



SUNSET ON WEST OKOBOJI LAKE  
By courtesy of the Okoboji Protective Association

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THIRD SERIES

## THE ORIGINS OF THE INDIAN MASSACRE BETWEEN THE OKOBOJIS MARCH 8, 1857

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[Being the continuation of the article on Dr. Isaac H. Harriott in the April ANNALS OF IOWA.]

### Sioux War Song OKICIZE OLOWAN

Kolapila takuyakapi-lo!  
Maka kin mitawa yelo!  
Epinahan blehemiciye-lo!

Comrades, kinsmen,  
Now have ye spoken thus,  
The earth is mine,  
'Tis my domain.  
'Tis said, and now anew I exert me.\*

### VIII

Let us now turn to a consideration of the causes of the awful tragedy in the snows on the shores of the Okobojis. We have seen that the victims were innocent of conscious fault, either in a legal or in a moral sense. We have seen in the various letters of Dr. Harriott that there is not the slightest intimation of appreciation of possible danger from the Indians. Further, despite the insolence and menacing attitude of Inkpaduta's warriors in the Gardner cabin, Dr. Harriott's youthful idealism would not let him see any serious menace in the conduct or the looks of the rude and ruthless Sioux in the cabin that Sunday morning. We have seen that the settlers on either side of the

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strait went the full limit of human hospitality in giving the hungry warriors and their squaws and children of their stores of food, virtually impoverishing themselves.

What were the conditions and causes of that hideous horror? What antecedent factors and what collateral forces converged in the minds of Inkpaduta's followers that impelled them to perpetrate their infernal outrage upon those unoffending settlers? To the victims the danger simply flashed out of the blue and instantly overwhelmed them. Mr. Harvey Ingham, who has a right to speak upon the relations of the Indians to the history of Northwestern Iowa that few Iowans can claim, assures us without qualification that "the Spirit Lake Massacre was an isolated tragedy, unrelated in any large way to the general current of Sioux history."<sup>63</sup>

Our physicists tell us that there is no such thing as an isolated fact or phenomenon. Each event is the resultant of antecedent and collateral influences, immediate and remote. Let us test the assumption in the case of the tragedy on the shores of Mini-Wakan. The story is a long and tangled web of racial conflict. It is a constantly moving and shifting criss-cross of crimination and recrimination, in which greed and passion incessantly clash with law and order, with truth and fault about

<sup>63</sup>Harvey Ingham, *The Northern Border Brigade: A Story of Military Beginnings* [1926] [p. 26.] Mr. Ingham neither dated his interesting brochure, nor paged it, hence my brackets. What is more notable, Mr. Ingham did not inscribe his name of the title page. I so accredit it to him for the reason that in sending me a complimentary copy, which I received Dec. 22, 1926, Mr. Ingham's name was subscribed thereon.

Mr. Ingham was born in Kossuth County, east of Dickinson County, in 1858. His father, Mr. W. H. Ingham, was held in captivity for three days in 1835 by Um-pa-sho-tah, one of Inkpaduta's sub-chiefs, who was present at the Spirit Lake Massacre. See Mr. Ingham's article, "Inkpadutah's Revenge," *Midland Monthly*, Vol. IV, p. 272, col. 1.

In the passing years since he began his editorship of the *Upper Des Moines* of Algona, 1882-1902, and of the *Des Moines Register* and *Evening Tribune*, 1902—Mr. Ingham has added much to the Indian lore of the state. He has given the public innumerable vivid and valuable articles, containing both personal recollections and critical comments upon both academic and popular writings, besides assembling data, securing the recollections of pioneers, letters and interviews with the old frontiersmen of the forties and fifties which will prove of inestimable worth to future students and critical historians. I cannot give references to all or many of them—for the simple reason that Mr. Ingham himself has not preserved a list, and cannot recall dates of some of his publications with certainty.

Much of the essence and the substance of his contributions will be found in his brochure, *Old Indian Days: A Story of White Man Beginnings* [1929] which gives us more or less of his articles in the *Upper Des Moines*—the first half being given over to Mr. Ingham's narrative of the major developments prior to 1870 and critical characterizations of men and measures involved in the relations of the whites and the Indians and the second, to "Reminiscences of the Pioneers."

As in the brochure first named above Mr. Ingham is a law unto himself. He gives us neither date of publication, nor page numbers, nor footnotes nor many citations as to dates or sources. My references to *Old Indian Days* are my own pagination signified by brackets.

equally divided and equally confused and confusing. The story perhaps cannot be accurately told or the many factors and kaleidoscopic conditions and human shifts correctly assembled and appraised. All that one can essay is a summary of the basic generalities and major considerations controlling the great currents of events.

Iowa's experience with Indian warfare was almost unique. Virtually at the crossroads of the continent, one familiar with our national history as it relates to the incessant conflicts with the aboriginal inhabitants would have naturally presumed that her fertile valleys, prairies and fastnesses would have been the terrain of many bloody contests—and such there were in plenty—but save the one just dealt with, they were not waged between the red men and the white men. Those bloody affrays were fought by the Indians against their own kind, mainly their Indian enemies.

This general exemption of Iowa's pioneers from the horrors that terrorized our ancestors in the colonial period and in the first two quarters of the last century east of the Mississippi and in the third quarter west of the Missouri River up to the 1890's when the ruthless Apaches and the warlike Sioux were overwhelmed, was due to a fact not generally appreciated in these peaceful days.

The acquisition by the whites of the favorite hunting grounds of the Indians in the United States, with but few exceptions, was a rather sorry story of aggression, greed and broken treaties. Since our national government started in 1789 we have solemnized each dispossession with specific assurances in sonorous circumlocution of ceaseless friendship and pledges that we would refrain from future intrusion and molestation. But the Anglo-Saxon has been impelled by an incessant desire to take what lies next to him, and in pioneering he has been controlled very much by the old Roman rule, *Capiat qui capere possit*—Let him take who can.

The story of the relations of the whites to the Indians in Iowa is at once similar and different. In the regions east of the Mississippi the national government was chiefly concerned with protecting the whites against the attacks of the Indians and built forts to insure such protection. In Iowa, on the other hand, as

I briefly pointed out some thirty years since, the constant and chief concern of the national authorities was not the protection of the whites against the Indians, but *contra*, first, to keep the peace among the Indian tribes and prevent their incessant intertribal conflicts, and second, to prevent the whites from breaking their treaty pledges by invading the lands of the Indians west of the "Father of Waters."<sup>64</sup> These two objectives of national policy which the central government tried conscientiously in the large to achieve gave an unique character to the relations of the whites to the Indians in Iowa. The narrative is at once interesting and instructive. Some of the radiant points are indicated, chiefly by means of pithy extracts from some of the notable official documents.

## IX

The Louisiana Purchase was consummated in 1803. On November 3, 1804, at St. Louis, William Henry Harrison, governor of Indiana Territory and superintendent of Indian affairs for the District of Louisiana, signed a treaty with the Sauk and Foxes. Two of its articles are very instructive:

Art. 4. The United States will never interrupt the said tribes in the possession of the lands which they rightfully claim, but on the contrary protect them in the quiet enjoyment of the same against their own citizens and against all other white persons who may intrude upon them.

\* \* \*

Art. 6. If any citizen of the United States, or other white person should form a settlement upon the lands that are the property of the Sac and Fox tribes, upon complaint being made thereof to the superintendent or other person having charge of the affairs of the Indians, such intruder shall forthwith be removed.<sup>65</sup>

If the foregoing articles of that treaty, negotiated at St. Louis, had been earnestly and effectively enforced the tragedy at Spirit Lake on Sunday, March 8, 1857, would not have occurred. President Jefferson, however, ordered and sanctioned serious and straightforward efforts to carry out the treaty.

Pursuant to orders from Governor James Wilkinson on Friday, August 9, 1805, Lieutenant Zebulon M. Pike, with twenty men in a keel boat seventy feet long, left St. Louis with instructions to explore the Mississippi from St. Louis to its sources,

<sup>64</sup>See Herriott on "Des Moines" in Powell's *Historic Towns of the Western States*, 1901, p. 302.

<sup>65</sup>Kappler's *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, Vol. II, p. 75.

select sites for military posts, hold councils with the Indians, bring about peace between the Sioux and the Chippewas, and look after United States interests in the fur trade, and in general to collect such information as he could concerning our new possessions.

A few extracts from Pike's Journal and his reported speeches to the Indians en route are instructive as to conditions prevalent which made for constant perplexity in the ensuing relations of the national government to the Indians.

Lieutenant Pike arrived at what is now Dubuque, Iowa, about noon of Sunday, September 1, 1805; he was seriously ill with a violent attack of fever, but he "dressed" himself in his regalia to execute "the orders of the general [Wilkinson] relative to this place."

We were saluted with a field-piece, and received with every mark of attention by Monsieur [Julien] Dubuque, the proprietor. . . .

Dined with Mr. D., who informed me that the Sioux and Sauteurs [Objibways or Chippewas] were as warmly engaged in opposition as ever; that not long since the former killed 15 Sauteurs, who on the 10th of August in return killed 10 Sioux, at the entrance of the St. Peters [Minnesota River]; and that a war-party, composed of Sacs, Reynards [Foxes], and Paunts [Winnebagoes], of 200 warriors, had embarked on an expedition against the Sauteurs. . . .<sup>66</sup>

Those intertribal war parties between the Sioux and the Sacs and Foxes continued to be for forty years a cause of constant perplexity for the national government, and their consequences should not be forgotten in passing judgment upon the conduct of the national authorities—the latter were not dealing (as critics so often assume) with either idyllic or ideal conditions wherein peace and good will, law and order were assumed, assured and achieved in the daily routine of the aborigines.

Another basic fact in those conditions is brought out luminously in Pike's Journal under date of September 10, when he arrived at St. Peters where he first met the warlike Sioux in council; for he was informed by a noted chief, La Feuille,<sup>67</sup> that his people the night before "had begun to drink, and that on the next day he would receive me with his people sober."<sup>68</sup> The

<sup>66</sup>Coues' *The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike to the Headwaters of the Mississippi River, etc.*, 1895, Vol. I, pp. 29-30.

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*, Note 50, p. 43.

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 44.

utterly pernicious influence of alcoholic stimulants upon the lives of the Indians and the resulting perversions of the relations of the whites and the Indians can neither be ignored nor overestimated in any effort to appraise causes or apportion blame in what follows in the next forty years. In that case, certainly, La Feuille's warriors had not been perverted by the Americans; but, as we shall see, it made but little difference for American Indian traders were no less active than the British in selling whisky to the red men.

There have been more important speeches, and more striking and scintillating speeches, made in Indian councils when our military chiefs met and conferred with the war chiefs of the Indian tribes, but there have been few more interesting speeches made in such solemn councils than Zebulon M. Pike made on September 23, 1805, when he negotiated the purchase of the site of Fort Snelling. He was both bland and blunt, paternal and practical, human and humorous, as a few excerpts will show:

Brothers: I am happy to meet you here in this council fire, which your father [Pres. Jefferson] has sent me to kindle, and to take you by the hands as our children. . . .

Brothers: It is the wish of our government to establish military posts on the Upper Mississippi, at such places as may be thought expedient. . . . I therefore wish you to grant to the United States nine miles square at St. Croix. . . . As we are a people who are accustomed to have all our acts written down, in order to have them handed down to our children I have drawn up a form of agreement. . . .

Brothers: These posts are intended as a benefit to you. The old chiefs now present must see their situation improves by communication with the whites. It is the intention of the United States to establish factories<sup>69</sup> at those posts, in which the Indians may procure all their things at a cheaper and better rate than they do now, or than your traders can afford to sell them to you, as they are single men who come far in small boats. . . .

Brothers: Another object your father has at heart, is to endeavor to make peace between you and the Chipeways. You have now been a long time at war, and when will you stop? If neither side will lay down the hatchet your paths will always be red with blood; . . .

Brothers: If their chiefs [of the Chipeways] do not listen to the voice of their father, and continue to commit murders on you and our traders, they will call down the vengeance of the Americans; for they

<sup>69</sup>This program, which was attempted in good faith, failed rather miserably as most undertakings of the nature have. But Demos is incessantly seeking to repeat such experiments.

are not like a blind man walking into a fire. . . . They know we are not children, but, like all wise people, are slow to shed blood.

Brothers: Your old men probably know . . . that we put one foot on the sea to the east, and the other on the sea at the west; and if once children [under the English Crown] are now men. Yet, I think the traders who come from Canada are bad birds amongst the Chipeways, and instigate them to make war on their red brothers the Sioux, in order to prevent our traders from going high up the Mississippi. This I shall inquire into. . . .

Brothers: I expect that you will give orders to all your young warriors to respect my flag, and its protection which I may extend to the Chipeway chiefs . . .; for were a dog to run to my lodge for safety, his enemy must walk over me to hurt him.

Brothers: I am told that hitherto the traders have made a practice of selling rum to you. All of you in your right senses must know that it is injurious, and occasions quarrels, murders, etc., amongst yourselves. For this reason your father has thought proper to prohibit traders from selling you any rum. . . .

Brothers: I now present you with some of your father's tobacco and other trifling things, as a memorandum of my good will; and before my departure I will give you some liquor to clear your throats."<sup>70</sup>

Let no one hastily conclude in these halcyon days of national prohibition of the liquor traffic that Zebulon Pike was either inconsistent or hypocritical in his formal exhortation against the evils of drunkenness and his parting promise of some liquor "to clear their throats." The young lieutenant came of good Scotch Presbyterian stock. He, like his forbears, took literally St. Paul's injunction, "Drink no longer water but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities"<sup>71</sup>—save that he deemed whisky a fair substitute for wine. His principle and program comprehended, as the Hebrew seers enjoined, both sobriety and temperance. With true Scotch thrift he combined piety and prudence, for he tells us that on the next day before departing he left with the Sioux an eight gallon keg of "made" whisky which consisted of two gallons of whisky and six gallons of water. One wonders whether he wanted to "clear their throats" or their minds, or to loosen their tongues.

But let not the hypercritical or the finicky of these days discount the adroitness or the earnestness or effectiveness of the young envoy of the Great Father at Washington. His success

<sup>70</sup>Coues' Pike, *Ibid.*, pp. 226-230.

<sup>71</sup>First Timothy, V, 23. Lt. Pike's recipe which he followed in compounding his "made" whisky was generally followed by him. See Coues' Pike, *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 19, 44, 48.



was notable and its benefits and lasting impression upon the course of the government's program may be inferred from the following eulogistic comments on his explorations by a distinguished explorer of world-wide fame, General A. W. Greeley:

Pike had more than carried out his orders . . . and did something more than give the world the first definite and detailed information as to the upper river and its tributaries. He discovered the extent and importance of the British trade in that country, brought the foreign traders under the license and customs regulations of the United States, and broke up for all time their political influence over the Indians. He did much to restrain the unlawful sale of liquor to Indians by domestic traders, and not only inspired the Indians with respect for Americans, but also induced them to at least a temporary peace among themselves.<sup>72</sup>

President Jefferson and his successors in office proceeded to carry out the program which Pike announced. The good will of the national authorities, however, was seriously disturbed, and public suspicion became rampant and perverted popular feeling and vision, because nearly all of the Indians of the Northwest, save the Sioux, allied themselves with the English in the War of 1812. Nevertheless, thereafter, the avowed promises of the original pronouncements were, in the large, fulfilled, or, perhaps one should put it, serious efforts in fulfillment were made, to wit, to keep the whites out of the territories possessed by the Indians, and to keep the peace among the Indians, and suppress traffic in whisky. Various sorts of proof may be offered of the sincerity of the effort to fulfill its treaty obligations by the government at Washington.

First, there was the establishment of a series of forts to insure the realization of the several promises: Fort Madison in 1808; Fort Crawford at Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, and Fort Armstrong at Rock Island in 1816; Fort Snelling, Minnesota, in 1819; Fort Atkinson in 1820; Fort Winnebago, Wisconsin, in 1829; Fort Des Moines, No. 1, at the mouth of the Des Moines River, in 1834; Fort Croghan and a block house at Council Bluffs in 1839; Fort Sanford near Agency City in 1842; Fort Des Moines, No. 2, at the Forks of the Raccoon, in 1842; and Fort Dodge in 1851.<sup>73</sup> Prior to the Black Hawk Purchase in 1832 the

<sup>72</sup>A. W. Greeley, *Men of Achievement: American Explorers and Travelers*, 1893, p. 175.

<sup>73</sup>See Van der Zee on "Forts in the Iowa Country" in *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, Vol. XII, pp. 163-204.

Mississippi was patrolled by Colonel Zachary Taylor, Lieutenant Jefferson Davis and other notables to keep the whites out of the Indian lands west of the river.

Second, the officers of the army charged with supervision of Indian lands and the enforcement of the treaties and laws thereunder, the governors of the territories, the Indian agents, the missionaries and teachers were in the main conscientious and earnest in fulfilling their duties to the nation's wards. Their denunciation of the lawless, unscrupulous whites, hucksters and traders, freebooters and interlopers who defied the law was often expressed in language that smoked. The attitude of the army was bluntly indicated by Colonel George Croghan, inspector general, in a report under date of January 25, 1836, anent the proposed road to be built between the old Fort Des Moines (No. 1) and Fort Leavenworth:

There is now, altogether too much traveling between the several forts for the quiet of the frontier, and good roads will only increase the evil by opening the whole territory to the ravenous appetites of lawless vagabonds and more greedy land speculators. Already has this description of persons begun to talk about the fine lands on the Ioway and Des Moines, and perhaps before two years are gone they will be crying aloud for new territory on that side of the Mississippi.<sup>74</sup>

On February 24, 1843, John Chambers, territorial governor of Iowa, and ex officio superintendent of Indian affairs for Iowa, addressed a letter to the commissioner of Indian affairs at Washington that left nothing uncertain as to his meaning or state of mind. One is tempted to quote it entire, but a few excerpts will illuminate the course of empire:

Mr. Ewing describes very correctly, I have no doubt, some of the many infamous practices resorted to by unprincipled men to cheat and abuse the Indians, and he might with great propriety have extended his representations to *some* of those he calls "regular traders" whose dealing with them are characterized by the vilest extortion. . . . With all your experience . . . you cannot, I apprehend, have more than a very imperfect idea of the "regular" Indian trade. If the vengeance of Heaven is ever inflicted upon man in this life, it seems to me we must see some signal evidence of it among these "regular traders." It would be worthy the labors of a casuist to determine whether the wretch who sells a diseased or stolen horse to a poor Indian, or the "regular trader"

<sup>74</sup>ANNALS OF IOWA, Third Series, Vol. IV, p. 162.

who sells him goods of no intrinsic value to him at nine hundred per cent advance on the cost, is the greater rascal. . . .

. . . It makes my heart sick to dwell upon the injuries and injustice to which the Indian race is subjected by the injudicious system by which our intercourse with them is governed. . . . [He then scorches the procedure of congressmen in the premises.]<sup>75</sup>

The ceaseless clashes of General Joseph M. Street, agent, first of the Winnebagos from 1827 to 1837, then of the Sacs and Foxes from 1837 to his death in 1840, with rapacious Indian traders, "regular" and "irregular," and with high powers and principalities of the American Fur Company and of the national administration at Washington in defense of the Indians' rights will afford the skeptical variegated proofs of my contention that the President and his army officers and agents sought honestly to carry out the promises of the treaties.<sup>76</sup>

But alas, despite treaties, laws and proclamations the greed of Anglo-Saxons was not constrained by concern for the solemn pledges of the government or the welfare of the Indians. The whites without regard to law or order or fair play pushed into the Indian lands, and the army officers were in constant anxiety lest hostilities ensue in consequence, and indignant that they were not able to keep them back. One half of the general blame or responsibility for the tragedy on the banks of the Mini-Wakan on the Sunday of March 8, 1857, and the week ensuing, must rest upon their white predecessors who violated treaties prohibiting their entrance upon the hunting grounds of the Sioux and the Sacs and Foxes and the Ioways.

Third, the Indians themselves were not without serious blame or contributory lapses which either initiated or aggravated their troubles and the tragedies which made their history at once horrible and deplorable. Indeed it may be easily contended that they were coequal sinners in the premises. Their insatiable fondness for alcoholic stimulants made them the prey of their own appetites and induced them to take the initiative in seeking "fire water" from the whites, and their weakness for the stuff incited the traders to seek them in their strenuous efforts to secure their valuable furs and sell their baubles and cheap wares at ridiculous prices. This was a ground fact in the situation which the friends

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, Vol. V, pp. 461-64.

<sup>76</sup>Wm. B. Street on "Gen. Joseph M. Street," *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 81-105. Ida M. Street, "The Simon Cameron Commission of 1838," *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, pp. 115-39; 172-93; and Ida M. Street on "Joseph M. Street's Last Fight with the Fur Traders," *Ibid.*, Vol. XVII, pp. 105-48.

of the Indians cannot gainsay, pathetic though it was. It aggravated many fold the third great fact in the explanation of the background of the tragedy we are concerned with here.

From 1804 when Lieutenant Pike addressed the Indian council at St. Peters down to the treaty with the Sioux in 1851 when we secured complete title to the remaining Sioux lands, including Emmet, Palo Alto and Kossuth counties, hard by Dickinson County, the Indians were in a state of intertribal warfare, or in a "snarling peace," if not engaged in war parties and hostile forays against their enemies. This was in spite of the elaborate program for keeping the Sioux and the Sacs and Foxes from fighting, agreed to at the Grand Council at Prairie du Chien in 1825, when Governor Clark of Missouri and Governor Cass of Michigan got them to consent to stay each on their respective sides of a line which began at the mouth of the Upper Iowa River and going slightly southwest to the Upper Fork of the Des Moines River—the Sioux to stay on the north side and the Sacs and Foxes to remain on the south. This arrangement did not suffice, for in 1830 each of the belligerent groups was induced to cede a strip twenty miles wide on their respective sides—which thenceforward became known as the "Neutral Strip"—but they did not "bury the hatchet."

Colonel, later General, Dodge's correspondence shows the constant dread of intertribal wars and extending complications involving the white settlers. A few extracts from his letters to General George W. Jones, then representing Wisconsin Territory as a delegate in the House of Representatives in Washington, will illustrate:

Belmond, January 2, 1837.

\* \* \*

From the dread the Winnebagoes have of the Sac and Fox Indians it will be exceedingly difficult to induce them to sell their country east of the Mississippi and remove west, unless there are troops stationed, and mounted troops that can protect them from the attacks of the Sac and Fox Indians.

\* \* \*

I hope you will be able to impress on the Secretary of War the importance of our Indian relations. The Indians are now killing each other. . . . It is by vigilance alone that the Indians can be controlled on this frontier.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>77</sup>Wm. Salter (ed.), "Letters of Henry Dodge to Gen. Geo. W. Jones," *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 390.

Mineral Point, September 25, 1837.

\* \* \*

Last winter I addressed the Commissioner of Indian Affairs on the subject of having two hundred dragoons posted on the frontiers of Wisconsin, to range the country west of the Mississippi the whole extent of our frontier. . . . This movement of troops I deemed of the utmost importance to prevent the Indians from making inroads on our white settlements, and at the same time prevent the frequent excursions of the war parties of the Sac and Fox, and Sioux Indians from killing each other. This letter was published in the *Globe*. It was written immediately after I had received official information from General Street that the Sioux had killed fifteen Fox Indians on the Red Cedar, and that the Fox had retreated back on our settlements . . . ; and I have no hesitation in saying that the late killing between the Sioux and Fox Indians would not have happened had my advice been followed.

During the time I was at St. Peters treating with the Chippewa Indians, the battle was fought between the Sioux and the Foxes, when 13 Sioux were killed, and 11 of the Foxes, and about thirty wounded.

\* \* \*

It is with difficulty that I can now restrain the Winnebagoes from killing stock and plundering the inhabitants on our borders. There were but 11 men, regulars, reported for duty at Fort Crawford when I met the Winnebagoes there, and not more than 20 at Fort Winnebago, and not to exceed 50 at Fort Snelling when I held the treaty with the Chippewa Indians, and at least 1,000 Chippewa and Sioux Indians were present, and these Indians in a state of war with each other when out of reach of the troops of the garrison. . . . Should we get into trouble with the Winnebagoes it will be from their killing stock and stealing horses. . . .<sup>79</sup>

The authorities of Iowa Territory had to be alert to Indian intertribal enmities all about their compass ring. The relations of the Sioux and the Sacs and Foxes gave them the greatest concern. But the relations of each of the great tribes with the Winnebagoes and Ioways kept them in ceaseless anxiety. The Winnebagoes seemed to be the object of general execration, that fact standing forth grossly in the official reports of Iowa's territorial governors who were ex officio superintendents of Indian affairs. The removal of the Winnebagoes by the national government in 1832 to the eastern portion of the Neutral Strip produced violent resentment on the part of Sioux and Sacs and Foxes alike. Governor Robert Lucas in his report to Washington in 1840, after relating an ugly affair between Sacs and Foxes with the Winnebagoes, he said:

<sup>79</sup>Salter, *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 392-93.

When I view the present situation of the Winnebago Indians, placed as they are upon a narrow strip of land only forty miles wide, situated between the two belligerent tribes of Sioux and Sac and Fox Indians, and bounded in part by the white settlement on the northern border of our territory, and consider the unfriendly state of feeling that exists between many of these Indians and the Sacs and Foxes, I am firmly impressed with the belief that they cannot long remain in their present position without collision with the Sac and Fox Indians, and perhaps with the inhabitants of the northern frontier of the territory.<sup>80</sup>

The Indians may have had greater and wiser friends than Governor John Chambers, but they had none who denounced the malefactors and causes of their evils and mistreatment in more downright fashion. His Scotch-Irish notions blazed out, as we have seen, when he contemplated the practices of the whites in their relations to the Indians, and he was no less clear-sighted in respect of the evil consequences to the Indians themselves. In his last message to the Territorial Legislature, after concurring in the wisdom of the proposed removal of the Winnebagos from the Neutral Strip, Governor Chambers says (May 5, 1845):

The large annuities paid by the government and the total insufficiency of the laws enacted for their protection against the avaricious feelings and demoralizing practices of the whites doom them (unless speedily relieved) to become the certain victims of that rage for intoxicating drinks, to which the indolent and irregular habits of the Indian race render them particularly liable. They have become, perhaps, the most degraded of all the western tribes—they have no longer the habits of the Red Man—the chase is almost abandoned, and the council fires, if kindled at all, seem only intended to light up the wretched scene of their drunkenness and debauchery. . . . So long as they are supplied with liquor by the abandoned and profligate scoundrels engaged in this most nefarious traffic, they will continue to diminish in numbers, and to descend if possible to lower depths of degradation. . . . I have continued to urge upon your consideration at each successive session the importance of further and more severe legislation upon this subject, and I now again respectfully suggest the propriety of such additional legislation as will restrain the practices referred to.<sup>81</sup>

We shall have occasion again to note the presence of the much hated Winnebagos in the drama that had its bloody finale on the shores of Mini-Wakan.

<sup>80</sup>*Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, etc., 1840-1841, Doc. No. 23, p. 100.*

<sup>81</sup>Shambaugh, *Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Iowa, Vol. I, pp. 284-85.*

## X

Finally, we cannot sense either the background or the immediate considerations impelling Inkipaduta and his band in perpetrating the horror amidst the snows of the Okobojis unless we realize what the public (students and laity alike) seldom does realize, to wit, that the Indian's ethics and religion were not exactly or approximately Anglo-Saxon. They were clannish, not individual, feudal, not personal, tribal, not several, in matters of personal accountability, connections, liability and responsibility. An injury to one of their family or tribe was an injury to each and all thereof and the whole family and the whole tribe took it directly and were "possessed" with an intense desire for vengeance. What was more serious, it was not the individual who actually committed the offense, or those in collusion or conspiracy with him who became the sole object of their vengeful feelings and hostile efforts, but it was any and all members of the family or tribe of the one doing the injury on whom they were ready to vent their rage and inflict ruthless punishment. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth in all directions was their working rule—*Lex talionis contra omnes*—was not simply a controlling rule, it was the injunction of their religion and the command of their Great Spirit who coerced their lives and controlled their daily conduct. When Lieutenant Pike faced the great gathering at St. Peters in 1805 and Governors Clark and Cass the hosts of Sacs and Foxes and the Sioux at Prairie due Chien in 1825, each white chief knew full well that

... they stood there on the meadow,  
With their weapons and their war gear,  
Painted like the leaves of autumn,  
Painted like the sky of morning,  
Wildly glaring at each other;  
In their faces stern defiance,  
In their hearts the feuds of ages,  
The hereditary hatreds,  
The ancestral thirst for vengeance.

The dread power of the Great White Father at Washington and the display of carbines and parked cannon might induce those war chiefs to smoke the pipe of peace and "to touch the goose quill" and "make their mark" in a solemn agreement to

live in peace with each other, and thereafter to treat each and all as brothers, but the white chiefs in council knew but too well that the old grand dame, Nakomis, spoke with the knowledge of the ages when she warned Hiawatha:

Bring not to my lodge a stranger  
From the land of the Dacotahs!  
Very fierce are the Dacotahs,  
Often is there war between us,  
There are feuds yet unforgotten,  
Wounds that ache and still may open.<sup>82</sup>

The Indian lived in his memories. His wrongs held his mind and heart in thrall. Fear might hold back his hand in revenge but charity seldom did. The invasion of his hunting grounds by either enemy tribes or by the heedless or the unscrupulous whites incited him to an insane rage relentless and ruthless in character

<sup>82</sup>Lest some may suspect that Longfellow drew on his imagination the following entries from Henry Schoolcraft's *Narrative Journal of Travels* as a member of Governor Cass's expedition to the Indian tribes in the Northwest in 1820, made under date of August 1, 1820, at St. Peters, may abolish doubts:

"LXX Day—(August 1st) A treaty of peace was this day concluded between the Sioux and Chippeways in the presence of Governor Cass, Colonel Leavenworth, Mr. Talliferro, the Indian Agent at St. Peter's and a number of officers of the garrison. These two nations have been at war from the earliest times, and the original causes of it are entirely forgotten, but still the ancient enmity is care [p. 304] fully transmitted from father to son. It is supposed to have arisen from a dispute respecting the limits of their territories, and favorite hunting grounds, but, if so, nothing was agreed upon in the present instance to obviate the original causes of enmity. It was only stipulated that hostilities should immediately cease on both sides. Several of the chiefs delivered their opinions upon the subject, and the Sioux appeared to manifest some indifference to the treaty, but finally consented to drop the hatchet; and the ceremony concluded with smoking the pipe of peace and shaking hands." [p. 305]

\* \* \* \*

"Whether the peace will prove a permanent one may be doubted. All their ancient prejudices will urge them to a violation of it, while all [p. 306] experience abundantly shows how difficult it has been to preserve a lasting peace between two powerful rival tribes of savages, whose predominant disposition is war. \* \* \* In 1805, a treaty of peace was concluded between the Sioux and the Chippeways at the instance of Lieutenant Pike. It continued *as long as he remained among them*. In the fall of 1818 a pacification took place at St. Louis under the auspices of Governor Clark, between the Osages and the Cherokees. The latter renewed hostilities *before they reached their homes*. This only proves, that treaties of peace between Indian tribes, like those between civilized nations, only amount to a momentary cessation of hostilities, unless the limits of their territories, and other objects in dispute, are accurately defined, and satisfactorily settled." [p. 307]

Schoolcraft's observations and especially his concluding comments are rather striking anticipations of the critical and cynical comments that have split discussion since the "civilized" nations signed the Versailles Treaty in 1920 to "end war," established the "League of Nations" to insure peace, and proclaimed the Kellogg "Pact" as the Grand Guarantee thereof coincident with augmenting military budgets, futile efforts at general disarmament and the thundering guns of the Japanese in Manchuria and at the gates of Shanghai (Feb. 12, 1932)—all this makes one wonder whether we have progressed an inch beyond the state of mind of the Sioux.



and it drove him in desperation to acts of savagery which exalted him in the eyes of his tribesmen but which shocked his white enemies beyond expression. These basic facts must be discerned and comprehended if we are to appreciate the equities in the origins of the Massacre between the Okobojis.

Let us look at some of the immediate conditions and causes leading to the catastrophe of March 8-15, 1857.

## XI

The immediate causes of the Spirit Lake Massacre may be grouped under six heads: five general in character, and one specific; the general relating to antecedent conditions which inflamed the minds of the Sioux, and one an alleged personal grievance that drove Inkpaduta in revenge.

First, the Sioux resented with intense feeling the placement of the hated Winnebagoes in the eastern portion of the Neutral Strip. In their hunt for game the Winnebagoes ranged westward more or less. Fulton tells us of a small band near Clear Lake in Cerro Gordo County. They pitched their tepees in 1853-54 near the home of a Joseph Hewett, an old Indian trader. One of their number was killed by the Sioux. A war party of Sioux, numbering according to rumor 200 to 400 braves, was reported on its way to Mayne's Grove in Franklin County, the Winnebagoes fleeing precipitately. The friendship of the whites for the Winnebagoes aggravated the feelings of the Sioux who felt that their lands were thus impudently and wantonly invaded.

Second, the Sioux, or more particularly the Sisseton and Wahpeton tribes, felt with intense bitterness that they had been both coerced and tricked into signing the treaties of Traverse des Sioux (July 23, 1851); and likewise later the Mdewakanton and Wahpekute tribes so felt when they signed at Mendota (August 5, 1851), whereby they agreed to withdraw entirely from Northwestern Iowa. Their resentment was aggravated by the failure of the government to pay their annuities for the ensuing five years, and it was immaterial in their view whether it was due to the red tape in the circumlocution offices at Washington, or to mere chicane which they more than suspected. Further, various clans, or their representatives, were not present at either treaty council and deemed that their consent had not been

given to the cession.<sup>83</sup> Recalling that the government for fifty years had failed to keep the whites out of their hunting grounds in the face of solemn promises in treaties, it is not strange that the Sioux thought that treaties were mere "scraps of paper."

Third, it is difficult to be judicial in one's efforts to discern the balance of the equities when the air is split with bitter recrimination about trickery and treacheries. But the Sioux in 1856 felt that the whites had no cause to complain of the savagery of the Indian in his warfare when they recalled the slaughter of their brothers by General Harney in the battle of Ash Hollow (September 5, 1855) near the junction of Blue River with the North Platte, when despite a formal request for a parley Little Thunder's band of Brule Sioux was annihilated. In the estimation of sundry writers, in General Harney's ruthless slaughter of the Brulé and the bitterness engendered we have one of the major immediate focussing causes of the tragedy, one year, four months and three days later between the Okobojis.<sup>84</sup>

Fourth, the removal of the national troops from Fort Dodge on March 30, 1853, on orders of General Clarke directing the transfer of the troops to Fort Ridgely in Minnesota. "A more ill-advised order could scarcely have been issued," says Mr. Teakle, "for following the actual abandonment of the post on June 2, 1853, the Indians 'inaugurated a reign of terror among the settlers as far east as the Cedar River.'"<sup>85</sup>

Part and parcel of this cause was what appeared to be the studied indifference of the government at Washington to the appeals of Governor Grimes for military protection for the settlers in the northwestern portions of the state. He formally addressed an appeal to President Pierce December 3, 1855, but it received no consideration.<sup>86</sup> Mr. Charles Aldrich, who started his *Hamilton Freeman* at Webster City in the midst of the reverberations of the Spirit Lake Massacre, declared years afterwards, "Had the earnest appeals of Governor Grimes been

<sup>83</sup>Hughes on "The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux in 1851" in *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society*, Vol. X, Pt. 1, p. 114. Teakle, *The Spirit Lake Massacre*, pp. 13-14 and the references in his Note No. 31.

<sup>84</sup>See Doane Robinson, *History of the Dakota Sioux Indians in the South Dakota Historical Collections*, 1904, Vol. II, p. 225. He is very severe in his condemnation of Gen. Harney's "needless" and "barbarous" massacre of Indians caught in a trap, branding it a "shameful affair." Mr. Teakle concurs, *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>85</sup>Teakle, *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>86</sup>See Correspondence, *ANNALS OF IOWA*, Third Series, Vol. III, pp. 135-37.

heeded the Spirit Lake Massacre would not have occurred."<sup>87</sup>

Fifth, the steady invasion of the Indians' hunting ranges contracted the Indians' sources of food from the chase and trapping. Buffalo, deer, elk, and other game foods were rapidly disappearing. This serious fact was immensely enhanced by the severe winters of 1855-56 and 1856-57. The wandering bands of Sioux in Northwest Iowa were actually on the verge of starvation, and particularly those bands whose obstreperous conduct and outlaw practices excluded them from the government's food allowances. This condition of things had a very grave significance in the origin of the tragedy at Mini-wakan.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 566. The amazement and perplexity of Governor Grimes and his Republican conferees, Mr. Aldrich and others, at the studied indifference of the administration at Washington was due, I venture to suggest, in no small part to the intense bitterness engendered in the discussion of the Slavery question in Iowa and the violent debates at Washington produced by the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. Governor Grimes had assailed President Pierce and the Democratic senators from Iowa, Messrs. A. C. Dodge and Geo. W. Jones, in no gentle terms. He had won his election to the governorship by tactics that the administration denounced as nothing short of "Mad-dog Abolitionism." Senator Dodge and President Pierce looked upon "Jimmy Grimes" as a blatant demagogue and anything he said or asked for was discounted utterly or ignored as naught else than the vaporings of a demagogue seeking preference and power. With the bitterness of that campaign and some of Mr. Grimes' maneuvers I have dealt at length, elsewhere. See my *A Neglected Factor in the Anti-Slavery in Iowa in 1854* published in the Yearbook of the German American Historical Society of Illinois, Vol. XVIII-XIX. This was reprinted in major part with considerable new data under the caption *James W. Grimes Versus the Southrons*, ANNALS OF IOWA, Third Series, Vol. XV, pp. 323-57, 403-32.

<sup>88</sup>The following excerpts from a letter of Gen. Joseph M. Street, Indian agent for the Sacs and Foxes, addressed to Gen. Henry Dodge, then governor of Wisconsin, may both illustrate and enforce the contention made in the narrative: Prairie du Chien, 13 July, 1838.

Sir:

\* \* \* \* \*

After my return to Burlington, I visited all the Sacs at their towns which are on the Des Moines river, and Wapella's band of Foxes in the same Prairie with the Sacs. They were well, very peaceable, and expressed much satisfaction in seeing me, but are in great distress from want of food. The game has left the country as the pressure of the whites is great even to within 8 to 10 miles of the Indian towns and their apprehensions of the Sioux keep them from all their Northwestern frontier. Two thirds of their number are living upon Roots obtained in the Prairies. Their crops are good and in two months will bring them in roasting ears of corn, beans, and mellons; until then they will suffer much, if not partially relieved by some provisions from the U. S.

Considering their extreme suffering, their quiet patience under it, and the just ground that have to expect some help from the U. S. Government, I procured some pork and flour for them and on my return to Burlington sent them about (400\$) four hundred dollars worth of fat Beef to be delivered on the hoof at their Towns, and hope it will meet with the approbation of the Department. I did it to prevent their meddling with the stock of the numerous settlers that are filling up the country almost to the Ind. Towns.

\* \* \* \* \*

If Mr. Ellis has declined Mr. Wilson, a competent surveyor and an applicant in the first instant, is at Prairie du Chien, and if appointed would immediately proceed to work. The rushing of white emigrants into the Indian country under pretense of being on the U. S. Side of the line is producing dissatisfaction among the Indians, and nothing can arrest the emigrants but an early survey. Anxious for the peace of the country and the safety of the Indians under my care, I do hope the subject will meet the earliest attention.

\* \* \* \* \*

With great respect I am  
your mo. ob. Serv.

His Excellency,  
Henry Dodge,  
Sup. I. Affr.

(signed) Jos. M. Street, U. S. Ind. Agent

Sixth, general tradition has it that the Massacre of March 8-15, 1857, was not wholly without immediate provocation. Not a few hold that it was undertaken and accomplished by Inkpaduta specifically in the way of revenge for the murder of his brother, Sintomniduta, by a renegade white on Bloody Run in north Humboldt County in January, 1854. Nearly all of the antecedent and collateral factors in aggravation preliminary to the tragedy are illustrated in that affair.

## XII

Most, if not all, life's major dramas are complexes of minor events that to the casual onlooker, or chance observer, seem to be fortuitous concourses of unrelated happenings, more or less remote. But if subjected to closer scrutiny the various events, or facts that seem to be merely isolated occurrences, will be found to be within the circuit of cause and effect, the lines converging into clusters of interrelations and interactions, that slowly concentrate and finally focus in the flash and fury of tragedy.

The physical background of the terrain of the drama between the Okobojis, in which the origins of the precedent events and influences are found, must be sensed no less than the character of the locus in which the finale of the drama occurs. Its median line runs from the Red Pipestone region in what Nicollet called the *Coteau des Prairies*, a plateau or high table land in Southwestern Minnesota, dotted with small lakes which form the headwaters of the Des Moines River located in most part in Pipestone and Murray counties, thence in a southeasterly direction about two hundred and fifty miles down the valley of the Des Moines to what is now Marion County in the region of Red Rock, distant from Iowa's present capital about thirty miles. Within a rectangular area comprehending sixty miles on either side of that median line the chief figures and forces of the drama moved for several years and their collisions finally led to the horrible concentration at the Lakes, March 8, 1857.

Sundry clusters of physical and social facts affecting what our literary folk are wont to call the milieu of the drama, may be noted, for many of them are shot through with the ideas controlling in the lives of the Indians constituting major concepts in their religious life, or, if you so prefer to call them, their primitive superstitions.

Although all of the families massacred on the Iowa side of the boundary line, save one, lived either on the shores of East Okoboji, or on those of West Okoboji, the tragedy has ever since been designated as the Spirit Lake Massacre—and the fact has aroused persistent curiosity and adverse inquiry.

The explanation lies mainly, if not entirely, in the fact that prior to 1860, for a century and a half Lac d'Esprit, or Spirit Lake was the only designation used by the map-makers. Indeed, in many of the notable maps it is not even indicated that the Okobojis are separate, collateral bodies to Spirit Lake as now known.<sup>89</sup>

In the Lewis and Clark account of their journey up the Missouri under date of August 8, 1803, when near the mouth of Stone River, called "by the French, Petite Riviere des Sioux, or Little Sioux River," we have the following entries:

Our interpreter, Mr. Durion, who has been to the sources of it and knows the adjoining country, says that it arises within about nine miles of the river Des Moines; that within 15 leagues of that river it passes through a large lake nearly 60 miles in circumference, divided into two parts by rocks which approach each other very closely; its width is various; it contains many islands, and is known by the name of the Lac d'Esprit; . . .<sup>90</sup>

In the map made by William Clark in 1814 but not published until 1887 and accompanying the Coues edition of 1893, the physical separateness and importance of the Okobojis are indicated but the outline was evidently sketched from hearsay. Nicollet, in his celebrated map of the Hydrographic Basin of the Upper Mississippi River, gave the public for the first time, so far as I can discover, a correct display of the relationship of the two Okobojis to the larger lake; but he thus refers to them: ". . . a group of lakes, the most important of which is called by the Sioux 'Mini-Wakan,' or Spirit Water; hence its name

<sup>89</sup>De Lisle's map of 1703; Pere LeGrand's, 1720; Schoolcraft's, 1820; the Judson map of Wisconsin and Iowa Territories in 1838, and Waw-Non-Que-Skoon-A, an Ioway Brave's Sketch, done by Capt. S. Eastman (U. S. Army), 1847, do not separate the lakes. The following named maps merely indicate either a cluster or a string of petty lakes: Law's, 1723; Bellin's, 1755; Sir Robert De Vaugondy's, 1755; Thos. Jeffery's, 1762; Laurie and White, 1794. Most of the maps just mentioned may be found reproduced in Doane Robinson's *History of the Sioux Indians* (1904), in Vol. II, *South Dakota Historical Collections*, and N. H. Winchell's *The Aborigines of Minnesota* (1911), Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>90</sup>Coues' *History of the Expedition under the Command of Lewis and Clark*, p. 70.

Spirit Lake."<sup>91</sup> The parlance of the French explorers and first map-makers determined the popular usage until the 1870's if not the 1880's, as the title of Mrs. Abbie Gardner Sharp's well-known volume conclusively shows, to wit: *The History of the Spirit Lake Massacre*, written for the most part in 1883 and 1884.

## XIII

Nicollet's statement that the Sioux words, "Mini-Wakan," are the equivalents of Spirit Lake suggests sundry queries for nearly all local annalists and poets have given us "Minne-Waukon" as the appropriate spelling. The latter may be the result of concern for euphony. Mr. Gue asserts that the French explorer, Le Sueur, in 1700 gave currency to the present popular usage, but the few references in the memoranda of Le Sueur's reports extant do not seem to sustain the assumption.<sup>92</sup> Jonathan Carver in his *Travels* (Third ed.) published in London in 1781, although he does not refer specifically to the Iowa lakes, gives in his "Vocabulary" the two words with variant spellings: "Mineh" for water and "Wakon" for Spirit.<sup>93</sup> Major S. H. Long in 1823 gave us slightly different spellings with slightly changed meanings—"Mene," water, "Wahkan," mysterious water and "Mene-wahkan," whiskey.<sup>94</sup> G. W. Featherstonhaugh in his *Report of a Geological Reconnoissance* in 1835 tells us that the Dakotahs call "Lac du Diable" in North Dakota "Minday Wakon," or Great Spirit Lake.<sup>95</sup> Elliot Coues in his Note 30 to his edition of Lewis and Clark in 1893 referring to the source of the Little Sioux says: "in a system of Prairie lakes the largest of which, close by the Des Moines river, is about 7 miles long, and commonly known as Spirit Lake from the Sioux name Mini-wakon, 'spirit,' or 'medicine,' water."<sup>96</sup> Apparently each one follows his own bent in spelling the words; and perhaps each feels like the Hibernian who "diminstrates his intilligince by disagreein' with ivrybody."

In the winter months of 1839-40 Nicollet, unable because of

<sup>91</sup>I. N. Nicollet Report Intended to Illustrate a Map of the Hydrographical Basin of the Upper Mississippi River, 28th Cong. 2nd Sess. Ho. of Rep., Doc. No. 52, p. 27.

<sup>92</sup>Gue, *History of Iowa*, Vol. I, p. 288. See Le Sueur's Explorations in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, Vol. I, pp. 319-38.

<sup>93</sup>Jonathan Carver, *Travels Throughout the Interior Parts of North America in the years 1766, 1767 and 1768*, Third ed., pp. 269, 270.

<sup>94</sup>S. H. Long, *Second Expedition* (1823), Vol. II, pp. 453-4.

<sup>95</sup>Featherstonhaugh, *Report of a Geological Reconnoissance*, p. 155.

<sup>96</sup>Coues' *Lewis and Clark*, Vol. I, pp. 69-70.

adverse weather to conduct his surveys, spent his days and nights studying the customs and language of the Chippeways and the Sioux. He tells us: ". . . I had the most favorable opportunities of continuing my observations on the customs of the Indians, assisting at all of their medicine dances, and their winter and spring ceremonies."<sup>97</sup> Among his conferees in study of the Sioux tongue were the celebrated missionaries, Messrs. S. W. and G. H. Pond, Dr. T. S. Williamson and Mr. S. R. Riggs. The latter in 1852 published his celebrated grammar and dictionary through the Smithsonian Institution at Washington, later revised and republished in 1890 as *A Dakota-English Dictionary*, Jas. Owen Dorsey, editor. The latter gives "Mini" and "Wakan" as the spelling, precisely as Nicollet gave it and with substantially the same significance.<sup>98</sup>

The two descriptive substantives, Mini, Wakan, in combination do not exactly connote or signify Spirit Lake. The Sioux noun "Mde," meaning lake, should precede them. For some reason not apparent to me the three words just given have not been used together in connection with any one of the lakes in Iowa, Minnesota, and North Dakota, called either Spirit Lake or Devil's Lake. Riggs's *Dictionary* gives us "Mde'-hda-kin-yan," Lake Traverse, "Mde-i-ye'dan," "Lac-qui-parle," and "Mde-mi'ni-sota," Clear Lake, but there is no mention of the two lakes called Spirit Lake—their small size and their non-importance in trade and tradition doubtless being the explanation. Mr. E. D. Neil, Minnesota's early historian, approaches the combination here considered in dealing with the various tribes or divisions of the Sioux when he says: "4. The M'dewakantonwans—(Med-ay-waw-kawn-t-wawns). . . . The signification of the word is 'People of the Spirit Lake,' and they are so called because their chief residence was formerly M'dewakon, Spirit Lake—the Mille Lacs of our modern maps."<sup>99</sup>

<sup>97</sup>Nicollet, *Report*, etc., p. 67.

<sup>98</sup>Stephen Return Riggs, *A Dakota-English Dictionary*, edited by Jas. Owen Dorsey, *Contributions to North American Ethnology*, Vol. VII, pp. 314, 316, 506-7.

<sup>99</sup>Neil, "Dakota Land and Dakota Life," *Coll. of Minn. Hist. Soc.*, Vol. I, pp. 260-261. The usage in sundry modern local annals is almost wholly the popular spelling, "Minne Waukon"; Fulton, *The Red Men of Iowa* (1882), pp. 177, 455; Mrs. Sharp, *History* (1885), p. 39; Richman, *John Brown* (1894), pp. 205-239; T. H. McBride in "The Geology of Osceola and Dickinson Counties" in *Iowa Geological Survey for 1889*, Vol. X, p. 206; R. A. Smith, *History* (1902) follows McBride, pp. 10-16; Teakle, *The Spirit Lake Massacre* (1918), p. 45. Professor McBride makes specific references to Nicollet and might be said to follow him, but he gives us the popular spelling.

As the matter in question here is not without both popular and academic interest the following paragraph from a letter to me in answer to inquiries as to the correctness of the local usage in Iowa, written by Dr. T. F. Riggs of Pierre, South Dakota, grandson of Rev. Stephen R. Riggs, compiler of the *Dictionary* above quoted, is instructive:

First, as to the word "mini-Wakan"—this is the proper spelling, the first word meaning water, the second meaning sacred, spiritual, consecrated, wonderful, incomprehensible, mysterious. For illustration, the term used for Almighty or God is Wakan Tanka, i. e., Great Spirit. The word Tanka means "large" or "great." I think this will give you the origin of the English translation, "Spirit Lake," which might have been more clearly translated "Mysterious or sacred Water." As to the spelling "Minne-Waukon"—this is incorrect, but doubtless was first written in order to insure a more correct pronunciation by white people. As you will readily see it would prevent the use of the long "i" in pronouncing the word "mini" and the long "a" in pronouncing the word "Wakan." As a great deal of the early spelling of the Dakota words was phonetic and was obtained through the French early settlers, some of the words were overloaded with letters. You are doubtless conversant with the continental vowels. The sound of the vowels in the Dakota are the same. In other words, the popular spelling, "Minne Waukon," is an English attempt to give the proper sounds to the words which are correctly spelled, "Mini Wakan."<sup>100</sup>

<sup>100</sup>Dr. T. F. Riggs to F. I. Herriott, mss., Jan. 25, 1932.

Two writers give us some variations that may be noted with interest. Mr. Fulton informs us that "The Sioux name of Spirit Lake is 'Min-ne Mecoehe Waukon,' or 'the Lake of the Spirit Land.' It is related that there was once an island in it which the Indians never ventured upon. They had a tradition that once several of the tribe landed upon the island from a canoe, when they were instantly seized and devoured by demons, and hence the name," p. 177.

Mr. L. F. Andrews writing in *Bulletin No. 16 Okoboji Protective Association* (June 1920), p. 50, says (quoting some Fur-trader among the Sioux):

"When the Sioux took possession of that region they named the west lake (Okoboji) 'Mini-Titonki' from 'Mi-ni,' water, and 'Ti-ton-ki,' big or large. The east lake was named 'Mi-ni-Wash-tu' meaning a nice, good lake. Spirit Lake was named 'Mi-ni-ca-o-che,' meaning 'lake of Spirits or Demons,' p. 48. He then relates a legend of two white captives, White Dove and Star of Day, their efforts at escape and drowning and concludes with the assertion: 'From that time the red man has called the lake, 'Mi-ni-Ma-ca-a-che-Wau-kon,' 'lake of the white spirits,' Waukon meaning 'white.'"

In the way of comment upon the foregoing and in further illustration of Dr. Riggs's letter previously quoted, the following instructive paragraph from a letter to me from Mr. H. W. Dorsey, chief clerk of the Smithsonian Institution at Washington under date of January 15, 1932, is reproduced:

"Your letter of January 2 has been received and referred to Mr. J. N. B. Hewitt, an ethnologist on the Staff of the Bureau, who states that the nearest approximation to the native Siouan enunciation is mi'-ni-wakañ'. Spirit Lake is not a correct translation of this compound term. The first element, mi'-ni, signifies water, not lake; and wakañ' is an attributive meaning sacred, consecrated, mysterious, taboo, having attributes which are incomprehensible, and dangerous to come in contact with. Therefore, mi'-ni-wakañ', in brief, signifies mysterious water; in the present case, the name for a lake, 'mde,' is of course understood. With the substitution of the term for a lake, the phrase in question would be 'The lake of the mysterious water.'" Mr. Hewitt adds that the differences of spelling do not change the meaning.



The legally minded and pious citizen of these latter days of prescribed private virtue by constitutional enactments and acts of Congress will suffer shock when he reads in Mr. Riggs's *Dictionary* that the compound word Mi-ni-wa-kan is given another meaning of widespread significance in the premises of the tragedy between the Okobojis which we are concerned with here, namely, water spirit, i. e., whisky. Nicollet tells us that the Sioux designations for the noted lake seventy-five miles north of Minneapolis, Mille Lacs, and its outlet, Rum River, were "Mdote-mini-wakan or outlet of ardent spirits."<sup>101</sup> Dr. Coues expresses his disgust at that rather "dismal aboriginal pun which mixes up nature spirits with the artificial product, turns a lake into a bottle, and the river into its neck; and it is bad enough to have been perpetrated 'next morning' and it is too bad that the debauches to which the traders allured the Indians should have been perpetrated in geographical nomenclature."<sup>102</sup> Unfortunately, despite the sorry flippancy of the "dismal pun" it suggests a basic fact in the relations of the whites to the westward progress of the Star of Empire in these western reaches of the Father of Waters. Dr. Charles A. Eastman tells us of a noted "One-Eyed Sioux" chief, whose favorite name was "Tamahay." He preferred this name because it was the same as that of a white chief whom he admired greatly, General Zebulon M. Pike, for whom he exercised his good offices in securing the tribal consent to the treaty whereby the site of Fort Snelling was secured for the government. He proved a great and good friend of the whites during the War of 1812, remaining loyal to the United States and, with Pike, fighting his own kin in the British forces, under a commission from Governor William Clark. His Sioux brothers long referred to the president of the United States as "Tamahay's father."<sup>103</sup> But he suffered from one weakness, as many another noted one has. Dr. Eastman records, "Sad to say, he acquired a great appetite for 'minne-wakan,' or 'mysterious water' as the Sioux call it, which proved a source of trouble to him in his old age."<sup>104</sup> In the spelling of the words, it will be observed, Dr. Eastman splits the difference with Nicollet.

<sup>101</sup>Nicollet Report, p. 67.

<sup>102</sup>Coues, *Expeditions of Zebulon M. Pike*, Vol. I, footnote, p. 314.

<sup>103</sup>Eastman, *Indian Heroes and Great Chieftains* (1918), pp. 61, 63.

<sup>104</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 65. In his *Old Indian Days* Dr. Eastman adds a Glossary in which he gives us "Min'nē-wa-kan, Sacred Water (Devils Lake)," p. 278.

## XIV

The psychic complexes of life, no less than the physical bases and environment are determinants of human conduct. The interactions and reactions of psychic feelings and ideas and physical factors and forces create the mazes which make up the warp and woof of the conscious life of man and the history of nations.

In dealing with the premises whereon walk the dramatic personae of the stark tragedy in the snows of the Okobojis it is not sheer sentimentalism to note the interesting coincidences and the predominance of the color *red* in the background, foreground and parlance of the legend.

Nicollet informs us in his notable Report of his Hydrographic Survey that "the Des Moines [river] is one of the most beautiful and important tributaries of the Mississippi north of the Missouri."<sup>104a</sup> ". . . It is fed from a beautiful group of lakes . . . towards the middle of the *Coteau des Prairies*. . . . The Sioux or Ndakotah Indians call the Des Moines Inyan-sha-sha-watpa, or Redstone river—from inyan, stone; sha-sha, reduplication of sha, red; and Watpa, river."<sup>105</sup>

The headwaters of the Des Moines, as already indicated, are in the midst of the Red Pipestone country—a region redolent with Indian folklore, myths and superstitions, and potent familiar traditions which controlled their beliefs, impelled their actions and inspired their endeavors and heroic sacrifices. That entire area was holy ground. It was the sacred precinct wherein the Great Spirit dwelt. Indeed, that famous upland was to the Indians what the Province of Hejaz with its famous shrines at Mecca and Medina are to devout Moslems. All the tribes and nations of red men between the Appalachians and the Rockies, at least, if not from coast to coast, were expected, and desired to make a pious pilgrimage to that dwelling place of the Great Spirit. While within its sacred confines Sioux and Chippeways, Sacs and Foxes kept their hands from their tomahawks and their scalping knives in sheath. Catlin's pages tell us the traditions of the Red Pipestone country so effectively that I draw rather generously from one of his famous letters (No. 54) written from that enchanted *Coteau des Prairies*.

<sup>104a</sup>Nicollet, *Report*, p. 22.

<sup>105</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 23.

Here (according to their traditions) happened the mysterious birth of the red pipe, which has blown its fumes of peace and war to the remotest corners of the continent . . .—p. 163.

The Great Spirit at an ancient period, here called the Indian nations together, and standing on the precipice of the red pipe stone rock, broke from its wall a piece, and made a huge pipe by turning it in his hand, which he smoked over them, and to the North, the South, the East, and the West, and told them that this stone was red—that it was their flesh—that they must use it for their pipes of peace—that it belonged to them all, and that the war club and scalping knife must not be raised on its ground.—p. 164.

We have seen here, too, in all its sublimity, the blackening thunder-storm—the lightning's glare, and stood amidst the jarring thunderbolts, that tore and broke in awful rage about us, as they rolled over the smooth surface, with nought but empty air to vent their vengeance on. . . .

Man feels here, and startles at the thrilling sensation, the force of *illimitable freedom*—his body and mind both seem to have entered a new element. . . . The rock on which I sit to write, is the summit of a precipice thirty feet high, extending two miles in length and much of the way polished, as if a liquid glazing had been poured over its surface. Not far from us, in the solid rock are the deep impressed foot steps of the Great Spirit (in the form of a track of a large bird) where he formerly stood when the blood of the buffalos that he was devouring, ran into the rocks and turned them red.—p. 165.

Here, amid rocks of the loveliest hues, but wildest contour, is seen the poor Indian . . . at the base of five huge granite boulders, he is humbly propitiating the guardian spirits of the place, by sacrifices of tobacco, entreating for permission to take away a small piece of the red stone for a pipe.—p. 166.

That this place should have been visited for centuries past by all of the neighboring tribes, who have hidden the war club as they approached it, and stayed the cruelties of the scalping knife, under the fear of the vengeance of the Great Spirit, who overlooks it, will not seem strange or unnatural, when their religion and superstitions are known.

That such has been the custom, there is not a shadow of doubt; and that even so recently as to have witnessed by hundreds and thousands of Indians of different tribes now living . . . here are to be seen . . . the totems and arms of the different tribes who have visited this place for ages past, deeply engraved on the quartz rocks. . . .

. . . General Clark, of St. Louis . . . told me explicitly, and authorized me to say it to the world, that every tribe on the Missouri told him that they had been to this place, and that the Great Spirit kept the peace amongst his red children on that ground, where they had smoked with their enemies.—p. 168.

The following speech of a Mandan . . . "We left our totems or marks on the rocks. . . . The Great Spirit told all nations to meet there in

peace, and all nations hid the war club and the tomahawk. The Dah-co-tahs, who are our enemies, are very strong—they have taken up the tomahawk, and the blood of our warriors has run on the rocks. My friend, we want to visit our medicines—our pipes are old and worn out. My friend, I wish you to speak to the Great Father about this.”—p. 170.

On my return from the Pipe Stone Quarry, one of the old chiefs of the Sacs, on seeing some of the specimens of the stone . . . observed:

“My friend, when I was young, I used to go with our young men to the mountain of the Red Pipe, and dig out pieces for our pipes. We do not go now; . . . The Dah-co-tahs have spilled the blood of red men in that place, and the Great Spirit is offended. The white traders have told them to draw the bows upon us when we go there; . . .”—p. 170-1.<sup>106</sup>

Within that carnadine, picturesque habitat of the Great Spirit of the Red Men of our Upper mid-continent the Des Moines had its headwaters. Out of the fastnesses of the outcropping red iron Sioux quartzite, overlain with either hard red shale or red soft slate, whence the Indians carved their memorable calumets or peace pipes, flowed its limpid spirit-laden waters—thence flowing in leisurely fashion towards the southeast, some sixty miles, they pass on their western or right bank within nine miles of the wooded shores and blue waters of Mde-Mini-Wakan. Here, too, the restless tribal spirits and harrassed souls foregathered in both worry and worship. The traditions of the place teem with Indian tales of the high reverence of the Indians for the mysterious medicine in the waters and woods of the lakes.

The Little Sioux River has its rise in the waters of the Oko-bojis. It runs south and west emptying into the Missouri in northwest Harrison County, passing through much of the Red Stone country. Not far from its bank on the southern border of Cherokee County is a famous red granite boulder where legend tells us Indians besought the good will of their tribal spirits. It was sixty feet long, forty feet wide, and twenty feet high. To the pioneers it was known as “Pilot Rock.” To the weary traveler it was a clear high sign against the horizon. From its top one could see for twenty-five miles across the valley of the E-a-ne-ah-wad-e-pon, the Sioux name for Stone River.<sup>107</sup> One of its largest tributaries was the Ochevedan River, a name derived from a noted hillock called by the Sioux—the Otcheyedan—the

<sup>106</sup>Catlin, *Manners, Customs and Condition of the North American Indians*, Vol. II.

<sup>107</sup>Fulton, *The Red Men of Iowa*, p. 176.

literal meaning of which according to Nicollet is "the spot where they weep," alluding to the custom of the Indians to repair to elevated situations to weep over their dead.<sup>108</sup> This wailing mound was straight west of the upper arm of West Okoboji about seventeen miles.

In its meanders to the southeast the Des Moines River goes through much beautiful country in Palo Alto, Humboldt, Webster, Boone and Polk counties, here and there passing some that suggest the red stone of its headwaters, as in the picturesque region of Boone County known as "The Ledges" where it crops out amidst the trees and verdure on the high bluffs that line its eastern bank. Soon after the river enters the northwestern corner of Marion County, a learned geologist told us some years since, its waters flow "through a deep canyon of red sand stone. The gorgeous vermilion cliffs attract wide attention. . . . Many a traveler has gone into ecstasies over its majestic splendors. . . . Today the little, almost deserted village of Red Rock lies nestled under one of the most brilliantly colored walls. It was once an important landing point for boats . . . the most gorgeously picturesque bit of scenery found anywhere in all the Mississippi valley."<sup>109</sup>

Dr. Keyes did not inform us, however (for it was not within his concern to do so), that the village of Red Rock was then damned to fame. Between 1842 and 1850 and later its reputation was notorious. It was on the edge of civilization, and in popular parlance was known as "the jumping-off place."<sup>110</sup> Prior to the Sac and Fox treaty of October 11, 1842, Red Rock was within the Indian lands. After March 17, 1843, it was just within "the United States," according to the specifications of the treaty.

A well marked boundary line was stipulated under the treaty's terms to indicate to the aggressive whites the limits of their rights of westward settlement or migration. The surveyor, George W. Harrison, fixed the top of Red Rock as his starting point, whence he ran the line directly north to the southern boundary of the Neutral Ground; and thence directly south to the northern boundary of Missouri. He and his assistants erected

<sup>108</sup>Nicollet, *opp.*, p. 27.

<sup>109</sup>Charles R. Keyes on "Des Moines River and the Origin of the Name," *ANNALS OF IOWA*, Third Series, Vol. III, p. 559.

<sup>110</sup>Interview with Mr. Geo. A. Jewett, a native of Red Rock, now a resident of Des Moines. See interview, Footnote No. 150.

on the top of "Painted or Red Rock" a cross, the arms of which pointed north and south. On its east side wayfarers could easily see and read the words, UNITED STATES, and on the west front the words, INDIAN BOUNDARY. Pioneers whose memories are still green recall the cabalistic letters "I-B" blazed on trees, or carved on stones or markers that notified them of the extent of the Indian lands, and warned them of their duty to stay out and refrain from trespass.<sup>111</sup>

While many bona fide, law-abiding pioneers came into the environs of Red Rock in the forties, that village acquired the reputation of being the rendezvous of freebooters, gamblers, horse thieves, refugees from justice and smugglers of whisky to the Indians. Red Rock has additional distinction in the drama with which we are concerned as being the locus in which the chief white villain charged with initiating the series of adverse, untoward events which culminated in the catastrophe on March 8, 1857. There persists an irrepressible, ubiquitous tradition that it was the pernicious activities of a quondam denizen of Red Rock that constituted the immediate inciting cause of the red drama in revenge on the shores of Mini-Wakan.

Finally another complex of facts has the same significance as those just indicated—it may, of course, be accidental and immaterial, and it may be an index of a mystical significance in the background and foreground of the drama at Spirit Lake. General Zebulon M. Pike, after the manner of "monny a brow Scot," was a Red Head.<sup>112</sup> General William Clark, the famous explorer and noted governor of Missouri Territory, was known among the Indians far and wide as "Red Head," and St. Louis was to them "Red Head's Town."<sup>113</sup> Dr. Isaac Harriott, the subject of this study, was red haired. He was a member of the Red Wing Land Company, organized mainly by residents of Red Wing, Minnesota, named after the Indian chief, Talangamane (or *Aile Rouge* as the French put it) Red Wing, or perhaps one should say a succession of chiefs by that name,<sup>114</sup> who seem to have had a sorry reputation as impudent, unmitigated beggars.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>111</sup>*Ibid.* See also C. C. Stiles, "The White Breast Boundary Line," ANNALS OF IOWA (Third Series), Vol. X, p. 22.

<sup>112</sup>Kyle S. Crichton on "Zeb Pike" in *Scribners' Monthly*, Vol. 82, p. 462.

<sup>113</sup>Coues' *Lewis and Clark*, Vol. I, p. LXXX.

<sup>114</sup>Coues' *Pike*, Vol. I, p. 69, Footnote 67. Keating's *Long Expedition*, Vol. I, p. 231.

<sup>115</sup>*Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society*, Vol. III, pp. 146, 147, 148, 153, 165.

Between 1838 and 1857 various bands of outlaw Sioux kept the Sacs and Foxes and the Winnebagos, and later the pioneer whites in northwestern Iowa in a state of intermittent terror. One of the prominent chiefs, according to Major Williams, was Red Thunder. Between 1846 and 1857 the most notable band was generally designated by the denizens of that section as "Red Top's Band."<sup>116</sup> When the soldiers at Fort Dodge first came upon the members of that band in or near the lakes in 1851 Major Williams records that a few were armed with old smoothbore muskets, but "the most of them were armed with bows and arrows and a murderous looking spear with red banner attached."<sup>117</sup>

The two chiefs who were foremost actors in the drama concluding between the Okobojsis, March 8, 1857, had significant names. Sintomniduta, whom many of the pioneers called the "Old Head Devil," was the chief of that band, according to Major Williams, and his name signified, "All-over-Scarlet." It was his murder that the majority of Iowans believe caused the tragedy between the Okobojsis, Sunday, March 8, 1857. Inkpaduta, who led the murdering band on that fateful Sunday evening, is generally believed to have been the brother of Sintomniduta, and his name meant "Scarlet-head-end," or as many record it, "Scarlet point."<sup>118</sup> Among the followers of Inkpaduta in the attack upon the settlers at the lakes was a brave named "Red Leg."<sup>119</sup> In his report of the experiences of the Relief Expedition Major Wm. Williams states that when his command reached the environs of the Okobojsis his scouts found many serious indications of the presence and doings and plans of the Indians. Among other things he says: "They had left the most threatening signs, stakes set up and painted red, trees barked and painted, representing men pierced with arrows, etc."<sup>119a</sup>

<sup>116</sup>Major Wm. Williams, "Our Pioneer Days," *Ft. Dodge Chronicle* (Sem. Wkly), February 13, 1897.

<sup>117</sup>*Ibid.*, March 3, 1897.

<sup>118</sup>Concerning the original significance of the names of the two chiefs referred to, the following paragraph from the letter of Dr. T. F. Riggs of January 25, 1932, previously quoted is instructive:

"As to your second question—the first name if correctly spelled should be "Sintomniduta" which is a contraction of "Sint-Ohomni-duta." The word "duta" means scarlet definitely differentiated by the Indians from the word meaning "red," which is Sa (pronounced Sha). The word Sintomni means "all-over," "throughout," "entirely," and in the combination of this name the translation should be "entirely scarlet," or "wholly scarlet," or "all-over-scarlet," or could be translated "no part of whose being, or clothes is not scarlet." The other spellings of this name are attempts on the part of more or less ignorant white men to give the sounds which he heard when the name was pronounced."

<sup>119</sup>Teakle, *The Spirit Lake Massacre*, p. 74.

<sup>119a</sup>Sharp, *History Spirit Lake Massacre*, p. 119.

Finally it adds a lurid and vivid hue when we appreciate the career of another noted Wahpekute, Tac-ya-te-du-ta or His-Scarlet-People, better known as Little Crow. He was virtually commanded by Superintendent Cullen to capture Inkipaduta after the Massacre of March 8, as a condition precedent to the payment of the regular annuities to his tribe. Little Crow asked for 100 mounted troopers to aid him which were not given him and Inkipaduta was not captured. The government's failure to capture the outlaw had horribly fatal consequences in 1862.<sup>120</sup>

In fine, the seekers after notable coincidences and believers in the mystic lines and influences in life and destiny may easily and confidently conclude that any of the multiple hues of Red—be it cardinal or crimson, damask or garnet, pink or purple, Venetian or vermilion—may be the accompaniment of strife, the red badge of courage, or the index of stark tragedy.

## XV

Nicollet and his associate surveyors in July, 1838, were entering the inner fastnesses of the sacred Red Pipe Stone Quarry. Consonant with Indian belief and tradition the Great Spirit instantly displayed his grave discontent with the intrusion of heathen interlopers within those sacred precincts by violent flashes of lightning and deafening crashes of thunder. He was soon reconciled to their presence, however, for the sun came out the next day and the intruders indulged their sense of the aesthetic in "admiring the beautiful effects of lights and shadows produced by the western sun as it illumined the several parts of the bluff, composed of red rocks of different shades, extending a league in length, and presenting the appearance of the ruins of some ancient city built of marble and porphyry."<sup>121</sup>

The next day Nicollet's party suffered no little anxiety on another score. They were overtaken by a pursuing band of "Indians who had been for many days tracking us at a distance, and whose fires we had mistaken for those of the Sacs and Foxes, then at war with the Sioux, one of whom was then of our party."<sup>122</sup> The pursuers proved to be friendly Sioux, but the

<sup>120</sup>Stephen R. Riggs, *May and I: Forty Years with the Sioux*, p. 144; Dr. Asa W. Daniels on "Reminiscences of Little Crow," *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society*, Vol. XII, p. 520; and Harvey Ingham, *Northern Border Brigade*, etc. [p. 27].

<sup>121</sup>Nicollet, *Report*, p. 15.

<sup>122</sup>*ibid.*



incident was typical of the incessant dread of all and sundry of the imminence of clashes between the Sioux and their inveterate foes to the southeast in the lower reaches of the Des Moines River.

The Indian who accompanied Nicollet's party as companion and guide was a noted Sisseton chief, Ish-ta-ba, "Sleepy Eyes," whose name, or "mark," appears among the signers of the treaties of August 19, 1825, and of July 15, 1830, at Prairie du Chien, of November 30, 1836, at St. Peters, and of July 23, 1851, at Traverse des Sioux, the "day of doom" for the Sioux in Minnesota.<sup>123</sup> He was intimately associated with the tragedy of March 8, 1857. First, his brother-in-law was no less than the notorious chief, Sintomniduta, who is credited with the leadership for ten to twelve years of a roving band of ostracized Sioux<sup>124</sup> known as the Little Rock band.<sup>125</sup> One of Sleepy Eyes' sons was a member of that roving band.<sup>126</sup> Sleepy Eyes, the elder, is charged by Mr. Doane Robinson with complicity in the Spirit Lake Massacre, although he concedes that there may be some reason for doubting the alleged fact.<sup>127</sup>

<sup>123</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 18; Kappler, *Indian Affairs—Laws and Treaties*, Vol. II (Treaties), pp. 254, 309, 482, 589.

<sup>124</sup>Thos. Hughes, "Causes and Results of the Inpaduta Massacre" in *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society*, Vol. XII (1908), p. 264.

I have followed Mr. Hughes in the spelling of the above named chief's name. Messrs. Hubbard and Holcombe in their *Minnesota in Three Centuries*, Vol. III, p. 221, give us Sintominee Doota. The traditional spelling in the various annals or histories of Iowa generally, if not invariably, follows Major Wm. Williams who knew him personally and officially and spelled his name, Si-domi-na-do-tah; e. g. Messrs. Fulton, Gue and Ingham; Messrs. Richman and Teakle follow save that they drop the final "h."

Major Williams asserts that the Indian meaning of Sintomniduta was "Two Fingers," ANNALS OF IOWA, First Series, Vol. VII, p. 333 (Oct., 1869); see also his "Our Pioneer Days" in *Fort Dodge Chronicle*, January 30, 1897, which is substantially a reprint of Major Williams' autobiographical account of his part in the Indian troubles of the fifties. Fulton in his *Red Men of Iowa*, p. 281; Gue in his *History of Iowa*, Vol. I, p. 288; and Teakle in his *The Spirit Lake Massacre*, p. 29; and Ingham in his *Old Indian Days* concur with Major Williams in calling him "Two Fingers." Mr. Ingham informs us that it was due to the fact that the chief "had lost the remainder of his right hand in battle" [p. 13].

I have followed Mr. Hughes's spelling, Sintomniduta, and interpretation because of the exposition in a letter to me under date of January 23, 1932, already cited, Footnote No. 118, from Dr. T. F. Riggs of Pierre, So. Dak. "There is no excuse for the translation of this name as 'Two Fingers.' . . ."

Mr. Ingham gives us the probable explanation of the English interpretation: it was, ex post facto, not the congenital Indian meaning, which Major Williams and his fellow-frontiersmen fastened upon the outlaw chief.

<sup>125</sup>Maj. Williams, ANNALS OF IOWA, First Series, Vol. VII, p. 333.

<sup>126</sup>Fulton, *Red Men of Iowa*, p. 282.

<sup>127</sup>Richman, "The Tragedy at Minnewaukon," in *John Brown Among the Quakers*, p. 223. Doane Robinson, *A History of the Dakota or Sioux Indians*, in *South Dakota Historical Collections*, Vol. II, p. 235. Mr. Richman simply assumes the complicity of Sleepy Eyes in the Massacre. Mr. Robinson, however, says in a footnote that Joseph LaFrambois, grandson of Sleepy Eyes, strenuously denied the verity of the charge; and Mr. Robinson frankly admits that the presumption is strongly in favor of his non-participation. The few references to Sleepy Eyes in Dr. Stephen R. Riggs's *Mary and I* (pp. 77, 83, 92), while meager in substance enhance this presumption.

It was not long after Nicollet and his associates were in the Red Pipe Stone Quarry that a tragic fratricidal event occurred which had fateful consequences on the shores of the Okobojis. It was a sorry crisscross of reactions from the interracial war of the Sioux with the Sacs and Foxes, of intertribal jealousies, and a family feud that issued in murder, tribal dissension and expulsion of the rebellious offenders. According to the noted Indian missionary, S. W. Pond, the Sioux occupying southern Minnesota from the Mississippi west to the Missouri were the Wahpekute, dwelling mainly in the headwaters of the Cannon River, flowing to the north into the St. Peters, or Minnesota, and of the Cedar and Iowa rivers flowing to the southeast towards the Mississippi; and the Sisseton Sioux were in southwestern Minnesota in the headwaters of the Des Moines, and the various tributaries of the Big Sioux.<sup>128</sup>

Concerning the character and conduct of the Wahpekute Mr. Harvey Ingham, whose charitable predisposition towards the aborigines is well known, writes in blunt fashion in the opening paragraphs of his *Old Indian Days*:

It is not particularly flattering to local pride to learn that the tribe of Sioux Indians which inhabited the Des Moines valley were the meanest and most worthless of all the Dakotas. They were known as the Wahpeoute tribe, or "shooters at leaves." Even the name seems to have been a mark of their inferiority, for it was variously interpreted as "the people of the leaves detached," "people that shoot at leaves," "shooters at leaves, which they mistake for deer."

Zebulon Pike made his memorable trip up the Mississippi in 1805-6-7. He tells about the Sioux, or Dakotas as they called themselves. Sioux is a shortening of various French names dating back to Na-dowe-ssi-wag, which means "snake like ones," and which was given to the Dakotas by their enemies. They never called themselves Sioux. Pike enumerates the various tribes and says: "The sixth, last, and smallest band of Sioux are the Warhpeoute, (Waqpekirte or Wahkpakotoan), who reside generally on the lands west of the Mississippi, between that river and the Missouri. They hunt generally at the head of the De Moyen [Des Moines]. They appeared to me to be the most stupid and inactive of the Sioux." Elliot Coues, who has edited a magnificent edition of Pike's journal, adds a footnote in which he says of the Wahpeoute: "This merely a band of vagabonds formed by refugees from all other bands, which they left for some bad deed."

<sup>128</sup>Samuel W. Pond in "The Dakotas or Sioux in Minnesota As They Were in 1834," in *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society*, Vol. XII, p. 320. See also Winchell, "The Aborigines of Minnesota" in *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72, with map opp., p. 72, based on Pond.

Major Long visited the Sioux later than Pike, and he agrees in giving this tribe a bad name. He says they have no fixed abode, rove near the head of the Blue Earth river, which be in and north of Kossuth county [Iowa], and are a lawless set. Lewis and Clark, however, in their journal of their trip up the Missouri, made in 1804-5-6, say of the Teton Sioux, "these are the vilest miscreants of the savage race, which gives the Wahpecoute a show for themselves. . . .

\* \* \*

But it was the Wahpecoute Sioux who caused all the turmoil and committed all the outrages in pioneer days. It was the Wahpecoute band which was in perpetual warfare with the Sacs and Foxes to the south. . . . They were so lawless that they could not even hold together.<sup>129</sup>

With such social antecedents and environing conditions in the character and relationships of the Wahpekute Sioux it is not strange and obviously not inexplicable, that developments were not controlled by the wiser counsels of the better minds among the chiefs of either the Wahpekute band or of those of the greater bands in tribal or confederated councils between 1837 and 1857, as they affected northwestern Iowa. Mr. Ingham's words quoted above, and many of his subsequent expressions later to be noted or quoted, indicate pretty clearly, if not conclusively, that the tragedy on the Mini-Wakan was far from an irrelevant, or isolated event in Sioux history; and we shall see that it had dire consequences for the country at large, immediately resulting from the red scenes between the Okobojis.

Sometime between 1838 and 1842 (the chroniclers do not concur in their dates) a fateful feud flared out in tragedy among the Wahpekutes. After the formal peace arrangements in the treaties of 1825 and 1830 the conservative chiefs of that band earnestly sought to restrain their young men from carrying on their traditional warfare with their enemies to the south, the Sacs and Foxes. Common prudence enjoined peace, for Schoolcraft informs us that their band in 1836 numbered only 555.<sup>130</sup> Disease and war parties had reduced their strength seriously.

<sup>129</sup>Harvey Ingham, *Old Indian Days* [pp. 3-4]. As previously indicated Mr. Ingham neither dates nor pages his brochure, nor indicates always his citations of specific documentary sources; his references to Pike may be found in Coues's *The Expeditions of Zebulon Pike*, Vol. I, p. 344; Coues's Note, *Ibid.*, p. 346; Long, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Source of St. Peter's River*, etc., by Keating, Vol. I, p. 386; Coues's *The History of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, Vol. I, pp. 94-101, 128-130.

<sup>130</sup>Schoolcraft, *Information Respecting the History, Condition and Prospects of the Indians of the United States*, Vol. III, p. 612.

Common sense, however, did not control their councils or conduct, for dissension prevailed within the tribe. Unfortunately two chiefs could not agree in either policy or procedure. Tasagi, "The Cane," was nominally the head chief of the band. He was for peaceful measures and avoidance of warfare and observance of the treaty. Wamdisapa, "Black Eagle," a co-chief, was contentious and irreconcilable. He would not concur, nor would he submit. He bolted the tribal council and led a portion of the band in revolt, he and his followers going to the headwaters of the Des Moines and into the valley of the Vermilion whither previously some members of the tribe had gone as early as 1828.<sup>131</sup>

But the lure of the government annuities and other disbursements to their fellow tribesmen kept the seceders within the tribal circuit. The contention of the chiefs, however, continued. Wamdisapa, either because of personal antipathy, or of irrepressible insurgency against any efforts at peace, defied Tasagi's rule and encouraged his young "bucks" in their heedless war parties against the Sacs and Foxes. Wamdisapa, moreover, was arrogant and brutal in temperament and resented his superior's attempts to restrain or reprove him. Sometime between 1838 and 1842 either in council or in a personal encounter their conflict of wills concluded in the murder of Tasagi. This fratricidal affair led to the formal expulsion of Wamdisapa and his followers from the Wahpekute band. Meantime, fearing vengeance they had fled again to the valley of the Vermilion. Some two or three years later Wamdisapa came to a violent death at the hands of one of his own henchmen who may have been a member of his own family.

The actual facts, if we are to follow the various historians, are not certain. The foregoing paragraph is based upon Mr. Thomas Hughes's narrative of 1905.<sup>132</sup> Mr. Doane Robinson in 1904 asserts that Wamdisapa's death did not occur until about 1848 when his son, Inkpaduta, succeeded to his chieftainship.<sup>133</sup> Messrs. Hubbard and Holcomb, writing three years later, inform us that various versions as to Tasagi's murder are current: "The most common, and the one generally believed, is, that the chief's

<sup>131</sup>Robinson, "History of the Dakota or Sioux Indians," *So. Dak. Hist. Coll.*, Vol. II, p. 204.

<sup>132</sup>Hughes, "Causes and Results of the Inkpaduta Massacre," *Coll. Minn. Hist. Soc.*, Vol. XII, p. 264.

<sup>133</sup>Robinson, *History*, p. 216.

murderer was Inkpaduta. After the murder, which caused great consternation and indignation among the Wahpekutes, the perpetrators fled, nevermore to return to their band.<sup>134</sup> Mr. Irving Richman writing in 1894 assures us that Sintomniduta was the successor to Wamdisapa, and Mr. Hughes concurs.<sup>135</sup> Mr. Robinson asserts that Inkpaduta succeeded and Mr. Teakle follows him.<sup>136</sup> Major William Williams tells us that Sintomniduta and Inkpaduta were blood brothers and he is followed by Messrs. Fulton, Richman, Gue, Hughes and Ingham.<sup>137</sup> *Per contra*, Messrs. Hubbard and Holcomb bluntly disagree, declaring that Sintomniduta was a Sisseton Sioux and Inkpaduta a Wahpekute. Mr. Teakle adopts their opinion with considerable proofs.<sup>138</sup> The fact that Judge Flandrau in his various reports and accounts of Minnesota's Indian troubles, and Mrs. Sharp in her personal narrative in her *History* do not mention Sintomniduta—each of them acutely interested in the Spirit Lake Massacre as participants in the drama—excites not a little curiosity.

Another tragic event should be noted in passing since it adds to the lurid background of the drama between the Okobojis seven years later. It is another sign of the confluent intratribal and intertribal hatreds which finally focussed and flamed in the tragedy on the Mini-Wakan. Within a short time after Alexander Ramsey became governor of Minnesota Territory in 1849 he was called upon ex officio as superintendent of Indian affairs for the territory to accord formal recognition to a newly chosen chief of the Wahpekute band of the Sioux, Wamundiyakapi, "The-War-Eagle-That-May-Be-Seen." He was a younger son of Tasagi, "The Cane" and his fellow braves chose him. Governor Ramsey reports that he was "a young, fine looking, intelligent Indian." Immediately following the ceremony Wamundiyakapi departed for his home near the headwaters of the Des Moines River. Within a few months (in July, 1849) Governor Ramsey was horrified by the report of the murder of that promising

<sup>134</sup>Hubbard and Holcomb, *Minnesota in Three Centuries*, Vol. III, p. 220.

<sup>135</sup>Richman, "The Tragedy on the Minnewaukon," *John Brown Among the Quakers*, p. 212; Hughes, *Ante*, p. 264.

<sup>136</sup>Robinson, *History*, p. 216; Teakle, *History of Spirit Lake Massacre*, p. 66.

<sup>137</sup>Wm. Williams, "History of Webster County," *ANNALS OF IOWA*, First Series, Vol. VII, p. 333; Fulton, *Red Men of Iowa*, p. 297; Richman, *Ante*, p. 213; Gue, *History of Iowa*, Vol. I, pp. 291-2; Hughes, *Ante*, p. 268; Ingham, "Inkpadutah's Revenge," *the Midland Monthly*, Vol. IV, p. 271, and his *Old Indian Days* [pp. 13, 17, 59].

<sup>138</sup>Hubbard and Holcomb, *opp.* p. 223. Teakle, *opp.* p. 75-77.

young chief and seventeen of his followers while on a hunting expedition. Governor Ramsey states that the murderers were a band of freebooters made up of "Winnebagos, Sauks and Foxes, and Pottawattamies, renegades from their respective tribes [who were] . . . still wandering in the northwest of Iowa and constantly committing depredations upon whites and Indians. Government should take measures to remove this band of murderers at once, before their numbers are increased through others of a similar stamp, from different tribes, being attracted to unite with them, when, growing bolder with impunity and greater power, they may commit outrages of a more serious and alarming character."<sup>139</sup>

A layman's perplexities are illustrated in the explanations of that tragic affair. Mr. Doane Robinson says in 1904 without qualification that that "massacre was committed by the renegade Inkpaduta and his band of outlaws." His authority for so asserting was the consensus of Sisseton and Wahpetons who he states were "unanimous" in so assuring him.<sup>140</sup> Messrs. Hubbard and Holcomb in 1908 citing the speech of Wa-koo-tay, "The Leaf Shooter," declares that the massacre was the work of the Sacs and Foxes and that Governor Ramsey proposed to deduct \$1,000 from the annuities due them as a punitive measure for the crime.<sup>141</sup> Mr. Winchell in his *Aborigines of Minnesota* (1911) quotes Governor Ramsey's report which is summarized above, and then interpolates between the paragraph describing the ceremonial of recognition and the next succeeding paragraph the cross-heading: "The Inkpaduta Band." He does not indicate whether he follows Robinson or not and he does not suggest his authority for his interpolation.<sup>142</sup>

The layman finds himself perplexed, if not lost in mudbank and fog, in trying to make his way through the various narratives. So many of the writers cite few, and many no authorities for their assertions or inferences which they put forward as facts. Mr. Teakle, who has given us the most detailed and critical study of the Spirit Lake Massacre, cites chapter and verse

<sup>139</sup>Ramsay, Annual Report to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, November 30, 1849, Exec. Doc. Thirty-first Cong., First Ses., Doc. 5, p. 1018-9, quoted in Winchell, "The Aborigines of Minnesota," *Coll. Minn. Hist. Soc.*, pp. 551-552.

<sup>140</sup>Robinson, *opp.*, pp. 209-210.

<sup>141</sup>Hubbard and Holcomb, *opp.*, p. 306.

<sup>142</sup>Winchell, *opp.*, 551.

for every specific and most general allegations which he makes, but unfortunately so many of his citations are to narratives with no citations, as Fulton, Gue, Hubbard and Holcomb, *et al.*

The blunt assertion of Messrs. Hubbard and Holcomb that Sintomniduta and Inkpaduta were not blood brothers, the former being asserted to be a Sisseton, and the latter a Wahpekute, is made with no display of proof of any sort. Mr. Teakle not only concurs, and adds that Inkpaduta hated Sintomniduta, and probably rejoiced at the murder of his alleged brother. Mr. Teakle, besides the former sources, cites Messrs. J. W. Powell and Jas. Owen Dorsey of the National Bureau of Ethnology in confirmation. The views of Powell and Dorsey do not seem to me material or relevant—at least it is difficult to perceive wherein they should control judgment as to the matter in controversy. If relevant they simply give us a "brother-group" or *gens* in which all of the sons of sisters are brothers, or all the collateral males of a generation are esteemed brothers. This connotation or extension of the term "brother" does not conclude the controversy; although it offers a possible alternative interpretation of the tradition in Iowa as to the relationship of the two chiefs foremost in the various scenes of the drama in the forties and the fifties roundabout the headwaters of the Des Moines River.<sup>143</sup>

On other grounds Mr. Ingham dissents vigorously from Mr. Teakle's conclusion in concurrence with Messrs. Hubbard and Holcomb as to the non-consanguineous relations of the two chiefs and the disconnection of the murder of Sintomniduta with Inkpaduta's designs and attack on the Spirit Lake settlement. Mr. Ingham contends that Mr. Teakle offers insufficient proofs to disturb the popular tradition created by Major William Williams who saw both chiefs at close range for years, knew them personally, and whose assertions were the issue of actual knowledge and conference with the chiefs and their familiars for more than a decade. I give a few excerpts from his editorial comments:

The point in controversy is this: Major Williams who knew both Sidominadota and Inkpaduta well, as both were frequent visitors at the fort [Ft. Dodge], says they were brothers, while Professor Teakle declares they were not related, claiming that Sidominadota was a Yankton Sioux while Inkpaduta was a Wahpacoute Sioux. Major Williams

<sup>143</sup>Powell, "Kinship and the Tribe," *Third Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, pp. XXXVIII-XI, and Dorsey, "Siouan Sociology," *Fifteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*, pp. 213-218.

declares that Inkpaduta took revenge on the settlers about the Lakes for the injury Lott had done his own family, while Professor Teakle declares that Indian vengeance did not wait that long, and that Inkpaduta had quite other motives, for his deed.

If we turn to Professor Teakle's own version we find him guilty of one unfortunate admission, and of three important omissions, which go far to discredit his claim. His admission is that Sidominadota succeeded Wamdisapi in the leadership of the outlaw Wahpacoute band. On what theory would a wholly unrelated Yankton Sioux succeed to the leadership of a Wahpacoute band, when the son of the chief was as capable of the leadership as Inkpaduta plainly was, Inkpaduta being nearly of the same age as Sidominadota?

The three omissions of Professor Teakle's account are his failure to mention that it was Inkpaduta's band that appeared at the county seat of Homer, bringing the bones of Sidominadota, demanding the surrender of Lott, and declaring vengeance when they discovered that Lott had escaped; that it was Inkpaduta's mother who was said to have been murdered by Lott in Sidominadota's tepee; and finally that immediately after the killing of Sidominadota and his family by Lott, Colonel Woods had called the Indian chiefs before him at Fort Ridgely and there told them that he would "blow them all to hell" if they began disturbing the settlements. These are certainly all of them important matters to be considered, before we can dismiss the Lott murder of Sidominadota as incidental or unrelated to the massacre.<sup>144</sup>

It may be that Mr. Ingham's counters do not check all of Mr. Teakle's contentions, but it seems to me that they indicate clearly the strong antecedent probability of the verity of Major Williams' widely accepted narrative.

<sup>144</sup>Harvey Ingham, editorial, "The Spirit Lake Massacre," *Des Moines Register and Leader*, December 17, 1918. Residents of the Lake region may find the editorial reprinted in *Bulletin No. 16* for June, 1920, of the Okoboji Protective Association, pp. 51-54.

In his *Old Indian Days* Mr. Ingham gives some material evidence on the point in issue which he might have offered. Under the general head of "Henry Lott and Inkpadutah" he reprints the reminiscences of Mr. A. D. Bicknell of Humboldt, Humboldt County, under the caption, "Bloody Run and Lott's Creek." The excerpts given below are weighty for several reasons. They were not offered in any controversy. They were presented without any appreciation of a possible controversy, or of their bearing or significance on the contention, such as we are considering. Mr. Bicknell says:

"Inkpadutah was a brother of Sidominadotah, and after the death of the latter, he rallied the band that had been led by his brother and demanded that Lott be given up. The whites would have gladly complied, but it was impossible. Several councils were held between the Indians and the settlers at points along the Des Moines at and between Dakota City and Fort Dodge, but they failed to satisfy the Indians and they kept this part of the state in fear of their vengeance for the three years that followed and up to the massacre at Spirit Lake.

"Inkpadutah was a very familiar figure during those three years, and the lodges of his band were pitched about here [Dakota City or Humboldt] at times, and especially at Glen Farm and 'up the Indian Trail' across from the mill dam. Drunk or sober he talked of his murdered brother; and in his indiscreetest moods he hinted of sure revenge, and he headed frequent parties that went out to plunder, but they did not murder.

"Jospadota [son of Sintomniduta, age 12, who escaped from Lott's vengeance by flight] had been cared for by Bent Carter who still resides at West Bend. Little Jos. warned the whites, just before the Spirit Lake Massacre, that trouble was close at hand; but it did no good. [p. 59]



Another point Mr. Ingham might have urged. Granting that the two chiefs were members of different Sioux bands, or tribes, and conceding that they, as Mr. Teakle asserts without other proof than the bald assertion of Messrs. Hubbard and Holcomb, hated each other heartily, it does not follow that either would be indifferent to the murder of the other by a white man. The Irish, we are often assured, fight each other *en famille* with fraternal fervor, not to say fury, but let any outsider intervene and the contestants instantly turn on the intruder. Again it may be that the many miscellaneous bands of migratory outlaws shunned each other, as Mr. Teakle asserts, because their chiefs could seldom co-operate, nevertheless the various narratives indicate that anon they combined and presented fronts that numbered from one to five hundred in sudden emergencies, or when there seemed clear chances for success in some foray. It was a touch-and-go combination, but it was a working one for the moment and some master mind directed their concert of action.

It may not be so very important that we know when Tasagi was killed, or whether Wamdisapa or Inkpaduta murdered him, or whether Sintomniduta and Inkpaduta were blood-brothers or not, or who was working head of that band of ubiquitous outlaws known in the forties and fifties as "Red Top's Band" in north-western Iowa and southwestern Minnesota. But it is known, and it is important, that a band, variable in size, or a cluster of intermittently co-operating bands of marauding outlaws kept the immigrant settlers in that region in a state of anxiety, and anon terror, for ten to fifteen years. Further, it seems clear that the many acts of thievery, and rapine, assaults and murders, committed here and there between the Cedar and Big Sioux rivers north of the Raccoon Forks of the Des Moines between 1846 and 1857, were neither "isolated," nor irrelevant, nor unconnected events.

Let us now examine the premises of Mr. Harvey Ingham's contention that "The Spirit Lake Massacre was an isolated tragedy, unrelated in any large way to the general current of Sioux history."

## XVI

For long the physicist and the physician have demonstrated that each and all events in nature or life, be they minor or major in character or significance, are not only the resultants of immediate antecedents in a direct ascending line or descending order, but they are the foci of many confluent antecedent and collateral events, factors and forces. Moreover, they themselves constitute a continuing *causa causans* of consequences beneficent or disastrous as the event may determine. The Spirit Lake Massacre was no exception.

Between 1846 and 1857 there occurred within the terrain, already defined, a score or more of events, or incidents, all of which, while severally neither momentous nor notable, were collectively part and parcel of an aggregate complex of potent forces that were the issue of the surging feelings of races of human beings in clash.

First, the battles between the Sioux and their inveterate foes, the Sacs and Foxes, and their intermittent clashes with the Omahas, the Pottawattamies and the Winnebagos, induced reactions now and then directly and indirectly aggravating the relations with the whites, inflamed by the vicious traffic of whisky smugglers, or aggravated by the involvement of whites who appeared to take sides.

Thus Henry Lott called Che-meuse, "Johnny Green," the Pottawattamie chief, to his assistance in his troubles in 1846 when he was driven out of Webster County by Sintomniduta. When the Sioux discovered the Winnebagos living near Captain Joseph Hewitt at Clear Lake in 1854, and a boy was foully murdered, rumor had it that a band of several hundred Sioux were coming and Mr. Ingham tells us, "The alarm occasioned by the killing of this one Winnebago boy was so great that all the settlers north of Marshall County, along the Iowa and Cedar rivers, fled and left their homes, while general panic spread to the east. Rumors of a widespread Indian war prevailed. . . ."<sup>145</sup>

That general alarm was due in no small part, we may suspect, to the abandonment of Ft. Dodge in 1853. The Indians had formally ceded their rights to hunt and fish and trap in Northwestern Iowa and the headwaters of the Des Moines by the

<sup>145</sup>Harvey Ingham, *Old Indian Days* [p. 20].

treaties of Traverse des Sioux and Mendota. But no small number, perhaps all, felt bitterly that they had been dealt with shabbily, if not fraudulently, in the negotiations of those two treaties. Governor Ramsey's own account does not disguise the bold design of the whites. Virtually all of the vagrant bands of outlaws that wandered hither and thither in the upper reaches of the Cedar and Iowa, the Des Moines and the Little and Big Sioux rivers, were not summoned to the council, and were not parties to the signing of the treaty. Although outlaws they too resented the cession and contemplated the incoming whites with malevolence.

It was in such a state of mind that we must view the sundry miscellaneous attacks on individual settlers, killing their cattle, stampeding their flocks or herds, maltreating the women, and generally spreading terror along the borders where dwelt solitary settlers or small clusters of pioneers, more daring or reckless than their compatriots "back east." These minor collisions constituted the intermittent "sheet lightning" on the horizon of the storm area, and forewarned the coming storm.

Second, the annalists of Northwestern Iowa give us a record of a series of particular events or occurrences between 1846 and 1857 that, although on the surface more or less disconnected and apparently unrelated, altogether constitute a complex of causal lines which reflected the malevolent state of mind just referred to, and which slowly let loose the racial hatreds which concluded in the fateful finale between the Okobojis. When their number is realized and their distribution throughout the wide-ranging region north of the "Forks" of the Des Moines and Raccoon rivers where Fort Des Moines No. 2 was located (1842-1846) and between the Cedar and the Iowa rivers on the east and the Big Sioux and the Missouri rivers on the west, their cognate character and intimate reactions and steady concentration become obvious.

The discontinuance of Fort Des Moines in 1846 seemed to the Sioux substantial evidence that national military control in the upper reaches of the Des Moines River was either moribund or negligible. The coming of the surveyor, Marsh, in 1848 into the region round about the later site of Fort Dodge they regarded as another impudent invasion of their hunting preserves; and

Sintomniduta ordered him summarily to get out and upon his refusal wrecked his instruments and forced him to depart.<sup>146</sup> His band attacked and robbed Jacob Mericle and some other settlers that same year—among others Henry Lott, concerning whom more later. The establishment of Fort Dodge in 1850 deterred the Indians somewhat; nevertheless, their depredations and marauding expeditions continued intermittently while the troops were stationed at that post; for example, the robbery of a trapper by the name of Green on north Coon River, in Sac County in 1851, and the trouble of Captain Galcott's surveying party in 1852 with Ish-ta-ha-ba's band. In October a family was attacked on the Boyer and some of its members taken captive. Inkpaduta was seized and held as a hostage for their return. In the fall of 1853 Inkpaduta led a war party or raiding foray down the Cedar valley into Linn County, capturing a James Chambers and a Mr. Madden of Muscatine—the latter by shrewd maneuvering managed to escape. Soon after the excitement produced by the murder of Sintomniduta in 1854 the Sioux drove out some surveyors and attacked a German by name of Broadshenk.<sup>147</sup> The general anxiety in the danger zone was kept constant through 1855 by incursions of various bands of Sioux into Woodbury, Monona and Harrison counties on the Missouri River; into Buena Vista and Sac counties; into Humboldt and Webster; and into Kossuth and Palo Alto counties.

So serious and widespread were these disturbances of the peace of the pioneers in the northwestern counties that Governor James W. Grimes was constrained to send a special message to the General Assembly on January 20, 1855, in which he enlarged upon the increasing seriousness of the threatening dangers, the defenseless condition of the settlers, and the utter inadequacy of the state's military preparedness to insure their protection. He made a direct and specific appeal to the state's representatives in Congress for national assistance, as it was the nation's particular duty to assure such protection. Iowa's solons passed a resolution asking the establishment of a military post in Northwest Iowa and the assignment thereto of companies of troops.

<sup>146</sup>Major Wm. Williams, *The Iowa North West*, June 13, 1866; Gue, *History of Iowa*, Vol. I, p. 288; Teakle, *History of the Spirit Lake Massacre*, p. 17.

<sup>147</sup>Major Wm. Williams, *Fort Dodge Chronicle*, Feb. 13, 24, Mar. 3, 6, 1897; Ingham, *Old Indian Days* [pp. 23-24].

No immediate results followed—not even acknowledgment of the appeals, if tradition is to be credited—save that in the summer of 1856 Governor Grimes received from the government 1,790 muskets and 50 Colt revolvers and two six-inch cannon. But he had no authority to organize and muster in companies. Later in the year Governor Grimes made an extraordinary appeal to President Pierce for national troops to protect the exposed settlers in the northwestern counties, but as already indicated he was ignored by the Chief Executive at Washington in a conspicuous manner.<sup>148</sup>

In the light of the foregoing we may discern two clearly marked clusters of facts, which clusters suggest diametrically opposite inferences or conclusions:

First, the relations of the whites and the Indians along the northwestern frontiers of Iowa were seriously disturbed in 1855-56. The insolence of the Indian freebooters and the frequency of the raiding parties of the outlaws were increasing in their menacing character; and

Second, despite the constant rumors and reports of border raids and individual outrages on the border, varying from pestiferous begging, petty pilfering, to robbery and stealing of stock, murder and rape, the people of the state generally, and the national authorities likewise, discounted their substantial character and either refused or neglected to authorize adequate protective measures. General peace prevailed and was assumed to be not seriously menaced.

The apparent contradiction in the two clusters of facts just mentioned is superficial and not substantial and may be easily dissipated by an illustration from present day conditions. Since the World War the public has been appalled by the impudence of criminal outbreaks and promiscuous lawlessness—daring bank robberies, lynching bees, “gang” murders, organized “rum” running under the Eighteenth Amendment—nevertheless the public at large rests in the comfortable belief that law and order and peace generally prevail. So with equal relevancy and verity we may say that during the quarter of a century from the conclusion of the Black Hawk War in 1832 to the Spirit Lake

<sup>148</sup>Grimes's letter to President Franklin Pierce December 3, 1855, may be found in the ANNALS OF IOWA, Third Series, Vol. III, pp. 135-37; and to the Iowa Congressmen, January 3, 1855, *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 627-30.

Massacre in 1857 the people of Iowa were practically exempt from the terrors of Indian warfare.

Four-fifths, if not nine-tenths, of the people of Iowa lived east and south of a line running from the mouth of the Upper Iowa River a few miles north of Allamakee County south and west to the mouth of the Boyer River, just above Council Bluffs in Pottawattamie County. Within that major area of the state peace was prevalent. The Sacs and Foxes were not only peaceful, but subdued, enduring aggressions from the lawless whites which they should not have been subject to; the doings of the Ioways, Omahas, Otoes and Winnebagos caused neither alarm nor anxiety; and the Sioux under the terms of the treaty of 1830 had ceded their possessory rights to northwest Iowa, and being allowed merely fishing, hunting and trapping privileges, terminable at the discretion of the President, all of which they ceded back or abandoned by the terms of the treaty of Mendota in 1851—so, to repeat, the pioneers of Iowa enjoyed general exemption from the terrors of Indian warfare.

Let us now follow the events which led directly to the unforeseen attack upon the settlers in the cabins between the Okobojis Sunday evening, March 8, 1857.

## XVII

Between 1843 and 1856 Red Rock, in northwest Marion County, Iowa, although a meagre huddle of cabins or huts with a rather extensive sorry reputation for lawlessness, had some maxims of propriety, or standards of social ethics, which did not tolerate flagrant impudence, or gross disregard of local interests and sensibilities. One of the notorious denizens of the community was made aware of the fact in a summary fashion several times between 1842 and 1846.

About 1842-43 a quondam resident of Fairfield, Iowa, a young man of noteworthy character, one Henry Lott, came to Red Rock. He claimed, or it was claimed by others, that he was of New England parentage and education. His wife was reputed to be the daughter of a governor of an eastern state, Ohio (or Pennsylvania?). Lott was a man of marked ability; dark eyed, slender in build, alert mentally, aggressive in seeking gain. Unfortunately his was not a normal and commendable vocation.

He was a trader in contraband whisky, dealing chiefly with the Indians in flagrant disregard of national laws safeguarding the nation's wards. Coequal in his program was stealing horses from the Indians, or acting as a fence for an organized gang of horse thieves operating between Wisconsin on the northeast and Missouri on the south. Some excerpts from Mr. Ingham's *Old Indian Days* will show in what general esteem he was held and some of the drastic discipline to which he was subject at Red Rock.

. . . Mr. Saylor [of Saylorville in Polk County] has written of Lott's horse stealing propensities: "I was well acquainted with this man Lott. He first settled this side of the Red Rock, before the white people were allowed to live there, and his business was robbing and stealing Indian horses. A few settlers had settled around Fort Des Moines, and they would disguise themselves as Indians and catch Lott, tie him to a tree, whip him nearly to death, and make him promise never to return; but he always came back."<sup>149</sup>

The general reputation of Lott was signalized in 1845 in a local flare-up which probably expedited his decision to leave Red Rock in 1846. He had lost a bell. He charged one Williams with stealing it, who denounced the charge and soon recovered the lost bell for its owner. The sons of Williams resented Lott's proceedings with indignation. They aroused local sentiment, led a mob in search of him, discovered him one night in Red Rock, took him unceremoniously from his bed and thereupon subjected him to gross treatment. The lynching bee caused sundry reactions in futile litigation which embittered the community.<sup>150</sup>

<sup>149</sup>Harvey Ingham, *Old Indian Days* [p. 16].

<sup>150</sup>Wm. M. Donnell, *Pioneers of Marion County* (1872), p. 228.

The validity and value of personal memories in weaving the warp and woof of accurate historical narration are always nicely balanced questions with our learned folk who chatter so much about "research" and scientific exposition. In the course of preparing this section I had an experience which may illustrate some phases effectively and also demonstrate the firmly fixed tradition of Henry Lott's adverse reputation among the pioneers whose memories are still green.

In discussing the beginnings of the Spirit Lake Massacre with Curator E. R. Harlan I stated that Henry Lott became notorious first in Red Rock, Marion County, as I recalled my readings of some twenty-five or more years since, and further that he had an ugly experience with a lynching party while in that community. Mr. Harlan, who is quite familiar with the Indian lore of the state, instantly expressed scepticism; he had no recollection of any such tradition. I could not remember the title of the volume which I had read but I was certain that it was bound in green covers, and it was some sort of a history of Marion County. I was certain as to my memory, but I could not recall more. I was sorely perplexed. My notebook confirmed my having read the volume, the title of which proved to be "The Pioneers of Marion County" and its author, Wm. M. Donnell. My memoranda related, however, only to the Southerners in Marion County, a subject that then engaged my interest. But I could not find the volume in either the city or the state libraries in Des Moines.

In my perplexity I recalled that Mr. George A. Jewett of Des Moines was a native of Red Rock (born September 9, 1847) with a remarkable memory.

It was the bitter memories of such intermittent harsh experiences at the hands of neighbors and the departure in 1846 of the Sacs and Foxes for their new home in Kansas which combined to induce Henry Lott to look around for other and better fields wherein to pursue his multifarious activities in pursuit of gain. He fixed his eyes upon the region to the north of "The Forks" of the Raccoon and the Des Moines rivers—

. . . where the best is like the worst  
Where there aren't no Ten Commandments,  
And a man can raise a thirst.

Knowing his aural difficulty I telephoned his daughter, Mrs. Hugh Welpton, January 14, 1932, and asked if she would ascertain if her father recalled anything about Henry Lott in or about Red Rock. I could hear her addressing him: "Professor Herriott wishes to know if you remember anything about Henry Lott at Red Rock?"

Instantly I heard distinctly over the wire the sharp inquiry, "Henry Lott? The man who sold whisky to the Indians? Is that the one he is asking about?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Welpton.

"Tell Professor Herriott I can tell him a good deal about his general reputation in Red Rock. It was pretty bad."

Immediately I arranged for an interview. With little or no prompting or suggestion he gave me the following:

"Henry Lott was notorious in Marion County, first, for selling whisky to the Sacs and Foxes in violation of the national laws governing the relations of the whites to the Indians; and, second, for acting as a go-between, or fence, for horse thieves. He had left Red Rock before I was born. I am not certain whether he was driven out or left when the Indians left the Sac and Fox reservation in 1846; but I heard constantly as a boy about his illegal doings and his reputation for undesirable conduct. Lott was such a bogey man in Red Rock that I can recall that mothers when trying to coerce their children into right conduct used to threaten that they would get Lott after them.

"Wait a moment, I have an old book upstairs which I believe has some things which will be of help to you."

In three or four minutes Mr. Jewett returned and placed in my hands an old, somewhat battered volume bound in green board covers entitled, *The Pioneers of Marion County*, by Wm. M. Donnell. On pages 228-229 was the brief account of the Lott lynching here referred to above.

"Was Red Rock's reputation for lawlessness justified?" I asked Mr. Jewett. "I am afraid that it was," he answered with a laugh. "Although there were many good people in and about the place, it was most notorious prior to 1850, as you may verify in Donnell's pages, when it marked the western boundary of the Sac and Fox lands. I recall the letters 'I-B' on the trees running north and south from the top of the celebrated 'Red or Painted Rock.' They stood for the words 'Indian Boundary.'

"Gambling and whisky smuggling to the Indians created a situation that caused many to call Red Rock 'The Jumping Off Place' of the country. Drunken sprees, fights and shooting scrapes were often of daily occurrence. An incident on board of an Atlantic ocean liner in 1902 on one of my return trips from Europe will give you some idea of the reputation of Red Rock prior to the Civil War.

"One afternoon I was sunning myself on deck when a stranger approached and sat down beside me. He soon asked if I hailed from the United States. To my assent, he then inquired as to my home state and when I told him Iowa he then asked what section. I told him that while I was then living in Des Moines my birthplace was Red Rock. His interest then became acute. "I spent two weeks in that place," he said, "in 1852 surveying for the Navigation Company, and I thought that it was the one place in Iowa from which a man should emigrate as soon as he could do so. There were six 'grocery stores' or 'doggeries' or saloons as they would have been designated in later years. There was a shooting or stabbing affair nearly every night that I was there."

"His memories concurred with mine. Red Rock was then the head of slack-water navigation on the Des Moines River, and was thus the transfer station for incoming and outgoing traffic. Donnell's pages will give you sufficient facts as to the causes of Red Rock's reputation. I may have seen Henry Lott as a lad, but I do not recall anything about his personal appearance, but his bad reputation was a matter of common talk."

As a result of my interview with Mr. Jewett the Historical Department now possesses one of Mr. Jewett's copies of Donnell's *Pioneers of Marion County*.



Tradition has it that Lott first settled near Peas Point in Boone County, but soon moved up into Webster County near the mouth of the Boone River where he began to sell whisky to the Sioux. His cabin became known as a rendezvous for horse thieves and fugitives from justice. The Indians found their ponies disappearing. They soon suspected Lott. Among the losers were the members of Red Top's Band. Sintomniduta did not submit meekly. He organized a searching party and soon discovered his live stock near Lott's place. Lott denied complicity or knowledge. Sintomniduta gave him blunt orders to "puchachea," to get out of the country within a "moon" or he would be dealt with summarily. He refused for a time to go. Suddenly he learned that Sintomniduta's braves were coming for him and he and his young son fled down the river, leaving his wife and small children. His stock was driven off or killed. Mrs. Lott, who was in feeble health, was subjected for three days to the terror of the efforts of Sintomniduta to frighten her into giving information about her husband. While not grossly mistreated, three days of harrowing anxiety produced such a nervous shock that she died soon after the Indians left her cabin and the neighborhood. Meantime a twelve-year-old son who had left, going in search of his father or help, was frozen to death in the woods not far from the present town of Boonesboro.<sup>151</sup>

When Lott returned with "Johnny Green" and his band of Sacs and Foxes and learned the tragic fate that had befallen his wife and son, the iron entered his soul. He left the region, settling near Adel in Dallas County. In February, 1848, the clerk of court of Polk County at Des Moines, issued a license for Henry Lott to marry Miss Jemima McGuire. Farm life, following the plough, garnering crops, was too prosaic. Orderly society was too dull. The "call of the wild" and the hope of large gains in illicit trade with the Indians again lured him into the north woods. His bitter memories of Red Top's Band and his vow of vengeance coerced his mind and drove him northward towards the hunting lands of the Sioux. We hear of him again in the environs of Fort Dodge. Major Williams tells us that his presence was immediately noted and in 1851 he was ordered to

<sup>151</sup>Unless otherwise stated I have followed Major Williams, or Messrs. Fulton, Gue, Ingham, or Teakle in this section.

depart and was escorted south by corporal's guard.<sup>152</sup> Two years later the pioneers heard of him again on what became known as Lott's Creek in the north of Humboldt County, and another act in the red drama we are following, rapidly came to another frightful focus.

Lott was steadily, stealthily seeking his revenge for Sintomiduta's attack upon his cabin and torture of his wife. He learned that the "Old Head-Devil," as he called him, was encamped some four or five miles south of his cabin on a creek, since known as "Bloody Run." Let Mr. Ingham tell what took place in January, 1854:

. . . Sidominadotah was in winter quarters living on the creek in Humboldt county, called now Bloody Run, in memory of the massacre, with his mother, wife and two children, a younger squaw also with two children, in all nine of them. Lott had gotten into the old chief's good graces by pretending friendship and dispensing whiskey, and one fine morning after packing his own goods, persuaded the chief to go out and hunt some buffalo he pretended to have seen. When out of sight of the tepees he shot him. There are several versions of the affair. One is that Sidominadotah was attended by three young Indians and that Lott arranged a ring hunt by which they went off in different directions and that after killing the old chief he pursued and killed the young men in turn, but this likewise seems to be imaginary. Mr. Saylor's version is that Lott waited till the warriors had gone hunting and that then he rushed in and killed the women and children in camp, with the old chief. In any event Lott went to the tepees and massacred the women and children, a boy of twelve escaping with a scalp wound and a younger girl lying in the grass unnoticed. Lott killed the other children by dashing their brains out against a tree. The aged mother of Sidominadotah and Inkpadutah ran in the snow 100 yards, but was caught and tomahawked.

Lott and his stepson made a wide circle about Fort Dodge in their flight south. They stopped at the Saylor home in Polk County for breakfast, stating there that they had traveled all night, and then left immediately, advising the Saylor's to look out for the Indians as there would be an outbreak. Mr. Saylor says Lott went to Red Rock and from there to California, where the report was that he was hung by vigilants, adding that the story is likely as he deserved hanging in any country.

The rage of the Indians when they found the camp at Bloody Run was very great, Inkpadutah especially threatening trouble.<sup>153</sup>

<sup>152</sup>Fort Dodge Chronicle, February 10, 1897.

<sup>153</sup>Harvey Ingham, *Old Indian Days* [p. 17],

Major Williams informs us that a part of Lott's tactics in his ruthless assault was disguising himself and son as Indians, thus inducing popular suspicion that the perpetrators of the hideous outrage were either Sacs and Foxes or Winnebagos. In furtherance of this pretense he burnt his own cabin and out-buildings. There is no dissent among early annalists or latter-day chroniclers from the scathing judgment of Major Williams, "Never was a more brutal murder committed than of those poor, helpless squaws and the children."<sup>154</sup>

As soon as the report of the outrage reached Fort Dodge and evidence finally focussed on Lott as the villain in the scene, Major Williams organized a posse and started in pursuit of Lott, but he had too much of a start before it was clear that he was the malefactor. His announcement that Lott had escaped his grasp greatly enhanced the indignation and resentment of the Sioux. Their bitter feelings were aggravated seriously by three events which to the minds of the red men imported trivial treatment of a gross crime; they simply added insult to injury.

First, Mr. Lucas asserts that Lott was indicted by the Grand Jury of Polk County at Des Moines; but to the Indians it was either a futile or pretentious gesture, for nothing was accomplished.<sup>155</sup> Second, a coroner's jury under the guidance of Rev. John Johns conducted an inquest at Homer, the then county seat of Webster County, that seemed to the Indians an impudent farce.<sup>156</sup> Anglo-Saxon rules of evidence and Sioux notions of tribal responsibility did not concur. At the outset the evidence against Lott was meagre and vague, partly because his Indian disguise served as an effective camouflage and created shadows for doubts, all of which was increased by the confusion incident to the Indians' answers to questions meaning one thing to them

<sup>154</sup>Major Williams in *The Iowa Northwest*, January 7, 1867.

<sup>155</sup>Lucas, *The Milton Lott Tragedy*, p. 7.

A search was made of the original papers of the Criminal Court of Polk County for 1854 by Mr. John L. Hamery and myself for the indictment referred to by Mr. Lucas without discovery. The first volume of the Criminal Court record has been mislaid or lost, and our search was, therefore, inconclusive. Mr. Hamery is parole agent of Polk County and very familiar with the files of the Criminal Court, and he doubts Mr. Lucas's assertion.

<sup>156</sup>Rev. John Johns of Border Plains was a notable pioneer of Northwestern Iowa. See Mr. Charles Aldrich's "Recollections of Rev. John Johns of Webster County" in *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. VIII, pp. 321-25 (July, 1892). Rev. John Johns was one of the delegates-at-large of the Republicans to the Republican National Convention at Chicago, May 16-18, 1860, that first placed Abraham Lincoln in nomination for the presidency of the United States. I have described Mr. Johns's notable speech at the Republican State Convention in Sherman Hall, Des Moines, January 18, 1860, in *ANNALS OF IOWA*, Third Series, Vol. IX, pp. 403-404.

and another to the members of the jury.<sup>157</sup> Third, what appeared to Inkpaduta and his fellow braves flagrant indifference to decency and justice and produced intense feeling, a heedless or heartless denizen of Homer severed Sintomniduta's head from the body, impaled it at the end of a pikestaff and decorated the front of his store building with the old chief's skull, it being thus exposed for a year or more; such gross desecration of his brother's remains produced a sullen rage that steadily smoldered until he saw his chance to repay the affront with compound interest. Ad interim, while waiting for the courts of the whites to bring the murderers of his kinsman to justice Inkpaduta led a war party against the Sacs and Foxes and Winnebagos at Clear Lake, in some part repaying them for Johnny Green's intervention on behalf of Lott in 1848.<sup>158</sup>

The relations of the whites and Indians throughout the north-western counties of Iowa, in consequence of Lott's atrocious act on Bloody Run, became generally and seriously inflamed in 1854. The Sioux manifested marked and widespread resentment and gave vent to their feelings more vigorously, freely and widely because of the abandonment of Fort Dodge by the national government in 1853. As they contemplated the ineffective efforts of the whites to bring Lott to justice, contempt mingled with their resentment and they began to consider taking matters into their own hands. Mr. Ingham sums up the general consequences concisely in the following paragraph:

<sup>157</sup>Ingham, *Old Indian Days* [p. 17].

The following paragraph from Mr. Ingham is illuminating:

"The settlers made every effort to trace Lott, without success, and then to pacify Inkpaduta, although there is something ludicrous in the proceedings that followed. A coroner's inquest was held on the remains of Sidominadotah, which the Indians attended, thinking it was to be a big 'pow wow' preceding the turning of Lott over to them. They also brought the bones of the old chief, delivering them under the impression that that ceremony was in some way important. The Indians announced many times to the coroner's jury: Ho wasecha nepo Dakota, Sidomniadotah nepo, 'White man kill Dakotah, kill Sidominadotah,' whereupon, Major Williams records, part of the jury thought that an Indian named Wasecha Nepo had done the killing. This led to an animated debate and finally to a row, one member of the jury insisting that 'nepo' was a Greek word. The proceedings turned into a farce and the jury quit in a quarrel, one member stamping his feet and denouncing the whole affair as a 'd—— proposition' (imposition). The skull of old Sidominidotah was taken to Homer, then the county seat of Webster County, and nailed to a house where it was left for over a year. Charles Aldrich\* saw the skull in 1857 in the office of Granville Berkley, a pioneer lawyer, and says it showed many fractures, as though it had been beaten with a heavy club. . . . Mr. Berkley told Mr. Aldrich that he kept the relic because the murdered Indian had been his friend." *Ibid.* [pp. 17-18].

\*Mr. Charles Aldrich was then editor of *The Hamilton Freeman*, later founder of the Historical, Memorial and Art Department of Iowa and editor of the *ANNALS OF IOWA*, Third Series, from April, 1893, to his death March 8, 1908, eight volumes. Mr. Aldrich shares equal honors with Mr. Ingham in preserving the history of the relations of the Indians to the whites in the state of Iowa.

<sup>158</sup>Major Williams in *Fort Dodge Chronicle*, March 6, 1897.

The Indians when they found that they were being trifled with, and that Lott was not forthcoming, left more offended than ever. This was the immediate occasion of all the subsequent raids along the Des Moines, and the direct cause of the Spirit Lake massacre three years later. Every unprotected settler from that time forward was in a state of alarm. Trappers, surveyors, and pioneers were stripped and abused, and no man's life was safe, although no one was killed until the hardships of the spring of 1857 were added to the aggravations of the Bloody Run massacre. The delay in taking revenge was doubtless due in part to the rapid influx of white settlers, and in part to the vigorous admonition of Col. Woods, of the Fort Ridgely forces, who immediately upon hearing of the massacre called the chiefs together and after assuring them that everything possible would be done to capture and punish Lott, told them in his own peculiar way that if they caused any trouble to the whites he would blow them all to hell<sup>159</sup>

Several significant facts stand out in foregoing paragraphs and excerpts from Mr. Ingham's narrative which may be noted before passing:

First, although Mr. Ingham asserts very decisively that the Spirit Lake Massacre was an "isolated tragedy," his own narrative contains sundry assertions of direct causal connections with the antecedent events hereinbefore set forth, all of which have an intimate connection with the history of the Sioux tribes in the previous two or three decades. His own exhibits are conclusive that the Massacre between the shores of the Okobojis was the confluence of forces and feeling, coming from many previous clashes and events which incensed the minds of the Sioux against the whites in the northwestern counties.

Second, if we agree with Major Williams and Messrs. Fulton and Ingham that Sintomniduta and Inkipaduta were blood brothers we may assume without hesitation that Lott's brutal murder of the mother, brother and children, would have aroused Inkipaduta's racial hatred of the arrogant whites to a high pitch of intensity; and if the brothers had quarreled, the fact would not have materially lessened his sense of outrage so far as the whites were concerned.

Third, Lott's butchery of Sintomniduta's family on Bloody Run was not a mere "local affair," of interest for a week and a day and then forgotten. Its repercussions were far-reaching, and widespread. The rumors of the atrocity must have run through

<sup>159</sup>Ingham, *Old Indian Days* [p. 18].

the north woods with winged feet; and the disturbance of the Sioux must have been instant and serious; for how otherwise are we to account for the call of Colonel Woods of a council of the Sioux chiefs at Fort Ridgely in Nicollet County, Minnesota, a hundred miles or so north of the locus of the tragedy in Iowa? His emphatic injunction to the chiefs to keep the peace and his blunt threat to "blow them all to hell" if they went on the war path is rather substantial evidence that the intensity of the Indians' resentment of the outrage was pronounced and vocal, if not violent. Further, while Colonel Woods' language backed as it was by the government's troopers and cannon kept the Sioux in check, we must not suppose for a moment that the chiefs or their braves forgot the atrocity on Bloody Run. Its ruthless brutality was more abominable than the Massacre between the shores of the Okobojis three years and two months later.

Lott, if widespread and persistent tradition constitute any sort of a base for a conclusion, was a notorious horsethief, or the fence for thieves. He had stolen Sintomniduta's ponies, and they had been found within Lott's corrals. Lott was given notice to get out of the country—very mild punishment contrasted with the summary proceedings whenever whites captured suspected horsethieves. He gave no heed to the warning. When he finally realized that Sintomniduta meant what he said, Lott fled. His wife, while terrorized in the efforts of the Indians to learn of Lott's whereabouts, and died as a result of her fright and delicate health, was not otherwise grossly mistreated. The sad death of the young boy who died from exposure in the dead of winter was, like the wife's demise, a sorry incident of Lott's crimes which justly incensed the Indians. But when we consider the heinousness of stealing horses among our pioneers, and the swift, ruthless punishment invariably administered by irate sufferers therefrom inflicted upon malefactors, Sintomniduta was mild in procedure and penalty.

The atmosphere throughout the upper portion of the terrain of the red drama we are following was already highly charged with the red man's intense resentment of his treatment at the hands of the white man. A maze of bitter memories became electric with flashing hatreds when he saw the steady encroachments of the whites. It was in such a surcharged atmosphere that

Inkpaduta and his band operated between 1854 and 1857, migrating between the fastnesses of the Upper Vermilion River in South Dakota and the headwaters of the Des Moines and Big Sioux in the Red Pipe Stone country and thence down into the northwestern counties of Iowa. If considerations of "blood revenge" because of his brother's brutal murder did not drive him forward in his miscellaneous marauding expeditions—prudence controlling his plans and staying his hand—we are not far wrong in suspecting that the death of a Sisseton chief (even if he was in more or less of a feud with him and his band) at the hands of Lott was not a matter of indifference to him as a Sioux. It was a *casus belli* and he would strike whenever circumstances of time or place would afford him a chance of certain, swift and sweeping revenge. Indians are not different in this respect from the Irish, or Scotch, or Serbs, Germans, or French, or ordinary Americans.

#### XVIII

The various migrations of Inkpaduta's band between January, 1854, and March, 1857, cannot be followed with any considerable degree of certainty, but more or less evidence exists as to his whereabouts at certain dates. He was *persona non grata* to his own tribesmen because of his alleged participation in the murders of Tasagi, Wamdisapa, and Wamundiyakapi, and suffered formal expulsion. Being thus ostracized he was not included in the summons of Governor Ramsay when the Wahpekute tribe was called to Mendota in August, 1851, and his band of Ishmaelites was not included in the annual distribution of the annuities paid by the national government. Inkpaduta, however, was either so influential or domineering or so dreaded that, nevertheless, he insisted upon and obtained his share of the government's annual allotments from his tribesmen who could not or dared not resist his claims for his equitable allowance thereof. In 1854 and 1856, however, his demands or appeals were not successful for the reason that Agent Flandrau at Fort Ridgely refused peremptorily to countenance his presence and demands.<sup>160</sup> Mr. Fulton informs us that he was encamped near Algona with his band comprising fifty lodges in the summer of 1855.<sup>161</sup> Major Prich-

<sup>160</sup>Teakle, *opp.*, p. 71.

<sup>161</sup>Fulton, *opp.*, p. 293.

ette tells of his appearance at Fort Ridgely in the fall of 1855.

There is more or less conflict of opinion as to the itinerary of Inkpaduta in 1856. In the middle period of the year he was at Fort Ridgely.<sup>162</sup> Mr. Fulton asserts that Inkpaduta and his band spent the winter of 1856-57 "about the lakes, and in the groves bordering on the Little Sioux River."<sup>163</sup> Mr. R. A. Smith states that "Inkpaduta and his band left their camp at Loon Lake sometime in December and went south down the Little Sioux as far as Smithland."<sup>164</sup> He also informs us that another band had "pitched their camp in the neighborhood of Springfield (now Jackson, Minnesota) and at Big Island Grove. Ishtahaba (Sleepy Eyes) was located with his followers."<sup>165</sup>

Mr. Teakle expresses another opinion: Agreeing with those who hold that Inkpaduta, on leaving Fort Ridgely, went to Spirit Lake in South Dakota and set up his tepees nearby his friends, the Yankton Sioux, who before and later had given him protection when in dire need of food and good will when the Fates frowned upon him, and that he did not winter at Loon Lake, Minnesota.<sup>166</sup> The scarcity of food, and the severity of the winter of 1856-57 compelled Inkpaduta's band to eat their ponies and other sorts of food seldom indulged in. He had to move down the valley of the Big Sioux. In January he seems to have gone over the watershed into the valley of the Floyd and thence across the valleys and watersheds of the Elliot and Whiskey creeks into the valley of the Little Sioux, camping in the neighborhood of Smithland at the junction of Moose Creek with the Little Sioux, almost on the south line of Little Sioux Township bordering on Monona County.

Mr. Smith, whose memories were contemporary with the period dealt with, states that no reports of attacks or depredations were current in the course of the progress of the band down to Smithland and for a time the Indians hunted and fished or begged from the settlers who did not regard them with special dread. Mr. Teakle, however, quoting Mr. Doane Robinson's general characterization of the outlaw Wahpekute chief, says that after Inkpaduta left his Yankton friends and came down into Iowa

<sup>162</sup>Teakle, *opp.*, p. 71.

<sup>163</sup>Fulton, *opp.*, pp. 301-2.

<sup>164</sup>R. A. Smith, *History of Dickinson County*, p. 53.

<sup>165</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>166</sup>Teakle, *opp.*, pp. 72-73.



"wherever he appeared murder and theft marked his trail." He gives no facts to substantiate his strong assertion.<sup>167</sup>

An incident occurred at Smithland, however, which clearly changed the course of things. Fulton, Smith, and Teakle agree that while the Indians were killing elk which they found in great numbers because of the heavy snow near Smithland, the white settlers suddenly combined and compelled the Indians to give over their firearms to them. A part of their strategy was a successful ruse that had more than immediate consequences. One of the whites dressed up in what appeared to be the uniform of a general. They told the Indians that the one so appearing was General Harney who two years before had annihilated Little Thunder's band of Brule Sioux at the battle of Ash Hollow, whose name then produced terror. The trick was effective and the Indians fled. But soon they discovered the truth and their indignation and resentment converted Inkpaduta's band into a malevolent crew of ruthless freebooters.<sup>168</sup>

The band proceeded northward to Correctionville where they grossly mistreated Robert Hammond who resisted their thieving. Inkpaduta's conduct thenceforth merited Robinson's harsh comments. Cattle, hogs, and horses were stolen or run off. They not only seized food but guns and ammunition. Inkpaduta began displaying those qualities as a leader which later made him famous in the post Civil War-Indian warfare in the Dakotas and Montana—he sent out scouting parties; he resorted to feints and maneuvers in pretentious friendship, first, and force afterwards. In the pages of Messrs. Smith, Teakle, or Ingham one may read the variant tactics in Cherokee, Ida, Buena Vista, Sac, O'Brien and Clay counties as they pursued the way northward towards the headwaters of the Little Sioux in the Okobojis. In the latter stages the conduct of the Sioux warriors became more and more vicious in their wanton destruction of food and property not needed, and more malevolent in their treatment of both men and women.

In the environs of Petersen in southwestern Clay County Inkpaduta's braves carried things with reckless hands. The treatment of the Kirchners, Meads, Taylors and Bells just stopped short of murder. Mrs. Ambrose Mead and daughter ten years

<sup>167</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>168</sup>Smith, *History*, p. 55; Teakle, *Ibid.*

of age were held captives for several days. Near Gillet's Grove on the Little Sioux, some eighteen miles east and twelve miles north of Petersen, the racial hatreds flashed into flame. One of the brothers, Gillet, resented the conduct of one of the Indians towards his wife, started in pursuit and shot him to death. Knowing what would probably be the reaction when the Indians would discover what had been their tribesman's fate, the two Gillets hastily gathered their movables together and fled, going to Fort Dodge. We next hear of Inkpaduta's band in the neighborhood of Lost Island Lake—whether in Clay or Palo Alto counties the chroniclers do not state—where it remained until the latter weeks of February when they began their slow progress towards the shores of Mini-Wakan.

In order to appreciate the state of mind of Inkpaduta's braves, as they prowled about Lost Island Lake, and then started for the Okobojis, we must realize the conditions controlling their commissariat. The previous summer season had been unfavorable. Heavy snows and cold, harsh winds had made ordinary game scarce and difficult of access. The band, if it consisted of fifteen or twenty braves, had seventy-five to one hundred mouths to be fed. The trick played upon the band when killing the elk near Petersen which deprived them of an ample supply of meat at a critical juncture, not only reduced their available food supply, but it put their tempers on a wire edge. E'er this they had doubtless become aware of the death of their fellow brave shot by the husband of Mrs. Gillet.

One needs but little imagination to discern the complex of embittered memories amidst which Inkpaduta and his band made their way towards the Okobojis. They were outlaws from their own tribe—ostracized and in a state of relentless feud with their own clansmen. But they nevertheless were Sioux and were like their fellows to the north whose memories of their relations with the whites were shot through with recollections of the white men's aggressions, broken promises, false pretenses, robberies and trickeries. If the red man had struck back and killed his white brother in the ruthless manner of the Indian, it was in retaliation for the white man's invasion of his domain and systematic imposition thereafter—now impudent intrusion, now sly tricks and shrewd schemes with intermittent warfare in which they were

steadily worsted and steadily pushed out of their favorite habitats and hunting grounds—peace terms assuring them of protection against the insidious attacks of unscrupulous whites and violated often before the ink was dry on the parchment of the treaties which solemnly declared an everlasting peace.

Let us glance for a moment at the character of the chief of the band who slaughtered the unsuspecting settlers between the Okobojis on Sunday evening, March 8, 1857.

### XIX

Both popular chroniclers and critical "research" historians have given Inkpaduta an unenviable reputation for sheer brutality, ruthless ferocity, and abominable treachery. Such a reputation is to be presumed among his victims, their relatives, friends and neighbors. But critical students of the origins of the tragedy concur in their opinion. Further, we are assured by those familiar with the traditions of the Sioux and especially of the Wahpecute tribe that his fellow tribesmen appraised his character and conduct in almost equal terms of disapprobation.

Mrs. Abbie Gardner Sharp, one of the victims of his attack upon the settlement between the Okobojis, could hardly be expected to restrain her pen in describing Inkpaduta's character and disposition. Recording her girlhood memories of the outlaw chief twenty-seven years later, Mrs. Sharp says:

As I remember Inkpaduta, he was probably fifty or sixty years of age, about six feet in height, and strongly built. He was deeply pitted by small pox, giving him a revolting appearance, and distinguishing him from the rest of the band. . . . His natural enmity to the white man; his desperately bold and revengeful disposition; his hatred of his enemies, even of his own race; his matchless success on the warpath, won for him honor from his own people, distinguished as a hero, and made him a leader of his race.

By the whites Inkpaduta will ever be remembered as a savage monster in human shape, fitted only for the darkest corner of Hades.<sup>169</sup>

Mr. Ingham in one of his "Scraps of Early History" published in the *Upper Des Moines* quotes Mr. Ambrose Call who came athwart Inkpaduta, as follows:

Inkpaduta was about fifty-five years old, about five feet, eleven inches in height, stoutly built broad shouldered, high cheek bones, sunken

<sup>169</sup>Mrs. Sharp, *opp.*, pp. 56-57.

and very black sparkling eyes, big mouth, light copper color and pock-marked in the face.<sup>170</sup>

In character and disposition Inkpaduta was very much like Milton's Satan. Physically powerful, mentally alert, keen of insight and foresight. He was arrogant, contentious, and restless under the ordinary stupid routine of things. He could not patiently submit to superior authority. His alleged participation in the murder of Tasagi, and of his father, Wamdisapa, suggest an irrepressible brutality of temperament. But his hatred of the whites was intense, relentless and notorious. Submission to the control of the white man seemed to him utterly supine and intolerable.

The general public had but little appreciation of Inkpaduta's extraordinary ability and achievement until 1904 when Mr. Doane Robinson of Pierre, South Dakota, published his illuminating volume on the *History of the Dakota or Sioux Indians*, wherein, while confirming the traditions in Iowa as to Inkpaduta's character and disposition, he makes us realize that he was a military chief of exceptional genius among the Sioux. By his tribesmen he was dreaded, hated, shunned and ostracized in peaceful times; but when war waged with the whites Inkpaduta coerced their admiration, directed their action, and many a time snatched victory from beneath the shadows of impending disaster. Mr. Robinson's description of the man and his character is so vivid that I venture to quote rather generously:

The Indian who more than any other developed great generalship in this war [the Outbreak of 1863] was Inkpaduta, the villainous Wahpekute renegade, of whom no single noble trait is recorded. This conscienceless Ishmael, whose hand was against every man, white and Indian alike, . . .

He inherited his father's fiendish temper and cruel instincts, which were not at all modified by his training, and when he succeeded as chief of the outlaw band, upon the death of Wamdesapa about 1848, he was a post graduate in savage deviltry. . . . During all of this period [1848-1863] his band was a refuge and a shelter for the renegade Indians of all the bands. When an Indian had rendered himself obnoxious to the whites or to his tribe so that life was unsafe on the frontier he knew that a welcome ever awaited him in the lodges of the desperado. . . .

It was only as a war chief that he won a place in the admiration of the Indians. In civil life they would have none of him. Except where

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<sup>170</sup>Quoted in Smith, *History of Dickinson County*, p. 33.

bloodshedding was the business in hand, they knew by sore experience he was not to be trusted. During all of the time that he was in command of the Indian forces the white men did not realize that he was even present and in all of the writing, there is not a line that gives him credit for any part in those battles. Everything considered, he must be accorded a high place as a military leader. . . . He appears never to have resorted to diplomacy to carry a point, but invariably depended upon brutal force. If there is one exception to this, it was in the negotiation for the release of Mrs. Marble. . . . It is scarcely probable from all of his conduct that he was other than he seemed, a terrible monster.<sup>171</sup>

In a later section I may indicate some of Inkpaduta's notable military exploits which clearly demonstrated that he was a warrior of no mean ability in the post-civil struggles of the red men with their white conquerors. Here it suffices to say that if one must come under the frowns of the Fates and be involved in a wholesale massacre, one for aesthetic and dramatic reasons naturally prefers to be the victim of a villain of high class ability and extraordinary achievement rather than the hapless prey of a dull brute who kills in mere wantonness.

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<sup>171</sup>Doane Robinson, "History of the Dakota or Sioux Indians," *South Dakota Historical Collections*, Vol. II, pp. 342, 343, 344, 346, 347.

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#### MAKING A NEWSPAPER DIRECTORY

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The editor of the *Wilmington Delawarean* asks all the newspaper publishers in the "United States" to send him a copy of their respective papers. Though not in the United States we shall take the liberty of sending him the first number of the *Adventurer* with the hint that it may be set down as belonging to one of the territories unsurpassed in beauty and fertility by any of the great family of rival children.—*The Western Adventurer and Herald of the Upper Mississippi*, Montrose, Wisconsin Territory, June 28, 1837. (In the Newspaper Division of the Historical, Memorial and Art Department of Iowa.)

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