

Jonas (John) Peterson and the Dakota Indians

Transcribed from page ten, The Centennial History of Kandiyohi County, Minnesota, 1970, Oscar B Augustson (director). Page ten was reprinted from Chapter IV of Illustrated History and Descriptive and Biographical Review of Kandiyohi County Minnesota, 1905, published by Victor E. Lawson and J. Emil Nelson.

Jonas (John) Peterson, mentioned below, was the future husband of Anna Stina Broberg.

An incident connected with Kandiyohi county history serves to illustrate Little Crow's dreams. Louis Larson, one of the pioneers of New London, relates that in the spring of 1861 a party of Sioux pitched their camp near Lake Henderson between the Nest Lake and Eagle Lake settlements. They had recently encountered a party of Chippewas and in the fight that ensued had secured a number of scalps. They had evidently sustained some losses, at least in wounded, for it was observed that a number of their warriors limped as they passed from one tent to another. While they were preparing to celebrate their victory with a scalp dance a number of warriors set out to forage. It was no unusual occurrence among the early settlers to be approached by begging Indians, but on this occasion they stole outright and among other things carried off in the night some pigs belonging to Peter Thompson. When the depredations were discovered a number of young men from the settlement came together and proceeded to the Indians' camp, where they directly accused them of the theft. The Indians denied the accusation, but the young men scattered out among the lodges and began to search. Jonas Peterson, one of Erick Pehrson's sons, soon came upon an Indian who was engaged in cooking a pig whole in a large kettle or boiler. To attract the attention of the others he called out, "Piggie! piggie! piggie!" Before his companions could assemble, a stalwart warrior rushed toward him with the apparent intention of knocking him over; but the young man quickly sidestepped, put out one leg and tumbled the Indian to the ground. This incensed the redskin, and rushing into his tent he emerged a moment later armed with an ugly looking knife. Things now began to look serious. Whites and Indians gathered around and great excitement prevailed. There were ten armed Indians to each white man and a fight must have resulted disastrously to the latter. Rev. Andrew Jackson was in the party and finally persuaded his companions that in such a predicament discretion was the better part of valor, and that for the present it was best to let the Indians keep their booty.

*After the tumult had subsided Little Crow, who was among the warriors, stepped out of his tent and approached the white men. With a stick he drew a mark on the ground which he said represented the Mississippi river, another the Minnesota river and a third represented a line from Big Stone lake northeastward. Pointing to this rough map he said, with deliberate emphasis: "This is all *my* land; all game, all pigs are *mine*. The white man must move off *my* land to the other side of Fort Snelling."*

This incident made a deep impression on the white men present and so disturbed Rev. Jackson's peace of mind that he immediately wrote to Governor Ramsey asking that the Indians be restrained from doing further mischief. Letters of this tenor were frequently received by the governor, but in this instance he immediately communicated with Major Pemberton at Fort Ridgely and ordered that the Indians be compelled to remain on their reservations. There was but a handful of soldiers at Fort Ridgely and for this little force to keep thousands of Indians in restraint was an impossible task, and the red rovers continued to come and go as they felt disposed. The regions of the Kandiyohi lakes was always a favorite hunting ground and during the summer of 1861 a large number of them continued to camp around the lakes in the north central part of the county. In obedience to orders from the governor Major Pemberton with a company of soldiers from Fort Ridgely came up to Monongalia county this same summer and camped for some time between the Twin lakes. Here he met the Indians in council and endeavored to establish peace between them and the Chippewas, which proved as barren of results as all previous attempts of the same nature. This Pemberton became a Southern general and in 1863 surrendered Vicksburg to General Grant.