the sale of spirituous liquors in the Indian country shall be in full force and effect throughout the country hereby ceded until otherwise directed by congress or the president of the U. S.” Note that no provision was made barring beer, malt liquors, or wine.

The preamble to the treaty states this treaty was made at the Old Crossing, yet the treaty was not held at the Old Crossing but at the crossing of the new trail up near the site of Huot in Red Lake County. At that time the Old Crossing was located at Fisher. The new trail was best known and probably that was the reason for its use. Proof that the treaty was held near the site of Huot was confirmed by a soldier named Benjamin Dolbec, a mounted ranger, who was present at the treaty of 1863 and also present at the celebration June 8, 1914. On this day Polk and Red Lake County celebrated the treaty events with appropriate exercises.

Congressman Selvig introduced a bill HR5271 in April, 1930, for $5,000 for the erection of a memorial to the Old Crossing. The bill was passed. Carl G. Mose of Washington D.C. made an Indian statue and bronze plate which was set at Huot Park. June 25, 1933, the statue was put up and the park was dedicated. The park is 8.8 acres on the west bank of the Old Crossing. Also at this time 100 acres of land, which included portions of the Pembina Trail which led to the east bank of the Old Crossing, and a tract of land on both sides of the river north of where the bridge stood was bought by citizens of Polk and Red Lake Counties.

A PIONEER BURIAL

He stood there alone on a plot of ground in the wilderness of northwestern Minnesota on a warm day in August.

To the east of him were thickets of poplar and oak inhabited by large numbers of crows. To the west were prairie lands so far as the eye could see.

Erick John was not a robust man to look at as you would expect an early settler to be, but he was quick and wiry and what he lacked in weight and brawn he made up for in ingenuity and perseverance.

He looked down at the mound of damp earth to the right of him and measured the depth of the hole with his eye. He shook his head when he discovered it was not deep enough.

Perhaps the grave diggers didn’t have time for they had a small patch of oats ready for cutting or maybe they thought it was the right depth.

After a moment he turned and looked toward the wagon to his left and said audibly, as if the still figure in the wooden box could hear him,

“Well, Karl, I’ll see that you get buried right as far as it is in my power to do so. You bet I will! You helped me hew the logs and build my house this spring. And I’ll never forget how you helped me when Johanna and the children were seasick on our voyage to America last fall. Now it’s my turn to help you who are all alone in this new country.”

He reached into the wagon and pulled out a shovel. There was no time to lose. He must finish the burial and return the team before dark. Hoglund was going to cut his oats in the morning and had to have his horses properly taken care of that night.

Erick John jumped into the hole and began throwing shovels of clay to the surface. It was hard work for the clay was packed hard. He realized then why the grave diggers had not gone deeper. He kept on digging and wiping his brow until he struck a vein of sand. The digging became easier. Shovel after shovel of sand was thrown to the surface until he discovered that his head was about three inches below the surface of the ground. He knew then that he had reached the six foot depth. He thrust the shovel into the side of the grave in several places and made ledges in the clay, by which he climbed out.

It was pleasant to sit and rest on the damp cool earth and feel the wind waving him dry. He lit his pipe and inhaled deeply for he knew the most difficult work was still to be done. How was he to get the box into the grave? He had to do the work that six pallbearers usually do. He had a long rope and two planks. That comforted him. But there wasn’t enough manpower.

As he sat pondering a curious little chipmunk came closer and closer. He raised up on his haunches and seemed to wonder why everything had become so quiet. He wanted more activity. But he scampered away like lightning when Erick John rose up suddenly as though he had just solved the problem and was anxious to carry it out.

He knocked the ashes from his pipe and chucked it into his pocket. He picked up the shovel.

“It means more digging, Karl, but I’m going to do it,” he said, as he began to dig an incline at the end of the grave.

When that was done the dug away some earth from the back wheels until the wagon box was at the right slant. He placed the planks on the incline just meeting the wagon box and there he had a straight gently sloping chute to the grave. Then we wound the rope around the box and holding the two ends in his left hand pushed with the other.

His plan worked! It was heavy pushing but he preferred that to the risk connected with steeper incline.

When the box was in its right place, he removed the rope and threw it into the wagon box. Then he lifted the planks and threw them in.

“Caw, Caw,” came from almost every tree as the crows protested against this unusual disturbance of their domain.

Erick John sat down for another brief rest. But thoughts of the religious rites of a burial came surging through his mind. The fact that the only minister in that section of the country refused to conduct a serviceranked in his mind.

“There is a rumble and a butchering,” the minister had said, “that Karl might have been intoxicated when the accident occurred and he was not a religious man! No one knows whether he even had sent up as much as a sigh to God before he died. So you see, I haven’t the authority to bury him.”

“Well,” thought Erick John, “neither have I but I am going to do my best. Who am I to sit in judgment of any man. I believe God hears the prayers of any one if it comes from the heart. So I am sure he will hear me.”

Texts of funeral sermons he had heard came to his mind. There was the favorite one about “In My Father’s House are Many Mansions” and “Through Faith Ye Are Saved” and “The Hour Cometh Ye Know Not When.” Then he recalled the old one “The Wages of Sin Is Death” which ministers liked to use in order to frighten people into becoming religious.

He rose, picked up the shovel, and went to the head of the grave. Quietly he placed the shovel into the soft earth so that it stood upright. He removed his hat and with bowed head he fervently but softly repeated the Lord’s Prayer. Then he reached for the shovel and threw a little earth into the grave. It struck the box with a thud. “From dust thou art”— another thud— “To dust shalt thou return”— another thud— “Blessed be the name of the Lord, Amen.”

This ended the ritual and even as a minister would have done it.

Erick John looked around him. Everything was so still. The wind had died down, the crows were silent, and the little chipmunk was standing upright nearby unafraid.

A calmsness came over Erick John, too. He felt that what he had done was evidently right.

He began his last task, that of filling in the grave. It was much easier to fill than to dig. When he had shaped the mound to suit him, he rested on the shovel for a brief moment and felt the satisfaction that comes with work well done and especially when facing such odds.

He hitched the horses to the wagon and they pulled the wheels up the incline. Then he leveled the ground, threw the shovel into the wagon and climbed in. The horses started on immediately for they were headed towards home, and it was near their feeding time.

As they sped away a big black crow flew down from a tree, swooped low and circled the grave, then silently returned to the tree. Erick John turned towards the grave for his last look and called softly, “Goodbye, Karl, I did the best I could. May you rest in peace.”

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