for war against her own people. It was a most diabolical plan. He and the Sioux war council planned to make a token gesture of peace with the Chippewas. He would lead his people into the camps of the enemy bearing the pipe of peace. When the Chippewas had been convinced that the pipe was true, the warriors of the Sioux would slowly infiltrate the lands surrounding the camps of the unsuspecting Chippewas. At a given signal, the Sioux would attack at all points throughout the entire Chippewa nation.

Chahpah selected his strongest horse and sent his Chippewa wife on a mission of peace to the Chippewa villages near Pembina. She was accompanied by a band of selected warriors. She was to bear the pipe of peace to the enemy. She was to convince the Chippewas that Chahpah was coming later to visit them, and wanted to smoke the pipe of peace with them.

In order to assure himself that his Chippewa wife would not inform her bloodbrothers of his intentions, Chief Chahpah held a knife to the throat of her sons, telling her that if she was to fail his plans the sons would be slain and left in the fields in unmarked graves. This disgrace was supposed to make the spirit of the dead wander alone forever in the darkness.

The second part of Chahpah’s plan was to be carried out by another group of selected warriors, led by his full-blooded Sioux son, Wah-nah-tah, which meant “The Charger.” Wahnahtah was to carry the pipe of peace to the Chippewas living in central Minnesota. He sent the same message of peace to them: “Chahpah was tired for war, and wanted to smoke a pipe of peace and to become friends and brothers to the Chippewa.”

Wahnahtah and the Sioux party met the Chippewas at a point about 10 miles south of the site of the present city of Little Falls, Minnesota. The Chippewa believed the message delivered by Wahnahtah. A day of celebration was declared. All of the participants seemed friendly, and sincere, and the day went well for the plans of Chahpah.

At one point in the celebrations, the plan almost came to an untimely end. A young Sioux warrior, who had been in the battle of Long Prairie, hadn’t forgotten the defeat at the hands of the Chippewas. He provoked a fight with a young Chippewa warrior. The Chippewa was struck to the ground with a blow from a stick being used by some Indian children in a game of stick ball.

Wahnahtah saw what had happened and fearing his father’s plans were shattered, stepped between the two, and beat his Sioux brother into unconsciousness. The Chippewa seeing this were assured the peace offering was genuine.

Chahpah’s plan was a simple one. He had instructed the peace parties to win the friendship of the Chippewa and to convince them that the pipe of peace was real. He wanted all to know that his wife was in the north and his son was in the south, both seeking the same desire of peace. Once they had accepted the pipe of peace, he would come and visit them smoking another pipe to seal his peace with them.

Meanwhile, the Sioux war lords had massed the warriors into three groups. It was the plan of Chahpah to spring a three-pronged attack against the enemy.

One prong was to go northward toward Pembina; the second was to travel northeastward toward Detroit Lakes and go as far as necessary in the general direction of Cass Lake; the third was to go eastward and slightly to the south meeting up with his son at the Little Falls meeting site.

The north prong was to drive the Chippewas out of northern Minnesota, and into Canada. Chahpah figured the Cree would give them shelter, but would not give them any fighting support. He knew the Cree were soft and didn’t want any part of fighting.

The second prong was to fan out into several war parties, some going to the south, and some to the north. They were to spread out from their eastern destination. It was Chahpah’s strategy that if the Chippewas near Pembina didn’t flee into Canada, they would panic and seek their brothers in central Minnesota. There they would be between his Dakota Sioux on the north and his central spearhead. It was his plan to annihilate the fleeing Chippewas between the two groups of warriors.

In order to signal the synchronistic start of the plan, a system of runners, horsemen, and smoke signals were to be used. The time and the date of the attack had already been set by the War Chiefs.

It was the objective of the third spearhead to join up with Chahpah’s son and together they were to destroy the Chippewas near Little Falls. Chahpah’s whole plan was based on the element of surprise! He figured he would catch the old enemy so off guard that they would panic and run. Once they were away from their guns and their bows, he would be able to kill them before they had time to muster a counter attack.

Chahpah had instructed his son to attempt to drive the fleeing Chippewas towards the south if at all possible. He figured that Sioux in Iowa would finish his work for him.

If they could not be turned toward Iowa but fled North, they would be caught between the central pincer and his own, as well as his son’s warriors. Chahpah was to lead the central spearhead himself.

The stage was set. Chahpah’s plan was going well, everything was just as he had planned it would go. Soon the appointed day and the appointed hour for his attack would be at hand. His dream of the return of the Minnesota hunting ground to the Sioux was to be fulfilled, and he would be hailed as the mightiest of the Sioux War Chiefs.

AN UNCALCULATED TURN OF EVENTS

The Chippewas, who made their home near Leach Lake, were led by a wise and learned man. Chief Flat-Mouth. He did not trust the Sioux. His dealings with them in the past had taught him they were not to be trusted in any dealings. It was Flat-Mouth’s reasoning that it was too soon for the Sioux to want peace, especially after the victory at Long Prairie. In his wise mind, he could see no reason for the sudden change of heart and he told his warriors of his feelings.

He knew the ways of the Sioux, and he warned his people not to attend the peace meetings at Little Falls. When runners of the Sioux first offered the pipe of peace to Flat Mouth, he refused. In defiance, he went on a hunting and trapping trip along the Long Prairie River.

One evening while watching for beaver tracks in the sand, Flat Mouth found the marks left by a Sioux war party. From all indications it was a large party, more than just a hunting party.

The mind of Flat Mouth grasped the full meaning of his finding. His suspicion about the Sioux Pipe of Peace was now confirmed. He knew in a flash the whole idea behind Chahpah’s plan of attack.

Flat Mouth realized his people had kept the early hours of the evening in silence, and only after darkness had settled over the lake did Flat Mouth and his party leave their place of concealment. They made their way silently across the lake in their canoes. They slept the remainder of the night in their canoes far away from the shores of the lake.

When morning came, Flat Mouth and his band slipped ashore and hid their boats in the reeds along the shore. Flat Mouth was an excellent tracker, and soon found the trail left by the Sioux war party. From the signs, he and his followers concluded that the party was large, at least 400 men and horses. Flat Mouth found a trail marker, left for a following party of warriors. Flat Mouth recognized the mark as that of Chahpah, chief of the Yankton Sioux!

As Flat Mouth read the signs, the Sioux were traveling in the direction of Battle Lake. He knew that there were no Chippewas in that area, and he surmised that the Sioux knew this too, but were to use this area as a staging area.

The mind of Flat Mouth worked swiftly. He triangulated the path that the war party would take to reach the Chippewa Village, and the path that he and his party must take to be there before the attack of the Sioux. Flat Mouth knew that the village of the Chippewas was to the east near the shores of Leach Lake. He had two cousins, who made their homes in this village, and he and his party sought to reach them before the attack of the Sioux. Flat Mouth and his followers, paddled across the chain of lakes that lay between him and Leach Lake. Arriving undetected, they sounded the alarm.

The Chippewas armed themselves and hid in the woods to