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# Whitestone Battlefield

A History From 1863 To 1976

HISTORIC CELEBRATION AT WHITESTONE PARK ON JULY 4-5, 1976.

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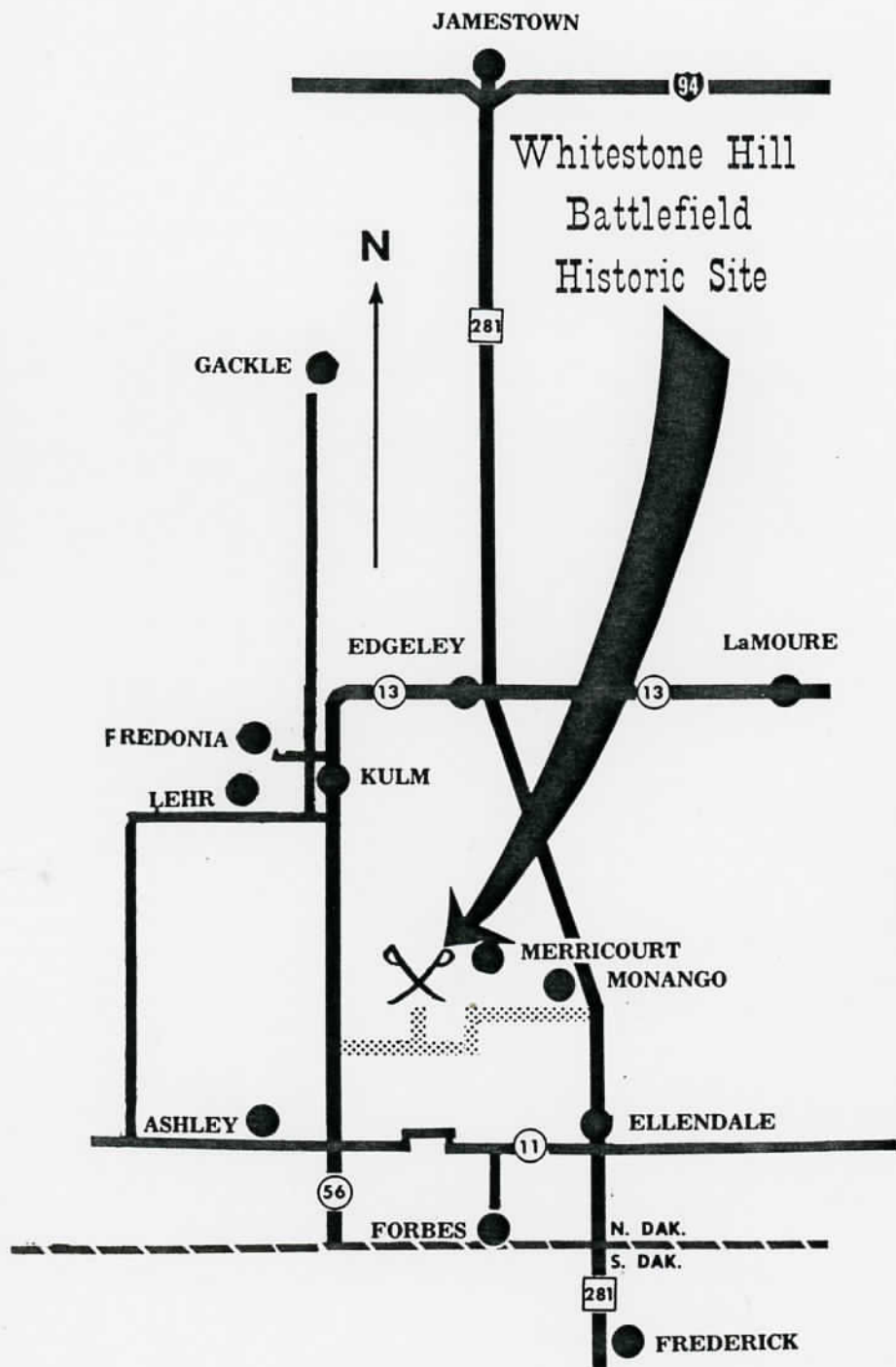
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# I. Introduction

The Whitestone Battlefield Celebration Committee welcomes the public to Whitestone Battlefield Park on July 4 and 5, 1976. During this bicentennial year of the nation's history, we honor both Indians and whites who died at this battlefield over 100 years ago—and in thinking about both the present and the future, we strive to build a better nation for all peoples.

—Whitestone Battlefield  
Celebration Committee



## Important Events

AFTER THE BATTLE AT  
WHITESTONE ON SEPT. 3 AND 5, 1863

1909—Dedication of monument on October 13.

1910—Memorial Day service on May 30.

1941—Dedication of museum and other park buildings on September 7.

1963—100th anniversary of battle held in July (instead of September). About 20,000 people attended tw-day memorial event.

1976—Bicentennial celebration on July 4 and 5.



## 2. Background

### Civil War May Have Aggravated Already Tense Relations Among Indians, Whites

In 1862, the Santee Sioux in southern Minnesota broke into open revolt against the whites. The relentless westward march of white civilization, plus many grave injustices inflicted upon Indians by unscrupulous white traders and agents, had fanned resentment to a hot flame. Indians were not satisfied with the speed and manner of payment by whites in settlement of treaties by which the U.S. came into possession of most of their lands in that region. Their payments in food and clothing were greatly delayed, and the threat of starvation along with other grievances made them easy prey to the urgings of those who wanted to create trouble. The Northwest Confederacy, for example, (a spy organization sympathetic to the South during the Civil War—which was then in progress), hoping to create a second front for the

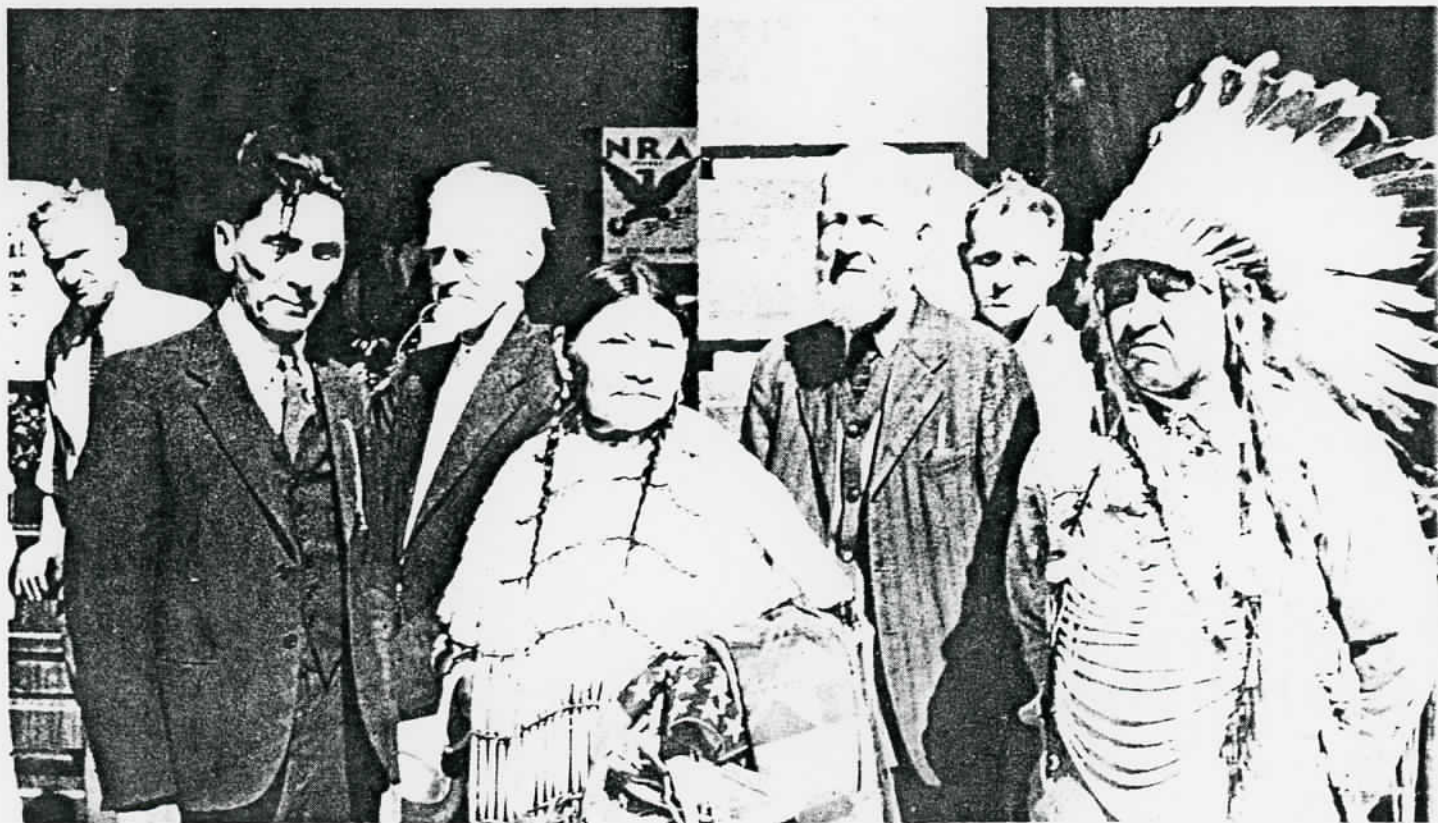
Union soldiers to oppose, helped to incite hatred by the Indians against the white citizens on the frontier. It was not long before Chief Little Crow, who had previously resisted agitation for war, joined with Inkpaduta whose warriors had just commenced hostilities.

Beginning in August of 1862, the Santees attacked settlers on the western fringe of the part of Minnesota inhabited by whites. The attack was to become known as the New Ulm Massacre. Histories vary considerably as to the number, the figures ranging from 350 to 1,000 that were killed in this massacre.

Only a few weeks had elapsed when Col. H.H. Sibley quelled the rebellion and before the year was done, thirty-eight of the Indians captured were executed for their part in the massacre. Nevertheless, the greater

majority of the warriors fled to the northwest, to Dakota Territory. In the winter of 1862-63 plans were made at Gen. Pope's headquarters in Milwaukee to send out two expeditions the next year to punish the Indians and see to it that no further depredations would be committed.

It was therefore decided to send Gen. Sibley to the northwest early in 1863—toward Devil's Lake, and to send Gen. Alfred Sully northward from Sioux City with a cavalry brigade toward where Bismarck is now located with the intention of catching the warriors in a huge pincers movement in central Dakota, thus crushing the Indians at one blow. Their plans miscarried, however, as Gen. Sully's expedition was delayed by low water in the Missouri, resulting in his supply boats being held up. Sibley fought the Indians in three running fights between



Left to right, front row: Frank Zahn, government interpreter from Fort Yates, North Dakota; Mato Cina (Bessie Young Bear) youngest daughter of Chief Basil Two Bears, grandson of Two Bears who fought at Whitestone

Hill. Between Zahn and Mato Cina is James Austin of Ellendale. To the right of Austin is Rev. A. McGuffey Beede, Episcopal missionary. At the rear, left to right: Mr. Kutsikas and A.J. Phillips. Mato Cina, aunt of Basin

Two Bears, was a girl of 11 years when present at the Whitestone Hill battle. She was still living in 1944. This photograph was taken in Ellendale, North Dakota in 1933.



Devil's Lake and the Bismarck site, then drove them across the Missouri in a fourth battle at Apple Creek four miles south of present Bismarck. Waiting a week for Sully, the disappointed Sibley then marched his troops back to Ft. Snelling in Minnesota, after which the Indians are believed to have re-crossed the Missouri, traveling about 100 miles southeast to Whitestone Hill for their

annual autumn hunt. It is unknown today how many warriors in the hunting party actually participated in the Minnesota massacre of 1862. Some historians think there were none. It is pure speculation to think that Indians in a couple of weeks' time could re-cross the Missouri River and move 100 miles to Whitestone—and still stockpile hundreds of tons of pemmican by September 3. This indicates

that the Whitestone Indians were not the group Sibley was originally chasing. Many Santees had fled to Canada, and the more numerous Yanktonais, together with the lesser groups of Hunkpapas, Cutheads, and Blackfeet Sioux, had only reluctantly allowed the remaining Minnesota warriors to join them for protection. ■

## 3. The Battle

### When U.S. Cavalry Attacked At Whitestone, Indians Were Preparing Winter Food Supply

In late August, Gen. Sully with his Iowa and Nebraska Cavalry, reached the site of the last Sibley battle and soon learned from a deserted old Indian what had happened. His supplies being low, Sully determined to make a quick swing to the southeast in search of the Indians, and then go rapidly to his base camp on the Missouri, which was about 40 miles north of Pierre. Following this plan, after a forced march of a few days, Sully's guide LaFramboise, found the Indians in camp at Whitestone Hill.

The Indians were engaged in laying

in their winter supply of jerked buffalo meat and gathering their harvest of robes and pelts. Coming from a direction where he could see only a portion of the Indians' lodges, Major House—leading the 3rd Battalion of the 6th Iowa Cavalry—misjudged the number of Indians to about 600 or 800. He decided to attack. But when his men had ridden fully into the camp and saw about 600 lodges, he realized he had grievously underestimated the size of Indian strength, and that there were over 1,000 Indians at the site. Since retreat was impossible and an

attack would only result in the complete annihilation of his whole party, Col. House sent his chief guide, Frank LaFramboise, hurriedly back for reinforcements to where Sully had camped, some nine miles away to the southwest. Meanwhile, Col. House parleyed through his interpreters with Indian leaders, trying to assure them the Union government did not want to harm the Sioux. The Indians, however, soon realized their camp was in danger of imminent attack. They hurriedly took down their tepees, and packed the women, ponies and dogs with babies, small children, jerked buffalo meat, robes, furs and all camp equipment. The women, elderly, and ponies were then formed into a hollow square and surrounded by the men.



Shortly before sunset, Sully's reinforcements arrived with a rush and the battle of Whitestone Hill was in progress. The Sixth Iowa formed on a hill north of the little valley where the Indians had assembled and the Second Nebraska on high ground south of the valley. Major House attacked from the north, Col. Robert Furnas led the 2nd Nebraska Regiment in from the south and Gen. Sully approached from the west.

The late Lewis Tveit of Forbes, N.D. wrote an historical paper about the Whitestone battle in 1961. His account

Chief Two Bears (1797-1877)—Headed the Yanktonai Tribe at the Battle of Whitestone Hill, Dakota Territory, Sept. 3 and 5, 1863. Signed Black Hills and other treaties.





was assisted by the research of another student of Whitestone history, the late T.R. Shimmin of Forbes, N.D. Shimmin had collected copies of reports from officers and soldiers who had fought in the battle. The reports were later turned over to Tveit, which included some of the following: J.H. Drips, a soldier, wrote that "the battle was opened by the Nebraska boys, which was followed by the Indians opening their fire."

Henry Davenport Northrup, also a participant in the battle, wrote: "Captain Bayne of the 2nd Nebraska Cavalry resolved to take advantage of the moment ere he had as yet received positive orders. He stepped out before his men and said, 'Boys, we have come a long way to fight the Indians and now that we have got them, I am in favor of whaling them.'" Then the shooting started.

Another letter quoted Col. Furnas as writing: "I became convinced that House's battalion, mistaking my com-

mand in the darkness for Indians, were firing into it. I therefore ordered my men to fall back out of range of their guns."

The battle lasted for about two hours, until darkness mercifully put an end to it. It is difficult to properly estimate the number of Indians killed in battle, as many of the dead warriors were carried off the field before dawn, and the bodies of many others were strapped onto their ponies and lost in that manner. One account states that approximately 150 warriors were killed, along with as many as 200 women and older men, although those figures too are questionable. In leading a charge trying to break the lines of the Sixth Iowa, in order that his men might escape, Chief Big Head—one of the leading chiefs—was killed. He is buried near the Whitestone monument. General Sully's loss was 20 soldiers killed, and 50 or 60 more or less seriously wounded (however, some reports say 38 wounded).

The next morning, Union soldiers found dead and wounded in all directions from the battlefield—also quantities of provisions and baggage, and a large number of ponies and dogs harnessed to travois, with babies strapped to some of the dogs, according to the paper written by Lewis Tveit. One baby was found attempting to nurse from its dead mother. (This baby was returned to the

Calvary charge of Sully's Brigade at the Battle of Whitestone Hill, Sep. 3, 1863. Sketched by an officer engaged. Reprint from Harper's Weekly, Oct. 31, 1863.

Indians. She later re-visited the battlefield when she was an elderly woman.) About 150 warriors (this figure also varies), many women and older people, and two wagon loads of children were held prisoners for a short time and then released. Gen. Sully estimated that between 400,000 and 500,000 pounds of jerked buffalo meat was destroyed by his men.

The results of the battle of White-

## Indian Woman Re-Visited Scene Of Battle

stone were not conclusive. The frontiers did not become secure, and the Indians were far from subdued. In fact, the Sully campaign only irritated the Sioux even further—and for three decades after Whitestone Hill, they amply demonstrated their resentment throughout Dakota Territory. The federal government—having started a small fire—was faced with a much larger, more serious one. ■



Major Albert E. House General Alfred Sully



# 4. Starting The Park

## The First White Settlers Didn't Know About Early Battle At Whitestone; Site Was Lost

The following is an explanation of some of the early highlights of Whitestone Battlefield Historic Park, the excerpt taken from *A History of Dickey County, North Dakota* written and published by the Dickey County Historical Society, 1930.

"As nobody lived around that country (of present Whitestone Battlefield Park) and the place was not marked the site of this battle was lost, and in fact no one of the early comers knew about the battle or that it had been fought near where they were establishing their homes, and the discovery of the battlefield was accidental, even not appreciated, for a number of years.

The battlefield was discovered by Frank Drew, a brother of ex-sheriff J.C. Drew, while driving over the hills in the western part of Dickey County in search of buffalo bones to take to Ellendale to market in order to help replenish the home larder. He had sold

there having been a big skirmish. No one attached any importance to the discovery nor took the trouble to look up the matter further for some time. They thought it might have been an affair among the Indians.

**W**H. Leffingwell was teaming for Martin, Strane & Walker and was in Columbia after a load of flour. While there he told of the finding of this mass of bones and the local newspaper man wrote it up and reported it to the St. Paul Pioneer Press. The account fell under the eyes of Mr. Luce who was

living at Groton. He had been with the Iowa troops in this battle and was a member of the scouting party that had found the Indian camp at the lake. He had long wanted to revisit the battlefield, so on reading this account he came over to Dickey County on his pony and inquired for one of the veterans he had known and was directed to Theodore Northrop, himself an old soldier. Mr. Northrop hitched up his ponies and took his son Lee and Mr. Luce over to M.M. Cooks and asked him to show them where the bones had been found. Mr. Cook helped them to find the place and Mr. Luce identified

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### Buffalo Bones Led To Re-Discovery

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bones many times before, but this time he came across a lot of bones which proved to be other than buffalo bones. He did not care to let others find his picking grounds and said nothing about it, but others did see that he had been unusually fortunate and went to the hills to look for bones.

M.M. Cook and J.G. Hyde set out to find bones and found the place where Drew had located his find. Some of the ground had been burned over and in addition to bones of horses and mules they found a human skull and a sort of knife or dirk. They did not stop long to make an investigation but took their load of buffalo bones to market at Ellendale, where they told the story of the finding of the mass of bones. Thomas Shimmin of the southwest part of the county heard of this find and went to investigate. He found pans and copper kettles and many evidences of



Theodore Northrop (1840-1912), a Civil War veteran and long-time resident of the Monango, N.D. district, had much to do with the origination and accomplishment of the Whitestone Battlefield Park and monument project.





At left is H.F. Eaton of Oakes, N.D. and at right is E.R. Kennedy of Ludden, N.D. Both were members of the Grand Army of the Republic, and were on the original Whitestone park board, working faithfully with Theodorus Northrup, Representative T.F. Marshall of Oakes, N.D. and J.C. Luce.

the location and many incidents of the fight.

Some sort of chart of the burial places of the Iowa soldiers had been made, and it is reported that the family of Lieutenant Leavitt wished to remove the body to their own cemetery, so they had John Stewart, Henry Warren, Frank Drew and Mr. Hollister open the grave. They found part of a silk handkerchief and patent leather from a collar and shoulder strap and other personal belongings. This was early in the history of restoring the site as a park. When it was finally determined to make this place a state park the remains of the Iowa men were removed to the hill around the monument.

**F**or some years there was nothing accomplished to preserve the site of the battlefield, but fortunately the land was still the property of the government, and finally through the efforts of Honorable T.F. Marshall of Oakes, who was a member of Congress, an act was passed giving the state of North Dakota the southeast quarter of Section 7, the southwest of 8, the northwest of 17 and the northeast of 18 for the purpose of preserving the place as a park.

On March 13, 1905, a bill was passed by the State Legislature accepting the land grant and authorizing the governor to appoint a commission to have the care and management of the park. Theodore Northrup, E.R. Kennedy and H.F. Eaton were appointed as this commission. Under another Act of Congress the commission sold 572 acres of this land and with the funds so

obtained built a fence around the remaining 68 acres and erected a monument. This monument was dedicated with appropriate ceremonies in October, 1910. It was planned to have the dedication on the anniversary of the battle but the monument was late in arriving, as it is constructed of Barre Granite and was made in the East. Governor Burke of North Dakota and Governor Carrol of Iowa were the principal speakers. Others present were the commissioners, eight of the

old veterans who had fought there, two Indians who were at the camp as boys, their interpreter, and a large number of visitors from the neighboring towns. The monument is surmounted by a bugler blowing 'boots and saddles,'

## In July 1922, Storm Threw Off Bugler

facing north, the direction in which the supporting troops were located.

In July, 1922, the bugler was thrown off in a severe wind and electric storm and was quite badly broken, so the Legislature of 1923 appropriated \$500 to have it repaired and empowered the governor to appoint a commission to have the repairs made. Hon. T.J. Kelsh, at the time the senator from Dickey County, Mrs. Mary Flemington Strand and Mr. W.E. Dickinson were appointed on this commission. The monument was repaired and restored to its former state. The same Legislature passed an Act vesting the care and custody of the park in the State Historical Society, which now has control. In 1928 the Dickey County Historical Society through Mr. T.R. Shimmin planted a number of trees in the park." ■



The above picture shows the dedication ceremony of Whitestone Hill Battlefield monument on October 13, 1909. It was planned to have the dedication on the anniversary of the battle, but the monument was late in arriving. (For more information regarding the dedication ceremony, see the section of this booklet entitled "Documents.")



# 5. Documents

## Playwright, After Interviews With Indians, Whites, Claimed Battle Was "All A Mistake"

The events concerning the battle at Whitestone Hill were incorporated into a play, entitled "Heart-in-the-Lodge," written by A. McG. Beede. A rare copy of the play was found among the papers of the late Lewis Tveit of Forbes, N.D.

Beede apparently wrote his play at the turn of the century, basing the play's story upon extensive interviews he had with both Indians and whites. His thesis is that the Whitestone battle was "all a mistake." The following contains excerpts from the play's preface:

The men of Ellendale heard the Indians tell the story of the "Whitestone Battle," on which this drama is based. The conference was long with questions freely asked and answered. Living with these Indians, I have heard their free conversations about the battle, enough to make books.

Did they intend "to make a night attack on Sully's army?" One who knows them will not believe it. Under any circumstances they would not make a night attack when "the moon was not right," and at this time "the moon was not right."

They had no part in the "Minnesota Massacre" in '62. They were at home planting and harvesting and hunting meat and wild fruits by the Missouri River, where they had lived for 125 years. Their tribal motto was "Quit war, plant the fields" (Wokicizeayustan, Wozupo).

After the massacre a desire for revenge obsessed white people. A murder by an Indian is chargeable to all Indians and is unforgivable . . .

After the "Minnesota Massacre" General Sibley went from Minnesota west pursuing the retreating Santee (Sioux) Indians till they escaped across the Missouri. General Sully went from the south up the Missouri to cut off their escape across the river. Poor man, he was late, and so the Santees escaped. Sibley's promptness left Sully late. Sully's boats perplexed him. The Missouri was "low water," and he lacked the civilian boldness to let a few hundred detached horsemen go on ahead living from buffalo meat, frontier style. This would have trapped the Santees, for their warriors had no discipline. It was 13 years later when 400 Sioux with Gall and 400 Sheyennes

with Crazy-Horse had sufficient discipline to hurl themselves onto Custer as a unit, and 900 warriors with Red-Cloud fought Crook to a standstill with his 1900 "regulars." Indians were learning discipline when the failure of buffalo meat and starvation made them "reservation Indians."

Sully knew Pope would blame him—and he did. What could he do but take any Indian trail he saw and find some Indians? The Hunk-pa-ti (Sioux) Indians had recently gone from Long Lake (down river from Bismarck), where Sully had now arrived to Bigstone (some sources state Whitestone) Lake, 20 miles northwest of Ellendale. He saw their trail and took it. Up to this day these Indians had not had any trouble with white men. Now they will have trouble enough. The drama tells the story. It is to be played by a community, unmindful of "the

audience."

Several men now living heard Sully say, "The battle was all a mistake." Sibley was a resolute frontiersman, inclined to be over-prompt. He saw the necessity for order and government, though he knew justice for Indians was impossible. I understand he said, "Bad faith on the part of some white people has caused this uprising, and now I am sent out to kill Indians." Indians knew him personally, and they say he was not "a man with murder in his heart." General Sibley had no part in the attack on these Hunk-pa-ti Indians and the "Whitestone Battle."

Beede's play "Heart-in-the-Lodge" was published by the Bismarck Tribune Company, Bismarck, N.D. Date of publication unknown. ■

## Soldier At Whitestone Gives Eyewitness Account

The following letter was written in 1901 by a white participant at the battle of Whitestone Hill. F.E. Caldwell of Fort Creek, Neb. wrote the letter to his friend and comrade, J.H. Van Meter of Ellendale, N.D. The letter was subsequently published in the Dickey County Leader, of Ellendale, on January 17, 1901. Caldwell's letter contains questionable information—such as his reference to the Indians at Whitestone as "the same that butchered the inhabitants of New Ulm, Minnesota." Most contemporary historians agree that the Indians at Whitestone were innocent.

Yours of January 2nd received and contents noted. The battle of Whitestone Hill was fought on the third day of September, 1863. The troops engaged were commanded by General Alfred Sully and consisted of the Second Nebraska Cavalry by Colonel Robert Furniss, Sixth Iowa Cavalry by Colonel Wilson, a battalion of cavalry raised in and about Sioux City, and a battery of

four twelve-pound guns. Cannot call to memory what the battery was called, but I think the artilleryists were detailed from the other regiments and commanded by Lieutenant Krume. The Indians were the same that butchered the inhabitants of New Ulm, Minn., led by Chief Little Crow.

We joined the Sixth Iowa at Sioux City and left that place sometime in June, and marched up the Missouri river to Crow creek, where we stopped several weeks, and then went on to the mouth of Sheyenne river and there left the river and went towards Devils lake, where we were told the Indians were in force. At Fort Pierre we engaged a guide. The Frenchman we hired was Frank LaFramboise, but the real guide was a full blooded Indian called Fool Dog. At fort Pierre we were ordered to go in light marching order. Did not carry much, but rations and ammunition. Left our overcoats and took one blanket and dog tents, and suffered with the cold. At the mouth of the Sheyenne one day at noon



the thermometer registered 120 in the shade. That afternoon there was a hail storm and the next morning our dog tents were frozen solid. We went on and when we reached the Jim river we came to the buffalo country, and there were thousands of them. Soon we struck signs of Indians. Struck trails, found small camping places, carcasses of buffalo with the meat stripped from the bones. We kept on going several days. In the meantime scouts to locate the Indians were sent out, and a reward offered to the one that first brought the news.

We had camped for noon and picketed our horses, eaten our dinners, when a horseman was seen coming like the wind, and rushed to headquarters. In an instant the bugler blew, boots and saddles, and in just eighteen minutes we were in line. One battalion was left with train. General Sully rode down the line on his iron gray horse (it was a saying when the iron gray comes out look for trouble). Boys you done d—d well. Fours to the right march. Trot march, and we were soon on a run, and we made that twelve miles in about one hour. We came on the Indians. They were warned of our coming, and were preparing to move or fight. Our regiment rode to the right of them and the Sixth Iowa to the left. We were dismounted and fought on foot and those devils fought for one good hour. The bullets flew like hail and the yelling and screaming, it seemed to me was the most terrible that ever racked human ears. A number of our men were killed, more wounded, and we began to think our scalps were in danger, for the Red skins far outnumbered us, and were as well armed. When the battery came, unlimbered and began to pour it in to them about the fourth shot they broke and ran. Part of them ran right through the Sixth Iowa and stampeded a lot of horses and some of the men were killed.

The Indians scattered in all directions. We mounted and followed them some distance. Night came on and we halted, formed a hollow square and laid on our arms until daylight. Here we made a mistake. We should have gone back to the battle ground where our dead and wounded lay. In the night some of the Indians returned to the battle field chopped our wounded and dead and scalped them, and carried off their own dead. Thirty of theirs were piled and covered with stones and rubbish. Our wounded were killed with arrows. In some cases the missiles were clear through them. When we returned to the battle field at daylight it was a sight I do not care to see again. Tepees, some standing, some torn down, some squaws that were dead, some that were wounded and still alive, young children of all ages from young infants to 8 or 10 years old, who had lost their parents, dead soldiers, dead Indians, dead horses,

hundreds of dogs howling for their masters. Some of the dogs were packed with small poles fastened to a collar and dragging behind them. On the poles was a platform on which all kinds of articles were fastened on—in one instance a young baby. The first thing General Sully did was to care for these children. We gathered about sixty of them. We had captured about 150 prisoners, both bucks and squaws, and the children were turned over to them. Sully ordered all the property destroyed, tepees, buffalo skins, and all their things, including tons and tons of dried buffalo meat and tallow. It was gathered in wagons, piled in a hollow and burned, and the melted tallow ran down that valley in a stream. Hatchets, camp kettles and all things that would sink were thrown into a small lake. He sent troops to scout in force to destroy all scattering Indians he could find, but this was uphill business, for when they found one hid in the grass he would spring up and go to shooting, and was almost sure to kill from one to three men before he was brought down. In two days there were more soldiers than Indians killed.

As we were out of rations, except dried buffalo meat, Sully dispatched a courier to Pierre, to have a steamboat come up the river to the mouth of the Sheyenne with rations. We gathered up or destroyed all our trophies, loaded the little orphans into two government wagons, drove our prisoners and a lot of sore backed ponies and struck for the river as fast as possible. The boat was there and the rations were dealt out to us without stint, and that bacon, coffee and hardtack was food fit for a king. We brought the prisoners down to Fort Pierre, and I suppose they were kept all winter and turned loose in the spring.

This is the history of the battle of Whitestone Hill, as near as I can recollect, after the lapse of nearly 38 years as seen from my point of view. Will close with a few incidents. Lieutenant Krume and a party in overhauling a tepee, an Indian jumped up in their midst and killed two men and wounded another with arrows before he was killed. Two pickets saw what seemed to be one of those dogs howling. They shot it and it was an Indian with between twenty and thirty white women's scalps on his person. ■

## Soldier Writes: Battle Was Of "Pathetic Scenes"

(The following report was written by Z.T. Mullin, and was read at the dedication of Whitestone Battlefield on September 3, 1909. Mullin's speech was taken from the papers of the late Lewis Tveit of Forbes, North Dakota.)

I remember very distinctly the event which we are gathered here to commemorate. Although a beardless boy only sixteen years of age at that time, I was a private in Company L of the 2nd Nebraska Cavalry. The expedition, which was composed of the 6th Iowa Cavalry, the 2nd Nebraska Cavalry, one Company of the 7th Iowa Cavalry and one Company of Artillery, after a march along the Missouri River from Omaha to old Fort Pierre, arrived at the latter place about August 10th. Near this frontier post we built Fort Sully, named after General Sully, who was in command of the expedition. Leaving there about August 25th the command took a north-easterly direction, with Devils Lake as the objective point, where the Indians in large numbers were supposed to be. Between Fort Sully and the place where we now stand no house or other sign of civilization was seen. In fact there was no settlement

between Yankton, a village of about one thousand inhabitants and Fort Pierre, excepting Bon Homme, a boat landing and Tacketts Station, and Fort Randall. Between Fort Pierre and this place the only things seen were vast herds of buffalo and antelope. The country was a vast uninhabited desert, and buffalo grass the only vegetation. It was barren and unpromising and little did one realize the great fertility of the soil and the wonderful development to come.

After marching several days, the scouts came in one evening and reported that the camp fires of the Indians were to be seen to the west of us on the Missouri River. The scouting party was called for to start in the morning at daylight. Two men from each of the twenty companies of the command composed this party. I was one of the number volunteering. An all day ride of fifty miles brought us to the bottom lands of the river, which was yet two miles distant. We set camp on a small stream, the name of which I do not recall, expecting to find the enemy in the morning. The next morning we marched down to the timber which fringed the river bank;



but no Indians were to be found. Our forced march was all in vain. Our steps were retraced. Arriving at Goose Creek, as I recall it, the starting place of the day before, to find that the command had moved on a short distance in an easterly direction.

I had suffered greatly all day from the heat and the too hearty indulgence in buffalo meat, and was unable to proceed further that day. The lieutenant in command left several men with me, and with the balance of the scouting party proceeded to overtake the command, promising to send back an ambulance in the morning for me. About eleven o'clock the next day the ambulance arrived, and it was, I assure you, joyously welcomed, as I was unable to ride my horse, and as it was "in the air" that we were in "Indians' country." I did not, with my small squad of men, care to be detached so completely from the main body of the army. We came to them the next day. I rode in the ambulance another day. Then on September 3rd I was able to ride my horse.

We went into camp about 2 o'clock. The horses had been picketed out to grass, the cooks were preparing dinner—buffalo chips being used for fuel—when suddenly a bugle sounded, the order was: "Every man to his horse, cut his saber, and take only his revolvers and gun." It required but a brief period and all was ready for the wild race of twelve miles, to where the Indians, estimated at four thousand in number—had been discovered by the scouts of that day. They had struck their teepees—eight hundred altogether—and formed a hollow square in the valley where we are now congregated, their provisions, camp equipment, their teepees, dogs, and all their belongings, the warriors being placed on the outside, evidently awaiting the attack.

The sixth Iowa Cavalry formed on one side of this valley; our regiment, the second Nebraska Cavalry on the other. It was near sunset, and after a period of waiting, the order to fire was given and the battle was on. The Indians evidently had many U.S. army guns, captured the year before in Minnesota. The battle lasted until some time after dark, when the Indians cut their way through one of the Companies of the Sixth Iowa Cavalry, killing, as I recall it, about thirty of the soldiers of that Regiment. They escaped, taking with them their dead warriors, leaving their squaws, papooses and all their camp equipments and provisions on the field, where they were found the next morning in great confusion. Many dead and wounded Indian women and children, many dogs and ponies, and the many dead soldiers, was the view before us the next morning at daylight. The night was one of pandemonium. With the barking of the dogs, the neighing of the ponies, the wailing of

squaws and children in the black darkness of the night will never be forgotten.

We withdrew from the field after some time and laid on our arms all night. The shooting of the dogs by the pickets, which in many cases were supposed to be Indians prowling about in the darkness, and the Indians themselves, who were evidently prowling about, prevented any one from

sleeping. We were called out several times during the night, supposing the Indians were attacking. They, however, did not attack in force that night, nor did they make a serious demonstration until two days later, on the 5th.

It is useless to speak of the privations, anxiety, that we experienced for several days, nor of the pathetic scenes that followed. ■

## Sully's Camp Located In McIntosh County

—Comments by the late T.R. Shimmin of Forbes, N.D. Taken from the papers of the late Lewis Tveit of Forbes, N.D.

Sully's camp No. 33 was on section 24-131-67 in McIntosh County.

The scout Joe Laframboise was sent to inform Sully of the village having been located, when House first saw the village from the hill about two miles northwest of where the monument is now located.

Where Lt. Hall says in his official report the fight on the 5th took place about fifteen miles from the White-stone, must have been a mistake, for

by the diary of different soldiers, who were in the fight it was only about five or six, and still in the hills, fifteen miles would place the point five or six miles northeast of Merricourt, on the level prairie, and we know that no Indians ever would leave the broken and rough ground, found along the foot of the hills, when pursued by troops.

When William Harker located Sully's camp 33 for Dana Wright and me, he pointed out where the camp was located on the north side of a shallow slough. There is a fine spring of good water on the south side of the little slough, but it is a poor place to camp on that side but on the north side the land lays almost level, and from there the view is fine to look over a large part of the surrounding country. It was in this little shallow slough where Harker and other young soldiers were chasing the young geese, when the scout from House came to notify Sully that he had located the Indian village.

The wagon train must have left the camp ground in a hurry for there has been found by the local people when the land was broken up a revolver, sword, gun, heavy log chain, part of a set of army cooking outfit, many dishes, with the army stamp on them, parts of heavy army harness, and many other small articles. ■



This picture of the late T.R. Shimmin of Forbes, N.D. was taken in 1924. Shimmin was interested in Indian and local history, serving as members on Whitestone Park Board and also the Dickey County Historical Society.



# Choosing The Park Site

(Reprinted from the December 13, 1900 issue of The Dickey County Leader of Ellendale, North Dakota.)

## A Movement on Foot to Mark the Spot With a Monument

The committee appointed by the Dickey County Veteran Association to inspect the grounds and look up data regarding the Whitestone battlefield personally examined the spot last week and are now active in trying to get the matter in proper shape to present to the legislature for consideration. The troops that were engaged in this memorable fight with the Indians were of Company B, Sixth Iowa Cavalry, under command of General Sully, who was on his way in the fall of '63 to join forces with General Sibley to the north.



A controversy over the correct site of Whitestone Battlefield stirred some debate up to the 1940s. The late Sam Anderson of Forbes, N.D. maintained the battle occurred in the northwest quarter of Albertha Township in Dickey County—about 21 miles west of Ellendale, N.D. Anderson based his premise on the remains of about 17 army wagons, and assorted sabres and rifle pits which had been discovered at the Albertha Township site. Anderson's theory was not accepted, however. Historians in 1909 agreed the site of the battlefield was at its present location.

It is found that 21 soldiers of the company fell, Lieutenant Leavett being among the number. The graves of our soldiers are located in a beautiful spot, between two hills, says Col. Kennedy, and the high hill overlooking the valley would be a splendid location for the monument. The hill is the loftiest of the adjacent country and a fitting memento on top could be seen for miles around.

The step being taken by the association is most commendable and should receive encouragement from every citizen. An effort is being made to reach some of the members of the Iowa cavalry who took part in the struggle, and Col. Kennedy expects to soon have a report from an eye witness. Below we append a brief letter from E.R. Kennedy, chairman of the

committee:

The committee that was appointed by the Dickey County Veterans and Sons of Veteran's Association to locate and report on any historical facts that they may find of the Whitestone battlefield met last week and visited the spot where the battle took place. They found the graves of our soldiers located on the southeast corner of the southwest quarter of section 8, township 131, range 65 of Dickey county. The battle was mostly fought on sections 8 and 17. We expect to be able to make a report to get before the legislature to ask for a memorial to congress for an appropriation to suitably mark the spot of this fierce fight with the Indians.

The committee was organized by electing E.R. Kennedy chairman and Theo. Northrop secretary. Leonard Ellis is the other member of the committee. We will notify you occasionally as we gather our information. ■

## Dedication of Whitestone Battlefield Monument

Merricourt, N. D., Oct. 13, 1909

### PROGRAM

Exercises to begin at high noon

Sounding of the Assembly—Bugle.

Prayer.

Address of Welcome—Hon. T. F. Marshall.

"Bivouac of the Dead"—Helen Dean.

Unveiling of Monument—Mrs. Gertrude Ryan, daughter of Col. Wilson.

Music by Band.

Presentation of the Monument—By Whitestone Battlefield Commission.

Acceptance by Governor John Burke.

Address on behalf of Iowa.

Address on behalf of Nebraska.

Flag Drill.

History of Indian Raids—Prof. H. L. Rockwood.

Address—By President J. H. Worst, of North Dakota Agricultural College, Fargo.

Poem—James W. Foley of Bismarck.

Brief Addresses by Survivors of the Battle.

Song—America.

Benediction.

At left is the original program used for the dedication ceremony of the Whitestone Battlefield monument.

# 4,000 People Honor Dead At Whitestone In 1910

(The following is from the June 2, 1910 issue of The Monango Journal, which was published in Monango, North Dakota. The article reports on the Memorial Day service of 1910 held at Whitestone Battlefield. The newspaper is from the papers of the late Lewis Tveit of Forbes, North Dakota.)

## ABOUT 4,000 PEOPLE DO HONOR TO NATION'S DEAD

### Ideal Weather Prevailed

There has not, in all probability, been an occasion in the state of North Dakota of the kind equal to the Memorial service held on the now famous battlefield of Whitestone Hills last Monday. Providence as well as the people evidently was in sympathy with the occasion for a more nearly perfect day could not have been made to order. And the people—they came from





Memorial Day celebration was observed at Whitestone Park in 1910. This postcard was addressed to Earl Northrop, who resided in Fargo, N.D.

everywhere. It was impossible to count their numbers but many conservative estimates placed the crowd at between four and five thousand. One speaker in referring to the numbers present said there was not less than a half million dollars worth of horses and vehicles which were used in conveying the multitudes there.

The program began at 10:30 a.m., the schools, etc., occupying the time until dinner. The principal speaking, however, took place after dinner. Hon. T.F. Marshall of Oakes was the first speaker and briefly recounted how the battlefield had been secured from the government and turned over to the state for a memorial park. He was well received by the vast audience. Mr. Marshall spoke from the famous rock which marks the place and this was used by the successive speakers.

Dr. O.G. Libby, professor of history of the University and secretary of the State Historical Society, followed Mr. Marshall, giving a brief resume of Dakota's earliest history. His remarks were in themselves a liberal education on the history of the state. He urged that the people present form an organization to continue and perpetuate the memory of Whitestone as one of the historic spots of North Dakota. He emphasized the fact that every Dakotan should be proud of our state's history.

The next speaker was "Jones of Rock," the well known states attorney of LaMoure county. Mr. Jones began his address by stating that he had talked to many crowds that filled large halls but that this was the first time

that he had been privileged to address a crowd that filled all outdoors. Mr. Jones is an orator of exceptional ability and delivered a very interesting address. He paid a beautiful tribute to the boys of '61 to '65 who fell in the line of battle or who have since answered the final roll call.

Miss Helen Dean, one of Dickey county's own productions, a reader of ability, next read a very beautiful sketch which was fully in harmony with the occasion. The K.O.K.A. band was also a very essential part in the day's program.

Another interesting feature of the day was the presence of several of the old veterans who actually took part in the Whitestone Indian fight in '63. In this connection it might be interesting to our people to know that Major House, who commanded the scouting party of 300 men who first came upon the Indians, died only just last March at his home in Delhi, Iowa. He was 82 years of age and one of the most respected citizens of his state. Two of his old scouting party, A.T. Shanklin of Sprinville, Ia., and J.C. Luce of Groton, S.D. were in attendance at the exercises last Monday.

Everything passed off pleasantly and on time under the direction of Col. Theo. Northrop, who has been the central figure in the dedicating and consecrating of the beautiful Whitestone Memorial Park.

No memorial service has ever been attempted in North Dakota on so gigantic a scale as this, but it is hoped that this is only the beginning of a movement that will grow more popular

# PROGRAM

FOR  
MEMORIAL DAY EXERCISES  
AT  
WHITESTONE HILLS  
BATTLEFIELD  
MONDAY, MAY 30TH, 1910

- No. 1. Call to Order.
  - No. 2. Song, America, led by the K. O. K. A. Band.
  - No. 3. Invocation by Rev. J. C. Engel.
  - No. 4. "47 Years Ago," by Mrs. Allspaugh, of Anamossa, Iowa, wife of one of the Whitestone Veterans.
  - No. 5. Reading—Patriotic—by Miss Hulda Scheidt of Kulm, N. D.
  - No. 6. Song by the Students of the S. N. I. S. of Ellendale, N. D.
  - No. 7. Five Minute Address by Prof. Tjaden of Kulm, N. D.
  - No. 8. Recitation by Miss FuVall, Edgeley School.
  - No. 9. Address in German by Rev. Vogel of Kulm, N. D.
  - No. 10. Song by Scheidt Sisters Quartet, Kulm, N. D.
  - No. 11. Recitation, pupil of Forbes School.
  - No. 12. Flag Drill, 12 girls from the Monango School.
  - No. 13. Exercise by the Kulm School.
  - No. 14. Exercise by the Fullerton School.
  - No. 15. Exercise by the Ellendale School.
- INTERMISSION.**  
**45 Minutes For Dinner.**
- No. 16. 15 Minute Address by Hon. T. F. Marshall of Oakes, N. D.
  - No. 17. "Our Earliest History," by O. G. Libby, Professor of History, University of North Dakota.
  - No. 18. Address by G. P. Jones, La Moure, N. D.
  - No. 19. Reading by Miss Helen Dean.
  - No. 20. Decoration Day Exercises led by the Oakes High School and followed by the Kulm Boys Military Company, and Flower Girls Representing Various Schools.
  - No. 21. Closing Number, Song by the Audience, "God Be With Us 'Til We Meet Again."

Shown above is the original program to the Memorial Day services held at Whitestone Park on May 30, 1910. Organizer of the event was Col. Theo. Northrop.



as the years go by. Whitestone Hills is the only battlefield of importance in the state, but in importance it ranks with any in the United States, for it marks the last determined stand taken to stop the forward march of civilization by a people who, according to the law of the survival of the fittest were gradually giving way to make room for the oncoming white race. ■

## In 1941, Extensive Improvements Completed For Park—Museum, Picnic Facilities

### PROGRAM 1941

12:15 p.m.—Oakes Drum and Bugle Corps.

1 p.m.—Concert by Ellendale Band, Floyd Ackert, director.

1:30 p.m.—Bugle Call.

Flag Ceremony—Boy Scouts from Ellendale.

Song by audience, "America," led by Gertrude Erbe, music director at N-I, Ellendale.

Invocation by Rev. K. Orlando Lee, Methodist pastor at Ellendale.

Quartet—Ted Hillius and his associates.

Remarks—Miss Blanche Stevens.

Remarks—Col. Dana Wright.

Brass Quintet—"Out of the Dusk to You," by Dorothy Lee. "Prayer Perfect," by Ervine Stenson.

Tribute to Thomas Shimmin—Walt Haas.

Address—Thomas H. Moodie, WPA director for North Dakota.

Quartet—Ted Hillius and his associates.

Trombone duet, "Whispering Hope" played by Neil Smith and John Blumer.

Song by audience, "God Bless America," led by Miss Gertrude Erbe.

Taps.

Benediction.

H.C. Edblom, Co-publisher of The Oakes Times, Master of Ceremonies.



The museum building (shown above) was completed in 1941. A picnic shelter is also a part of the structure. This photograph was taken in 1941.



The elaborate stone gateway was also finished in 1941, when this picture was taken.





This is the dedication and unveiling of the plaque erected in memory of the Indians slain at the Whitestone Hill battle. This picture was taken July 4th, 1942. Basil Two Bears, 3rd from the right and grandson of Chief Two Bears

who commanded the Yanktonai at the battle, accepted the plaque for the Indians. Alberta Two Bears, his granddaughter, standing in front, unveiled it. Others, left to right: Agnes Looking Horse, James All Yellow, Mrs.

Basil Two Bears and Frank Young Bear. This photograph was taken by H.A. Porter and the plaque was made by Clinton Hess. —Courtesy of Whitestone Park Museum.

## Centennial Celebration In 1963 Hailed As Big Event Of The Year

(On July 18, 1963—100 years after the big battle—a two-day centennial celebration was observed at Whitestone Park. The following story from the Dickey County Leader describes some of the highlights. The news clipping comes from the papers of the late Lewis Tveit of Forbes, N.D.)

Just as 100 years ago, the whites badly outnumbered the Indians at Whitestone Hill hunting grounds, only this year the odds were even worse for the Indians. Yet they had the upper hand. The Indian group came away with first prize in the parade entries. The whites came away with a sunburn.

Probably half the population of southeastern North Dakota are gingerly applying lotions to the tangible results of a day, up to two days in some cases, at what Dick Rainbolt, Associated Press writer, calls "The Second Battle of Whitestone Hill."

The celebration, much promoted in an area as large as the state of Rhode Island, started calmly enough Saturday morning, with a traffic jam on narrow roads leading to the park, backing traffic up to the point many carloads of spectators missed the parade at 10 a.m. An estimated 6,000 people came for the Saturday festivities, and many stayed the entire





Indians dancing at centennial celebration at Whitestone Park in 1963.

two days, sleeping in cars, in sleeping bags, trucks, trailers, campers, or whatever.

Indians, at the park to participate in the parade and ceremonial dances, camped at the park, coming from Fort Totten in the northern part of the state.

Perfect weather blessed the event with sunny skies and cool evenings.

The Saturday performance of the rodeo played to a good crowd, and many brought blankets to sit on, but ended up wrapping themselves (in them.)

The rodeo, not approved by the Rodeo Cowboys Assoc., attracted cowboys from all over the state. The

## Cowboys Flock To Rodeo

riders were trying to build up extra points in the annual contest to determine the top ranking cowboys in the state. Riders were experienced hands, veterans of the rodeo circuit, and some not so experienced. Jim Biegler, Edgeley, entered in the bronc riding event, was taking his first rodeo ride. Jim did as well as some of the others, but failed to last as long as the horse.

Sunday started much like Saturday, with a traffic jam over two miles long, from the parking lot, around the lake, and south to the nearest main road.

Better traffic handling eased the situation somewhat, when an estimated 20,000 people converged on the battlefield with 5,000 cars.

An estimated 600 cases of soft drinks, innumerable hotdog buns, and other foodstuffs were eaten by the overflow crowd. Drivers of bread supply trucks and soft drink trucks expressed wonder at the size of the crowd, and mentioned that this was the new record in the state for consumption of these products in a two-day period.

The parade started late on Sunday morning to allow as many latecomers (caught in the traffic snarl) to see it as possible. The Indian group from Fort Totten garnered first prize; second went to the Ashley Whisker Club, a group of bewhiskered men left over from the Ashley 75th anniversary celebration; and third went to the Farmers Union junior entry, of a sodhouse, contrasted with the modern home of today.

Marching units from area city high schools vied with the 38-year-old Kulm Community Band to produce the sweetest music for the ears of the crowd. Of the bands, Ellendale high school carried off the first prize; second went to the Kulm community band; and Kulm High earned third place.

There was a great deal of livestock at the park. Rodeo stock was grazed overnight between performances. Saddle clubs rode into the area from Edgeley. The club coming the farthest was the James' own-Montpelier group. The best dressed and styled was the Maude Evans Riding Club, and second was the Edgeley Riding Club.

After the parade, probably the most impressive event of the entire celebration was held. The reason for the

entire effort: The memorial service to the 20 soldiers buried on the hill, and to the Indians killed in the battle. The combined American legion marching unit, the National Guard marching unit from Edgeley, and the Kulm Community Band assembled on the hill by the monument while divine blessing was asked, a 20-second silent salute observed, and benediction was given by the chaplain.

Taps were sounded from the Hill, and a three-gun salute was fired by the National Guard, both resounding from the hills around the lake. A wreath and flag were put on the monument to commemorate the anniversary.

By noon Sunday the crowd was turning a noticeable shade of pink under the hot July sun. Many spectators brought picnic lunches and found the best place to eat was in their cars, or in the grass-covered parking lot where the only shade to be had was man-made.

Soon after noon, visitors wishing for a cool drink of water found the well water cool, but brown with silt. Directors of the park report that this well has been in use many years, and several attempts have been made to pump it dry, none successful. Lots of arm went into lifting water into cups of the thirsty. The hand pump was operated almost steadily all day. Most folks were so interested in a cool drink that a little mud caused them to hesitate only slightly.

Afternoon festivities included the speaker, Judge Ray Friederich of Rugby, who gave a most comprehensive talk, touching on the subjects of politics, history, and the future.

Indian dancers followed. The slope of the hill made a natural vantage point for spectators. The hill was covered with visitors watching the events taking place at the base, where the speaker's platform was located. Most of the crowd, now turned to a more delicate shade of red and those who attended the afternoon performance of the rodeo could have gotten more serious burns. This writer saw the rodeo the evening before, and felt that enough sun was enough. Many other spectators left in mid-afternoon, while many more were arriving for the rodeo.

It will take a week or two for the southeastern part of the state to recover from probably the largest single event gathering ever held in the state. Initial opinions after the affair are that it was an unqualified success.

Some folks think the rodeo facilities could be left set up, and an annual event made of it. Many long range developments of this celebration are possible. If nothing else the communities near the battlefield have experienced an example of cooperation and mutual satisfaction in successfully planning and expediting this 100th anniversary celebration.