

ADDENDUM to Urban History

Johann Jacob Urban

Since the Johann Jacob Urban family was intertwined in Minnesota and U.S. history in 1862 I thought more detailed information on the events and the Urban's place in them would be of interest. Most of this information is well known, at least in bits and pieces, to many of the Urban clan but felt including it and the sources even in this bare outline of our family history would be worth the effort.

It may be noted that two of the other families involved in the capture of the Sacred Heart community may have been Pauline's (Wilhelmine Pauline Doege Urban) sisters. Minnie Buce Carrigan in her book refers to two of Pauline's sisters but doesn't name them. A distant cousin also was under the impression that Johann and family had arrived at Sacred Heart not long before the uprising. Since Johann had not had the opportunity to yet build a home, he, Pauline and family were still living with one of Pauline's sisters. No siblings of Pauline have been found that I am aware of so these two tidbits of information about the Doege family are intriguing.

1. Excerpt from Wilhelmine Pauline Urban's obituary, 1825

In 1862 they moved to Minnesota and settled down near New Ulm across the Minnesota River. Not very long after the Indian Massacre broke out and many settlers were unmercifully slaughtered. Mrs. Urban with her children, her husband not being at home, tried to escape, but was captured by the Indians and had a narrow escape from death. They were kept captive for a long time. After peace was declared, the family was re-united in St. Paul.

2. Incidents of Indian Days published in 1912 in the Mankato Daily Review newspaper

Albert Urban, one of the prominent farmers of Pleasant Mound Township while in the city Wednesday with election returns from that part of the County, incidentally and in a laughing manner made the remark to the Daily Review man that he was branded as a pioneer of this state. The reporter becoming interested, asked Mr. Urban what he meant by that.

In answer to the question Mr. Urban shoved back his hat from his forehead and displayed a livid scar over the left eye. "This" said Mr. Urban "is a keepsake I carry from the Indian outbreak of 1862, when our home near Fort Ridgley was attacked by Little Crow, while father was at work in New Ulm in a wagon shop. My mother and three sisters and myself were captured, but my oldest brother managed to get away. My mother had to carry one three-year-old girl on her

back and my 11-month-old sister in her arms as the Indians forced us along when they went farther west.

“The three-year-old girl I speak of is Mr. Gus Blum [Rose Urban Blumberg] of St. Peter and the eleven-months-old child is now grown to womanhood and is the wife of Gotfried Neumann [Louise Urban Neumann] of Lake Crystal and mother of Al Neumann, marshall of that village. The other sister is Mrs. Charles Miller [Ernestine Urban Mueller Burke] of Montana.

“My mother was not ill treated, strange as tho it may sound, and now when I look back thru the years I can realize this was owing to the fact that we were driven from place to place in custody of the Indians for over six weeks as they ran to dodge the soldiers, we did not fare as badly as we might have, when one takes into consideration, that we were captured by savages.

“Oh, the story of the scar on my forehead, did you say? Well, at that time I was a boy but six years of age but tho I am now a man going on 56 years, I can shut my eyes and see the whole terrible ordeal as plainly as if it were yesterday. After being in captivity for several days I was stripped as naked as the day I was born and ran naked with the Indian children and other white children in captivity.

“Whether the Indians were testing my nerve with the view of adopting me in their tribe or not I am unable to tell, but they took it into their heads that is, the best bow and arrow shots in the tribe, to place pieces of bark on my head and shoot the same off. Being then but a mere child, I was terribly frightened and several times one day my knees nearly wilted under me, and I would have fallen had not some of the Indians prodded me with their knives to make me understand that I had to stand up straight and still.

“It may be that I stirred, and now I don’t wonder that I did, or it may be the archer aiming his arrow at the piece of bark on the top of my head shot low. However this may be it was then that I received the ‘stamp of Minnesota’ which I will bear to my grave. The point of the arrow struck me on the forehead and knocked me out, and I stayed that way for three days, but you see,” said Mr. Urban with a smile, “I came out of it all right or I would not be telling you how I came to be bearing this mark.”

In closing his narrative Mr. Urban said, “My mother is still living and makes her home with my brother Fred who lives near Lewisville. I wish you could meet her, for she remembers many interesting incidents of those trying times.”

3. Albert Urban Obituary Excerpt from Mankato Free Press, 28 January 1931

The obituary includes the same story from the Mankato Daily Review above with the following addition:

When they were taking them to their camp they came to a place where they had to ford the Minnesota River. The Indians stripped him naked, threw him into the river and told him to go ahead and cross. Albert could not swim and never been in a lake or river before. Luckily for him, however, the Indians were driving a herd of cattle across the river. He caught hold of the tail of a cow and was dragged ashore.

4. August Urban story published June 1932 in the Truman Tribune by John Wood Bussman

This is a true story about a little boy that was captured by the Indians. In the years 1981 August Urban, a boy of eight years, moved with his parents from Wisconsin to Renville County, Minnesota. The Indians seemed quiet and friendly then and they made the trip in safety.

The Indians in this part of Minnesota were not very friendly to the whites and several times shot and killed a few of the whites. One time just after this boy came to Minnesota he saw an Indian shoot a little girl's hand off. The girl was hugging her mother and the shot that tore off her hand killed her mother.

One day two men were cutting hay for the soldiers and found the bodies of a number of white people. They ran at once and told the rest of the people what they had found and all of them thought it best to start for Fort Ridgley. So at night they hitched the oxen to the wagons and put the women and children in the wagons and started for the Fort. They could not travel very fast in those days and met the Indians before they reached the Fort. Those Indians seemed friendly and told the white people that they would take care of them. They took the women and children to their tents.

The white men were made to walk beside the wagons and at a whistle from one Indian each Indian shot a white man. The Indian squaws were jealous of the white women and used to cover them with rags or anything they could when ever the Indian men came near. The Indians let the white people have their pick of the food they cooked. They cooked chickens and ducks, feathers and all, and just heated the potatoes through in the coals.

The white women promised the Indian men that if they were paired they would not be their squaws. The Indians thought that the children should be shot. They shot at August Urban, who was stunned and fell. Another boy fell partly over him killed. The Indians thought August was dead too but by night he and three other children and one woman got away and started for the Fort. For sixteen and a half days they wandered around on the prairie. They had no food except grass, bark of trees and roots. One day they found melon rinds on the road and ate every bit of them, skin and all. Water was scarce and they had to drink water they found in sink holes or any place. Once or twice they met friendly Indians who gave them a few crusts of bread. Most of the time they travelled by night and hid in the woods or swamps by day for fear of meeting unfriendly Indians.

When they did reach the Fort they were nearly starved and begged for food and water. The soldiers gave them just a little food and water at first for fear they might eat too much and die.

The rest of the white people stayed with the Indians for six weeks. Then some soldiers went and got them away from the Indians.

August's mother was one of the white women who was kept by the Indians all this time.

August Urban still has a lump on his head where the bullet hit him when he was a boy of nine years.

Notes on this article: From Albert's account and other sources listed in the bibliography it is clear there are some inconsistencies in this article either because August was not clear in his recounting or the reporter misunderstood August as he gave his account of the uprising.

5. Urbans and the Dakota Uprising of 1862 compiled by Marba Pogue (copyright 2009)

Monday, 18 August 1862 started out to be another routine day at the Urban homestead near Sacred Heart creek in Flora Township, Renville County, Minnesota. Johann was away at New Ulm where he worked in a wagon wheel shop and helped in the fields. His wife, Pauline, was at home with their children, August 9 years, Ernestina 7 years, Albert 4 years 11 months, Rose 6 days shy of her third birthday and little 1 year old Louise.

Pauline and the children were beginning to relax after another hard day of chores when Emeal Grundman and August Fross drove excitedly up to the house. Each

man prodded an ox team with a pitch fork to hurry the oxen along. They informed Pauline that the Indians were killing the white settlers. She was instructed to gather the children together and meet at the home of Paul Kitzman where they would decide what course of action should be taken.

During the discussion that ensued with the entire community assembled at the Kitzman home some people said it was difficult to believe the Indians were on the warpath since they had lived together peacefully up to this time. Paul Kitzman was one who held this belief and so sent two men to the John Schwandt house to investigate. The men returned with a coat belonging to Schwandt's hired man, John Fross. It was blood stained and had a bullet hole in it. They had found most of the family murdered.

Everyone was now convinced the Indians were indeed on the warpath. The ox teams were hitched to wagons and at 8:00 P.M. 13 families with 11 ox-drawn wagons left for Fort Ridgley. They started traveling on the fort road but soon veered off to the northeast toward Renville hoping to avoid the war parties by taking a more indirect route. At 2 or 3 A.M. they again changed course toward Beaver Creek, heading around that stream toward the fort.

Two hours after dawn they had travelled about 14 miles - half the distance to the fort. At that time the settlers spotted a band of eight Sioux (Dakota) on a hill to the west. The Dakota were all armed as they approached the settlers who had only two guns and no ammunition.

One Indian who knew Paul Kitzman dismounted, came forward to inquire of him where they were going. Kitzman answered that the Indians were killing all the white people so they were leaving. The Dakota man replied that it was the Chippewa (Ojibway) who were killing the white people therefore the settlers were to return to their homes under Dakota protection. Much goodwill and handshaking followed and the guns were put away. The Indians also asked for something to eat because they were hungry. The settlers collected some bread and gave it to the Indians who sat in a circle with their guns behind them.

The Dakota began to escort the settlers back to their homes at times riding ahead of the wagons, other times riding behind. Sometimes the Dakota were even out of sight but they were always watching.

When the group of settlers was within sight of their homes, they came upon the bodies of two men and a dog. At that time, the Indians were ahead and out of sight. Mr. T. Kraus became upset at the sight. He bolted the horse he was riding and rode out of sight over the hills toward Fort Ridgley for help. Mr. Kraus' wife was screaming and there was a great deal of confusion as the Indians approached once again from the west.

The Indians inquired as to the where-about of Mr. Kraus but no one answered. The Indians went ahead of the wagons a short distance, dismounted and returned to the wagons, four on each side, and opened fire. Confusion reigned; everyone was screaming, some jumped from the wagons and threw themselves on the ground. All but three of the men were killed in the first round of shooting. Some women and children were beaten, shot or tomahawked to death.

Mrs. Guess was caught in the trace chains of an ox team that ran into the brush. After being dragged for a distance, she freed herself and eventually made her way to Fort Ridgley.

August Urban received a glance shot on the forehead. He was stunned and fell unconscious. Another boy who was mortally wounded fell on top of him. The Indians left them both for dead.

It was almost dark and 25 people lay dead and more were injured.

Another group of Indians had appeared on a hill overlooking the scene and watched the entire massacre. The new band of Indians joined the original group and took the survivors captive. Among the survivors were Pauline Urban and her four other children - Ernestine, Albert, Rose and Louise.

After the Indians left the scene under cover of darkness, settlers who were wounded or assumed dead began to stir. Minnie Krieger, 6 years old, Caroline Krieger 11 years, Lizzie Krieger 10 years, Tillie Krieger 13 years old, Mrs. Anna Zable, who was wounded in the hip and August Urban carried 18 wounded children to the Krieger home nearby.

Caroline and Tillie Krieger took water back to the dying men and women in the field. The others in the little group became alarmed because Caroline and Tillie were gone so long. Lizzie Krieger and Mrs. Zable went to look for them while

August Urban and Minnie Krieger stayed with her 6-month old sister and the other wounded children. Mrs. Zable and the Krieger sisters finally returned near dawn the next day, 20 August.

Mrs. Zable thought it would be dangerous to stay at the house because the Indians might return and kill them. The Krieger girls, August Urban and Mrs. Zable washed in the brook and went to Mr. Tillie's house looking for food. All they found was some flour which they mixed with water and ate.

The little group decided to try to reach Fort Ridgley but they were unable to carry baby Kieger any further. As the rest wandered that day, they came upon what they supposed was the body of Mrs. Krieger. As it turned out, the girls' mother was only wounded and was later rescued and taken to Fort Ridgley. That night the Krieger girls, August Urban and Anna Zable once again reached the Krieger home to find the Dakota had indeed returned, burned the house with the dead and dying children still inside.

The morning of 21 August they started again on their way to the fort. At first the group traveled by day but discontinued that when they came near to being captured. They slept during the day and traveled at night. They had nothing to eat so were forced to eat grass, tree bark and roots and drank water from sink holes. One day, they found red onions in an abandoned house and ate those with delight. Another day they found melon rinds and devoured those.

One evening at dusk, they came upon approximately 15 bodes of men, women and children. At this location, the small band of refugees again was almost caught by Indians. The Dakota were on foot and walked close to the group. However, they remained undetected by hiding perfectly still in the brush until the Indians passed.

Another evening, about 15 days since the first attack, the Krieger girls, Anna Zable and August Urban were five miles from Fort Ridgley when they spotted another band of Indians on the road ahead of them. They quickly dove into the tall grass beside the road hiding until the Indians passed. That was the end of their travel that night! In the morning the group almost ran into an Indian camp. The Indians didn't see them so the group ran back to the woods to hide.

The last day Minnie Krieger was exhausted and could go no farther. Mrs. Anna

Zable urged them to leave her behind. Lizzie Krieger and the other children would not hear of it and dragged Minnie to a creek, put water on her head and rested awhile. They were then able to continue together. At last the fort appeared in the distance. They were overjoyed and sat down to rest. It was enough for them to just look at it. When soldiers in the fort saw them a wagon was sent to pick them up. The children and Mrs. Zable had been on the road 12 days after eventually leaving the settlement.

6. Bibliography of 1862 Dakota Uprising

Just a note on the bibliography. When reading the various accounts such as those listed one has to be mindful of the details. Ages of children are listed differently in different accounts, who was with whom, and when and where can be confusing. It is only after reading and comparing the details does one begin to understand the facts. Daniel Buck's account for instance puts August Urban at a particular event when in actuality it was August Guess. Based on the age of the author and the age of Pauline's children, Minnie Buce Carrigan in one section of her book was referring to either Ernestina or Rose rather than their mother Pauline.

1. The Sioux Uprising of 1862, Kenneth Carley, 1962, Minnesota Historical Society Press.
2. Indian Massacre in Minnesota, Charles S. Bryant and Abel B Murch, 1864, Cincinnati Rickey and Carroll publishers, reprinted 1977, Kraus Reprint Co., Millwood, N.Y. [Includes personal narratives of many who escaped].
3. Through Dakota Eyes, Narrative Accounts of the Minnesota Indian War of 1862, Gary Clayton Anderson and Alan R. Woolworth, 1988, Minnesota Historical Society Press.
4. Little Crow, Spokesman For The Sioux, Gary Clayton Anderson, 1986, Minnesota Historical Society Press.
5. Held in Captivity, Experiences Related By Benedict Juni of New Ulm, Minn., as an Indian Captive During the Indian Outbreak in 1862, 1926, Liesch-Walter Printing Co., New Ulm, Minn, reprinted 1961, Kemske Paper Co., New Ulm, Minn.
6. Minnesota History Magazine, Sioux Uprising Issue, Fall 1976, Minnesota Historical Society Press.
7. A Detailed Account of the Massacre by the Dakota Indians of Minnesota in 1862, Marion P. Satterlee, self-published
8. Renville County History Book [Unfortunately, I only have one page from this publication.]

9. Horror at New Ulm, Brown County, Minnesota, Extracted from the Indian's Revenge: or Days of Horror, by Rev. Alexander Berghold, San Francisco, 1891, reprinted in *Midwestern Heritage*, Vol. 2, No. 4, page 148 and Vol. 3, No. 1, page 15-17.
10. Indian Outbreaks, Daniel Buck, 1965, Ross & Haines, Inc., Minneapolis, Minn.
11. Adrian J. Ebell, Photographer and Journalist of the Dakota War of 1862, Alan R. Woolworth, *Minnesota History* magazine, Summer 1994. [Includes wonderful pictures taken just before, during and immediately after the Uprising.]
12. Stereotypes of Minnesota's Native People, Bruce M. White, *Minnesota History* magazine, fall 1992.

Not read:

1. Over the Earth I Come: The Great Sioux Uprising of 1862, Duane Schultz, 1992, St. Martin's Press, New York. Reviewed in the *Minnesota History* magazine, fall 1993. [Reviewer didn't recommend the book. He felt it perpetuated Indian stereotypes rather than relate accurate historical events.]

Johann's siblings and their descendants also have some interesting stories of their own. For more detailed information about Johann Jacob's siblings see Urban Family History 1780-1986, Linke & Linke, 2nd edition, 2003.

Christian Friedrich Urban

Johann's brother Christian Friedrich was a farmer. Christian and Rosine had seven children by the time Rosine died at the age of 39 years 11 months about 10 months after the birth of their last child. Christian then married Auguste Geske who must have been much younger. They had ten children; the last born when Christian was about 68 years old.

August Friedrich, son of Christian and Rosine came to the United States but returned to Germany. August's and his wife, Margarete's, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are known to be living in Germany today. They are located in the cities of Hamburg, Augsburg, Essen, Minz, Berlin, Stuttgart, and Konstanz Am Bodensee.

Fredrick Emil, one of Christian and Auguste's sons was in the German Cavalry. While in the military he broke his leg when his horse slipped in the mud and fell on him. He came to the U.S. while on injury furlough and stayed. Fredrick can be found on the Hamburg ship's passenger list for the ship, Pennsylvania, leaving Hamburg on 10 March 1901. His point of origin was Sadke, Kreis Wirzitz, Posen. His occupation is listed as a "landmann." Fredrick came with a Wilhelm Fitting in second class. A Herman Fitting married his sister Ida. However, as of yet I have not been able to locate them on any New York ship's passenger list.

August Urban, Sr.

Rosina Urban, the daughter of August Urban, Jr. and Ernestine Rehbein traveled by covered wagon with her family when she was only six weeks old from Wisconsin to Minnesota. The water of the Mississippi River was so high at the time they crossed, Rosina was almost carried away by the current. She was in a willow reed basket the Indians had made for her. It got caught in a whirlpool but Rosina's mother grabbed her by the dress and pulled her to safety.

Ironically, one of Rosina's own children, Louisa, drowned when the Blue Earth River flooded in 1907. She was in a boat that tipped over; her dress caught in a fence. She was about 13 ½ years old.

William Blomberg

William Blomberg (1899-1951), the son of Rose Urban Blomberg who was one of Henry Otto Urban's sisters was quite the character. He was unmarried and joined the circus.

The following article was in the Minneapolis Star newspaper by staff writer Frank Marray. There is no date on the paper but I would estimate it to be late '40s or early 50s:

'ME, I'D BE A CIRCUS HORSE'

Life of Riley, Says Wabasha Rodeo Man

When they celebrate the end of toll charges on the Inter-state bridge at Wabasha, Minn., Saturday, it will be old home week rolled into a single day for Bill Blomberg, the 260-pound six-footer who's going to run the rodeo as the principal attraction. Because Bill's back home now and sort-of plans to stay. At 47, he's beginning to take roots - on an 80-acre farm nestled into the hills of the Hiawatha valley. But what a farm! An agronomist would say it's out of this world. A veterinarian would go bug-eyed. Any old circus hand would agree it's a dream come true. The crop this year, Bill figures, ought to run to about 3,500 bushels of apples, quite a few tons of hay, barrels of walnuts and some assorted livestock. Present livestock inventory, as of today, is 14 Shetland ponies, 15 Morocco horses, 15 bucking bronks, three comedy mules, 25 foxhounds, 24 trained dogs, seven Alaskan malamutes and huskies, and a monkey named Mike. Bill began to get his ideas of what a real farm ought to raise way back when he was a kid in St. Peter, Minn., over in neighboring Nicollet county. He did then what so many kids of about 12 dreamed of 30 years ago. He just up and ran away to join the circus. He worked his way up in the old Barnes circus to director of animal trainers. Then he left the circus flat, bummed around a while and turned up in the early twenties in Minneapolis with the

start of an act that was to carry him to the pinnacle of vaudeville top billing at the Palace in New York. "Bill Blomberg and his Alaskan Dog Team" was his billing from coast to coast. The famous "serum run" [now know as the Iditerod Dogsled Race] to Nome had put the romance of the dogsled into the public eye, and Bill cashed in on it. "Me, if I had a choice, I'd be a performing horse," says Bill. "You work 'em pretty hard the first year. After that it's the life of Riley. Best of food, best of bunks, best of care." The war nearly washed him up. He had a big animal show, with bucking horses and roping steers, touring the midwest fairs in 1942. Then, despite his age and weight, Blomberg got "greetings" one day in Sedalia, Mo. He sold his animals and equipment and prepared to go into the army. Then the "over 38" law went into effect and the army lost interest in Bill. By then show business was pretty restricted, and his equipment was gone. Now the tide has turned in his favor again. Back in his home state again, Blomberg has worked out a compromise that should see him through the rest of his days. He's booking himself and his acts into community celebrations and county and state fairs around the Upper Midwest. He made a good start last year. When the Wabasha Chamber of Commerce asked him to put on a little show for the bridge celebration Saturday, he got a big kick out of it. He's sharpening up every act he's got and he says he's going to give the hometown folks - and the crowds expected to come from all parts of southern Minnesota and Wisconsin - "the best darn show they ever did see."