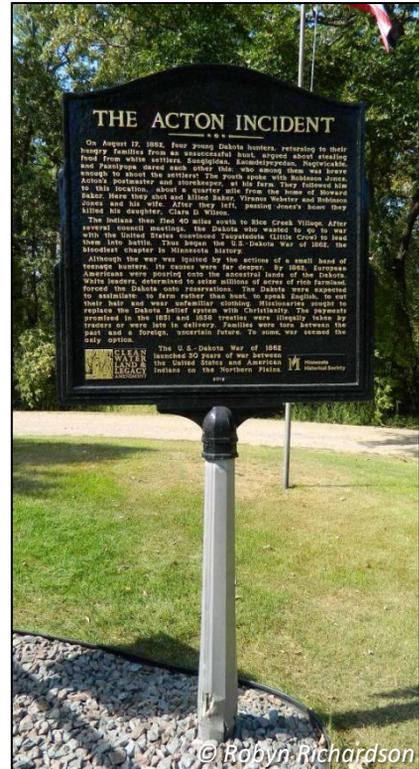


# The Acton Incident

August 17, 1862



**Monument/Marker Location:** ½ mile west off MN Hwy. 4 on 248<sup>th</sup> St, first farm on your right.

## Monument inscription reads as follows:

- East Side: This marks the spot where the first blood was shed in the Sioux Indian outbreak, August 17, 1862.
- South Side: Erected by the state of Minnesota on the 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary, August 17, 1862.
- West Side: Victims, Robinson Jones, Ann Baker-Jones, Howard Baker, Viranus Webster, Clara D. Wilson
- North Side: Bodies of these victims buried in Ness Cemetery.

## Marker reads:

“On August 17, 1862, four young Dakota hunters, returning to their hungry families from an unsuccessful hunt, argued about stealing food from white settlers. Sungigidan, Kaomdelyeyedan, Nagiwicakte, and Paziyoopa dared each other this: who among them was brave enough to shoot the settlers? The youth spoke with Robinson Jones, Acton’s postmaster and storekeeper, at his farm. They followed him to this location, about a quarter mile from the home of Howard Baker. Here they shot and killed Baker, Viranus Webster and Robinson Jones and his wife. After they left, passing Jones’ home they killed his daughter, Clara D. Wilson.

The Indians then fled 40 miles south to Rice Creek Village. After several council meetings, the Dakota who wanted to go to war with the United States convinced Taoyateduta (Little Crow) to lead them into battle. Thus began the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862, the bloodiest chapter in Minnesota history.

Although the war was ignited by the actions of a small band of teenage hunters, its causes were far deeper. By 1862, European Americans were pouring onto the ancestral lands of the Dakota. White leaders, determined to seize millions of acres of rich farmland, forced the Dakota onto reservations. The Dakota were expected to assimilate: to farm rather than hunt, to speak English, to cut their hair and wear unfamiliar clothing. Missionaries sought to replace the Dakota belief system with Christianity. The payments promised in 1851 and 1858 treaties were illegally taken by traders or were late in delivery. Families were torn between the past and a foreign, uncertain future. To some, war seemed the only option.

## The Historic Target Tree



*Photo reproduced from photo taken by John T. Mullen*

The infamous tree that Robinson Jones, Howard Baker, and the Sioux Indians used in their contest for marksmanship shortly before the murders. The pioneers pictured were part of the Acton Burial Party and met under the shade of the tree sometime in August of 1909. Pictured from L to R: Albert Delong, Even Evenson, Henry McGannon, Nels Hanson and Nels Elofson.

## Acton Monument Dedication, August 22, 1909



*Photo courtesy of Robyn Richardson*

Reference:

Lamson, Frank B., (Year Unknown) Condensed History of Meeker County, Litchfield, Minnesota: Brown Printing Company