

The Massacre at Lake Shetek and Slaughter Slough

Aug. 20, 1862



Attack on Lake Shetek Settlement

- Chief Lean Grizzly Bear and Chief White Lodge lead Sisseton Dakota forces to the north end of Lake Shetek settlement
- Wed., Aug. 20, 1862
- 9 families live on Lake Shetek

Attack on Lake Shetek Settlement

- Meyers cabin
 - Make a lot of noise/knock down fences
- Hurd cabin
 - Mr. Hurd has been gone since June
 - John Voight (hired man) shot
 - Mrs. Hurd & 2 children sent away
- Koch cabin
 - Mrs. Koch gives over her gun
 - Mr. Koch shot getting water
 - Mrs. Koch hides until they go away and then heads south

Koch Cabin – now relocated



Attack on Lake Shetek Settlement

- Charlie Hatch – brother-in-law to Mr. Everett
 - Hitches horse at Koch cabin & walks to Hurd's (wants to buy butter)
- Finds Voight dead
- Heads south to warn others
 - His horse runs off
 - Gets a horse at the Eastlick cabin & keeps going south

The “Paul Revere” of Shetek

- Charlie Hatch warns every household of the danger
- Eastlick's head south
 - Nobody's home at the Smith cabin so they head to the Wright's
- Mr. & Mrs. Eastlick, 5 sons and Mr. Rhodes (hired man)

Attack on Lake Shetek Settlement

- All settlers make their way to the Wright cabin
- Mr. Wright is gone to Mankato
- Natives camped in the Wright yard
- Old Pawn volunteers to go get the hiding women & children
- 8 men, 26 women & children prepare for battle in the Wright home

Attack on Lake Shetek Settlement

- Old Pawn & his group offer to fight on the side of the settlers
- They set up in the shed
 - Settlers give them guns and ammunition
 - What type of guns would they have at this time?

Attack on Lake Shetek Settlement

- The attacking Natives arrive
- Old Pawn suggests they all fire at once to scare them off
 - It doesn't work

Attack on Lake Shetek Settlement

- Old Pawn goes to talk to the attackers
- If you go away quietly no one will be harmed
 - If you don't we'll burn the house down
- "200 attackers are on their way"
- The settlers take the deal
 - They head east on foot
 - 2 men go back to get a wagon

They're being followed...

- After about a mile they realize the natives are following them
- Old Pawn's crew is riding w/the attackers now
- Wagon is so weighed down it's slow
- Settlers think they want the horses so they abandon the wagon & start running
- Natives start firing on them – no one is hit

1st Native Death...

- When the attackers get to the wagon a settler shoots him as he tries to detach the horse from the wagon
- 2 male settlers fled, followed by 2-3 Dakota
 - 1 makes it to Walnut Grove
 - 1 makes it to Dutch Charley's house

They Have to Hide...

- The rest of the settlers run down a hill into a tall grass slough to hide

They Go To Hide in the Slough

- Later known as Slaughter Slough
- They run down amidst a rain of musket balls
- Lay down in the grass
 - Shots rain down for 2+ hours
 - Laying in the damp slough leads to guns malfunctioning

In the Slough

- Six men w/guns and 26 women & children
- Dakota would pop up over the edge of the slough 1 or 2 at a time
- Much detail is known based on the account written by Lavina Eastlick
- She is in the slough surrounded by her 5 children

In the Slough...

- Mrs. Everett-shot in the neck
- Mrs. Eastlick-shot in the side of the head
- Mr. Eastlick-shot and dies
- Natives call for the women to come out
- Mr. Everett responds to Pawn
 - Pawn recognizes his voice and tells him to come out
 - Mr. Everett says he can't & is too injured
 - He is shot in the arm
 - Mr. Everett tells his wife to report he's dead

In the Slough...

- Pawn says he wants Mrs. Everett & Mrs. Wright for his "squaws"
 - What's a squaw?
- Mr. Everett tells them to go & they go talk to Pawn
- Mr. Duly plots to take a shot at Pawn while they're talking but is talked out of it

In the Slough...

- "Uncle" Tommy Ireland rises up and begs the Dakota to spare the women & children
- He is shot 7 times
- Pawn tells the women they will spare the women & children
 - They rise up out of the grass
 - Mrs. Eastlick sees her dead husband and his dog

Coming Out of the Slough...

- 4 of the Eastlick children accompany mom
 - Merton carries Johnny
 - Frank and Giles help mom walk
- Mrs. Wright is told to gather the guns
 - Tommy Ireland begs her to shoot him
- A rain storm starts

Coming Out of the Slough...

- 5-year-old Freddy Eastlick pops up out of the grass calling for his mother
 - Is beaten bloody by a squaw
 - Chaos ensues
 - Frank is shot through the mouth, thigh and belly
 - Other children disappear in the chaos

Out of the Slough...

- Mrs. Eastlick and Wright & Mrs. Wright's kids are told to start walking w/a horse
- Mrs. Everett runs back to the slough for her husband and is shot in the back
- One of Mrs. Duly's children is being attacked
 - She pleads for the lives of her other two

Out of the Slough...

- Mrs. Eastlick is shot in the back as she walks
 - Now shot 4 times
 - She falls on the trail and is afraid she'll be run over
 - Crawls off the trail
 - Gets caught and is beaten with the butt of a gun
 - Apparently has her shoulder thrown out of its socket
 - Left for dead

Mrs. Eastlick Wanders the Slough

- She lays for 2-3 hours
- Hears Merton calling for her
- Hears a baby – is it little Johnny?
- Gets up and heads into the slough

Mrs. Eastlick wanders the slough...

- Little Willie Duly calls out to her – she can do nothing for him so walks on
- Finds the crying baby – it's Mrs. Everett's youngest, Charley, sitting with his 6-year-old sister, Lily
 - Lily begs for water
 - Is there water in heaven?

Mrs. Eastlick wanders the slough...

- Finds the bodies of Mrs. Ireland and Mrs. Smith
 - Mrs. Ireland's baby is laying on her chest, sleeping
- She thinks they were raped, so she repositions their bodies
- Takes apron & some pins
 - Very hard with her arm as it was

Mrs. Eastlick wanders the slough...

- She finds her son Giles, shot in the chest
- She finds her son Freddy, still alive, though he had been beaten and stabbed
- She couldn't stay with him because she needed to keep going and see if the last two sons were alive

Mrs. Eastlick Wanders the Slough

- She hears Mrs. Everett dying
 - Making a rattling, gurgling sound
- Becomes very scared
- Could not bear to witness her suffering so leaves, searching for her possibly surviving two sons, Merton and Johnny

Thursday, Aug. 21, 1862

- She hides in the daylight
- The rain continued til 9 a.m. Thursday
- She can hear gunfire at about 10 a.m.
- She hears children crying all day, sometimes shrieking
- By about 4 p.m. she hears gunfire and then no more crying

To Dutch Charley's House

- When it got dark she headed in the direction of Dutch Charley's house
 - German immigrant who lived 16 miles from Lake Shetek
 - Fear of wolves
 - She sucks the dew from her skirt hem to get a drink

Friday, Aug. 22, 1862

- She arrives at Buffalo Lake about 11 a.m. Friday and is trying to cross it
- Hears somebody coming and hides
- It's the mailman who goes between Sioux Falls and New Ulm
- He puts her on his horse and they go to Dutch Charley's, arriving about 4 p.m.
 - Charley's not home, but Tommy Ireland was there!

Merton and Johnny

- Mr. Ireland says Merton and Johnny had left the Slough on Wednesday
- He thought maybe they had joined w/Dutch Charley's family and left
- Tommy told how he had tried to talk Merton out of leaving
- "No, mother told me to carry Johnny as long as I live, and I'm going to do it!"

Frank lived...

- He had tried to go with Merton & Johnny
- After 2 days some native people found him and took him to Mrs. Smith's house
- He was taken into the family of a "halfbreed"
 - As far as the Eastlicks knew, he grew up with the Joe Leaboshie family

Sunday, Aug. 24, 1862

- Mailman offered to take her to Sioux Falls with him
- She would rather go to New Ulm – he offered to go there with her
- They come upon Mrs. Hurd and her 2 children
 - She says Merton and Johnny were just ahead!
 - 11-year-old Merton had carried 15 month-old Johnny 50 miles
 - Children were starving, covered in mosquito bites

Mail Carrier

- The mailman rode ahead to a house where they had more horses
- When he came back he reported all the settlers on the Cottonwood River were dead, New Ulm was burned
- He came upon 6 Dakota who pursued him for some time
- Now he sets off for Sioux Falls – attacks had happened there as well

Mr. Brown's House

- The survivors all holed up at the home of a Mr. Brown, near New Ulm
- Soldiers find them there 9 days after the attack began
- Later they find the bodies of the Brown family, who were murdered trying to escape
- Soldier named Gilfillan wandered off and was killed

Heading to New Ulm

- As they traveled they would come upon dead settlers, signs of battle and abandoned wagons
- They finally reach New Ulm
- Sept. 5 they headed for Mankato where they were treated for wounds

What Happened to the Survivors?

- Mrs. Koch remarried and moved to Mankato
- Tommy Ireland recovered and stayed in Minnesota, as well as his daughters
- Little Lily Everett was held captive by Dakota and eventually released. Mr. Everett and she were reunited and moved back East.

What Happened to the Survivors?

- Charley Hatch moved back to Wisconsin
- Mr. Myers' son discovered the deaths at the Hurd and Koch cabins and decided to escape. They loaded a wagon with a mattress for his ill wife and 5 kids. The day they made it to Mankato, she died. a
- Mr. Bently joined the military.
- Mrs. Hurd became lost after she left her cabin. The elder child became very ill so she had to carry them both. This was so hard she started relay-carrying them. She ran into Merton and Johnny, and they traveled together for some time. She eventually moved to LaCrosse, WI.

What Happened to the Survivors?

- Mrs. Eastlick went to Wisconsin and eventually back to Ohio where her parents lived
- In 1864 she returned to Wisconsin and wrote her narrative of the events of 1862
 - Book sales allowed her enough money to return to Minnesota

What Happened to the Survivors?

- Merton learned to be a carpenter and raised enough money to support the family
- In 1870 she was remarried but he left her after 3 months and nobody knows what happened to him
- In 1871 she had a baby, Laura, by that husband
 - Little Johnnie, age 10, babysits while she works the fields

What Happened to the Survivors?

- Merton is married in 1873 and moved Rochester
 - They have one son
- In 1875 he became ill and died
 - He was buried in Rochester without a headstone
- In 1883 Lavina Eastlick's house burned down
- In 1885 Johnnie was married
 - They have 2 sons
 - They live a mile from mom

What Happened to the Survivors?

- Lavina's arm still gives her trouble, as well as her hip

Lavina Eastlick, Merton & Johnny



Monument to those who died from Lake Shetek



Fool Soldiers

- Young men's group of native men who wanted to do good deeds
- Set out to rescue the 2 women and 6 children still held captive by Chief White Lodge and his band of Santee warriors
- Eventually successful Mid-November, 1862

What Happened to the Survivors?

- Mrs. Duly & Mrs. Wright were rescued by the Fool Soldiers & returned to Camp Release after 4 months
 - They returned to their husbands
- Mrs. Duly's son Willie died in the slough, but her other 2 children, whose lives she begged for, survived
- Mr. Duly ended up joining the 1st Minnesota Mounted Rangers. So did Mr. Smith, though he went missing shortly thereafter, and it was assumed he deserted.
- The Duly's moved to Mankato

Surrender

- Sept. 26, 1862 – native representatives surrendered to U.S. forces at Camp Release (Montevideo)

The Trials

- 392 went on trial
- Unfair trials:
 - Biased court (officials were mainly military leaders)
 - Sparse evidence
 - No lawyer
 - Limited English ability
- Should they have gone on trial at all? Were they murderers? Or enemy combatants?

The Trials

- 392 went on trial
- 303 sentenced to death
- 16 sentenced to prison
- *"Anxious to not act with so much clemency as to encourage another outbreak on one hand, nor with so much severity as to be real cruelty on the other, I ordered a careful examination of the records of the trials to be made, in view of first ordering the execution of such as had been proved guilty of violating females" (Lincoln to the Senate)*

The Trials

- 392 went on trial
- 303 sentenced to death
- 16 sentenced to prison
- But only 2 were found guilty of rape, and that would not have satisfied the American thirst for revenge, so he opened it up to include natives who had been included in "massacres" of civilians, not just battles
- 39 native men sentenced to die

Waiting to Die

- The prisoners listened to the gallows being specially built for the occasion
- **Letter from Hdainyanka to Chief Wabasha written shortly before his execution:**

"You have deceived me. You told me that if we followed the advice of General Sibley, and gave ourselves up to the whites, all would be well; no innocent man would be injured. I have not killed, wounded or injured a white man, or any white persons. I have not participated in the plunder of their property; and yet to-day I am set apart for execution, and must die in a few days, while men who are guilty will remain in prison. My wife is your daughter, my children are your grandchildren. I leave them all in your care and under your protection. Do not let them suffer; and when my children are grown up, let them know that their father died because he followed the advice of his chief, and without having the blood of a white man to answer for to the Great Spirit."

The Execution

- Dec. 26, 1862
- One condemned man was pardoned at the last minute
- 4000 spectators
- Martial law/prohibition of alcohol in 10 mi. radius
- Rope was cut by Capt. William Duly
 - Had lost his relatives at Lake Shetek

Mass Execution of 38 at Mankato



Mass execution

- Bodies were buried on sand bar between Main St. and the MN River in a shallow grave
- Almost all bodies were dug up that night

A Price on Native Scalps

- Lincoln promised to have all native people removed from Minnesota

- Price on native scalps: \$200

A Price on Native Scalps

- A Dakota man was killed outside of Hutchinson July 3, 1863, while picking raspberries with his son
 - Killed by a farmer and his son
- Search party scalped him and threw his body in the waste pit of a slaughter house
 - They noticed he had strangely shaped forearms and a double row of teeth
- A week later the head was taken
- On July 28 there was a military skirmish, the U.S. army managed to capture only one native
 - The boy who had been in the raspberry patch

Chief Little Crow




