

## Causes and results of the Inkipaduta massacre /

### **CAUSES AND RESULTS OF THE INKPADUTA MASSACRE.\***

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The paper here presented is derived from numerous accounts in the state and county histories of Minnesota and Iowa, and from narratives and information given by persons who were witnesses of parts of this history, some of whom are still living. A former paper on this subject, read by Hon. Charles E. Flandrau before this Society in 1879, was published in its third volume of Historical Collections (pages 386–407), which the present writer has endeavored to supplement by relating especially the events that preceded and followed the massacre.

Among the sources most consulted is the History of Iowa, in four volumes, by Hon. Benjamin F. Gue, published in 1903. Four chapters in its first volume portray these thrilling scenes of about half a century ago.

### **SINTOMNIDUTA KILLED BY HENRY LOTT.**

The Indians who claimed the site of the present city of Faribault as their principal ancient camping ground and who hunted along the Cannon and Straight rivers, and thence to the headwaters of the Blue Earth and the Iowa line, were known as the Wahpekuta band of Dakotas.

A chronic warfare had existed from time immemorial between all the Dakota or Sioux tribes and the Ojibways on the north and the Sacs and Foxes on the south.

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About 1840 the Wahpekutas were suffering severely because of the unusual bitterness of this war, which they attributed to the bloody propensity of one of their own sub-chiefs, named Wamdisapa (Black Eagle), whose vicious activity on the warpath provoked constant retaliation from the enemy.

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One day Tasagi (His Cane), head chief of the band, attempted to remonstrate with Black Eagle for his over-warlike disposition, which kept the enemy ever stirring like a nest of hornets; but the savage warrior would brook no reproof even from his head chief, and in the quarrel that ensued Tasagi was slain. Fearing the vengeance of the tribe, Black Eagle with a few partisans, mostly relatives, fled to the Vermilion river in South Dakota. There the outlaw chief met his death in two or three years and was succeeded by Sintomniduta (Red all Over), also known as Napenomnana (Two Fingers), from the fact that one hand had only two fingers as the result of the accidental discharge of a gun. He was a large, powerful Indian, fully as aggressive and warlike in disposition as his predecessor,—well fitted to lead a gang of savage freebooters.

In 1842 the government removed the Sacs and Foxes from northern Iowa, and soon thereafter Sintomniduta removed with his band into their vacated hunting grounds, fixing his principal camping place about where Fort Dodge now stands.

The lawless character of this band attracted to it desperadoes and fugitives from justice from other bands, until it became notorious even among the Indians for its wild and desperate character. It was called the “Red Top” band, perhaps from the habit of carrying streamers of scarlet cloth tied to the points of their long lances. Besides these spears, they were armed with smooth-bored guns, bought from French traders, and each carried bows and arrows, a big tomahawk, and a scalping knife.

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Sintomniduta was married to a sister of the noted Sisseton chief Ish-tah Kha-ba (Sleepy Eye), who, with a portion of his followers known as the Little Rock band, often hunted in the territory along the upper Des Moines.

In 1845 there lived at Red Rock in Marion county, Iowa, a somewhat notorious western character named Henry Lott. He was a small, spare, dark complexioned man, who claimed to be of New England origin, and his wife was reputed to be the daughter of one of the early governors of Ohio or Pennsylvania. But the family had greatly degenerated from its noble origin, and the freedom of pioneer life was used by it as an occasion for lawless deeds.

Lott dealt in horses, but his method of acquiring them was very suspicious. He also pretended to be an Indian trader; but the 265 principal commodity received by the red man in exchange for his furs was the poorest grade of whiskey.

In 1846 Mr. Lott left Red Rock at the request of his neighbors, and after a short sojourn at Pea's Point, he located upon the Des Moines at the mouth of Boone river. Here he came into contact with Sintomniduta and his wild followers, and in December, 1848, they became involved in a serious quarrel, which finally led to dire consequences to the red and white inhabitants of both northern Iowa and southern Minnesota.

As to the particulars of this quarrel, the accounts do not agree. Some say that the Indians traced five ponies, which they had missed, to Lott's stable, that the chief gave him five days to quit his dominions, and that, on his failing to comply with this order, Sintomniduta and his band decked their war paint and forcibly drove Lott and a grown-up stepson from their home. As the two in their flight glanced back from the bluffs of the Boone, they imagined that they saw the cabin in flames and heard the dying shrieks of Mrs. Lott and the younger children, who had been left in it. Lott and his stepson fled down the Des Moines about one hundred miles to the nearest white settlement, at Pea's Point.

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Here John Pea undertook to raise a company to go back with Lott to look for his family and punish the Indians. At Elk Rapids, chief Chemeuse (called "Johnny Green") of the Pottawattamie and Musquakie tribes volunteered to join the expedition with twenty-six braves, glad of an opportunity to go on the warpath once more against their old enemy, the Sioux.

With this force of Indians and six white recruits under John Pea, Lott hurried back, but on arriving at his cabin found it standing and his wife and children safe, except his son, Milton, a lad of twelve years, who, his mother said, had left the cabin for fear of the Indians shortly after his father, and had not been seen since.

A search disclosed the fact that Milton had followed the tracks of his father and brother down the Des Moines, probably only a few hours behind them, though they knew it not, until, exhausted by cold and hunger, he fell in the snow and perished within three miles of where stands the present town of Boonesboro. A few months later the mother, who had been overcome by terror and grief, sickened and died, and Lott laid both deaths to his account against Sintomniduta.

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The old chief and his band easily eluded the war party Lott had brought with him to punish them, until, running out of provisions, they soon returned to their homes disappointed.

Fort Dodge was abandoned by the war department in 1853, and the soldiers were all transferred to the new military post on the Minnesota, called Fort Ridgely. Captain Woods, with most of his command, left for the new post on April 18th, 1853, and Lieutenant Corley followed on the 2nd of June with the remainder. Thus the Upper Des Moines country was left without protection.

In November of this same year (though some claim, perhaps more correctly, that it was 1852), Henry Lott, whom we had left near the mouth of Boone river, removed with his

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stepson up on the east branch of the Des Moines, and built a cabin and cleared a small piece of land on the east bank of this stream, nearly opposite the mouth of Lott's creek, in section 16 of Humboldt township. He took with him a few trinkets and two or three barrels of whiskey, and, as was his wont, engaged in the Indian trade.

In the winter of 1853–4 Sintomniduta was encamped two or three miles south of Lott's cabin, on the right bank of Bloody Run in section 4 of the township of Grove. For some reason the chief and his family, consisting of two squaws (one of whom, as some say, was his aged mother) and five or six children, were left alone for a period of time during January, 1854. When Lott discovered this, he concluded that his long sought opportunity to glut his vengeance for the death of his wife and son had come. Apparently that occurrence had long been forgotten and he and the chief had been on the best of terms, but in fact Henry Lott was as bitter as ever down in his heart.

Having drawn his plot and gotten everything in readiness, Lott and his stepson rode down to Sintomniduta's camp, one afternoon, and reported that they had just discovered a herd of elk, a mile or so up the creek, at what is known as the Big Bend, and invited the chief to help hunt them. The prospect of a lot of fresh elk meat delighted the heart of Two Fingers and his family, and he readily accepted the invitation. Before starting, Lott treated the chief liberally with whiskey, of which he was very fond, and then the three rode off to the hunt. When the appointed place was reached, and the chief, because of the liquor and his eager search for the game, was wholly off his guard, Lott and his stepson shot him in the back dead. Taking his pony and gun they went home, and, disguising themselves in Indian garb and paint, they stole down to the chief's wigwam at dusk. The two squaws and children had heard the firing about sundown and were eagerly awaiting the arrival of the three hunters with the elk meat. Suddenly out of the gloomy forest leaped upon them what they supposed were two Indian of the deadly Sacs and Foxes. One squaw and three or four of the children were butchered before they could get away from the wigwam; but the other squaw, with her babe in her arms and accompanied by a boy of twelve and a girl of ten years, fled a few rods before she and her babe were overtaken and slain. The boy

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also received a blow on the head and was left on the ground for dead. The girl, however, managed to hide in some brush and dead grass so as to baffle in the darkness every effort of the murderers to find her. Their bloody work finished, Lott and his son gathered what furs they considered of value, and then set fire to the wigwams. They had already loaded their wagon with the furs and other things worth saving at their own cabin, and now they put that building to the flames, with intent to lead to the belief that they had also been attacked by the same enemy.

Lott and his son thereupon passed hurriedly and as unperceived as possible down the river, disposed of their property and escaped to California, and the last heard from them was a letter a year or two later from the stepson to some friend near Fort Dodge, stating that his father had been killed in some broil in the gold state. This letter was probably written to mislead the authorities and get them to abandon the search for the murderer.

The little girl who had escaped into the brush, found on the next morning that there was life still in her brother, Joshpaduta, and in time he revived. The two subsisted on roots and bark until some days later they were discovered by some of their own people.

The bodies of the slain had been horribly mangled by wolves and other wild animals.

The murder was reported at once by the Indians to the military authorities at Fort Ridgely, and to the white settlements about Fort Dodge, where on departure of the soldiers Major Williams had been commissioned a sort of peace officer.

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Both Indians and whites at first thought, as the two surviving children had reported, that the dastardly deed was the work of some of their prowling Indian foes; but the inability to find the bodies of either Lott or his stepson, and the discovery of the telltale wagon track, soon revealed to the satisfaction of all who the real murderers were. Places where the fugitives had stopped and people who knew them, with whom they had talked, and who

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had seen in their possession the gun and pony of Sintomniduta, were also found, putting the matter beyond doubt.

### **THE MASSACRE AT OKOBOJI AND SPIRIT LAKES.**

Inkpaduta, the brother of Sintomniduta, succeeded to the chieftainship of the Red Top band. When he knew that white men were the slayers of his brother and family, it was only upon the most positive assurance given by the military at Fort Ridgely and at a number of councils held between the whites and the Indians along the Des Moines, to the effect that the white people emphatically discountenanced the dastardly deed and would speedily apprehend and hang the murderers, or would turn them over to the Indians for punishment, that an immediate massacre of the settlers was averted.

Corner John Johns and Granville Berkley, the prosecuting attorney of Hamilton county, Iowa, went up and viewed the remains of the murdered Indians, and brought back with them Sintomniduta's skull, under the pretext that they wished to examine it for marks of violence. A corner's jury was then summoned at Homer, the county seat, and the late chief's surviving son and daughter and other witnesses were examined before it, but the whole proceeding was turned into a farce and a joke. It is said that Berkley acted as interpreter as well as attorney at the inquest, and that he humorously applied Greek terminology to Indian words and disputed in a bantering way with an old frontier man named William R. Miller as to the correct translation. It is also said that, instead of burying the chief's skull or returning it to his friends, he nailed it to a pole over his house.

All this did not tend to allay the suspicions of the Indians as to the white man's sincerity in denouncing the murder and promising to avenge it. In fact, no further effort was made by the authorities 269 to apprehend the murderers, though the Indians were pacified with many fair promises all that year and the next.

In 1856 it was very evident to Inkpaduta that all these promises were in bad faith, that in fact the whites never intended to apprehend the murderers, and that, if the brutal death

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of his mother, brother and relatives was ever to be avenged, it must be done by himself after the custom of his fathers. That such a wild, expatriated band of savages, already ill disposed toward the whites because of the appropriation of their lands, should resort to desperate deeds under such added provocation, is not to be wondered at. A massacre of the white settlers was often discussed at their camp fires during the fall and winter of 1856, and war dances were frequently held to work up their courage to the proper pitch.

Joshpaduta, the orphan son of Sintomniduta, had, since the murder of his parents, been brought up by a white family named Palmer, but made frequent visits to his Indian relatives. On these visits he discovered the murderous intent of Inkpaduta and his followers, and fully warned his white benefactors of their danger. The whites, however, paid no heed to reports of peril the Indian youth brought them. Finally, about midwinter, fearing the threats of his own people if he lived any longer among the whites, "Josh," as he was called, suddenly disappeared and was never heard of again.

In January, 1857, Inkpaduta and his band started down the Little Sioux river, and were very insolent and overbearing to all the settlers. At Smithland they were turned back by them. It is claimed that a dog bit one of the Indians, and that he shot the dog. The owner of the dog in his anger struck the Indian. The settlers, fearing trouble, went to the Indian camp and took away all their guns. The next morning, the Indians went to the house where their guns had been stored, and, finding only a woman at home, they took back their guns, but offered no violence to the woman.

Returning up the river in an uglier mood than ever, they entered the house of Abner Bell on February 21st, 1857, drove the family from the house, killed some cattle, and plundered the house of provisions and clothing. On February 24th, they entered the house of James Gillett and committed like depredations. It is also claimed that, at the site of the village of Peterson, they not only killed the cattle of A. S. Mead, but they knocked down his wife and 270 carried off his daughter, Hattie, as a prisoner to their camp; that they also entered the



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cabin of E. Taylor, and, after knocking him down and pushing his boy into the fireplace, dragged his wife away as a captive. Both women were released, however, the next day.

Delegations of citizens were dispatched at once to Fort Dodge, Webster City, and other points, to complain of these outrages, and to get aid at once to restrain and punish the Indians. Nothing, however, came of these appeals for help, and the savages were permitted to continue their depredations.

The winter of 1856–7 was almost the longest and hardest ever experienced in the Northwest. The snow and cold started early in November, and on December 1st a great snow storm set in which lasted without any abatement for three days and three nights, covering the ground on the level to the depth of three feet. This was followed by storm upon storm, until the snow was drifted in some places twelve and even twenty feet in depth, as in valleys and ravines. Spring did not come until the last of April, it continued cold through May and June, and some of the great snowbanks in deep secluded glens had not entirely disappeared even in July. The cold and hunger suffered by the Indians in such a winter tended to exasperate their evil tempers and gave them some excuse for taking provisions, but it is quite evident that the main intent of Inkpaduta and his band was to work themselves up to the killing point,—to feel, as it were, of the whites and see how much fight there was in them, and whether they were really dangerous.

From Gillett's grove, near the present site of the village of Spencer, the Indians went north some twenty miles to Lake Okoboji (Place of Rest), where a few settlers had located the summer before. They were Rowland Gardner, his wife and three children, and his son-in-law, Harvey Luce, his wife and two children, whose joint cabin lay farthest south, and who were the first actual settlers, having come July 16th, 1856, from Clear Lake, Iowa. About a mile north of them, on the east side of the strait connecting East and West Okoboji lakes, lived James H. Mattocks, his wife and five children; and with him was stopping Mr. Madison and his son eighteen years old, the others of the family not yet having come from Delaware county, Iowa, where also had been the former home of Mr. Mattocks. On the

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west side of the strait, about one hundred 271 rods from the Mattocks cabin, stood a log building, which had been erected by a townsite company, composed of Messrs. Freeborn, Louver, Granger, Sweney, Herriott, and Snyder, of Red Wing, Minn. This company had been formed in May, 1856, to start a townsite on the lake, and their building was occupied by Dr. Herriott, Carl Granger, and Bartell A. Snyder. Two or three miles farther up the lake, on its east bank, had located Joel Howe, his wife and six children, also a son-in-law, Alvin Noble, with his wife and one child, and another son-in-law named Ryan, while with Noble resided Joseph M. Thatcher and wife and one child. About five miles farther north lived the only settlers on Spirit Lake, Mr. William Marble and his wife.

This small isolated settlement seemed to Inkpaduta and his warriors to offer the best opportunity in which to begin the massacre they had planned. The Indians arrived at the southerly end of Lake Okoboji on Saturday, the 7th of March, 1857. The band comprised twelve or thirteen warriors, besides two boys and a number of squaws and papooses. The next morning most of the warriors went up to Mr. Gardner's house and demanded breakfast, which was given them. They at once became ugly and insolent and evidently had intended to begin the massacre there, but the prompt action of the three men, Gardner, Luce, and Clark, who happened to be present, rather disconcerted them. On leaving the cabin, they shot some of Gardner's cattle and showed plainly that they were bent on mischief.

After dinner they went to the house of Mr. Mattocks. Just how the trouble there was started will never be known. The Indian story was that it arose over their taking some hay for their horses. It seems that it took some time for the savages to get to the actual killing point, as Mattocks had sent to Granger's cabin for help, and Dr. Herriott, Snyder, and Joe Harshman had gone to his aid. They all were in the act of fleeing from the Mattocks cabin to the Granger cabin, Mrs. Mattocks and the children ahead and the four men bringing up the rear, when they were shot from an ambush, or the men were treacherously fired

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upon by some Indians who were walking in their rear, and the women and children were dispatched next. The bodies were all found in a group on the path.

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The Indian then enticed Carl Granger from his cabin, and killed him in front of his door. Luce and Clark they ambushed as they were going from Gardner's to warn the other settlers; and then, returning to Gardner's cabin, they treacherously shot Mr. Gardner and butchered all the family except one daughter, Abbie, whom they took captive.

That night the Indians celebrated the success of their bloody work with wild orgies. The next day they continued the slaughter at the cabins of Howe and Noble, killing all except Mr. Thatcher, who happened to be away from home for provisions, and Mrs. Thatcher and Mrs. Noble, whom they carried away into captivity.

On the 13th they came to the cabin of Mr. Marble on Spirit Lake, and, killing him, they took his young wife as a captive. In all, thirty-four persons were killed in the Spirit Lake settlement, besides Mrs. Thatcher and Mrs. Noble, who were slain some weeks later in captivity. None of the bodies were scalped. Mr. Mattocks' cabin was the only one burned, but all the rest were plundered and the stock everywhere killed. Having glutted their vengeance on this little settlement, Inkpaduta and his band repaired to Heron Lake, dragging with them the four women prisoners.

### **RELIEF EXPEDITIONS FROM FORTS RIDGELY AND DODGE.**

The awful tragedy was first discovered by Morris Markham, a young man who had been making his home with Gardner and Howe that winter. He was away during the massacre on a trapping expedition, but returned on the evening of the 9th of March. Seeing what had happened, he fled in haste to Granger's Point, whence George C. Granger accompanied him to Springfield, or Des Moines City, another small, isolated settlement on the Des

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Moines river, which had been started the previous summer and was located where the village of Jackson, Minn., now stands.

Most of the settlers there had come from Iowa, and had their claims on the east side of the river; but William and George Wood had come from Mankato, Minn., and laid out a townsite on the west side and built a trading post there, which they then occupied. Learning of the outbreak, the settlers gathered at the house of J. B. Thomas for mutual protection, and dispatched Joseph B. Cheffins, a young frontier man who had come out with the Woods from Mankato, and Henry Tretts, a young German, to Fort Ridgely for help. These messengers left Springfield on the morning of the 18th of March, and reached the fort on the forenoon of the next day.

The commanding officer, Colonel E. E. Alexander, promptly detailed Captain Barnard E. Bee, with forty-eight men, to go to the scene of trouble, with Joseph La Framboise as guide. Judge Flandrau, then Sioux agent, and Philander Prescott, volunteered to accompany the expedition. The command was ready by 12:30 p. m. of that same day.

Owing to the heavy cumbersome military equipment of that time, it was deemed inexpedient to attempt the short cut over the prairies, as there was no road in that direction and the snow lay in heavy masses all over the country and was beginning to thaw.

A most circuitous route was therefore adopted, going down the Minnesota river to South Bend, and thence southwest along some sort of a road as far as to the claim of Isaac Slocum, on the Watonwan a few miles below the present village of Madelia. Their progress was attended with many difficulties and great hardships. Most of the time was spent in extricating the teams from one snow bank after another; and as it melted somewhat during the day, the soldiers' clothing became soaking wet and then would freeze about them as they bivouacked on the snow in the frosty nights. The expedition reached South Bend, three miles west of Mankato, on Saturday night, the 21st of March, and remained there the next day, gathering supplies. Judge Flandrau and Mr. Prescott, who had pressed ahead as

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far as Slocum's place to learn more fully, if they could, as to the outbreak, returned to meet Captain Bee at South Bend, but with no special news except that they had found the road almost impassable.

It was thought advisable for Flandrau and Prescott to return to their posts at Fort Ridgely, while Captain Bee with his force pushed on to Springfield. By night of the 24th Slocum's house was reached.

Here every semblance of a road ended, and as what was reputed to be the biggest drift in the country lay square across their way some ten miles beyond, in which some Springfield men with a load of provisions had been stuck for days, Captain Bee sent a squad of men ahead on the 25th, who spent all day cutting a road through this snow bank.

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While Captain Bee is thus employed, let us glance at affairs elsewhere. After dark on March 15th, Orlando C. Howe, R. W. Wheelock, and B. E. Parmenter reached the cabin of Joel Howe on Lake Okohoji, with a load of provisions from Fort Dodge.

They knocked at the door, wholly unconscious of the terrible tragedy which had occurred there just one week before. Receiving no answer, they entered the house, started a fire in the stove, and began to cook supper. The glow of the fire lit up the room, revealing much disorder, and, in one corner, a pile of hay with a boot protruding from it. One of them went and picked up the boot, when to his horror he found a human foot and limb attached, and the horror of all three can hardly be imagined when on removing the hay they discovered under it the bloody, ghastly remains of five of the family piled in a heap. It did not take the three men long to vacate that house of death. Driving their load out on the prairie, they released the oxen and hurried back on foot, with their terrible tale, all the way to Fort Dodge, where they arrived on Saturday, the 21st, the same day Captain Bee reached South Bend.

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The news was also carried the same night to Homer and Fort Dodge and roused the whole country. Mass meetings were held on Sunday, the 22nd, at Fort Dodge and Webster City, and three volunteer companies organized at once, one known as Company D, with J. C. Johnson as captain, at the latter place, and Companies A and C at the former place, with Charles B. Richards and John F. Duncombe as their respective captains. There were about thirty to thirty-five men in each company.

Company D left Webster City Sunday at noon and passed the night at Fort Dodge. Next morning, the 23rd, all three companies started on their memorable journey, under the general command of Major Williams, who, though seventy years old, had volunteered to lead the expedition. The hardships endured by this brave little army of something over a hundred men on their long and terrible march through snow and storm and icy floods are of thrilling interest. Time will not permit us now, however, to relate them; and we pass both relief expeditions, cutting their way, foot by foot, through the ramparts of winter, to glance at the fortunes of the Springfield settlement.

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### **ATTACK AT SPRINGFIELD (NOW JACKSON), MINN.**

On Wednesday, March 25th, two of Inkpaduta's band appeared at the Wood Brothers' store, in the Springfield settlement, and bought eighty dollars worth of ammunition, for which they paid in gold, doubtless part of the Spirit Lake plunder. The settlers protested to the Wood boys against this sale, but they seemed skeptical of every report against the Indians.

The next day, March 26th, about 2 p. m., Inkpaduta and his warriors came to the settlement. Under some pretext or other they enticed William Wood and his brother some distance away from their store, and treacherously murdered both. They found Josiah Stewart with his wife and three children at home, and while one of them, under the pretext of wanting to buy a hog, got him out in the yard, the others shot him dead from ambush,

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and then murdered his wife and children, except one boy, who managed to hide and escape.

Nearly all the other settlers were still gathered at the log house of J. B. Thomas, for fear of the Indians, and were anxiously awaiting the return of their messengers from Fort Ridgely with the soldiers. Therefore when Willie, the ten year old son of Mr. Thomas, saw a man coming down the road that afternoon, he thought it was Henry Tretts, one of the messengers, and ran into the house with the news. It proved to be an Indian dressed as a white man, and when the people rushed out to meet him a volley of bullets fell among them from a number of other Indians close by in ambush. Little Willie fell, mortally wounded. The others all got back into the house and barricaded the door, but it was found that Mr. Thomas had been shot through the left wrist, David Carver in the side, and Miss Swanger in the left shoulder.

The Indians kept shooting at the house until after dark, and the whites fired back from port holes made between the logs. When Mrs. Church and Miss Gardner after dusk were watching one side of the house, they noticed an Indian steal up by a tree near the house, and as there was no white man near, Mrs. Church picked up a gun she had just loaded with buckshot, and taking aim fired upon him. Miss Gardner said she saw the Indian fall, and some months later, when the premises were examined, the tree by which the Indian stood was found to contain some buckshot in it at about 276 the proper height for a vital spot, and a dead Indian was found buried in another tree not far distant, wrapped in a blanket and with a white man's pillow under his head.

Whether Mrs. Church killed the Indian she shot at, may not be positively known, but if she did it was probably the only one killed in that massacre. There was one wounded at Lake Okoboji, but otherwise no Indian is positively known to have been injured in the whole outbreak.

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After this shot from Mrs. Church and whatever execution it may have done, if any, the Indians quickly retired. About midnight the whites evacuated the house, and, putting the wounded with the women and children into an old sleigh behind a pair of oxen, fled down the Des Moines. The team became exhausted on the way and these refugees, thirty-three in number, on the fourth day, March 30th, were met by Major Williams' command, on the open prairie some miles beyond the Iowa line, in a most miserable plight, cold, hungry, and wet. In all there had been seven killed at the Springfield settlement and three wounded.

### **PURSUIT OF INKPADUTA AND HIS BAND.**

On the same day as the attack on Springfield, Captain Bee's force left Slocum's and on Saturday, the 28th, after a most laborious march, reached a point on the Des Moines about eight miles north of Springfield, where a half-breed from Traverse des Sioux, named Joe Coursolle (called "Gaboo" by the Indians), had established a small trading post the year before. From reports Captain Bee expected to find the hostile band at this place, and had deployed his men for battle when approaching it, but was disappointed. Coursolle, and the few Sissetons and half-bloods whom they found there, informed them that Inkpaduta and his band had wiped out the settlements on Spirit Lake and at Springfield; that they were now encamped at Heron Lake, about twenty-five miles farther west; and that they had four white women with them and a large amount of plunder, including many horses that they had stolen.

Early the next morning, Lieutenant Murray and twenty-three men, mounted on all the ponies and mules available, were dispatched in pursuit of the foe, with Coursolle as guide. When they reached the grove on this lake, they found abundant traces of their camp, in the quantity of plunder left behind, but the camp ashes 277 indicated that they had been gone two or three days. Their trail led toward a grove four miles to the west and thither the soldiers pursued, but only to find another deserted camping place. The guide gave as his opinion, after an examination, that this camp also was two or three days old, and further



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pursuit was abandoned because the expedition lacked supplies. It was afterward learned however, from the captives and the Indians, that the soldiers were close upon the enemy at this point, and that they fully expected to be attacked in a few minutes, when to their surprise and relief the soldiers withdrew.

### **BURIAL OF THE DEAD.**

On the next day, Monday, March 30th, Lieutenant Murray was sent with the mounted detachment to scout for Indians, and to bury the dead in the Spirit Lake settlement, while Captain Bee took the remainder of the command to Springfield. Arriving there, he found two helpless cripples, named Robert Smith and John Henderson, and an infant child of A. P. Sheigley, who, not being at the Thomas house at the time of the midnight exodus, had been left behind. Smith and Henderson were Englishmen, who the previous December had attempted to drive their cattle across the prairie to Blue Earth county and had been overtaken by a blizzard and so severely frozen that one lost a foot, and the other both feet. They informed Captain Bee where the settlers had gone, and he sent a messenger after them, who on March 31st met the volunteer expedition from Fort Dodge at Granger's Point on the Iowa state line.

Major Williams, learning thus of the arrival of United States soldiers on the scene, and that the Indians had fled, halted his command, intending to return on the morrow. Learning further, however, that Lieutenant Murray had returned to Springfield after burying Mr. Marble only, and without visiting Okoboji at all, he detailed twenty-three men to proceed there and bury the dead. Captain Aldrich was to command, but failing to make his horse cross the river, he returned, and the detachment went in charge of Captain Johnson.

Having performed their gruesome mission, they started on their return march on Saturday, the 4th of April. It was a warm day and the melting snows flooded the country, when suddenly in the afternoon a terrible blizzard swept down from the northwest. Captain Johnson and a young man named Burkholder who had just been elected clerk of court

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of Hamilton county, became separated from the rest in the blinding storm and perished, but their bones were not found until ten years later. The sufferings of both detachments of the Iowa volunteers who were caught on the open prairie by this fearful storm, were most appalling. All, except the two above mentioned, finally, after days and nights of the severest hardships, reached their homes.

Captain Bee, having buried the dead at Springfield and left Lieutenant Murray with twenty men to guard the few survivors, returned across the country with the others of his command to Fort Ridgely, which he reached on the 9th of April.

### **ALARM OF THE FRONTIER SETTLERS.**

The news of the outbreak went like fire through all the settlements, throwing the whole country into a frenzy of fear, and the wildest rumors were spread broadcast.

On section one in the extreme northeast corner of Watonwan county are three small lakes with groves of trees. Here five or six families of peaceable Sissetons were fishing, oblivious of trouble, near the cabin of Theodore Leisch and Philip Schaffer. In the same grove a little to the north lived Bisier and his family, and north of him Boeckler and family. Hearing of the massacre, these people became uneasy at the mere presence of an Indian, and leaving their cabins fled to the house of Isaac Slocum. This started the rumor that these Indians, who in the story had grown to several hundred in number, were on the warpath. Joseph Cheffins happened to reach Slocum's cabin at this time, on his way to Mankato from Springfield, and his description of the horrors that he had just witnessed did not tend to allay the fears of the people.

Slocum and others sent by him to Mankato requested immediate help to protect the settlers on the Watonwan. Reaching Mankato on Friday night, April 10th, Cheffins delivered his message, rendered a hundredfold more impressive by his vivid report of the scenes he had beheld two weeks before at Springfield. The fire bell hanging in the Mankato House was rung to call the people together, a mass meeting was held at the log

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school house, and as a result a company of thirty-eight volunteers, with Dr. William 279 F. Lewis as captain, left the next day for Slocum's cabin on the Watonwan, four or five miles below the village of Madelia. Having reached their destination that evening at a late hour, at daybreak the next morning, on Sunday, April 12th, they proceeded to the small Indian camp by Leisch and Schaffer's cabin, four or five miles off, and surprised the savages by a sudden attack. A warm skirmish was kept up for a few minutes from behind trees. One Indian was hit in the arm and two or three of the whites had narrow escapes. Soon both parties retreated, fleeing in opposite directions, each imagining itself pursued by the other.

The excitement now was at its height. All the previous day and night refugees had been pouring into Mankato, St. Peter and other towns, and the quiet of this Sabbath day was completely forgotten in the turmoil of teams and terror stricken people. The news of the little skirmish reached Mankato in a few hours, but magnified to a battle in which a number had been killed on both sides; and it was reported that the Mankato company was then shut up in Slocum's cabin, besieged by several hundred painted savages. On this same Sunday, Captain Dodds with about forty volunteers from St. Peter reached Mankato, and, hearing the many startling reports, the captain dispatched a mounted messenger to Fort Snelling for military aid, and then hurried on to reinforce the Mankato company.

On Monday the two companies united forces at Slocum's place, and went down the Watonwan to the mouth of Perch creek, where Sintomniduta (All Over Red), a Sisseton sub-chief, with a small band had been encamped during the winter. They found the place deserted, and in the camp ashes was discovered a stone painted red, and on a log trough, which had been used for holding maple sap, a pair of snow shoes pointing southeast, and, tied to a branch above them, a number of goose bones. It simply meant, "All Over Red has gone southeast of here to hunt wild geese."

This same Monday a company of about thirty volunteers under George McLeod as captain, from Traverse des Sioux, passed through Mankato. The next day they ran across Sintomniduta and his band, with a few other Sissetons, up on the Blue Earth river not far

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from the site of the village of Vernon, and chased the astonished Indians, squaws, and papooses, far over the prairie and across 280 the Watonwan toward the northwest. One feeble old squaw and one starved little pony, with quite an amount of Indian furniture, fell into the hands of these doughty warriors from Traverse.

The same Tuesday a company of Welsh and German settlers on the Little Cottonwood, under Colonel S. D. Shaw as captain, drove away from a point on that stream, about a mile west of the Blue Earth county line, a band of Indians, probably those whom the Mankato company had skirmished with on Sunday. After their departure, the body of a German bachelor named Brandt was discovered in the brush back of his cabin, probably murdered by these Indians in retaliation for that Sunday attack.

The people of Judson and Nicollet townships formed another volunteer company at the old townsite of Eureka, with Mr. Bean as their captain. After building a fort of some sawmill logs, they marched to Swan lake, where as usual the old Sisseton chief, Sleepy Eye, had his village, and requested him and his followers to quit their ancient home.

The courier whom Captain Dodds had dispatched to Fort Snelling for aid reached there Monday morning, and Colonel Smith was ordered to Mankato at once with one hundred and sixty soldiers. He advanced with great deliberation, spending two days at Belle Plaine. Doubtless he had heard the rumor, which had been carried to nearly all the eastern towns of the state, to the effect that Mankato and St. Peter had been captured and burnt by nine hundred Yankton and Sisseton Sioux, and that this savage horde were sweeping down the Minnesota valley with fire and tomahawk. Even St. Paul organized military companies expecting the barbarian foe would be upon them soon. Colonel Smith and his force did not reach Mankato until Saturday, April 18th, and after spending three or four days reconnoitering as far as the Watonwan and finding no Indians he returned.

The excitement now began to abate, and things soon assumed their accustomed tranquillity.

## RESULTS OF THE MASSACRE.

Inkpaduta and his murderous band retired unmolested to their old haunts beyond the Big Sioux river, carrying their plunder and prey with them, and encamped by what is now known as Lake Madison in South Dakota. There they were found about the 5th 281 of May by Mak-pi-ya-ka-ho-ton (Sounding Heavens) and Se-ha-ho-ta (Gray Foot), two young Sioux brothers who had been Christianized by the missionaries Riggs and Williamson. The young men were out hunting, when they heard that a band of Wahpekutas were camped at Lake Madison, having three white women as captives. The fourth, Mrs. Thatcher, had been killed when crossing the Big Sioux. They at once set about rescuing the women, but it took all the property they had to purchase the release of one, and the choice fell on Mrs. Margaret Ann Marble. The young men treated her with the utmost kindness, and on May 21st, 1857, delivered her to Dr. Riggs, and later were given a small reward by the government for this service.

The matter of rescuing the other two women was now taken up by Dr. Riggs and Judge Flandrau, and on the 30th day of May, three Christian Indians, Paul Mazakuta-mani, Angpetu Tokecha (Otherday), and Chetanmaza (Grass), were sent on the difficult mission. Before they reached the hostile Indians, Mrs. Noble had been killed, but they managed to purchase the release of Miss Abbie Gardner, and on June 23rd, at the Fuller House in St. Paul, she was formally delivered by them to the governor.

About the last of June a son of Inkpaduta ventured down to the camp of White Lodge, on the Yellow Medicine river, in quest of a wife. His presence there coming to the knowledge of the authorities, a detachment of soldiers and friendly Indians were sent to apprehend him, and as he was trying to escape he was shot and killed by one of the Indians.

The government now insisted that the Indians punish the Inkpaduta murderers, on penalty of withholding their annuities until it was done. After much protest on the part of the Indians, they were finally induced to undertake an expedition against the outlaws. They left

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Yellow Medicine on July 22nd, in charge of A. J. Campbell, the United States interpreter. There were in this party one hundred and six Indians, prominent among whom were the notorious Little Crow and four half breeds, two of whom were John and Baptiste Campbell, who some years later were hung at Mankato. It is claimed that this expedition came upon Inkpaduta's band about July 28th, near Lake Madison in South Dakota, and killed three of them and captured two squaws and a boy. This was the only attempt made to punish these murderers.

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The band soon afterwards fled with their chief into the British possessions far beyond Prince Albert, where, it is said, some of their descendants still live.

Thus do we recall the first of our Sioux massacres, a time that tried the souls of the pioneers. Its origin was unfortunate and its results disastrous. It cost the whites the loss of some property, but much more it cost the loss of forty-five precious lives.

More important than all else, perhaps, it cost a loss of prestige with the Sioux, for they saw how easily a mere handful of them could destroy many white people without the loss of a warrior, and how impotent the whites were to punish the injury done them, as all the punishment that Inkpaduta received had to be inflicted upon him by the Indians themselves.

These considerations had great weight with Little Crow and his followers, five years later, in deciding on the second and greater massacre.