

*Family and Friends of
Dakota Uprising Victims*

**What Happened to the
Settlers in Renville County?**

The Aftermath of the U.S. - Dakota War

Janet R. Clasen Klein - Joyce A. Clasen Kloncz

Volume II

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What Happened to the Settlers in Renville County?

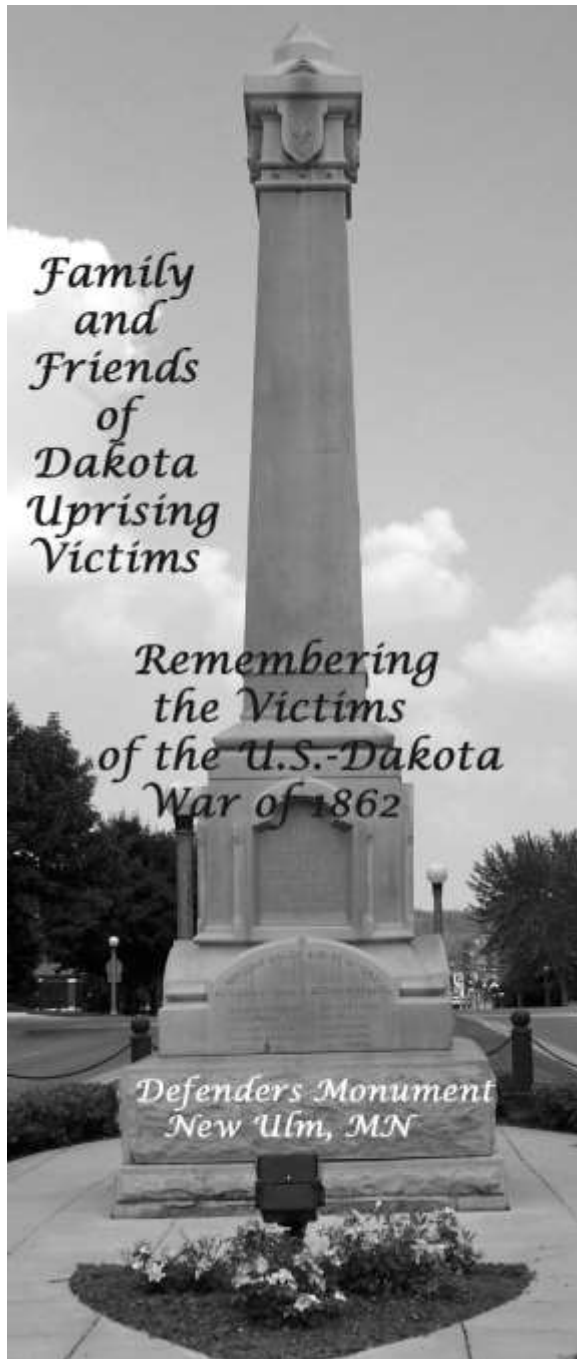
“With our going, the horrors of August, 1862 will cease to be a memory. Soon it will just be history – history classed with the many hardships of frontier life out of which have grown our beautiful, thriving state and its good, sturdy people. . . .”

Minnie Mathews, daughter of Werner Boesch
From the Marshall Daily Messenger, 1939

Front cover, *‘People Escaping the Indian Massacre. Dinner on the Prairie. Thursday, August 21st, 1862’*, by Adrian Ebell and Edwin Lawton, photographers. Joel E. Whitney Gallery, St. Paul, Minnesota, publisher. Ebell photographed the large group of settlers, missionaries, Yellow Medicine Indian Agency employees and Dakota escaping with him and Mr. Lawton. This image is thought to be the only image photographed during the war. The photograph was probably taken in the general vicinity of Morton in Renville County but up on the highlands.

We are grateful to Corinne L. Marz for the use of this photograph from the Monjeau-Marz Collection.

What Happened to the Settlers in Renville County?



Our group *Family and Friends of Dakota Uprising Victims* was founded in 2011 to recognize our settler ancestors and honor their sacrifice and place in Minnesota history. On August 18, 1862, many settlers lost their lives, their homes, their property and peace of heart and mind. Their stories should never be forgotten.

Our mission is to give voice to these brave settlers by publishing their stories provided by their descendants. Accordingly, we have set up a website for this:

www.dakotavictims1862.com

There is also a companion Facebook page that now has over 200 followers that can be accessed on-line at Family and Friends of Dakota Uprising Victims.

The website features dozens of their stories. There are also photographs of monuments, victims and tombstones, lists of those killed, captured and those who escaped, commemoration pictures and extensive lists of those who served in the military and on town militia teams plus much more.

If you want to share your family story, please contact us at our email addresses below.

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Joyce Clasen Klonc

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What Happened to the Settlers in Renville County?

Foreword

This book addresses an important but largely neglected question regarding the 1862 U.S.-Dakota War: “What happened to the settlers?” It focuses on Renville County, Minnesota, which of all counties affected suffered the greatest number of deaths and casualties. Those that survived could not immediately return to their homes, or what was left of them, for some time.

The 2nd Minnesota Cavalry Regiment had to maintain border patrol until the end of the Civil War due to continued violence and killings on the frontier. As a result, General Henry H. Sibley and General Alfred Sully conducted campaigns in 1863 and 1864 into Dakota Territory. These campaigns were also conducted because of a large Indian camp numbering into the thousands west of the Minnesota border in Dakota Territory. It consisted of various Dakota bands, including the followers of Little Crow and Inkpaduta. Not until several years after the Uprising was it actually safe to return to Renville County.

Franklin Curtiss-Wedge notes in his history of Renville County: “Here and there a trapper pursued his calling and found shelter at times in some settler’s cabin left standing by the Indians, but for the most part the county was bereft of human activity from the time of the Indian Massacre to the time when a few brave souls ventured back in 1865.” At this time, however, there still were “small parties of Indians scouting over our frontier.”¹ As late as May 1865, the Jewett family was killed at Rapidan, near Mankato, demonstrating that the region was still not completely secure.² Many settlers came to Renville County in the following years, but most were new to the area, as the original population of settlers had been decimated and not all of those who survived wanted to return.

In early 1870, my great-grandparents, Carl and Augusta Tolzmann, moved to Flora Township, acquiring what had previously been the farm of the Schwandt family. They moved there as my great-grandmother’s parents had moved there in 1869. Both families moved from farms in Le Sueur County; apparently many were moving to Renville County at that time, since it had been depopulated as a result of the war. Even though they came to Renville County after the Uprising, it was impossible to not be aware of what had happened there. In the area around the family farm, in sections 33-35 of Flora Township, thirty-nine people had been killed.³ If something like this happened today, it would get worldwide news coverage.

Not surprisingly, my grandfather, Albert Tolzmann, was interested in the Uprising and belonged to the Renville County Pioneers Association. Just as members of my grandfather’s generation got together to

¹ Franklin Curtiss-Wedge, *The History of Renville County*. (Chicago: H. C. Cooper Jr. & Co., 1916), Vol. 1, p. 554.

² William Watts Folwell, *A History of Minnesota*. (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1924), Vol. 2, pp. 346-47.

³ For further information, see: Don Heinrich Tolzmann, ed., *German Pioneer Accounts of the Great Sioux Uprising of 1862*. (Milford, Ohio: Little Miami Pub. Co., 2002).

What Happened to the Settlers in Renville County?

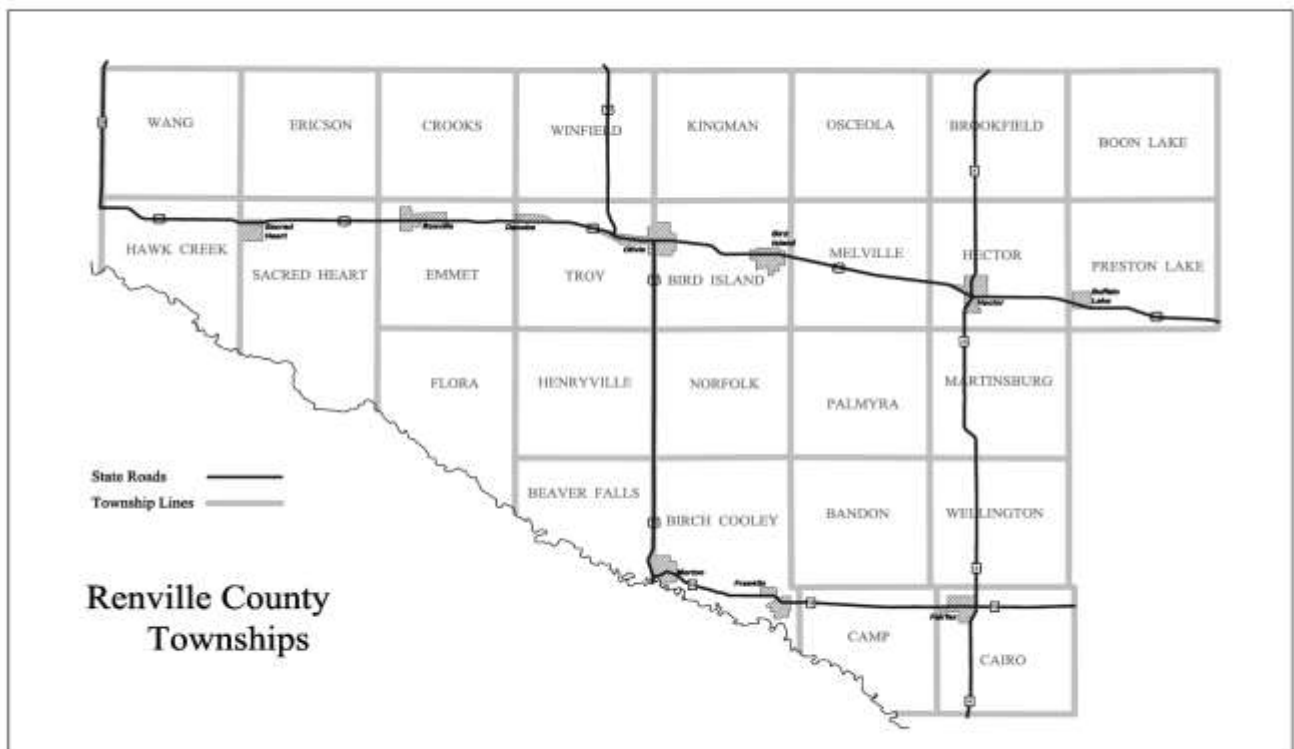
establish the Renville County Pioneers Association, so too have many today come together to form *Family and Friends of the Dakota Uprising Victims*. Its purpose is “to recognize our settler ancestors and their sacrifice and place in Minnesota history.”

Thanks to Janet R. Klein and Joyce A. Kloncz for getting this organized and putting together a valuable website: www.dakotavictims1862.com. In 2012, they published a booklet entitled *August 18, 1862: Neighbors Share the Tragedy: August 18, 2012: Descendants Honor and Remember*, (Volume I) which records the life stories of those who settled Renville County as told by their descendants. They have now followed up with this book *What Happened to the Settlers in Renville County? The Aftermath of the U.S.-Dakota War*. It makes an important contribution to the history of the Uprising by further exploring a neglected chapter of its history, a story that needs to be told today.

Don Heinrich Tolzmann

This is a current map of Renville County that shows those townships along the Minnesota River that were most affected by the U.S. – Dakota War of 1862: Hawk Creek, Sacred Heart, Flora, Beaver Falls, Birch Cooley, Camp and Cairo. This book only focuses on those townships.

This map and townships maps are courtesy of Renville County Public Works.



What Happened to the Settlers in Renville County?

Preface

There have been many books written about the U.S. - Dakota War, but none specifically addresses the aftermath of the Renville County settlers after the war. Their plight was undoubtedly horrifying as so many had lost family members, their homes and their belongings. Some even lost their minds witnessing the brutal deaths of their loved ones.

There are also more family stories to share submitted by descendants since publishing our first book in 2012. Renville County family stories that were published in Volume I are: Ahrens, Bahlke-Frohrip, Boelter, Buce, Buery, Cardinal, Carrothers, Clasen, Earle, Eisenreich, Hayden, Henderson, Ienenfeldt, Juni, Kochendorfer, Kumro, McConnell, Perreault, Picard, Schwandt, Urban, White, Wichmann, Witt, and Zimmermann. Some of these stories have been expanded by descendants who have submitted supplement stories for this book. Many of the stories in this book are snippets of the longer versions found in Volume I and on our website, www.dakotavictims1862.com.

In re-reading the descendant stories, we became curious about what happened to the settlers after the war. How many returned to Renville County? If they did, when? And if they didn't return, where did they go? This book attempts to answer these questions.

There were two contrasting types of experiences for settlers during the war: those that lived alone on the prairie with no town or fort to protect them and those who lived near fortified areas like Fort Ridgely, New Ulm and Hutchinson, where they were relatively safe and also the fortunate ones. The settlers along the Minnesota River bore the brunt of the attacks, and their escape to safety involved a long journey, in many cases by foot. Certainly those who lived furthest in the far western townships did not fare as well as those who lived in the far eastern townships.

Because there was no core population in the county to fall back on for support, many settlers were left on their own to make new homes elsewhere or wait until they were certain the violence was over before they returned; and if they did return, it was not for several years.

The county was virtually depopulated that week of August, 1862. About 150 settlers in Renville County were killed by hostile Dakota, about 115 whites and mixed-bloods were taken captive and over 200 fled to Fort Ridgely and elsewhere. In addition, 48 soldiers and citizen militia were killed at the four battles in the county. Many of these soldiers were not from Renville County but were killed here during battle, so we have included their numbers in our statistics.

In some cases, we had problems determining the exact township or county of the settlers as historians differed as to where they lived. Also, some of the township and county boundaries were changed when Renville County was formally organized. For example, Lowel was in Renville County in 1860 but later was changed to Meeker County. We mention this because there was one victim from Lowel who was killed, Daniel Cross. He was killed in Greenleaf Township in Meeker County on the property of Caleb Sanborn, who was also killed. In most cases, we have located the settlers' homes within today's boundaries.

In recent years, we have seen less and less attention given to the settler victims of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862. We cannot let the voices of our brave ancestors be silenced. That is why this book was written.

What Happened to the Settlers in Renville County?

Introduction

In 2012, *Family and Friends of Dakota Uprising Victims* dedicated a panel honoring the Birch Coolie settlers called “Caught Unaware”, and in 2013, two additional panels were completed, one for the Beaver Falls settlers called “Bravery and Tragedy” and one for the Flora Township settlers called “Sacred Ground”, all honoring victims in Renville County. Those known settlers who were killed, who were taken hostage and who escaped are identified on each panel. These panels were commissioned by donations from family members. This book will further identify who these settlers were and where they lived. Photographs of the panels are located in the Historic Sites chapter.

We used census, land, death, and cemetery records plus tombstone memorials from the website, Find A Grave to trace these families to determine what happened to them. Our research found that only about 26 out of 99 families returned to the county or 24%, and most did not return until several years after the outbreak. For those that did return, some were instrumental in the formation of the county. And for some families, we reached a dead end as no further records could be found.

We have included chapters on each of the inhabited townships in Renville County along the Minnesota River in 1862. A chapter on Fort Ridgely was also added as many of the escapees reached the fort for safety; a few went on to local towns for protection. This chapter also identifies the Renville County settlers who were involved with the defense of the fort and includes the names shown on the Fort Ridgely monument.

Each township chapter contains a list of all known killed, captured and those who escaped. Photographs of some survivors are included. We have also added maps and section numbers of the settlers so descendants can locate their homesteads.

Our dedication page called - In Memoriam – contains a comprehensive list of all known civilians killed, plus military and citizen militia killed in Renville County are also noted. Also included is a section of Historic Sites in Renville County. Finally, Curtis Dahlin’s list of Military and Civilian Soldiers Killed in Renville County Battles, noted by regiment is included.

We have added the ages of the victims when found, usually through census records. Some ages may be slightly off, but they are close enough to show the reader that many of the victims were young families with small children and that many who reached the fort were orphaned and/or widowed. Of all the refugees at Fort Ridgely, 50% were 15 and under, according to historian Curtis Dahlin.

We faced the quandary of whether this book should recognize only the settlers of Renville County or include all who were victims in Renville County and lived elsewhere. There were some who were visiting the area that week, and there were some who passed through while fleeing. We made the decision to include all who were in the townships along the river in Renville County that week in our numbers tally.

The original mission of *Family and Friends of Dakota Uprising Victims* was to give voice to those victims by sharing their stories and identifying where they lived and where they died. Only ten known victims, excluding the cemetery burials of soldiers and militia, had cemetery burials and most of those were re-internments. The rest lie in unmarked graves. This book pinpoints where many lived and where many died and are probably buried, usually where they fell, either at their homes or while escaping.

What Happened to the Settlers in Renville County?

Acknowledgements

Historians Curtis A. Dahlin, John LaBatte and Don Heinrich Tolzmann have been strong supporters of our mission to preserve the settler stories. We want to thank them for their review of this book and for sharing photographs, maps and documents. We also want to thank Franky Jackson of the Renville County Historical Society, Darla Gebhard of the Brown County Historical Society and the Minnesota Historical Society for the use of their photographs which enhance our stories. And thank you to Mary McConnell who provided the chapter maps and the photographs of the panels. Special thanks to Gayle Coyer who provided the information and map on the Middle Creek Church.

We also want to thank Bill Cox for the use of his narratives from his Find A Grave memorials and their accompanying photographs. Grateful thanks to photographer Dan Traun for allowing the use of his spectacular photographs of the Morton monuments. His photographs are found in the Historic Sites chapter; his work can be found at dantraun.com/. And thanks to Amy Thompson of the Renville County Public Works Department for providing the county and township maps. But most of all, we must thank the descendants of those settler ancestors who so willingly shared their stories and their photographs. Without you, this book could not have been written.

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In addition, we relied on two very important resources for the Renville County lists: Curtis Dahlin's list of statewide Dakota Victims found on our website: www.dakotavictims1862.com and Carrie Reber Zeman's blog on *A Thrilling Narrative of Indian Captivity*: <http://athrillingnarrative.com/> for her comprehensive listing of the Fort Ridgely refugees and the Camp Release list.

What Happened to the Settlers in Renville County?

– In Memoriam –

We dedicate this book to all known killed in Renville County.

Andrew Bahlke
Robert Baxter*
Charles R. Bell*
Ferdinand Bennekin*
Joseph S. Besse*
Gottlieb and Justina Boelter
John and Amelia Boelter
Mrs. Michael, Justine, Pauline and Wilhelmina Boelter and two unborn children
Peter Boyer*
Thomas Brooks
John Buhrer
Gottlieb, Wilhelmina, Bertha, Caroline and Augusta Busse
Johnny and Willie Carrothers
Charles Clasen
Frederick Clasen
William M. Cobb*
Edwin F. Cole*
John College*
George Colter*
Cornelius F. Coyle*
Daniel Cross, Lowel
John Cusdy
Joseph W. DeCamp*
Joseph C. Dickinson*
Radnor C. Earle
Balthasar Eisenreich
Russell H. Findley*
August and John Frass
Jacob Freeman*
Charles E. French*
John Gardner*
Jacob A. Gehring*
Robert Gibbens*
Mr. Graff
Emil, Augusta, Henrietta, Johanna, and Wilhelmine Grundmann
Ernest, Augustine, Attila, Frederick, Ernest, Jr., and Henrietta Hauff

John Hayden
Patrick Hayden
Stephen R.* and Clarissa Henderson, Lydia and unnamed daughter
Carl August and Rosina Henning and three children
David Holbrook*
John Holmes*
Mrs. John Hose and two children
Dr. Philander and Susan A. Humphrey, Gertrude and Jay Phelps
Alexander Hunter
William Ienenfeldt
Jedidiah H. Ingalls
William Irvine*
Christian Joerger*
Henry Kaertner
Duras Kanzig*
Joseph Kellene*
Patrick Kelly
James H. Kerr*
Paul, Sr., Dorothea, Paul, Jr., Pauline, Wilhelmina and Gustave Kietzmann
Chauncey King*
Johann, Catherine and Sarah Kochendorfer
Friedrich Krueger and two children
Wenzel Kusda*
William Lammers
Mr. and Mrs. Lentz and two children
John Lettou and son
Mr. and Mrs. Levant, 2 daughters and a son
Edward Magner
John Magner
Gottlieb Mannweiler
John S. Marsh*
Henry McAllister*
Caroline, Lydia, Johnny and Sarah Meyer
Hubert Millier

What Happened to the Settlers in Renville County?

John Newman
Mrs. Nichols and son
Wenzel Norton*
David O'Connor
John W. Parks*
Moses P. Parks*
John Parsley*
Pierre Perreault
Harrison A. Phillips*
Eusebi Picard
Nathaniel Pitcher
Ole Quam (Sampson) and two daughters
Peter Quinn*
Eusebius II, Margreth, Benjamin
and Annie Reyff
Heinrich Rieke (died at fort of heart
problem)
John, Justine, Gustav and Albert Roessler
Frederick Roessler
John and Mrs. Rosbe (Rusby) and two
children
Henry Rouleau*
William Russell*
William and Louisa Schmidt, Minnie
and two other children
Hubert Schmitt*
Johann, Christina, Frederick and
Christian Schwandt
Rev. Christian Louis Seder

Henry A. Shepherd*
John E. Sherwin*
John, Anna, Freddy, Amelia, Emmy
and Louisa Sieg
Charles W. Smith*
Felix Smith
Thomas Smith
Nathan Stewart*
William C. Taylor
John Tenner
Benjamin Terry*
Elizabeth (Mrs. Louis) Thiele and two
children
John and Mrs. Thiele and two sons
Christian Torger*
Solan A. Trescott*
Mike Unknown
Uris Untermach (Andermach)
Michael Wagner
John and Caroline Walz and unborn child
Jehiel Wedge
Mr. and Mrs. Weiser, son John
and two other children
Henry Whetsler*
Eugene White
Frederika Witt
Gottlieb Zabel (Zabel)
John, John Jr. and Gottfried Zimmerman
John Zitzlaff
Michael and Mary Zitzlaff & unborn child

*Denotes military, militia or armed civilians killed at the Redwood Ferry Battle and the Battle of Birch Coulee. Very few of those killed in battle were Renville County residents, but they died in this county, and they too must be recognized and honored. The list also includes four unborn children from the Boelter (2), Walz and Zitzlaff families.