

there. Chitto did not want to go, but finally mother convinced her to start on the return.

When we reached our house nothing was to be seen of father's body. We soon, discovered a newly-made grave, where we had reason to believe he was buried.

Afterward we found out that he had been given a decent burial by orders of Little Crow himself. We did not doubt that this man would have protected us, had we been at the house when he came.

We rode on carefully through the woods. When we came out on the other side, we were relieved to see the white tents of United States soldiers. Colonel Sibley was encamped at Lac Qui Parle, and we were safe at last.

Chitto disappeared from this post in the same sudden manner as before, escaping at night. I am happy to say, though, that I have seen her several times since.

Mother and I were afraid her people would punish her for the part she took in helping us, but they did not. We believe that father's friendship with Little Crow may have played a part in this. I hope so. I will consider it father's legacy.

## **A STORY OF THE SIOUX WAR**



### **A Tale from U.S. History**



A LearningIsland.org  
15 - Minute Book

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A Story of the Sioux War/A Tale from U.S. History

Summary: A family's adventures during the Sioux uprising of 1862, told through the eyes of a young girl.

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2. Little Crow. Juvenile Literature.
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Just then Chitto spoke to the horse. He raced forward, almost throwing mother and me from his back. He kept up his furious pace, never halting until he had gone two or three miles.

When we looked back, we saw nothing of the Indians. Chitto brought the horse down to a walk, but we did not stop.

When night came, we entered a dense wood. There we stayed the night.

I shall not attempt to describe those fearful hours. Not one of us slept a wink. Mother sat weeping over the loss of father, while I was heartbroken, too.

Chitto, like the Indian she was, kept on the move continually. Back and forth she stole as noiselessly through the wood as a shadow. She kept watch all through that cold night.

At daylight we all fell into a feverish slumber, which lasted several hours. When we awoke, we were hungry and miserable.

Seeing a settler's house in the distance, Chitto offered to go to it for food. We were afraid she would get into trouble, but she was sure there was no danger and went.

In less than an hour she was back again with an armful of bread. She said there was no one in the house, and we thought the people had gotten scared and ran away.

We stayed where we were for three days. On one day we saw an army of Sioux warriors come through the wood. They set up a fearful cry and rushed at the house where Chitto had gotten our food. After tearing things apart inside, they burned the cabin to the ground.

It seemed to mother that the Indians would not remain at Lac Qui Parle long. She felt that we would be able to find safety

“What do you mean?” asked mother. She and I hurried to Chitto’s side.

“What are the Indians doing?” I asked.

“They burn buildings—kill people—come this way!”

Chitto spoke the truth, for the Sioux were raging like demons at that very hour at Lac Qui Parle.

“What shall we do, Chitto?” asked my mother.

“Get on horse—he carry you.”

“But my husband is ill. The horse cannot carry all three of us.”

My poor distracted mother scarcely knew what to do. All this time father sat like a statue in his chair. A terrible suspicion suddenly entered her mind, and she ran to him.

Placing her hand upon his shoulder, she called his name in a low tone. Then she uttered a fearful shriek, as she staggered backward. “He is dead! He is dead!” she screamed.

It was true. The shock of the news brought by the little Indian girl was too much. He had expired in his chair without a struggle.

The wild cry which escaped my mother was answered by several whoops from the woods. Chitto became frantic with terror.

“Indian come!” she said.

Mother instantly helped me on the back of the horse and then got on behind me. She was a skillful rider, but she let Chitto to handle the bridle and we started off.

Looking back, I saw a dozen Sioux braves come out of the woods. They headed straight for us.

## A STORY OF THE SIOUX WAR

In the summer of 1862, we were living in the State of Minnesota. There I had a most remarkable experience.

We lived at Lac Qui Parle, or rather quite close to it, for we were about a mile from the place.

There were only three of us—father, mother, and myself, Susanna. We had moved to Minnesota three years before. My parents moved to restore their health; for they were feeble and needed a change of climate.

The first year, both father and mother were much better; but not long after, father began to fail.

I remember that he used to take his chair out in front of the house in pleasant weather and sit there. He would stare at the blue horizon, or into the depths of the vast wilderness which was not more than a stone's throw from our door.

Mother would sometimes go out and sit beside father, and they would talk long and earnestly in low tones. I was too young to understand all this at the time, but it was not long afterward that I learned the truth.

Father was getting more and more frail; but mother had become strong and robust. Her disease seemed to have left her altogether. She tried to encourage father, and really believed his weakness was only temporary.

Scarcely a day passed that I did not see some of the Sioux Indians who were scattered through that portion of the State. In going to, and coming from the agency, they would sometimes stop at our house.

Father was very quick in picking up languages, and he was able to converse quite easily with them.

How I used to laugh to hear them talk in their odd language. To me it sounded like they were grunting at each other.

But the visits used to please father and mother, and I was always glad to see some of the warriors stop at the house.

I remember one hot day in June when father was sitting under a tree in front of the house. I was inside helping mother. We heard the peculiar noises which told us that father had an Indian visitor. We both went to the door, and I went outside to laugh at their queer talk.

Sure enough, an Indian was seated in the other chair, and he and father were talking excitedly.

The Indian was of a stout build, and wore a straw hat with a broad, red band around it. He had on a fine, black cloth coat, but his trousers were shabby and his shoes were pretty well worn.

His face was bright and intelligent. I watched him very closely as he talked in his earnest way with father, who was equally animated in answering him.

The Indian carried a rifle and a revolver—the latter being in plain sight at his waist—but I never connected the thought of danger with him as he sat there talking with father.

On the afternoon of August 19, father was sitting in his chair in front of the house. Mother was going about her household duties, and I was playing and amusing myself.

The day was hot and sticky, and I remember that father was unusually pale and weak. He coughed a lot. Then he would sit so still that I thought he was asleep.

Suddenly I stopped my play.

“Mother,” I asked, “what is that smoke over there?”

I pointed in the direction of Lac Qui Parle. She saw a dark column of smoke floating off on the horizon. From its location, we knew that it was at the Agency.

“There is a fire of some kind there,” she said. She shaded her eyes with her hand and stared earnestly in that direction.

“The Indians are coming, Edward,” she called to father. “They will be here in a few minutes!”

Suddenly, a splendid black horse came galloping from the woods. With two or three powerful bounds, it halted directly in front of me. As it did so, I saw that the bareback rider was a small girl. It was our little Sioux friend, Chitto.

She made a striking picture, with her long, black hair streaming over her shoulders, and her dress fluttering in the wind.

“Chitto,” I cried in amazement, “where did you come from?”

“Must go—must go—must go!” she exclaimed, in great excitement. “Indian soon be here!”

It seemed that, in the few weeks since she had been at our house, she had picked up enough English to make herself understood.

know the language, I am quite sure that they were understood by Chitto. She looked at me with the gratitude she could not express.

She soon grew sleepy and was put to bed with me. She fell asleep as soon as her head touched the pillow.

I lay awake a little longer and noticed that the storm had stopped. The patter of the rain was gone from the roof, and the wind blew soft and gentle. At last I sunk into a sound sleep.

I awoke in the morning and saw the rays of the sun entering the window. I quickly turned over to speak to my young friend.

To my surprise she was gone. I thought she had risen a short time before, so I hurriedly dressed myself and went down stairs to help keep her company.

But she was not there, and father and mother had seen nothing of her. She had no doubt risen in the night and gone quietly away.

There was something curious and touching in the fact that she had groped about in the darkness, until she found her own clothes. Then she put them on and departed without taking so much as a pin that belonged to us.

We all felt a strong interest in Chitto. A few days later when father visited Lac Qui Parle, he took me with him. We asked many people about the little girl, but could learn nothing about her.

I was very disappointed, for I had had hoped to take her home with me for a few days.

Father and I went a number of times afterward and always made an effort to find Chitto. We could not find out anything about her. It seemed that no one knew of her.



The Sioux Chief  
Little Crow

I describe this Indian rather closely, as he was no other than the well-known chief, Little Crow. This man was at the head of the frightful Sioux war, which broke out within sixty days from that time.

The famous chieftain stayed until the sun went down. Then he got up and walked away rapidly in the direction of Lac Qui Parle. Father called good-by to him, but he did not reply and soon disappeared in the woods.

The sky was cloudy, and it looked as if a storm was coming. Since it was dark and blustering, we remained inside the rest of the evening. A fine drizzling rain began to fall, and the darkness was intense.

It was getting late and father was reading to us, when there came a rap upon the door.

It was so gentle and timid that it sounded like the pecking of a bird. We all looked at the door, uncertain what it meant.

“It is a bird, scared by the storm,” said father, “and we may as well let it in.”

I sat much nearer the door than either of my parents, so I jumped up and opened it. As I did so, I looked out into the gloom. Suddenly I sprung back with a cry of alarm.

“What's the matter?” asked father. He quickly dropped the book and came toward me.

“It isn't a bird; it's a person.” As I spoke, a little Indian girl, about my own age, walked into the room. She looked at each of us and asked in the Sioux language whether she could stay all night.

I closed the door and we gathered around her. She had the prettiest, daintiest moccasins, but her limbs were bare from the knee downward. She wore a large shawl around her shoulders, and her coarse, black hair hung loosely below her waist.

Her face was very pretty. Her eyes were as black as coal and seemed to flash fire whenever she looked at anyone.

Of course, her clothes were dripping wet.

She could speak only a few words of English, so her face lighted up with pleasure when father addressed her in the Sioux language.

As near as we could find out, her name was Chitto, and she lived with her parents at Lac Qui Parle. She told us that there were several families in a spot by themselves. That day they had got hold of some alcohol. They were drinking quite freely.

At such times Indians are dangerous, and Little Chitto was terrified almost out of her senses. She fled through the storm and the darkness, not caring where she went. She only wanted to get away from the dreadful scene.

She suddenly found herself on a path in the woods. She followed it until she saw the glimmer of the light in our window. She hurried to the house and asked to be let in.

Mother quickly removed the damp clothes from the little Sioux girl. She replaced them with some warm, dry ones belonging to me. At the same time she gave her hot, refreshing tea, and did everything to make her comfortable.

I removed the little moccasins from her feet. I kissed her dark cheeks, and, spoke some soft words. Though she did not

