

Events in Pope County During the Dakota Conflict

Ann Grandy, Pope County Historical Society Staff

www.popecountymuseum.com

September, 2012



In 1851, most of the area that is now known as Pope County was included in the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux. In 1862, there were five families in Lake Johanna Township. All fled to safety at Paynesville. This trunk in our museum collection belonged to Gregar Halvorson Stordahl and was left behind when the family fled. It was discovered by the Dakota braves, who scratched off the lock and chopped a hole in the top. But the trunk and the rest of the farm were spared

and the family returned.

The Joseph Hutchins family lived in Leven Township. They were warned by an unknown person arriving from the west. They hastily gathered their five children and fled to Sauk Centre, leaving all their livestock behind. Shortly after arriving in Sauk Centre, Mr. Hutchins and a small company of soldiers returned to the farm to retrieve the livestock, but found all the animals dead and the buildings burned to the ground. Mr. Hutchins sent his family to Minneapolis while he harvested the crops and rebuilt the farm.

In Grove Lake Township, there were only two families; the Stablers and the Van Eatons. Rev. Thomas Van Eaton, a Methodist minister and farmer, was visiting the Stablers with his family when Mr. Stabler's brother arrived with news of the uprising. They immediately fled to the stockade at Sauk Centre. The Van Eatons had five children, including Thomas C. Van Eaton who was one of the first (if not the first) white children born in Pope County. After a few days at Sauk Centre, Rev. Van Eaton returned to look after the livestock and gather a few possessions. He found everything destroyed. He was then attacked by the Dakota and beheaded. The Grove Lake Church still stands on the property he owned.