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Legends, Letters, and Lies: Readings About Inkpaduta and the Spirit Lake Massacre

Mary Bakeman

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Legends, Letters, and Lies: Readings About Inkpaduta and the Spirit Lake Massacre Mary Bakeman From Introduction and background: COULD THE DAKOTA CONFLICT of 1862 have been avoided? With perfect hindsight, many believe that the lessons learned from the Spirit Lake Massacre of 1857 could have prevented or at least predicted that outcome. Without doubt, there were lessons to be learned. How should troops be equipped? What role should cultural differences play in government policy and its implementation? How could similar events be avoided in the future? George Santayana (1863-1952) could have been speaking of this episode when he said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." How the passing of time and the retelling of the story affect the memory can be studied through the comparison of the contemporary and later accounts which follow here. I leave that for the reader. Included are lists of those involved, not only those who were attacked, but also those who responded to the call for rescue. Spellings and punctuation are from the original documents. Enjoy! background....THIS VOLUME IS DIVIDED INTO SECTIONS from the attack to the 'wrap-up' of the massacre events, each with contemporary reports from a variety of sources. This section provides the setting and an opportunity for the reader to return to 1857, with an understanding of the people of that era. The white settlers on the frontier had regular contact with the Indians, and knowledge of the treaties which made the land available to them. They knew of the gathering of the tribes for annuity payments, and understood the relationships of the sub-groups within them....

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