now in contemplation, the breaking up of the tribal idea, the segregation of the bands and the settling of families on seperate parcels of land. The Indians generally did not favor the plan, and opposed a seperation from each other, further than was necessary in order to obtain an amount of land necessary for a sufficient field.

The Lower agency settlements extended perhaps ten miles north and nearly as far south of the agency, along the west side of the Minnesota having the high river bluff for a base and extending as far as desired towards the open prairie. On these parcels of land about two hundred brick, frame and log houses had been built. A few school houses were also erected and a number of teachers

engaged, but little or nothing was accomplished by them. It was however quite an advanced idea for an Indian agent to even recognize the necessity of educating the Indians. The missionaries were practical men, earnestly at work, and compelled a recognition of the necessity of education. The traders quietly opposed any change in agency affairs that seemed to interfere with special interests. Money and a variety of goods were annually distributed among the Indians, called annuities, which were furnished by the government as payment for lands surrendered by them, and not, as many supposed, a gratuity. When a distribution was to take place, all the Indians had to be present and placed on the pay roll as each person, from the oldest to the infant just born, were entitled to, and received equal shares of money and goods. All the Indians were enclosed in an open space, each band passing through an opening by families and counted. The goods consisted of articles for domestic use--hats, caps, boots and shoes and ready made clothing for men and boys. This sounds as if the Indians were progressing in civilization and adopting decent and civilized methods and habits, but the goods apparently were not selected as suitable for his habits or comfort, scrapings of eastern warehouses that must have been purchased for a trifle, but paid for by the Indians possibly at a high price. Swallow tail coats of ancient make, "plug" hats and cow hide boots, which he only endured on his feet for a day for the novelty of the thing, and shoes of every make and pattern, were some of the articles distributed. They were novelties for the young people and mighty popular for a time. It was quite the thing for a youngster to don a "plug" tile and "swallow tail", the tails sometimes trailing on the prairie, on which he would turn his head and gave with immense admiration, but the luster of his grandure soon wore off, fashions changed in an hour, swallow tails were shorn to the waist and hats were cut in two, his preference usually inclining to the top half as more suited to his athletic taste. The stiff boots tortured their feet and the tops were soon used as soles for their more comfortable moccasins. The sensible men of the bands had no use for such goods and openly said they were being robbed, but were soothed by extra presents for themselves and their leading men which, however, did not blind them to the fact that their money was being wasted, if nothing worse, and that they were bribed to be a party to the transaction. They would ask where their presents came from, or who paid for them, were suspicious and only accepted the presents to distribute among their friends, afraid of being suspected as parties to the fraud and thus lose their influence in the band. Of course blankets, cloth and calico for shirts and women's wear, were part of the goods, but a great many things were inferior in quality, made for the Indian trade, and the laughing remark was not uncommon "good enough for an Indian". There was a general conviction that there was gross misapplication of their money and that they were helpless to prevent it. The complaint was common that they were not consulted as to their needs, and were compelled to accept goods of little or no use to them.

A vicious system of trading was early introduced by the traders. Credits were given to the Indians of which they kept but little account. When the money annuities were paid the traders sat at the tables, and as soon as the money was passed to the Indians a trader put his hand on it, took what he wanted and passed the remainder to the Indian. This method of collecting debts was the cause of endless trouble. The Indians accused them of robbery, but as the agent allowed it they had to submit, but with a vengeful feeling growing and intensifying in many of their hearts. A trader's clerk relating a conversation he heard between two old Indians, said they begged a piece of tobacco and squatted on the floor for a smoke. He heard them laughing and listened. Said one, taking a whiff "Have you heard the news?" No what is it?" said the other. "We are getting a new great father". Oh said the other,"that is news indeed" and

with a laugh "I wonder if his pockets are deep?" Our great father always sends us a new father with deep pockets and the Dakotas have to fill them", and they smoked and laughed at their own wit.

That half of their reservation east of the Minnesota was of little use to them, and only used for an occasional hunt. Bands of Chippewas stealing across the prairie, ambushed and killed the hunters and travelers. During their last inroad three Dakotas were killed and one Chippewa wounded. One of the Dakotas, Little Crow, barely escaped the tomahawk of a vengeful Chippewa. The affair was seen from the fort. A detatchment soon overtook the Chippewas, who were encumbered by a wounded comrad they were unwilling to abandon. They were brought to the fort and kept there until the wounded man recovered, when they were started for their reservation which they reached in safety. The Sioux were furious because the Chippewa prisoners were not delivered to them. Six hundred braves demanded them at the fort, and left in a hostile frame of mind. As the Dakotas would not occupy this half of their reservation, they had been opportuned for some time, by interested parties, to sell it to the government, and many had been the conferences in relation to the sale. The Indians refused to sell knowing that they were being pushed to the wall, and afraid the money would never reach them. At a council they were assured that the money would come directly to them, as all their debts to the traders were paid, and it was represented to them that if the country was filled with white people they would be free from the harrassing raids of their enemies. The treaty was finally concluded, the land sold and opened for settlement, most of it along the river being quickly taken. The Indians often complained that they had never been paid a dollar of the money which they said was swallowed up in the payment of false claims, whether true or false, no accounting was ever made with them for the money which they could understand.

In the Spring of 1859 a dreadful and altogether unlooked for massacre of white settlers had taken place at Spirit Lake, Iowa. About forty men, women and children, without warning, were ruthlessly killed by a small band of Indians going from house to house, destroying each family as they went. Four women were taken prisoners, two of them only escaping with their lives. They were purchased from their captors by the agency Indians and delivered to their friends. This occurrence put the Indians in a flame. (?) Blood had been shed and only more blood would seem to satisfy them. So threatening seemed the situation that all the agency employes were called to the agency and soldiers with artillery were brought from the fort for protection. The cooler heads among the Indians, however, counseled peace and they were quieted for a time. A feeling of unrest and excitement was, however, abroad among them and several things occurred to augment and intensify this condition. A son of Ink-pa-du-ta (?) boldly visited some friends at Yellow Medecine. A small detatchment of soldiers hastily summoned from Fort Ridgely surprised and killed the murderer, which nearly brought on a conflict. About this time the Superintendent of Indian affairs in one of his addresses to the Indians, had promised them an extra sum of money, something that was to make them happy. The Indians were greatly elated and had come from far and near to receive it. About 4000 (?) had come together and many had come from a great distance poorly supplied for their journey. They were in a famishing condition and broke into the warehouse and helped themselves to provisions, having previously, by a stratagem, deprived the guards of their weapons. T. W. Sherman then came from the fort with his artillery to protect the agency. A young Indian strolling through the soldiers' encampment, defiantly stabbed one of the soldiers. He was surrendered to the officer, but made his escape, and, as the soldier recovered no farther action was taken as the situation was felt to be precarious.

Orders had been sent from Washington to send an expedition to punish the Spirit Lake murderers. The Indians were told that no farther annuities would be paid unless this was done, and as a test of their loyalty they were expected to do it. They very reluctantly, after much counciling, got together a large party and proceeded against Ink-pa-du-ta. The Indians ueanestly (?) urged the propriety of the white soldiers punishing the murderers. They were willing to help, but said they could not do it alone, and they were right. A large party finally went to arrest or kill the murderers who still lingered near the lakes. Returning after their provisions failed, they reported a fight that did not take place and the Ink-pa-du-ta murderers were never punished. The entire proceedings were fruitful only of evil.(?) The younger Indians laughed at what they supposed the weakness of the whites and it certainly encouraged them to their awful work of 1862.(?)

The blanket of (or?) wild Indians, were fiercely opposed to the seperate farm plan and its civilizing effect, which was commencing itself gradually to even many who were at first opposed to it. They felt their influence was on the wane and unless something was speedily done, they would soon be an indifferent (?) minority. Could peace have been maintained for only a few years the influence of the progressive Indians, working in harmony with the missions, would have made the outbreak impossible, and all the subsequent troubles with the different bands of the Sioux would have been avoided.

The Civil war was now in progress and helped on the coming storm. The money annuities had been delayed and the feeling of discontent was clearly assuming a hostile appearance. A number of men had been enlisted at the agency and neighboring settlements, which the Indians were not slow to perceive, favored their plans, leaving the country more at their mercy and encouraged them to believe they could drive out the white people and repossess themselves of the country, which among the ignorant young warriors was considered possible if the different tribes in Minnesota--the Siouxs, Chippewas and Winnebagos--could be consolidated; and some steps had been taken in this direction. Shortly before this time the Tee-you-tee-pe (Tee-yon-tee-po?) or Soldiers' Lodge had been organized. This was a secret order where only warriors were admitted, those who had killed and scalped an enemy, or at least had touched the dead body of one newly slain. The members were only called together when war or a great hunt was in contemplation. At these meetings every question of importance was discussed and plans made for the work in contemplation. Severe penalties were inflicted on any one revealing the work of the lodge; his property was destroyed and he even sometimes suffered death. Two instances of this punishment inflicted occurred at the agency. One man had his clothes entirely cut from his person, leaving him naked, and the other was shot to death. Something of the designs of the lodge had leaked out and they were the supposed culprits. At those secret consultations a plan had been formed for an organized outbreak, which had it been adhered to, would have been more destructive in its results. Their money annuities had been delayed on account of pecuniary difficulties at Washington and did not arrive until the outbreak had taken place. Their plan was to be ready at payment time, when, as usual a great many visitors would be at the agency, secure their money and massacre all the white people present. All their plans miscarried, as some young bucks of the Shakope band not in the secret, precipitated matters by killing some people at Acton in Minnesota. The temper of the Indians needed only a spark to create an explosion, and this fired the train. This was on the 17th of August, 1862. On that night a great council was hastily called and the question was "Deliver the murderers or fight". It was decided by a speech, some said by Little Crow, who made the decisive remark "Our hands are now bloody, let us fight at once". Their movements

were, however,without order or concert. The impatience of the young warriors to distinguish themselves could not be controlled and before morning small raiding parties dispersed themselves over the outlying settlements, murdering the unsuspecting people in their homes and fields and working back in a narrowing circle toward the agency, destroying everything in their course. At 6:45 on the morning of the 18th of August the storm broke over the agency, and within fifteen minutes no living white people were there, all had either fled or were dead. The Indians had gathered in parties around the stables and warehouse and a large number were seen near the trading posts, but no overt act had taken place up to this time. They seemed to be waiting. Standing among a number of them I could get no answer to my questions as to what the trouble was. Suddenly there was a great discharge of guns and instantly there was a break for the stables, in which were many fine horses. Several volleys in quick succession followed, then scattering shots as individuals were killed. The trading posts had been attacked and were being rifled. A few persons only escaped because of the eagerness of the Indians for their share of the plunder.

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(This is the end of the manuscript as I received it. However, some of it may well be missing.)

Peggy Troy

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During the Buchanan administration an old Indian trader of some ability was appointed agent and inaugerated an entire change in the conduct of the agencies He was well acquainted with the Indian character and needs,and tried on his own responsibility,to better their condition Up to this time nothing had been attempted to improve their material or intellectual condition. Previous to,and up to this periodthe Indians had lived in their original tribal communities. Each band cultivated a large communal field,annually divided by themselves into parcels suitable for each family . The agency farmer fenced and plowed the field. It was then planted to corn and cultivated by the Indian women . During the communal period but little of any other crop was raised ;a few beans,squashes, sometimes melons and occasionally a few potatoes. A radical change was now in contemplation,the breaking up of the tribal idea,the segregation of the bandsand the settling of families on seperate parcels of land . The Indians generally did not favor the plan ,and opposed a seperation from each other ,further than was necessary in order to obtain an amount of land necessary for a sufficient field.

The Lower agency settlements extended perhaps ten miles north and nearly as far south of the agency,along the west side of the Minnesota having the high river bluff for a base and extending as far as desired towards the open prairie. On these parcels of land about two hundred brick,frame and log houses had been built . A few school houses were also erected and a number of teachers engaged ,but little or nothing was accomplished by them . It was however quite an advanced idea for an Indian agent to even recognize the necessity of educating the Indians. The missionaries were practical men ,earnestly at work ,and compelled a recognition of the necessity of education The traders quietly opposed any change in agency affairs that seemed to interfere with special interests. Money and a variety of goods were annually distributed among the Indians ,called annuities,which were furnished by the government as payment for lands surrendered by them,and not,as many supposed,a gratuity . When a distribution was to take place ,all the Indians had to be present and placed on the pay rollMas each person ,from the oldest to the infant just born ,were entitled to,and received equal shares of money and goods. All the Indians were enclosed in an open space,each band passing through an opening by families and counted . The goods consisted

resembled the Lower Sioux,occasionally trapping, and hunting small game although depending mainly on the buffalo for their supply of meat. Their principal village was five miles north of the agency ,near where were the Presbyterian Missions. At this place was Shakewood Republic ,an organization hitherto unknown to the public,conducted by the Indians themselves,where they were trained in the formula of the republic and taught their principles of civil government as a preparatory step to becoming citizens of the United States,one of the great aims of their missionary teachers. At the agencies were small communities of white people,employes of the government ,some of them having families residing with them . At the Lower Agency the Presbyterians had built a house of worship. The Episcopalians occupied a government building in which were held religious services,and also used as a school house,where the white children of the agency might attend. The corps of agency employes consisted of physician,farmer,blacksmith,warehouse clerk and a carpenter who acted as master mechanic and general overseer of all the mechanical department entrusting mills,building,bridging ect. Under the farmer and carpenter often a large force of men was employed . In close proximity to and in sight of the agencies,the traders had erected their stores and warehouses,where large stocks of general merchandise were carried.

The Sissetons had no particular grievance against the government, as their hunting territory was not encroached upon . They seldom came in contact with white people,except traders. Among the Indians of the lower agency a feeling of discontent and dissatisfaction was observable soon after their removal and was intensified by the frequent change of their superintendents and agents,who were generally men who were densely ignorant of the Indians,and unqualified by either training or knowledge for the responsible duties they assumed . It was unfortunate that the government had no established system of dealing with the Indians . A drifting ,erreless policy had been inherited and continued apparently without consideration.

The relation of the Indians to the government was anmalous,and independent semi-civilized foreign people,in possession of large tracts of land within the territorial limits of the United States ,and whose claim to the territory over which they roamed had never been questioned. Their independence was acknowledged when the government went into treaty relations with them for the surrender of portions of their land when wanted for the spreading population. They were allowed to manage their own affairs and permitted to carry on a never ending predatory warfare with the neighboring tribes, which was a scandal to the government and a hindrance to their civilization. Each new agent was allowed to formulate his own policy,or drift without one,which was the commoner way. In several instances ,without a common education and without preperation such men were invested with the control and management of thousands of wild ,untutored men,and the handeling of great sums of their money ; a most responsible and delicate position ,but which some pot-house politician was considered as possessing the necessary qualifications . On a salary of $1000 a year some agents would rise from poverty to affluence and retire with a fortune . It was considered the correct thing for an incoming agent of this kind immediately to introduce himself to the Indians at a general pow wow and air his knowledge of Indian ideas,which were supposed to be imaginative and poetical ,and supposing that something in the same line from their new father would be immensely pleasing and recommend him to their favor . The red men would be informed that his white father was a great man and had been sent by their "great father" at Washington to [illegible] ,that he hoped they would live in peace and harmony ,and it would be mighty pleasing to him to see the smoke from the wigwam of his red brother ascending and mingling with the smoke from the wigwam of the white man, and he hoped to smoke with them the pipe of peace and so on.

An Indian orator in [illegible] would launch out into the wrongs of the Indians,scoring ,critisizing and condemning the course of the retiring agent and the faithlessness of the government ,almost knocking the breath out of his white father by his knowledge of treaty and agency affairs,abolishing, and annihilating the preconceived notions of his white father,clipping his soaring wings and landing him on the earth among pork and flour.

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of articles for domestic use hats,caps,boots and shoes and ready made clothing for men and boys .This sounds as if the Indians were progressing in civilizationn and adopting decent and civilized methods and habits, but the goods apparently were not selected as suitable for his habits or comfort,scrapings of eastern warehouses that must have been purchased for a trifle,but paid for by the Indians possibly at a high price. Swallow tail coats of ancient make,"plug" hats and cow hide boots,which he only endured on his feet for a day for the novelty of the thing,and shoes of every make and pattern,were some of the articles distributed.They were novelties for the young people and mighty popular for a time . It was quite the thing for a youngster to don a "plug" tile and "swallow tail" the tails sometimes trailing on the prairie,on which he would turn his head and gave with immense admiration,but the luster of his grandure soon wore off,fashions changed in an hour,swallow tails were shorn to the waist and hats were cut in two,his prefference usually inclining to the top half as more suited to his athletic taste. The stiff boots tortured their feet and the tops were soon sued as soles for their more comfortab moccasins. The sensible men of the bands had no use for such goodsand openly said they were being robbed,but were soothed by extra presents for themselves and their leading men which,however did not blind themto the fact that their money was being wasted,if nothing worse,and that they were bribed to be a party to the transaction. They would ask where their presents came from,or who paid for them,were suspicious and only accepted the presents to distribute among their friends,afraid of being suspected as parties to the fraud and thus lose their influen ce in the band. Of course blankets,cloth and calico for shirts and womens wear,were part of the goods,but a grest many things were inferior in quality,made for the Indian trade,and the laughing remark was not uncommon "good enough for an Indian". There was a general conviction that there was gnoss misapplication of their money and that they were helpless to prevent it . The complaint was common that they were not consulted as to their needs ,and were compelled to accept goods of little or no use to them.

A vicious system of trading was early introduced by the traders. Credits were given to the Indians of which they kept but little account. When the money annuities were paid the traders sat at the tables,and as soon as the money was passed to the Indians a trader put his hand on it ,took what he wanted and passed the remainder to the Indian. This method of collecting debts was the cause of endless trouble. The Indians accused them of robbery,but as the agent allowed it they had to submit,but with a vengeful feeling growing and intensifying in many of their hearts. A traders clerk relating a conversation he heard between two old Indians,s said they begged a piece of tobacco and squatted on the floor for a smok He heard them laughing and listened. Said one,taking a whiff"Have you heard the news?" " No what is it?" said the other. We are getting a new grest father" "Oh said the other,that is news indeed" and with a laugh ""I wonder if his pockets are deep?"Our great father always sends us a new father with deep pockets and the Dakotas have to fill them",and they smoked and laughed at their own wit.

That half of their reservation east of the Minnesota was of little use to them,and only used for an occasional hunt. Bands of Chippewas stealing across the prairie,ambushed and killed the hunters and traveler During their last inroad three Dakotas were killed and one Chippewa wound edOne of the Dakotas,Little Crow,barely escaped the tomahawk of a vengefu Chippewa. The affair was seen from the fort. A detatchment soon overtook the Chippewas,who were encumbered by a wounded comrad they were unwilling to abandon. They were brought to the fort and kept there until the wounded man recovered,when they were started for their reservation which they reached in safety. The Sioux were furious because the Chippewa prisoners were not delivered to them. Six hundred braves demanded them at the fort,and left in a hostile frame of mind . As the Dakotas would

not occupy this half of their reservation,they had been opportuned for some time,by interested parties,to sell it to the government,and many ha been the conferences in relation to the sale. The Indians refused to sell insisting, that they were being punished to the well,and afraid the money would never reach them. At a council they were assured that the money would come directly to them,as all their debts to the traders were paid, and it was represented to them that if the country was filled with white people they would be free from the harrassing raids of their enemies. The treaty was finally concluded,the land sold and opened for settlement ,most of it also, the river being quickly taken. The Indians often complained that they had never been paid a dollar of the money which they said was swallowed up in the payment of false claims,whether true or not false,no accounting was ever made with them for the money which they cou understand.

In the Spring of 1859 a dreadful and altogether unlooked for massacre of white settlers had taken place at Spirit Lake Iowa. About forty men,women and children,without warning,were ruthlessly killed by a small band of Indians going from house to house,destroying each family a they went.Four women were taken prisoners,two of them only escaping with their lives. They were purchased from their captors by the agency India and delivered to their friends. This occurance put the Indians in a flam Blood had been shed and only more blood would seem to satisfy them. So threatening seemed the situation that all the agency employes were called to the agency and soldiers with artillery were brought from the fort for protection. The cooler heads among the Indians,however counseled peace and they were quieted for a time. A feeling of unrest and excitement was however,abroad among them and several things occurred to augment and intensify this condition. A son of Ink-pa-du-ta boldly whipped some fried at Yellow Medecine. A small detatchment of soldiers ~~hastily~~ summoned from Fort Ridgely surprised and killed the murderer,which queasly brought on a conflict. About this time the Superintendent of Indian affairs in one of his addresses to the Indians,had promised the them an extra sum of money ,something that was to make them happy. The Indians were greatly elated and had come from far and near to receive it About 400 had come together and many had come from a great distance poorly supplied for their journey. They were in a famishing condition an broke into the warehouse and helped themselves to provisions,having previously,by a stratagem,deprived the guards of their weapons. ~~Gen~~Sherm T.W.Sherman then came from the fort with his artillery to protect the agency. A young Indian strolling through the soldiers encampment,defiant ly stabbed one of the soldiers. He was surrendered to the officer,but made his escape,and,as the soldier recovered no farther action was taken as the situation was felt to be precarious.

Orders had been sent from Washington to send an expedition to punish the Spirit Lake murderers. The Indians were told that no farther annuities would be paid unless this was done ,and as a test of their loyalty they were expected to do it. They very reluctantly,after much counselling,got together a large party and proceeded against Ink-pa-du-ta The Indians unanestly urged the propriety of the white soldiers punishing the murderers. They were willing to help ,but said they could not do it alone,and they were right. A large party finally went to arres or kill the murderers who still lingered near the lakes. Returning after their provisions failed ,they reported a fight that did not take place and the Ink-pa-du-ta murderers were never punished. The entire proceeding were fruitful only of evil. The younger Indians laughed at what they supposed the weakness of the whites and it certainly encouraged them to their awful work of 1862.

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The Civil war was now in progress and helped on the coming storm. The money annuities had been delayed and the feeling of discontent was clearly assuming a hostile appearance. A number of men had been enlisted at the agency and neighboring settlements, which the Indians were not slow to perceive, favored their plans, leaving them the country more at their mercy and encouraged them to believe they could drive out the white people and re-possess themselves of the country, which among the ignorant young warriors was considered possible if the different tribes in Minnesota the Sioux, Chippewas and Winnebagos could be consolidated; and some steps had been taken in this direction. Shortly before this time the Toe-yon-tee-pe or Soldiers' Lodge had been organized. This was a secret order where only warriors were admitted, those who had killed and scalped an enemy, or at least had touched the dead body of one newly slain. The members were only called together when war or a great hunt was in contemplation. At these meetings every question of importance was discussed and plans made for the work in contemplation. Severe penalties were inflicted on any one revealing the work of the lodge; his property was destroyed and he even sometimes suffered death. Two instances of this punishment inflicted occurred at the agency. One man had his clothes entirely cut from his person, leaving him naked, and the other was shot to death. Something of the designs of the lodge had leaked out and they were the supposed culprits. At these secret consultations a plan had been formed for an organized outbreak, which had it been adhered to, would have been more destructive in its results. Their money annuities had been delayed on account of pecuniary difficulties at Washington and did not arrive until the outbreak had taken place. Their plan was to be ready at payment time, when, as usual a great many visitors would be at the agency, secure their money and massacre all the white people present. All their plans miscarried, as some young bucks of the Shakope band not in the secret, precipitated matters by killing some people at Acton in Minnesota. The temper of the Indians needed only a spark to create an explosion, and this fired the train. This was on the 17th. of August, 1862. On that night a great council was called hastily called and the question was "Deliver the murderers or fight" It was decided by a speech, some said by Little Crow, who made the decisive remark "Our hands are now bloody, let us fight at once" Their movements were however, without order or concert. The impatience of the young warriors to distinguish themselves could not be controlled and before morning small raiding parties dispersed themselves over the out lying settlements, murdering the unsuspecting people in their homes and fields and working back in a narrowing circle toward the agency, destroying everything in their course. At 6:45 on the morning of the 18th. of August the storm broke over the agency, and within fifteen minutes no living white people were there, all had either fled or were dead. The Indians had gathered in parties around the stables and warehouse and a large number were seen near the trading posts, but no overt act had taken place up to this time. They seemed to be waiting. Standing among a number of them I could get no answer to my questions as to what the trouble was. Suddenly there was a great discharge of guns and instantly there was a break for the stables, in which were many fine horses. Several volleys in quick succession followed, then scattering shots as individuals were killed. The trading posts had been attacked and were being rifled. A few persons only escaped because of the eagerness of the Indians for their share of the plunder.

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This letter was written by John Nairn, my great-grandfather, not long after his escape from the Sioux Indian Massacre of 1862 in southern Minnesota. It was sent to his sister, Magdalene Nairn (Mrs. John Smith) in their native Scotland. The introduction at the top of the letter was written ca. 1920s by John Nairn's niece, Sarah Jeffrey Buckley. Sarah found part of the original handwritten letter in the personal belongings of Margaret Robertson Nairn, John Nairn's daughter, after Margaret Nairn died in 1926.

The original of the letter apparently has disappeared. Sarah Buckley's typed copy is attached, along with a copy that I typed from Sarah's hard-to-read version. The handwritten notes on my typed copy are my own--to help the reader decipher names, etc.

Peggy Troy
May, 1983

LETTER WRITTEN BY JOHN NAIRN (CIRCA 1862)

(With introduction written--ca. 1926--by John Nairn's niece, Sarah Jeffrey Buckley)

Among the old photographs, etc., effects of cousin Margaret R. Nairn which were temporarily in my possession after her death I found what was apparently the half of a letter written by her father John Nairn to his sister Magdelin Nairn in Scotland soon after his escape from the Sioux Indian Massacre of 1862 near New Ulm, Minnesota. John Nairn with his wife and four children, Cecelia D.; Margaret; James and William after their escape from the Indians went to Burlington, Iowa, and resided for some time in the home of James and Georgina (Nairn) Jeffrey. The boy James died there.

Anxious to preserve anything relating to the experiences of our relatives at the time of this Massacre, I have made a copy of this faded and cris-crossed written letter.

Sarah E. (Jeffrey) Buckley.

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horses were killed by the Indians which saved the party as the men made breast-works of them. The first party sent out was small, only 48 men, 43? of whom were killed without effecting anything, the officers commanding on the frontier being incompetent to their duties. After the relief of the Fort all the refugees were ordered away, teams being provided by the Government. We left about 4 o'clock P.M. intending to travel all night to get to St. Peter, about 70? miles distant by morning, but it became so dark we were obliged to camp out and wait for light--and a dreary night it was, rain pouring on us without any shelter. We had only one quilt to cover the children the greater part of the night, but towards morning a man had the kindness to loan us a blanket. I was on guard outside the camp for four hours. We arrived at St. Peter the next day noon and was kindly treated by Dr. Daniels an old friend of ours. But this was not the last of our troubles. We were wrecked on the river, the steam boat getting a hole stove in her bottom and sinking. All the passengers were saved. I was so exhausted when we got _____ and _____ that I nearly fainted.

Our escape from the agency was very Providential. Cut off from the river at the only place where we could cross, our only course was to take a course and strike it 12 miles below, which we did. Our first intention was to try to get to New Ulm 30 miles distant, being the nearest point of safety on the side of the river on which we were on, but Providence ordered it otherwise. When we were about eight miles from the agency at the road leading to the fort, a Mr. Reynolds overtook us in his waggon on his way to New Ulm. As the children were becoming tired I proposed that he should take the two oldest with him, which he consented to do, and continued on his way. Shortly after he left us we suddenly changed our minds, and instead of following we concluded to make for the Fort and attempt to cross the river. I am a good swimmer you know and I thought I could swim over and obtain assistance from the garrison. We turned off and made for the river, the crossing place being about five miles distant. We had scarcely got out of sight in a low part of the country when two Indians rode over the very place where we had concluded to make for the Fort. We finally got to the river and a boat lay on the opposite side which I was not long in having across and getting them all over, when you may imagine our feelings--but where were our children? I intended to go immediately after them but the road had become dangerous and I was prevented. About 3 o'clock Mr. Reynolds rode into the Fort alone and I quickly enquired where they and his wife were--on the other side of the river--I sent off two men and followed

Cecelia Nairn, age 10; James Nairn, 6; Margaret (Maggie) Nairn, 3; William John Nairn, 6 wks

Cecelia + James

quickly with others and a waggon, the crossing being about a half mile distant. The boat was in the middle of the stream going over when I arrived and we all stood guard until they were all safely over, when I drove into the fort a happy man.

Mr. Reynolds had proceeded about 8 miles when he was intercepted by about 40 (?) Indians. He had a good horse and a friendly Indian kept between him and one man who had got near the waggon, he tried to discharge his gun but could not. Cecelia, poor girl was sitting in the back part of the waggon, a little thing with only one seat--let me, she called, get in front, he'll shoot me first. All that James said was Oh dear!, poor fellow he was greatly frightened. One day at Burlington before he had his last illness*, returning to the house soon after going out and being very quiet, his mother asked him what was the matter. He replied I heard a drum. He thought it was the Indians as he never had heard any but Indian drumming.

I have given you a very disjointed account of a little of what has befallen us in this wild country. How much we have to be grateful for it was not any good management of ours. The Lord led us. Mady** stood the terrible journey wonderfully and kept good courage all the way. Maggie never cried, she was carried on a handkerchief tied across one of the men's shoulders. Little baby cried only a very little. We carried him with nothing on but his shirt a great part of the way and he was none the worse.

And now my dear sister you must excuse my delay and write soon. I was happy to hear by your letter that Mother was a little better. I will send some money home in the Spring as I expect to be all paid up before long. Give my love to all at home. Father and Mother and all friends.

***

James has married at last. I saw his, at that time intended. She is a very sensible person and I think will make a good wife and mother.

I remain

Your aff Bro'

John Nairn.

* He died on 8 Oct. 1862 in Burlington, Iowa

** Mady = Magdalen(e), John Nairn's wife.

*** James Nairn of Burlington, Ia., brother of John Nairn

Among the old photographs set..effects of cousin Margaret Nairn which were temporarily in my possession after her death I found what was apparently the half of a letter written by her father John Nairn to his sister Cecelia written in Scotland not long after his escape from the Sioux Indian massacre of 1862 near New Ulm ,Minnesota. John Nairn with his wife and four children ,Cecelia D.,Margaret ,James and William after their escape from the Indians went to Burlington,Iowa and resided for some time in the home of James and Georgina (Nairn) Jeffrey. The boy James died there .

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After the relief of the Fort all the refugees were ordered away,teams being provided by the Government. We left about 4 o'clock P.M. intending to travel all night to get to St Peter,about 70 miles distant by morning, but it became so dark we were obliged to camp out and wait for light- and a dreary night it was,rain pouring on us without any shelter . We had only one quilt to cover the children the greater part of the night,but towards morning a man had the kindness to loan us a blanket. I was on guard outside the camp for four hours. We arrived at St Peter the next day noon and was kindly treated by Dr. Daniels and old friend of ours. But this was not the last of our troubles. We were wrecked on the river, the steam boat getting a hole stove in her bottom and sinking.All the passengers were saved . I was so exhausted when we got_____and _____ that I nearly fainted.

Our escape from the agency was very Providential. Cut off from the river at the only place where we could cross,our only course was to take a course and strike it 18 miles below,which we did. Our first intention was to try to get to New Ulm 30 miles distant ,being the nearest point of safety on the side of the river on which we were on,but Providence ordered it otherwise.When we were about eight miles from the agency at the road leading to the forst,a Mr Reynolds overtook us in his waggon on his way to New Ulm.As the children were becoming tired I proposed that he should take the two oldest with him,which he consented to do,and continued on his way. Shortly after he left us we suddenly changed our minds,and instead of following we concluded to make for the Fort and attempt to cross the river. I am a good swimmer you know and I thought I could swim over and obtain assistance from the garrison. We turned of and made for the river,the crossing place being about five miles distant We had scarcely got out of sight in a low part of the country when two Indians rode over the very place where we had concluded to make for the Fort. We finally got to the river and a boat lay on the opposite side . which I was not long in having across and getting them all over,when you may imagine our feelings-but where were our children? I intended to go immediately after them but the road had become dangerous and I was prevented. About 3 o'clock Mr Reynolds rode into the Fort alone and I quickly enquired where they and his wife were -on the other side of the river-I sent off two men and followed quickly with others and a waggon, the crossing being about a half mile distant . Mr R. [illegible] of the men going over when I arrived and we all stood guard until they were all safely over,when I drove into the fort a happy man.

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Obituaries for Margaret Robertson (Maggie) Nairn, who escaped the Sioux Indian Massacre of 1862 as a 3-year-old. She was the daughter of John and Magdalen(e) Nairn.

The first obituary is from the Sioux City Tribune. The second is from another paper in Woodbury County, Iowa--possibly the Sloan Star.

LIFELONG RESIDENT OF THIS COUNTY DIES

July 28 1926

Miss Margaret Nairn Escaped Death In Indian Massacre As Child

Wrong, Maggie was born in Minnesota probably in Redwood Falls

From Sioux City Tribune:

Miss Margaret R. Nairn, a lifelong resident of Woodbury county and Sioux City, died suddenly Sunday from a stroke of paralysis, at Iowa City, Iowa, where she went recently.

She was the daughter of John Nairn, a prominent early citizen, who for many years carried on a large farm and saw mill business southwest of Salix.

At the time of the Minnesota Indian massacre, John Nairn was in the employ of the Indian department at the agency as industrial agent, and had secured the friendship of some of the Indians who warned him in time, so with his wife and Margaret, a very young child, and an older daughter, Cecelia, he escaped and after much suffering, reached safety.

After Mr. Nairn's death, his whole farm of more than 1,200 acres was washed into the Missouri river.

Miss Nairn was graduated from the Sioux City high school, was a school teacher and for the last few years assisted Mrs. James in the publication of the Sioux City Stylus.

She is survived by two nieces in Sioux City, Madaline and Isabelle Countermne, and several cousins.

OBITUARY

Margaret Robertson Nairn, the fourth of the six children of John and Magdalen Nisbet Nairn was born Nov. 11th, 1859 and was the last surviving member of that family.

She was born near Redwood Falls Minnesota during the period when her father was industrial agent for the Government in the Indian reservation just previous to the Spirit Lake massacre.

Her mother was the first white women in the then to be town, and sat on the saw logs which her husband was putting out from his mill, for the construction of her own home and those of the Indians. After funishing the erection of this village Mr. Nairn was transferred to the lower Sioux Agency where again he was employed erecting houses for the Indians also in the building of Fort Thompson, until the time of the Sioux Indian Massacre led by Little Crow, Aug. 18, 1862.

Mr. Nairn was a great favorite with the Indians and, receiving a tip, was unable to escape after a perilous, all day journey, on foot with his wife little three year old Margaret and a six weeks old baby to Ft. Ridgely which he had helped to erect but five years before. As the company must not be too large the two oldest children were given to an old buck, board with the Government pay-master who was fleeing with the Government funds to the fort. During the ten days they remained at the fort, many times it was set on fire, the women and children often being obliged to lie flat on the floor to avoid the rifle fire. Finally after, ten days reinforcements arrived the Indians were defeated.

A releif force carried the white survivors down the Missouri river by steamboat to St. Louis. Mr. Nairn and family then left for the home of his sister Mrs. James Jeffrey at Burlington Iowa. After a residence of one year at Burlington the family removed to Omaha, and after a short residence there they moved to Sioux City, which became the permanent home of the family. Here the children obtained their education, Margaret being a graduate of the High School class of 1878. The family was prominently identified with the early life of the Presbytearin church of the city, Mr. Nairn being an elder of the church for many years.

After some years Mr. Nairn having acquired large timber interests south west of Salix removed to Lakeport, and there Margaret became his book-keeper and taught the local school. After her father's death, April 11th. 1894, the family moved to Salix to be near the 800 acres of land which they must now oversee. Her mother died in July, 1909.

On the removal of her sister and family to Sioux City, Margaret accompanied them and again became a resident of Sioux City.

In recent years she has been employed in the office of the "Sioux City Stylus" until her brief residence at Iowa City, where she suffered a stroke of apoplexy on the morning of July 31st. 1926, dying on the evening of the same day.

She leaves to mourn her loss the three children of her youngest sister, Douglas, Madeline and Isabel Countermine, besides a host of relatives and friends scattered all the way from Ann Arbor Mich. to Vancouver Wash.

Her memory will linger long in the thoughts of her friends who esteem her for her life of steadfast faith and Christian fortitude under adversity .

The funeral was held Wednesday afternoon from the West Funeral Home and interment was made in Floyd cemetery.

Those from Sloan who attended the Funeral were: Jas. N. Jeffrey, George S. Jeffrey, Mattie Jeffrey, Mrs. Dr. Hilts, and Jack and Peter Byers, all cousins of the deceased.

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This article was written by John Nairn's nephew, Alex W. Smith (my cousin).

Peggy Troy

Story of the Heroic Defense of Fort Ridgley

How a Young Volunteer Officer, with Only 28 Men, Resisted the Determined Assaults of 1,500 Blood-Crazed Indians.

BY ALEX. W. SMITH

SEVENTY years ago, upon the 18th day of August, began an outbreak of the Sioux Indians in Minnesota that developed into one of the most fearful massacres in the history of the middle west.

These notes simply relate the events leading up to that day in August, 1862, when a young army officer, in later life well known in Sioux City, found himself unexpectedly in a position of extraordinary responsibility in a frontier fort besieged by Indians, when for a time he had only 29 soldiers for its defense.

The beginning of the war between the states caused the replacement of regular army troops in the frontier posts with newly enlisted volunteer companies. The Fifth regiment, Minnesota volunteer infantry, was rendezvoused at Fort Snelling, situated at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers. Before the regiment was fully organized several of the companies were ordered to the western posts, Company B to Fort Ridgley on the Minnesota river, Company C to Fort Ripley on the Mississippi and D to Abercrombie, D. T.

On March 9, 1862, Company B marched overland through the snow with First Sergeant Thomas P. Gere commanding.

A few weeks later he was promoted to second lieutenant. He found Fort Ridgley pleasantly situated on a spur of land of the high prairie overlooking the bottom lands of the Minnesota river a mile away, but it was poorly located for defense operations. Several ravines penetrated the bluff, approaching the site of the buildings within gunshot, offering natural cover and entrenchment for an attacking force.

During the early months of the year there appeared no reason to suspect any attack by a foe and life was the monotonous routine of an army post. Capt. John S. March joined the company in mid-April. Lieut. N. K. Culver had commanded previously and the company drilled diligently, becoming proficient in the manual, foot evolutions and especially in skirmishing. In addition a regular army ordnance sergeant, John Jones, who had remained to care for six pieces of artillery, instructed the men how to handle the heavy pieces, more as a diversion than any expectation of necessity. The exercise proved suddenly to be of extreme value and of vital importance, for the ability to handle the heavy guns eventually saved the fort in stopping the repeated and determined charges of the Indians when the battle came.

Outbreak Averted at Upper Agency

During the summer there was one interlude of some excitement when Maj. Thomas Galbraith, who was the Indian agent at Yellow River, 50 miles north of the fort, complained that in anticipation of the issue of annuity goods and the payment of annuity money the Indians in that section had pitched their lodges in unusual numbers around the government buildings, and they were becoming increasingly impatient because of the delay in the arrival of the gold which, due in May, was tardy because of civil complications. At Redwood, on the Lower Agency, similar suffering prevailed, the Indian families actually driven to eat the roots and berries of the prairie, while in the stores there was food in plenty, held by the whites, greedy for the expected gold.

Responding to the appeal of Agent Galbraith for help, Companies C and B camped for a time at the Upper Agency. The former was commanded by First Lieut. Timothy J. Sheehan, of Fort Ripley, a fighting Irishman who later played an active part in the defense of Fort Ridgley.

On the evening of August 4 the hungry Indians made a wild demonstration, attempting to storm the government warehouse. Prompt action of the officers prevented bloodshed at the time, and upon their insistence emergency rations were issued to the hungry Indians. Next day Capt. Marsh held a council and ordered the immediate issue of annuity goods, thus solving a perilous situation, when the red men outnumbered the soldiers eight to one. Following the powwow, the Indian leaders promised to keep their people away from the agency until the arrival of the gold.

The Lower Agency Indians had no part in this affair, the reservation appeared peaceful and the soldiers returned to their posts, with the exception of Lieut. Culver, who with six men was detached to muster in recruits waiting at St. Peter.

Massacre at Redwood

Lieut. Sheehan and company departed from Fort Ridgley en route for Fort Ripley on the morning of Sunday, August 17. Company B resumed its accustomed routine at the fort that was suddenly interrupted next morning, Monday, August 18, when J. C. Dickinson arrived with the startling news that a wholesale massacre of the whites was in progress at Redwood, nearby, across the river. This incredible information was confirmed by the coming of a wounded man, and Capt. Marsh promptly prepared to go to the rescue, and within half an hour of the first alarm, with 46 men, marched out, after dispatching a messenger to recall Lieut. Sheehan, leaving the fort under command of Second Lieut. Gere with but 29 men for its defense.

Almost immediately settlers from the surrounding country arrived at the fort bringing terrible tidings of pillage and massacre by the Indians. Amongst the refugees was a government employe, John Nairn, later a well known Sioux City pioneer. With his family he owed his safety to the warning of friendly Indians, for whom with his good friend, Dr. John Williamson, the missionary amongst the Sioux, he had a great deal of sympathy.

A few days previously at a council at Redwood, under similar circumstances to the one at Yellow Medicine, the Chief Little Crow made an impassioned appeal for food for his people, pointing out that the provisions were in the stores, and the families in the lodges were starving, without money, the stores would not give them credit.

"We ask that you, the agent, make arrangements or we may take our own way. When men are hungry they help themselves."

Storekeeper's Brutal Reply

Dr. Williamson, who was present at the request of the agent, interpreted the speech, the regular interpreter being afraid to do so. Then the agent addressed the storekeepers, advising them to get together and decide something. It was put up to the head storekeeper, who attempted to leave the council, but the agent insisted on action. Then the storekeeper replied deliberately:

"So far as I am concerned, if they are hungry, let them eat grass."

The official interpreter shook with fright and again refused the agent his services, so Dr. Williamson was requested by the agent to translate the storekeeper's sentence, which he did in a clear vocle. There was a moment of silence, then as it moved by one impulse the council broke up in anger.

A few days later the Indians resolved not to eat grass, but set it aflame. Some they stuffed into the mouth of the storekeeper at Redwood as their reply to his brutal advice.

John Nairn fled from the agency when he saw the rising smoke at Redwood, swimming the Minnesota river to obtain a boat in which to ferry the women and children to safety in the fort.

Lieut. Gere issued small arms to the refugees and posted pickets, carefully instructed how to rally should attack come at any point. A close watch was kept for friend and foe and, strange to relate, at midday the clerk of the Indian superintendent with a guard of four men rode in with $71,000 in gold, the long looked for annuity money. Needless to say, they journeyed no farther.

Marsh's Command Wiped Out

The day passed and shortly after dark two excited soldiers came into the fort with the shocking news that Capt. Marsh and 23 of his men had been killed in a fight at the ferry while attempting to cross the river. This dire news placed a tremendous responsibility on the shoulders of the young lieutenant as he looked at the women and children crowding the barracks. Without delay he wrote a dispatch to the commandant at Fort Snelling, asking for reinforcements. Private W. J. Sturgis, mounted on the swiftest horse available, carried the message on a long and dangerous ride through the night.

While the night deepened, apprehension increased when the glare of the campfires became visible across the river and the throb of Indian drums could be heard in the distance, where the hostiles, now with plenty of food and drink, celebrated with an orgy of feasting the bloody doings of the previous day.

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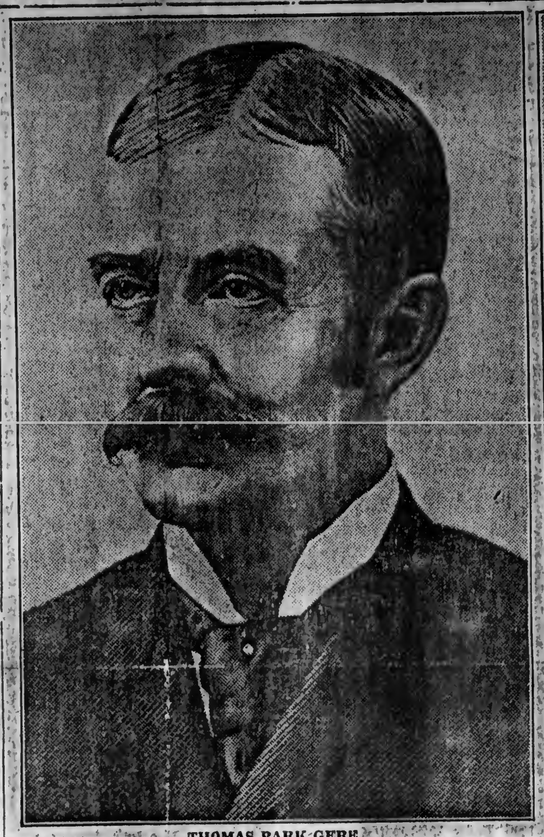

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This article was written by John Nairn's nephew, Alex W. Smith (my cousin).

Peggy Troy

Story of the Heroic Defense of Fort Ridgley

How a Young Volunteer Officer, with Only 28 Men, Resisted the Determined Assaults of 1,500 Blood-Crazed Indians.

BY ALEX. W. SMITH

SEVENTY years ago, upon the 18th day of August, began an outbreak of the Sioux Indians in Minnesota that developed into one of the most fearful massacres in the history of the middle west.

These notes simply relate the events leading up to that day in August, 1862, when a young army officer, in later life well known in Sioux City, found himself unexpectedly in a position of extraordinary responsibility in a frontier fort besieged by Indians, when for a time he had only 29 soldiers for its defense.

The beginning of the war between the states caused the replacement of regular army troops in the frontier posts with newly enlisted volunteer companies. The Fifth regiment, Minnesota volunteer infantry, was rendezvoused at Fort Snelling, situated at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers. Before the regiment was fully organized several of the companies were ordered to the western posts, Company B to Fort Ridgley on the Minnesota river, Company C to Fort Ripley on the Mississippi and D to Abercrombie, D. T.

On March 9, 1862, Company B marched overland through the snow with First Sergeant Thomas P. Gere commanding.

A few weeks later he was promoted to second lieutenant. He found Fort Ridgley pleasantly situated on a spur of land of the high prairie overlooking the bottom lands of the Minnesota river a mile away, but it was poorly located for defense operations. Several ravines penetrated the bluff, approaching the site of the buildings within gunshot, offering natural cover and entrenchment for an attacking force.

During the early months of the year there appeared no reason to suspect any attack by a foe and life was the monotonous routine of an army post. Capt. John S. March joined the company in mid-April. Lieut. N. K. Culver had commanded previously and the company drilled diligently, becoming proficient in the manual, foot evolutions and especially in skirmishing. In addition a regular army ordnance sergeant, John Jones, who had remained to care for six pieces of artillery, instructed the men how to handle the heavy pieces, more as a diversion than any expectation of necessity. The exercise proved suddenly to be of extreme value and of vital importance, for the ability to handle the heavy guns eventually saved the fort in stopping the repeated and determined charges of the Indians when the battle came.

Outbreak Averted at Upper Agency

During the summer there was one interlude of some excitement when Maj. Thomas Galbraith, who was the Indian agent at Yellow River, 50 miles north of the fort, complained that in anticipation of the issue of annuity goods and the payment of annuity money the Indians in that section had pitched their lodges in unusual numbers around the government buildings, and they were becoming increasingly impatient because of the delay in the arrival of the gold which, due in May, was tardy because of civil complications. At Redwood, on the Lower Agency, similar suffering prevailed, the Indian families actually driven to eat the roots and berries of the prairie, while in the stores there was food in plenty, held by the whites, greedy for the expected gold.

Responding to the appeal of Agent Galbraith for help, Companies C and B camped for a time at the Upper Agency. The former was commanded by First Lieut. Timothy J. Sheehan, of Fort Ripley, a fighting Irishman who later played an active part in the defense of Fort Ridgley.

On the evening of August 4 the hungry Indians made a wild demonstration, attempting to storm the government warehouse. Prompt action of the officers prevented bloodshed at the time, and upon their insistence emergency rations were issued to the hungry Indians. Next day Capt. Marsh held a council and ordered the immediate issue of annuity goods, thus solving a perilous situation, when the red men outnumbered the soldiers eight to one. Following the powwow, the Indian leaders promised to keep their people away from the agency until the arrival of the gold.

The Lower Agency Indians had no part in this affair, the reservation appeared peaceful and the soldiers returned to their posts, with the exception of Lieut. Culver, who with six men was detached to muster in recruits waiting at St. Peter.

Massacre at Redwood

Lieut. Sheehan and company departed from Fort Ridgley en route for Fort Ripley on the morning of Sunday, August 17. Company B resumed its accustomed routine at the fort that was suddenly interrupted next morning, Monday, August 18, when J. C. Dickinson arrived with the startling news that a wholesale massacre of the whites was in progress at Redwood, nearby, across the river. This incredible information was confirmed by the coming of a wounded man, and Capt. Marsh promptly prepared to go to the rescue, and within half an hour of the first alarm, with 46 men, marched out, after dispatching a messenger to recall Lieut. Sheehan, leaving the fort under command of Second Lieut. Gere with but 29 men for its defense.

Almost immediately settlers from the surrounding country arrived at the fort bringing terrible tidings of pillage and massacre by the Indians. Amongst the refugees was a government employe, John Nairn, later a well known Sioux City pioneer. With his family he owed his safety to the warning of friendly Indians, for whom with his good friend, Dr. John Williamson, the missionary amongst the Sioux, he had a great deal of sympathy.

A few days previously at a council at Redwood, under similar circumstances to the one at Yellow Medicine, the Chief Little Crow made an impassioned appeal for food for his people, pointing out that the provisions were in the stores, and the families in the lodges were starving, without money, the stores would not give them credit.

"We ask that you, the agent, make arrangements or we may take our own way. When men are hungry they help themselves."

Storekeeper's Brutal Reply

Dr. Williamson, who was present at the request of the agent, interpreted the speech, the regular interpreter being afraid to do so. Then the agent addressed the storekeepers, advising them to get together and decide something. It was put up to the head storekeeper, who attempted to leave the council, but the agent insisted on action. Then the storekeeper replied deliberately:

"So far as I am concerned, if they are hungry, let them eat grass."

The official interpreter shook with fright and again refused the agent his services, so Dr. Williamson was requested by the agent to translate the storekeeper's sentence, which he did in a clear, vocle. There was a moment of silence, then as if moved by one impulse, the council broke up in anger.

A few days later the Indians resolved not to eat grass, but eet it aflame. Some they stuffed into the mouth of the storekeeper at Redwood as their reply to his brutal advice.

John Nairn fled from the agency when he saw the rising smoke at Redwood, swimming the Minnesota river to obtain a boat in which to ferry the women and children to safety in the fort.

Lieut. Gere issued small arms to the refugees and posted pickets, carefully instructed how to rally should attack come at any point. A close watch was kept for friend and foe and, strange to relate, at midday the clerk of the Indian superintendent with a guard of four men rode in with $71,000 in gold, the long looked for annuity money. Needless to say, they journeyed no farther.

Marsh's Command Wiped Out

The day passed and shortly after dark two excited soldiers came into the fort with the shocking news that Capt. Marsh and 23 of his men had been killed in a fight at the ferry while attempting to cross the river. This dire news placed a tremendous responsibility on the shoulders of the young lieutenant as he looked at the women and children crowding the barracks. Without delay he wrote a dispatch to the commandant at Fort Snelling, asking for reinforcements. Private W. J. Sturgis, mounted on the swiftest horse available, carried the message on a long and dangerous ride through the night.

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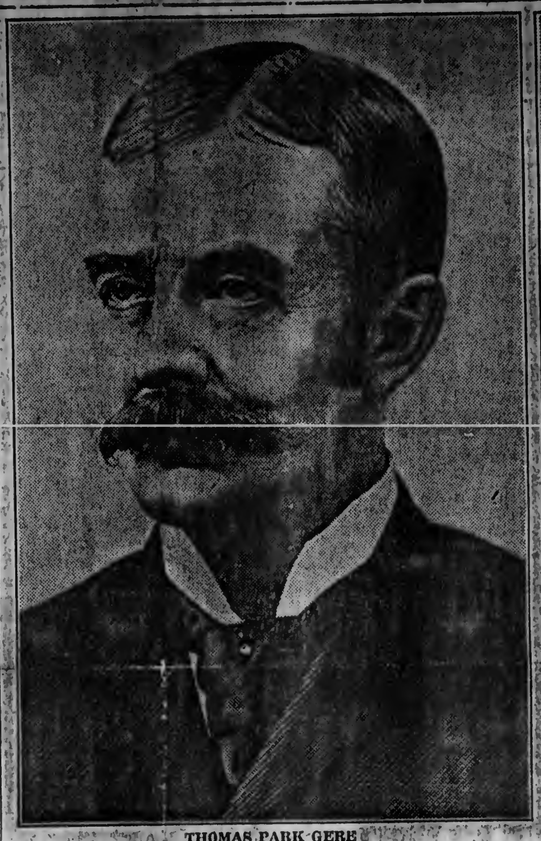

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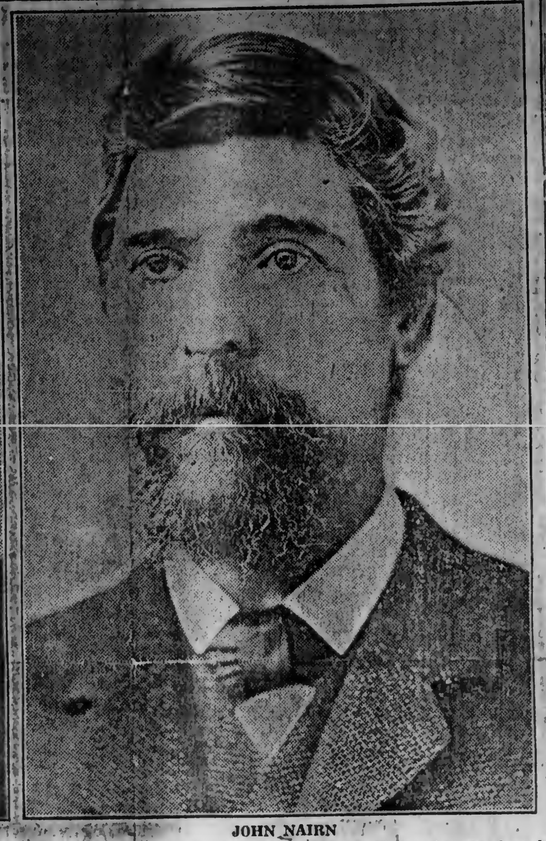

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Bryant (married

The relation of "comrade," which existed between Mr. Spencer and this Indian, is a species of Freemasonry which is in existence among the Sioux, and probably is also common to other Indian tribes.

The store of Louis Robert was, in like manner, attacked. Patrick McClellan, one of the clerks in charge of the store, was killed. There were at this store several other persons; some of them were killed, and some made their escape. Mr. John Nairn, the Government carpenter at the Lower Sioux Agency, seeing the attack upon the stores and other places, seized his children, four in number, and, with his wife, started out on the prairie, making their way toward the fort. They were accompanied by Mr. Alexander Hunter, an attached personal friend, and his young wife. (Mr. Hunter had been married only about a month.) Mr. Nairn had been among them, in the employ of the Government, some eight years, and had, by his urbane manners and strict attention to their interests, secured the personal friendship of many of the tribe. Hunter, too, was a favorite with many of them, and his wife was an educated and highly accomplished young lady of mixed Sioux blood. When some miles from the Agency, on the New Ulm road, they were met by a number of armed Indians, and gave up all for lost. But these were evidently well disposed toward the fugitives, as they came up to them and talked with them, advising them to keep in the timber, avoid the prairie and the roads, and go to the fort, and then left them. This advice was followed, and Mr. Nairn and his family reached the fort in safety that afternoon. Mr. Hunter had, some years before, frozen his feet so badly as to lose the toes, and

being lame, walked with great difficulty. When near an Indian village below the Agency, they were met by an Indian, who urged Hunter to go to the village, promising to get them a horse and wagon with which to make their escape. Nairn went on with his family, and soon afterward Mr. J. B. Reynolds and his wife, fleeing from his place at Red Wood River, ten miles above the Agency, overtook them in a buggy, and, although thereby lessening the chances of their own escape, kindly took two of Mr. Nairn's children and drove on. Mr. Hunter and his wife went to the Indian village, believing their Indian friend would redeem his promise; but, from inability or some other reason, he did not do so; and, fearing to remain, and unable to walk to the fort—obliged as they were to cross the Minnesota River—they went to the woods, where they remained all night, and, in the morning, started for Fort Ridgley on foot. They had gone but a short distance, however, when they met an Indian, who, without a word of warning, shot poor Hunter dead, and led his distracted young wife away into captivity.

What may have been the feelings of that young wife, who, on the morning before, looked out into the bright sunlight with buoyant hope and bounding heart, believing that before her extended a long vista of happiness and peace, secure in the fond affection of a devoted husband, and now beheld him stretched a mangled and lifeless corpse at her feet, the reader can, perhaps, imagine. They must have been such as we can not describe.

We now return once more to the scene of blood and conflagration at the Agency. The white-haired

CHAPTER XX.

Statement of Mrs. Valencia J. Reynolds.

[Mr. Joseph B. Reynolds resided, at the time of the Sioux massacre, at the Red Wood River, on the Lower Reservation, ten miles above the Lower Agency. He and his wife were located there, in charge of the Government school, near Shakopee's village, which had been established at this point for the benefit of that band. His house was ten miles from any *white* inhabitant upon that side of the Minnesota. John Moore, a half-breed trader, resided one mile from him, at or near the Indian village. In Chapter IV we have briefly referred to the remarkable escape of Mr. Reynolds and his wife from the hands of these savages. We here insert a full account of the terrible ordeal through which they passed unscathed, which they have kindly communicated to the authors. Mrs. Valencia J. Reynolds, wife of Mr. J. B. Reynolds, says:]

On the morning of the 18th of August I had arisen, and was busily engaged preparing breakfast, when Mr. Francis Patoile, of Yellow Medicine, came and called for breakfast for himself and another man with him. It was soon ready, and, while Mr. Patoile and the other persons then at the house were eating, Antoine La Blaugh, who was living with John Moore, came to the house and called for Mr. Reynolds. He said Mr. Moore had sent him to tell us that the Indians had

broken out, and had gone down to the Agency, and over to Beaver Creek, to massacre the whites.

We went back into the house, and asked Mr. Patoile if he would take us to New Ulm. He replied, that he would not go away without us, as we had but one horse and buggy. When I went into the kitchen, I found nine squaws and one Indian in the room.

Mr. Reynolds had, in the mean time, sent La Blaugh back after Mr. Moore, who came. Our horse was at the door when he arrived, and we were putting some things in the buggy. He told us to hasten our flight with all possible speed, and directed us what course to take. The three girls, Mattie Williams, Mary Anderson, and Mary Schwandt, got into the wagon with Mr. Patoile and his companion and Mr. Davis, making six persons in that wagon. There was also an ox-team, driven by a boy who was working for us.

Into this wagon we put a feather-bed, tied up in a quilt, and a trunk belonging to Mattie Williams. This boy was killed near Little Crow's village. Mr. Reynolds and myself took the buggy. When I went out, the squaws were clearing every thing off the table, dishes as well as food, and tumbling all into sacks, which they carried for taking away their plunder. One of them asked me if she might have the flour. I replied, "Yes." Another said to me, "Your face is so white you had better put some water on it," thinking me frightened, perhaps. We got into the buggy and drove toward the Agency. Before we reached the Red Wood River, which was but a short distance from the house, we passed the boy with the ox-team, and that was the last we ever saw of either wagon. At the river there

was a half-breed, named Louis, standing on the opposite bank. Mr. Reynolds asked him what was the trouble. He replied, that an Indian had just come from the Lower Agency, who said they were killing all the whites there. We drove on to the top of the hill, on the east side of the Red Wood. Here we saw Shakopee and two other Indians. We stopped, and called Shakopee to us, and asked him what the trouble was. He said he did not know, and kept motioning to us with his hand to go out upon the prairie; but we kept the main road until we came in sight of the Agency buildings. We had seen only one old squaw while going over the road thus far, but now we saw the Indians running toward the Agency, and we turned to the right, and drove out on the prairie, and went around behind an elevation, which ran parallel with the Minnesota River, and hid us from the observation of those at the Agency. When opposite the buildings, we crawled up to the crest of the ridge on our hands and knees, looked over, and saw an Indian near us, driving in cattle. The doors of the stores were open, and Indians were all about.

We returned to the buggy, and hastened on toward New Ulm. After going on some distance in that direction, we saw Indians in the road going up toward the Agency. We met two squaws, who talked to us in the Sioux language, and urged us to turn back, and asked us where we were going. Mr. Reynolds told them we were going to hunt ducks, as we believed them to be spies. We pressed on, and soon met an Indian, who wished Mr. Reynolds to write him a paper, certifying that he was a good Indian, as he wished to go to

Faribault, because the bad Indians were killing the white people at the Agency. "That," said he, pointing to a horse at some distance off, "is mine, and those are my wife and pappooses." He seemed frightened, and had no caps on his gun. He was a man somewhat advanced in age, though not an *old* man.

We soon overtook Mr. John Nairn, Government carpenter at the Lower Agency, and his family. Escaping with them were another man and a girl, Miss Frorip. We took two of Mr. Nairn's children into our buggy, and drove on.

We were now near the fort, on the opposite side of the river, and in plain sight, and thought we would go to it, and turned out of the road to do so, but a body of water intervening, we turned again toward New Ulm. We met Indians twice, with ox-teams, who turned out, giving us one-half the road, as is usual. The last one we met Mr. Reynolds hallooed to, but he would not answer a word. We met two squaws also, who were going toward the Agency, and one of them ran off from the road toward an Indian house. When we had got in sight of the buildings of the settlers, below the reservation, which were about a mile from us, we saw some sixty Indians, on the left of us, near half a mile away, on foot, and between us and them were two yoke of cattle attached to a wagon. There was, also, an Indian on our left, on horseback, and another, also on horseback, ahead of us, on our right, who had passed into a ravine. Between these two was a naked savage, on foot, about eight rods from us.

Mr. Reynolds hallooed to him, supposing he was friendly, until he saw him change his gun from the left

hand to the right, and look at the caps. The gun was a double-barreled one. Mr. Reynolds then turned his horse around, and the Indian raised his gun to his face, and snapped both caps, but they failed to ignite the powder. I turned my head, and saw an Indian coming after us, on a white horse. He shouted to us to "*Puckachee! puckachee!* PUCKACHEE!" Mr. Reynolds asked him which way. He pointed toward the Agency, and then rode between us and the savage who had attempted to kill us, with his gun leveled at him all the while, who tried again to get a chance to shoot us, but was foiled by our protector. Then the other two on horseback came up, and all started after us, when we moved off as fast as we could toward the Agency. This chase was kept up for about half a mile, when our friend on the white horse rode in before the other three, and between them and the buggy, and quite a parley took place between them, when they all fell in the rear.

We had gone, after this, about two miles, when we came into the midst of about twenty squaws and boys, and one old man, going toward New Ulm. The squaws turned out of the road, but the old man kept close to the track. Mr. Reynolds reined in the horse as we approached them, and asked the man if he wished to kill him. He replied, in good English, "No, no!—go! go!" and walked on without even stopping. The next rise of ground we reached we looked back, and saw one solitary Indian, on horseback, in pursuit of us. Soon after this we turned off from the road to the right, having decided to attempt to go to Fort Ridgley. After going about one mile, we struck the fort road leading from New Ulm. We had gone some distance on this

road when the horse gave out, and we could not urge him off a slow walk. Mr. Reynolds and myself got out, leaving the children in the buggy. The grass was very tall, reaching above my head. It was a prairie, but flat and low. After passing through the tall grass we looked back, to see if they were following us. We saw two Indians standing some distance off, like sentinels guarding the road, their gun-barrels glistening in the sunbeams.

When we reached the bluffs back from the Minnesota River bottom, the children also got out, and we all walked a mile and a half further, to the river, opposite the fort. Mr. Reynolds then unharnessed the horse, and attempted to swim the river on his back, but both went out of sight together, under the water. Mr. Reynolds then slipped off the horse and swam along by his side, and they both reached the opposite shore. He then went up to the fort to get assistance to bring us across the river. As soon as he was gone, I hid myself and the children in the willows, near the river bank. I had moccasins on my feet, and, sending the children ahead, I followed them, covering their tracks with my own, turning my toes in, as much like a squaw as possible. We remained concealed until Mr. Reynolds and the men came down from the fort. They called to us that they could not see us, and wished us to come out in sight. We did so, and they came over to us with a boat.

While we were concealed I had heard the bushes crack near us, and supposed Indians were searching for us; and when we went to get in the boat, we saw fresh moccasin tracks all along the water's edge, clear up to

where we went into the willows. Mr. Randall, the post sutler, had sent his carriage down to the river for us, and we crossed over safely, got into the carriage, and rode up the hill to the garrison. I was bareheaded, with an Indian blanket on, and my dress had been badly torn in my journey to the river; but I felt thankful to escape even with life. At the fort, I went into the hospital and assisted Mrs. Müller, the wife of the surgeon, in the care of the sick and wounded for one day, and, after that, assisted in making cartridges during the siege. In this way I was very busy until after the last battle at the fort.

The day after reinforcements reached us we left Fort Ridgley, and came below, utterly destitute, the savages having destroyed or appropriated all the property we had in the world, even to our personal clothing, and, as we afterward learned, burned our house, with all its contents.

Statement of Mrs. Mary G. Worley.

[The statement of Mrs. Worley is pretty conclusive evidence that St. Peter very narrowly escaped the fate of New Ulm. Mr. Worley, the husband of the lady who makes the following statement, owned a farm seven miles from St. Peter. When the outbreak occurred, he moved with his family into that town. They were in the habit of going daily to the farm, to see after their crops and milk their cows. It was on one of these occasions that the incident related below occurred. Mrs. Worley says:]

On Saturday, the 23d day of August, 1862, I went out to our farm with Mr. Heim, for the purpose of

milking our cows. When we reached the place, Mr. Heim went for his cattle, which were some half a mile further off than mine were. Our houses were near together. His family, as well as ours, were in town. I succeeded in getting the cows into the yard. The Indians were reported to be at Swan Lake, on the way down, but I thought there would be no danger before we could get our cows milked; but, when I had got them into the yard, my courage failed me, and I started for Mr. Heim's house. When I had passed a little creek which crosses the road midway between the two houses, I stopped to fix a revolver I had with me, having gone part of the way up the bank through some hazel-brush, when an Indian, before unseen by me, placed one hand upon my shoulder, and seized my revolver with the other. He then spoke to me in English, and, seeing I was somewhat frightened, said he was a friend, and I must not be afraid. He then asked me where I lived, and, when I pointed to the house, he said, "Man no there!" I shook my head. He then asked me where I was going. I told him where. He then directed me to go on to the next house, (Mr. Lang's,) saying there was a woman and children there, and told me to tell Mr. Lang to send his wife and children to town, and himself to go above, for he was needed there, as the Indians were fighting the whites up the country. He then wished me to go to St. Peter, and tell Thomas Cowan that he said it was not safe to keep the women and children in the town, as the Indians intended to attack the place that night.

I told him that Mr. Cowan was very ill. He said Judge Brown, of Traverse, would know him just as

rom Salix (Ia.) History, written and
ublished by Louis Duchaine of Sloan, Iowa,
irca 1930. Reprinted in 1981.

his book says that John Nairn built Ft.
hompson and assisted in transferring
ndians there. That makes it likely, I
hink, that the same John Nairn did the
sketch of Ft. Thompson for Harper's Weekly.

Peggy Troy

purchased a tract of land in Section 10, in Lakeport township, to which place he moved his family. For a time, Mr. Pope, while his farm was being put in a state of cultivation, supplemented his earnings to a considerable extent by working at and around Nairn's saw mill, hauling cord wood, lumber, etc.

George W. Thacker, born in Cass county, Nebraska, came to Lakeport township in 1882, and for a time was employed in and around Nairn's saw mill, and a little later purchased a farm in Section 15, in that township.

XIV—John Nairn, Pioneer Settler, Prominent Business Man, and Regarded as Public Benefactor

JOHN NAIRN was born in Coldingham, Scotland, September 28, 1828. He came of sturdy Scotch parents, and was the eighth of a family of eleven children. Mrs. Jas. Jeffrey, who died in Sloan in 1910, was a sister. In his native village he grew up, running about the "braes," and storing up a reserve strength which did not desert him in after life.

As he came to manhood he practiced the carpenter trade with his father. At the age of twenty-four, leaving his wife at home, he set out to make his fortune in America. He landed in Philadelphia, July 4, 1852, and, as he always proudly said, was "patriotic the minute he landed." He remained there but a few months, removing to New York, where he was joined by his wife.

In 1853, leaving his family in New York, he came west to Chicago, but finding the cholera raging there, he, with his friend, Alec Hunter, immediately passed on to Rock Island, where he worked a few months. At this period, the rush to the west was just setting in.

Possibly the Alexander Hunter killed in the massacre?

Being pursued by the dread disease, and a call coming for workmen to erect government buildings, he went on to Fort Ridgeley, Minn., where he remained until the fall of 1855, His wife met him in St. Paul in the fall of the same year, and together they went on to Redwood Falls, Major Murphy being the Indian agent. At this place he erected a government sawmill to furnish lumber to the Indians. Mrs. Nairn was the first white woman in the then to be town, sitting on the saw logs from which her home was to be constructed.

The family remained there until the time of the Spirit Lake Indian massacre, in March, 1857, then removing ten miles south, to the lower Sioux agency, where he superintended the erection of houses for the Indians until the Sioux massacre, led by Little Crow, August 18, 1862, escaping to Fort Ridgeley, which he reached after travelling all day with his wife and four children, the youngest being only six weeks old.

During the ten days they remained at the fort, several determined attacks were made by the Indians, but were successfully repulsed. A relief train sent from St. Paul carried the refugees down to that city, and thence via. the Mississippi river to St. Louis. From here Mr. Nairn, with his family, left for Burlington, and resided with his sister, Mrs. Jas. Jeffrey, in whose home his eldest son died. He never again took his family among the Indians, but left them to reside at Burlington.

In his boyhood, John Nairn had been a great reader, and had become imbued with a high regard and exalted opinion of the noble red man, as depicted by the writers of that day, little dreaming that his after life was to be so closely associated with theirs. During his long stay with them, he won their respect by upright dealings, and it was to his integrity that he attributed his escape in 1862, as they had several opportunities to kill him and his family in their retreat, but instead of using them they assisted him in his flight.

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On account of his influence with the Indians, Mr. Nairn was called in two months from Burlington to assist in transferring them to their reservation in Dakota Fort Thompson, which he built, and where he erected a saw mill, was dropped, as it were, upon the prairie in a very exposed situation. A government force was sent to assist him there, but being a class of ruffianly, quarrelsome fellows, he dismissed them, and employing Indian help, successfully carried on the work.

In 1865, Mr. Nairn went to Omaha, where, with his family, he resided until 1868, then removing to Sioux City, where at various times he owned what is now valuable property. He bought largely of land in Lakeport township early in the '70s, and while leaving his family in the city, his interests gradually centered there, until in 1880, he brought his wife and children here also. During the twenty years he lived in Lakeport township, he did not fail to leave an impress for the right upon the community.

Mr. Nairn was married in Scotland to Miss Magdalen Nisbet, who was also a native of Coldingham. Mr. and Mrs. Nairn were the parents of six children, all of whom have since passed away Mrs. Nairn died at her home in Salix, July 17, 1909. at the age of 82 years. Mr. Nairn died at his home in Lakeport township, April 11, 1894.

XV—More Early Settlers, Hubert, Choquette, McAllister, Mintun, Southworth, Jeffrey, and Others

FRANCIS HUBERT

FRANCIS HUBERT was born in Contre Coeur, County of Vercheres, Canada, February 16, 1834. He was married in his native village, in October, 1853, to Miss Aglae Lacroix, and in 1869, Mr. and Mrs. Hubert, with several small children, came to Woodbury county and settled on a farm in Section 4, Lakeport township, about

three miles southwest of Salix. Here these pioneer settlers experienced all the vicissitudes of real frontier life, including grasshoppers, drouths, floods and economic depressions, but with that real quality of persistence, with which our first settlers were abundantly imbued, all these difficulties were surmounted, and they lived and prospered on the farm. For some time after coming here, Mr. Hubert housed his family in a log house, but in the course of time, he erected a neat and commodious frame residence, into which he moved his family. Much of the furniture in use in the home, including chairs, tables, bedsteads, desks, and various other articles, were made by Mr. Hubert, who was an expert carpenter and cabinet maker, and his services in that line were often sought by his neighbors. In 1908, Mr. and Mrs. Hubert decided to retire from the active labors of the farm, and they moved into Salix to spend their declining years. Mr. and Mrs. Hubert were the parents of eighteen children, only three of whom are still living, Napoleon J. Hubert and Mrs. Marie Pepin, of Salix, and Mrs. William Gregoire, of Vermillion, S. D. Mr. Hubert died in April, 1910, and Mrs. Hubert passed away some years later.

JOHN M. M'ALLISTER

John M. McAllister was born and reared on a farm in Berke county, Pennsylvania, receiving a common school education, and assisting on the farm until the death of his mother. Being then twenty-four years of age, he started out in life for himself, and was employed in a blacksmith shop in his native village, where he worked for two years. He then spent four years in Lebanon county and fourteen years in Schuylkill county. In 1865 he came to Linn county, Iowa, where he was employed as a blacksmith for five years. Then he came to Woodbury county and located in Sloan township, where he lived for three years, and then purchased a small tract of land in Lakeport town-

Thacker, John Cain, and probably some others. Some of these men were engaged in farming, but most of them were employed in and around the saw mill.

J. C. Currier and family and Jas. Jeffrey and family came here from the east, the former from Vermont, in the late '70s.

The next few years following 1876 were quiet in that there was not much change in the population. A few families came in at intervals, settling on some of the wild or prairie lands in the vicinity and proceeded to make a home for themselves. In some cases the process was slow. The grasshopper scourge in the summer of 1877, and also the following year, was a serious setback to many, but the citizenry of those early days was one familiar with "hard knocks," and not easily defeated. After each succeeding calamity, the men would buckle on their armor anew, and proceed to "dig in" for another try.

In these struggles against adversity, these pioneer men were ably and untiringly assisted by their women. Many a farmer, who could hardly have afforded to hire help during the busier season, would be assisted in the cultivating and harvesting of the crops by his wife, who could, and did keep pace with him through the day.

VIII—Nairn's Mill, Pioneer in Lumber Business, Cottonwood Lumber, Cordwood and By-Products

THE arrival of John Nairn, who came here in 1869, from New Ulm, Minn., and started the operation of a saw mill in Lakeport township, about four miles southwest of Salix, was a great boon to the early settlers of the community who had been occupying such primitive habitations as log houses and sod shanties, and other makeshifts that substituted for places in which to live until better could be procured.

Mr. Nairn, was a native of Scotland, and had been a resident of Minnesota for a number of years, where he had been following his vocation as a carpenter and builder, and his advent in the lumber business in this section was but the following of a line of work with which he was thoroughly familiar. The saw mill established by him in Lakeport township, was located in the midst of a forest containing thousands of acres of cottonwood and elm trees, all of monstrous size, and just waiting to be cut down and converted into lumber. The land on which stood this timber has long since disappeared in the hungry maw of the Missouri river, and Mr. Nairn himself went to his reward many years ago, but the memory of this pioneer settler, and the good work he did, still remains fresh in the mind of many a man and woman of the community.

Nairn's Mill, in the early days of the life of this section, grew to be a place of considerable importance. A large number of men were given employment in the operation of the mill. A list of the men employed in and around the mill included R. C. Nisbet, John Byers, Robert Ingalls, John M. Cain, George Cain, George N. Gibbs, John Shimer, Clarence and Vernon Oakley, and perhaps others whose names cannot now be recalled.

Besides the regular employes of the mill, a large number of transients, generally residents of the neighborhood, were employed to assist in cutting down trees, scaling logs, cutting and hauling cordwood, and doing other work pertinent to the wood and lumber industry.

The lumber turned out at Nairn's mill was of a high quality, accurately cut, and always found a ready sale. Thousands of feet of it was turned out every year, all cut from a fine quality of cottonwood, than which there was none better for house or barn construcrion. Some of this lumber was hauled to Sioux City, but most of it was used in the construction of residences and farm buildings in the community. No doubt houses and other buildings may be found in Salix, Sloan or

Sergeant Bluff, or the country tributary, whose framework was constructed of cottonwood lumber, and without a doubt the lumber was the product of Nairn's mill.

Besides furnishing lumber and building material for local consumption, Nairn's mill also furnished many hundreds of cords of wood for fuel each year. Much of this wood was sold to the Sioux City and Pacific railroad company for consumption in the wood burning locomotives in use at that time, and in the heating of depots and office buildings, and even for use in railroad coaches. The wood was delivered in Salix or Sloan during the winter months, these deliveries amounting to anywhere from one thousand to five thousand or more cords of four-foot wood. This wood was piled up in ricks, eight feet high and two or three hundred feet long. In the spring this wood was cut with a power saw and hauled away by the company for use at different places.

The cutting, hauling and marketing of these large quantities of lumber and cordwood also furnished employment for a great number of men, with and without teams. Many a young farmer, who would fail to realize a sufficient income from the products of his limited farm to sustain himself and family through the winter months, hailed as a godsend this opportunity to add to his meager income by hauling and delivering or chopping cordwood.

The tops and branches of trees cut down were not marketable, and were given without cost to anyone who would haul them away. This provided cheap fuel for many who could hardly have been able to pay the high prices asked for coal or other commercial fuels.

Subsequent to the coming of Nairn's mill, several other parties came into that section with saw mills and helped in the cutting down of the timber and the manufacture of lumber. Among these may be mentioned Isiaah Bridget, Forney Brothers, and William and Benjamin Glover.

IX—Theophile Brughier, Pioneer Indian Trader and First Resident of Sioux City—A Sketch

THEOPHILE BRUGHIER, Sioux City's first settler, was born in the parish of L'Assumption, near Montreal, Canada, on August 31, 1813. His father gave him a good education, intending that he should take up the profession of law. However, the young man, after the death of his sweetheart, sickened at the thought of the life ahead of him, and left it to bury himself in the heart of the Indian country.

Having had the training of a hunter, trapper and woodsman in his native country, and endowed with that spirit of adventure which seems to have been dominant in the French Canadians, and which produced those heroic characters known as voyagers, Brughier, at the age of twenty-two, left his home on October 14, 1835, and arrived at St. Louis some weeks later. The headquarters of the American Fur Company were located at St. Louis. Brughier entered the employ of that company, and left for the Indian country, November 19, 1835.

Brughier and some companions started on horseback, and after a long and tedious ride, arrived at Fort Pierre on January 1, 1836. The party followed the Missouri river along most of their route from St. Louis to the upper country, and in passing along the bluffs on the Nebraska side, Brughier noticed the fine bottom lands on this side of the river. He passed along these bluffs thirty-five times, and in 1839, being on this side of the river, he camped on the very farm he afterward owned, in Lakeport township, at that time picking it out for future entry, which desire he later gratified, as he pre-empted it as soon as the land came into the market. He moved to his farm in 1869.

Brughier landed at the mouth of the Big Sioux river, May 13, 1849, about six months after Thompson came to Sergeant's Bluff. Travellers through

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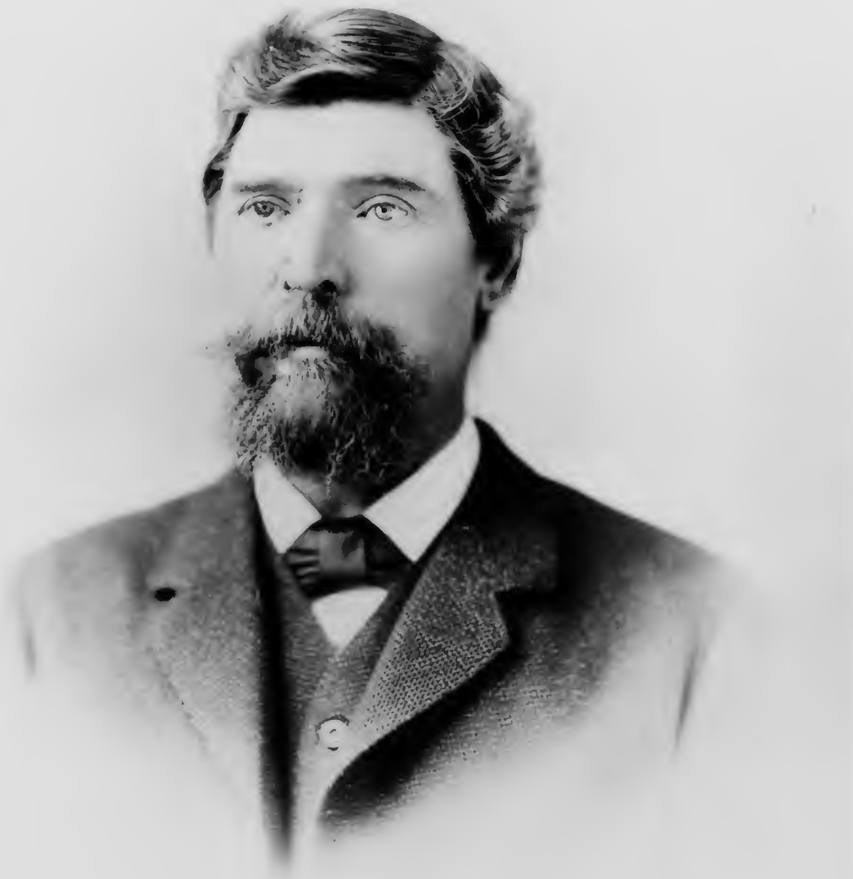

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Magdalen(e) Nisbet Nairn (Mrs. John Nairn)—Born 27 Jan. 1827 in Coldingham, Scotland. Died on 17 July 1909 in or near Salix, Iowa. Escaped Sioux Indian Massacre of 1862 with husband & 4 children.

This is copied from a tintype that was probably taken circa 1863–65.

Almost certainly Cecelia Nairn, daughter of John & Magdalen Nairn. Born 20 June 1852 in Coldingham, Scotland; died 27 Feb. 1874 in Sioux City, Iowa. Escaped Sioux Indian Massacre of 1862 in southern Minnesota with parents and 3 siblings.

This probably was taken ca. 1863–65 in Burlington, Iowa, or Omaha, NE. Copied from tintype.

Probably James Nairn, son of John & Magdalene Nairn. James was born 7 Mar. 1856, possibly in Minnesota; died 8 Oct. 1862 in Burlington, Ia., a few weeks after he escaped with his family from the Sioux Indian Massacre of 1862. (He was not injured in the massacre.)

This must have been taken in 1861 or 1862. If taken before the massacre, it probably was taken in Minnesota. If taken afterwards, it was probably taken in Burlington, Ia. The letters "FOR NEFF'S PAT" at the bottom seem to identify it as a melainotype made from a plate manufactured by Peter Neff, who made these plates only in 1856–63. Part of the word MELAINOTYPE is also visible at the bottom.

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Margaret Robertson (Maggie) Nairn—Born 11 Nov. 1859 in Redwood Falls, Minnesota. Died 31 July 1926, probably in Sioux City, Iowa. Escaped Sioux Indian Massacre of 1862 in southern Minnesota with her parents, John and Magdalen Nairn, and 3 siblings.

This is copied from a tintype that was taken circa 1863-64, when Maggie was age 3-5. It may have been taken in Burlington, Iowa.

Probably William John Nairn, youngest son of John & Magdalene Nairn. Born 7 July 1862 at or near Redwood Falls, Minnesota. Died 7 May 1881 in Woodbury Co., Ia. Escaped Sioux Indian Massacre of 1862 (southern Minnesota) with parents & 3 siblings.

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