

The following narrative was transcribed by Glenn R. Vogtman, great-grandson of the author, Mrs. John Vogtman (née Catherine Buery) from a copy of the original newspaper publication.

Every effort was made to transcribe the story as faithfully as it was written including errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, syntax, etc. Any attempt to make corrections for purposes of meaning, clarity, or accuracy (as in the spelling of proper names) was done in *italics* within brackets [].

Mrs. John Vogtman (née Catherine Buery) was a 14 year old daughter of George Buery, an early settler of the La Croix Creek (Birch Coulee) area near present day Morton, Minnesota at the time of the 1862 Dakota Conflict.

In August, 1862, the family consisted of George Buery, his wife Salomé/Sally (née Kaufman), daughters: Catherine, age 14 years, Margaret/Maggie, age 12 years, Emily, age 4 years, Mary Ann, age 3 years, and Martha, age 9 months; and a son: George Everett, age 6 years.

HUBBARD COUNTY CLIPPER

Park Rapids, Minnesota, Jan. 29, 1914

“THE SIOUX MASSACRE”

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“A Thrilling Sketch of the Horrible
Massacre of Settlers By
Indians in 1862”
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RELATED BY EYE WITNESS

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Mrs. Vogtman Gives Her Personal
Experiences During Those Trying Times
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Several months ago Mrs. John Vogtman was requested by the editor of the Clipper to write a sketch of her personal experiences of that awful massacre by the Sioux Indians in Renville County, this state. The Indians went on the war path on the morning of August 18, 1862, and they started their murderous work three miles northwest of the Lower Sioux Agency. Mrs. Vogtman describes the cruelty and deception of the Indian and the hardships of the settlers in a very interesting manner. The article will be published in two installments, the second installment to be published in our next issue.

The morning dawned bright and clear after a rainy spell of several days. Father had a lot of hay ready to stack, so he yoked his oxen to the wagon and he and mother went to haul hay. I being the oldest was left with the rest of the children to keep house while they were gone. My uncle [*John Kumro*] had started for New Ulm that morning with some wheat to have it ground, he having threshed it with the flail, as there were no threshing machines there at that time. When he got to where the road turned to the Agency the Whites [*Caucasians*] that lived there were all fleeing away, some bare headed and bare footed, carrying their children in their night clothes. One man carrying his arm in a sling, he being shot by the Indians that morning. So my uncle left his team with them and returned for his family and came to notify my father's family. About this time father drove up with his first load, another boy rode up to tell us that the Indians were at their house when he came away.

Packing up such things as they wanted, they told them they had better leave, so they took the ox team, packed the women and children in the wagon, this being Mrs. Eunes' [*also spelled Juni*] family, and their neighbor's wife and child, Mrs. Mike Haden [*Hayden*]. The men remained to load some things on Mrs. Haden's team, and to look up

their cattle to drive them along, as we were all pioneers and had only lived there three years and what little we had was dearly earned and was badly needed. We had harvested our first crop a few days before. Returning to us they upset the hay and put on the wagon box and we packed the children and ourselves into it. My father's family bible lay on the table, I took it and a half a loaf of bread, some knives and we started to go towards Fort Ridgely, but intended to stop at Magnus Johnsons [*more likely Edward Magner's place*] and consult what to do. When we got about a mile from home we met two Indians, who upon seeing us stopped, and loaded their gun, they having but one shot gun, so we stopped they came up to us and asked where we were going. We told them what we had heard and they said we should go back, that the Indians had broken into the warehouse to get something to eat, and that they did not intend to hurt the settlers. They also told us they were hunting their ponies so they went on, and we turned around to go back.

Now we lived on the Minnesota River bottom, but we had climbed the hill where it is a level prairie, so the men went back to the brow of the hill to look down to the main road and saw two teams, Mr. Haden's and our nearest neighbors wife, Mrs. Kirchnes [*Kaertner or Keartner*], and some one driving a herd of cattle and our cattle with them. About a mile to the north was a Mr. Witt mowing hay, his boy would drive out and he would load on a load and the boys' mother would help him stack it when he came home. Now when father and uncle turned and looked into the bottom they saw thirteen Indian warriors ascending the hill about a mile to the east of us going straight for Mr. Witt's home. His boy would drive the team to where his father was mowing and he would load for him and his mother would help him stack it. Now when the boy drove to the stack he heard shooting in the house and saw Indians, so he crawled in the hay and hid. The father

thinking the boy was having trouble with his load started home to see, but when he got in the house he found his wife lying on the floor, shot dead. She had been down cellar after something for dinner, the trap door stood open and a boy about ten years old was shot and fell in the cellar, having been shot in the shoulders. A little babe of six weeks old was in the cradle unhurt. The rest of the children were hid around the house, so he wrapped his wife in a blanket, buried her side of the house, dressed the boy's shoulder, took some bedding, the children, some cows, and started for the Fort, arriving there without seeing an Indian. Father said let us drive down the hill where the Indians ascended, so we came just ahead of Mr. Haden's team, and father stayed back and they planned what to do. When we struck the road which came from the agency, the dead body of Mr. Manly [?] lay by the side of the road, bare headed and bare footed, shot in the breast. Just then three Indians came up the road, one came to our wagon, one to Mrs. Kirchnes and the third stood back with his gun. Father had reached the wagon as the Indian got there, and he shook hands with father. The other Indian wanted to take Mrs. Kirschnes' gun she refused, so he pulled his gun to shoot her when she threw the gun down and left the wagon. Meantime the Indian at our wagon told us all to get off. My brother nine years old refused [*this would be George Everett, actually age 6 years*], whereupon he hauled up his tomahawk, but father jerked him away, the tomahawk skinning about an inch in the side board of the wagon box. I then asked the Indian to let me have the Bible and he threw it towards me and the bread, and I reached for a knife, but he would not let me have it. Now Mr. Hadens [*Hayden*] had stopped their team and was watching to see how we were getting along, so the Indians told us to take the road, but we turned and climbed the hill again. Now the other team was with Mr. Mike and John Haden and five children

of a neighbor's by the name of Eicenrich [*Eisenreich*], the parents driving their cattle, a herd of 22 head. When we got about half way up the hill we heard two shots, but the three Indians and the two men were standing, but when we got out of sight of them we heard two more shots. This was about a mile east of La Croix Creek. When Mrs. Eicenrich reached the Creek she told her husband she would follow the children, but she never saw her husband again. As she was hurrying along she overtook Mr. Kirchnes and a Mr. Shurk [?], they were walking all three abreast, she in the center, when those three Indians came up in front of them, they told her to stop, whereupon they shot both men dead, and told her to go on. When she reached her children, they had been thrown off from the wagon and some Indians had taken the three teams to the Agency. Just then an Indian came on horseback, took the oldest boy on the horse, and also took the woman and the rest of the children prisoners. The boy fell off from the horse and broke his arm. They were afterwards released at Camp Relice [*Release*]. Our party had reached the top of the prairie when we saw an object a little ways ahead in the slough.

We thought it was an Indian and he thought we were Indians, but finally we made out that it was a white man so he joined our party, which now counted fifteen. Now east of us was a deep ravine, and we were going around it to reach the house we were aiming for, Magnus Johnston's [*more likely Edward Magner's place per Satterlee*], when we heard a woman scream and saw the smoke ascent from the very house we were going to stop at.

Dr. Humphery [*Humphrey*] and his family, numbering five in all started from the Agency for the fort, but when they reached this house they sat down on a bench to rest and sent the oldest boy, about 12 years old, to the spring across the road on the brow of

the hill, but before he got on the hill heard a shot and looking over the hill saw the Indians shoot his father and his mother then ran in the house with her two little children, then the Indians set fire to it, and all three were burned to death, but the boy made his escape to the Fort.

We watched until we were sick at heart, then we proceeded to go around the ravine to get in the road to the Fort, when we spied [sic] two objects at a distance, then we saw that the woman wore a shacker, a kind of bonnet worn at that time by women, who also joined our party, which now numbered seventeen in all. The Indians were at their home, and packed everything that they wanted, so we journeyed on till we got in the road towards the Fort, when a man on horseback came up the road calling, 'go back,' so we went into a slough and laid down in the tall grass. We stayed about an hour then we traveled north and made a circle towards the Fort. At last just at sunset, we saw the guard outside the Fort, who at first thought that we were Indians, but when they observed we were white folks, they came to meet us. It was just dusk as we entered Fort Ridgely. Returning to our neighbors, Mrs. Eunes' family with Mrs. Haden and a Mr. Zimmerman his wife three boys and two girls, with another team had preceeded us and it was remarkable, both Mrs. Eune and Mrs. Zimmerman were blind, but they had gone about a half mile farther than we and had reached Mr. Faraboult [*Faribault*], the Government Indian Interpreter.

When they ran into the massacre the Indians had shot Mr. Faraboult and tied him to the back end of a wagon head down and dragged him to death [*cannot verify who this was*]. They then proceeded to Mr. Zimmerman's wagon. Mrs. Zimmerman understood the Indians as they said they would kill the men, whereupon she put her arms around her

husband and ask them to kill her and leave him with the children, but they shot him out of her arms, the oldest boy twenty years, one seventeen year old boy they also shot, leaving her and the three youngest.

Now Mrs. Hayden took her child and slipped off the back of the wagon and succeeded in getting into the brush and tall grass and reached the Fort that night without seeing any more Indians. The Indians then drove the two blind women into Mr. Faraboult's house and fastened them in, telling them they would return and burn them up, but in the afternoon a man fleeing for the Fort broke open the window and they all reached the Fort.

Mr. June [?] did not reach the Fort until the third day. He had been driving his cattle, but was forced to leave them and hide. A few rods to the south where the Indians took our team a man had been hiding in the willows and saw how we had been treated, he also saw the Indians shoot the two Hadens.

When we reached the Fort, tired, hungry, and down hearted, they took us into one of the log houses, brought us some rice tea, and bread. We had just started a fire when the sound of a gun was heard, whereupon they took us into the quarters which were built of stone, for safety. They then took every man and put him on guard outside, without having had either dinner or supper.

Now let me state the condition the war was in at that point. Most of the soldiers having been called out, the Fort had been left with as few men as possible, there being not more than 25 men at the Fort that evening, as Captain Marsh had left that morning with 40 men, for the Agency. By reading the narrative of the fifth Minnesota, in the Civil

and Indian wars, you will get a more correct account of it in the Battle of Redwood, as it was then called, although it was the Lower Sioux Agency.

Mr. J. C. Dickinson was one of the party that took my uncle's oxen, but when Mr. Dickinson reached the Faribault home they took the oxen off and put on the latter's horses as Mr. Faribault felt secure, he being married to a squaw, but in reality was no safer than the whites. Mr. Dickinson's brother was missing, so he went out with the burial party in search of his brother, and was killed in the Battle of Birch Coolie. Captain Marsh with his party on reaching the Minnesota River were all ambushed, and all but thirteen were killed, the remainder having been wounded, arrived at the Fort some ten days later. About 40 young men from the Upper and Lower Sioux Agency, had been enlisted to go south and had started for St. Peter the Friday before to be mustered into the service. A messenger was sent to St. Peter, and also the entire regiment of Renville Rangers under the command of Lieut. Sheehan, who took charge of affairs at the Fort. The same day the money for the annuity of the Indians arrived at the Fort, amounting to \$71,000.00. On Tuesday morning, about 10:00 o'clock a small band of Indians attacked the Fort, fighting for about an hour after which they beat a retreat. Meanwhile a young man, who had been sick, by the name of Rickey, about 19 years old, died in the quarters, with his loved ones about him making the end as comfortable as possible.

On Wednesday at 8:00 P.M. the 20th, of August, the Indians appeared in great numbers and commenced a fierce battle. The Fort is situated on the edge of the prairie about a half mile from the Minnesota River a timbered bottom intervening and a wooded ravine running up out of the bottom around two sides of the Fort within about twenty rods of the buildings affording shelter for the enemy on three sides within easy rifle or musket

range. The men were instantly formed in line of battle by order of Lieut. Sheehan. Two men, Mark M. Grear of Company C. and Wm. Goode of Company B. fell at first fire, after which the men broke for shelter and from windows and the shelter of the buildings fired upon the enemy. Robert Baker, a citizen, who had escaped from the Lower Sioux Agency, was shot through the head and instantly killed while standing at a window in the quarters. The forces in the Fort at this time were the remnant of Company B. 5th, Regiment. M. V. Culver's 30 men, about 50 men of Company C. The Renville Rangers under the command of Lieut. Gorman, Sargent [*sic*] Jones of the regular army, a brave and skillful man, took charge of the artillery of which there was in the Fort, six pieces of which three were used, two six pounders and one twenty four pound field piece. One of the guns was placed in charge of a citizen named J. C. Whipple, who had seen service in the Mexican war and in the United States Navy. One in charge of Sargent [*sic*] McGrew of Company C. the other in charge of Sargent [*sic*] Jones in person. The number of the Indians that were engaged was estimated at five hundred warriors, lead [*sic*] by Little Crow. To render the position of beleaguered garrison more critical, the magazine was some twenty rods outside of the main works on the open prairie. Only a small portion of ammunition had been removed inside. Men were at once detailed to take the ammunition into the Fort, which duty they performed, working all the afternoon with Indian bullets raining across the open space over which they had to pass, until the last ounce was safely within the barracks.

In the meantime the Indians had got into some of the log houses used for the soldiers families and behind some hay stacks, from which they poured heavy volleys into the Fort, but a few well directed shells from the howitzers set them on fire, and when

night came it was a sight never to be forgotten, to those who witnessed the scene. The great danger feared by all was that the Indians would crawl under cover of darkness to the buildings and set fire by fire arrows, igniting the dry roofs, but the loving eye of God was watching over us and about midnight the heavens opened and the rain began to fall, “Rain, Rain, Thank God, Thank God,” went around the beleaguered garrison. Men women and children breathed once more in comparative safety. In this battle two were killed and nine wounded; during the battle of the twentieth, Indians had taken possession of a stable in the rear of Sargent [*sic*] Jones’ quarters and held it until night, when Whipple was ordered to shell it and set it on fire, two shells were thrown from the mountain howitzer, both bursting inside of the building, setting the hay on fire. Two half breeds, Joe Latour and George Dashner of the Renville Rangers were stationed at the bakery within easy rifle range of the stable. As a shell went crashing into the building, an Indian sprang out of the door and started for the ravine; a ball from Dasher’s rifle brought him to the ground and when he tried to crawl away from the burning building, Dashner, seeing the move, dropped gun and simply saying, “Come Joe,” they started for the stable and seizing the wounded, struggling wretch, pitched him headlong into the flames and shouting the Indian warhoop returned unhurt.

Meanwhile the government was pressing men and teams into the service to take the refugees to safety. So one morning a string of teams drove in front of quarters, loading on those that had fled to the fort for safety. There was a long string of teams under an escort of soldiers. We drove until sunset when we stopped for the night. Some barrels of hard tack were opened and distributed. The well, an old fashioned one where the water was drawn was not far from the house where we stopped. With so many

people, drawing the water was naturally slow work with a bucket, but when they tried to drink this water it had a rank taste. Hair was discovered and the head of a woman was dipped up in the bucket. Now we were left without water and that hardtack was so hard that it could not be broken with hammer or stone. We had been traveling all day where the stench from the bodies of the dead animals that had died from over-eating unprotected green corn. Now and then we would pass a new mound where some unfortunate one had been murdered and the remains left in the sun. A few shovels of earth was thrown upon them to get them out of sight but the air was something fearful that night. We slept under the canopy of heaven, mother earth for our bed. Morning dawned at last. Some more hard tack for breakfast and the journey resumed. Slow and weary we traveled on till we reached St. Peter. Here we were treated to hot soup that contained so much pepper we could hardly eat it. Then we were escorted to some unfinished buildings for shelter and without bedding of any kind. The next morning the men were informed that if they would go out of town and work in the harvest fields themselves and families would be provided with provisions, if not, the women and children would receive soup once a day. Father told them he could not do it as he had a large family and winter was near. He needed clothing and bedding so poor father had to go hungry some of the time.

We remained here several days as we had no means of getting away till one day a small steam boat loaded with wheat made its appearance and father made arrangements with captain for our transportation to St. Paul. Three more families went with us, Mr. Eune, his blind wife and children, Mr. Kumro's family and Mr. and Mrs. Yess. Mrs. Yess had a bullet in her head received in the flight from the Indians. While on the boat we would lay for hours at a time on some sand bar in the middle of the river, the men

carrying the wheat sacks first to the front and then to the rear to change the ballast so we could work off the bar. The third day out the boat struck a snag and sprung a leak. This put the men on the pumps and for three days and nights we were without food and that while among supposed civilized people. They told us we could be satisfied for being on the boat. The banks of the river at this point were heavily timbered and run over with wild grape vines, making it an excellent place for the Indians to hide so the men were put on guard every night which added greatly to their suffering. Finally father asked the Captain how far we were from Le Suer [*sic*] and on learning we were but four miles from there by land we received permission to land.

On landing our first thought was of something to eat. We tried to buy some bread at the first house but they were threshing and could not let us have any but they directed to us another house about a mile away. At last we reached this house and were kindly received. The lady gave a dish pan to the men and told them to dig some potatoes and some got some water. Mrs. Burch the lady of the house made biscuit and such a feast as we had. Some of the crowd took sick from over eating they were so hungry. The meal being over we wended our way to Le Suer [*sic*] four miles distant where we were well cared for, thanks to the citizens. The town had sent the most of its men to assist at New Ulm. Our men went to work the next day for one dollar per day in the harvest field. This was in September, the grain was all uncut and much of it went to waste. Mrs. Eune the blind woman died soon after, leaving a large family of children. Father walked to Mankato the following December to witness the hanging of the 38 Indians, the most of whom we were acquainted with, having lived across the Minnesota river about two miles from our home.

I will now come to a close, having told you but a small part of what really happened. There were many sad sights to witness as the refugees came into the Fort. One woman and a small babe that were badly burned and Mrs. Trohp [*Frolip*], after being shot with fine shot so her back looked like a seive [*sic*]; the two little boys that left their little baby brothers asleep in a house so they could get to the Fort; the arrival of Mrs. Crothers [*Carrothers*] and her two children from captivity amongst the Indians and many more.

We finally moved to our old home in Renville County and many times we could hear shooting of Indians and some times see them for a year after. We lived their [*sic*] for sixteen years then moved to Hubbard County where we have resided ever since and expect to stay here to the end. May none of the readers of this brief history of pioneer days ever experience anything similar is the wish of the writer.

Mrs. J. Vogtman