

Thirty soldiers from Fort Snelling set out to apprehend the suspect. The **Minnesota Democrat** provided this account: “On Friday last, the murderer was surrendered by his own band to the dragoons sent to pursuit him.” The Dakota at his camp when U-ha-zy was delivered “sang his death song, supposing that he would be immediately executed.”

The records are sketchy, but according to the book **Legacy of Violence: Lynch Mobs and Executions in Minnesota** by John D. Bessler by University of Minnesota Press, 2003, the “district court minutes show that only three prosecution witnesses testified at U-ha-zy’s trial, with the state’s governor, Alexander Ramsey, listed as one of three defense witnesses.” The jury found U-ha-zy guilty after the trial, and the court’s minutes recount the reading of his death sentence: “The sentence of the court is, that you...be taken hence to the legal and proper place for confinement and you kept until under law, the Governor of this Territory shall be his warrant order your execution. My God Almighty have mercy on your spirit” p. 2.

The territory law required to be delayed at least one year after the trial. While there was a pardon campaign including Anna Ramsey, the wife of Minnesota’s first territorial governor, but after two years, U-ha-zy was put to death.

The night before, the public spectacle began, while guns and pistols were fired around the jail and the mob cried out “Crucify him!” The **Duluth News-Tribune** on Saturday, August 29, 1885, noted that U-ha-zy was executed on December 31, 1854.



The first judicial execution in Minnesota took place in St. Paul on December 31, 1854. “He was hung at a spot where the corner of Dayton and Farrington avenues is now, publicly, in the midst of a drunken and noisy rabble.” U-ha-zy was hang on a gallows on St. Anthony Hill (now Cathedral Hill) in St. Paul.

In one newspaper report, according to John B. Bessler (p. 4), “Liquor was openly passed through the crowd, and the last moment of the poor Indian was disturbed by bacchanalian yells and cries. A half-drunk father could be seen holding in his arms a child, eager to see all; giddy, senseless girls and women chatted gaily with their attendants, and old women were seem competing with drunken ruffians for a place near the gallows.” The crowd reportedly left the sense “satisfied and in high glee.”



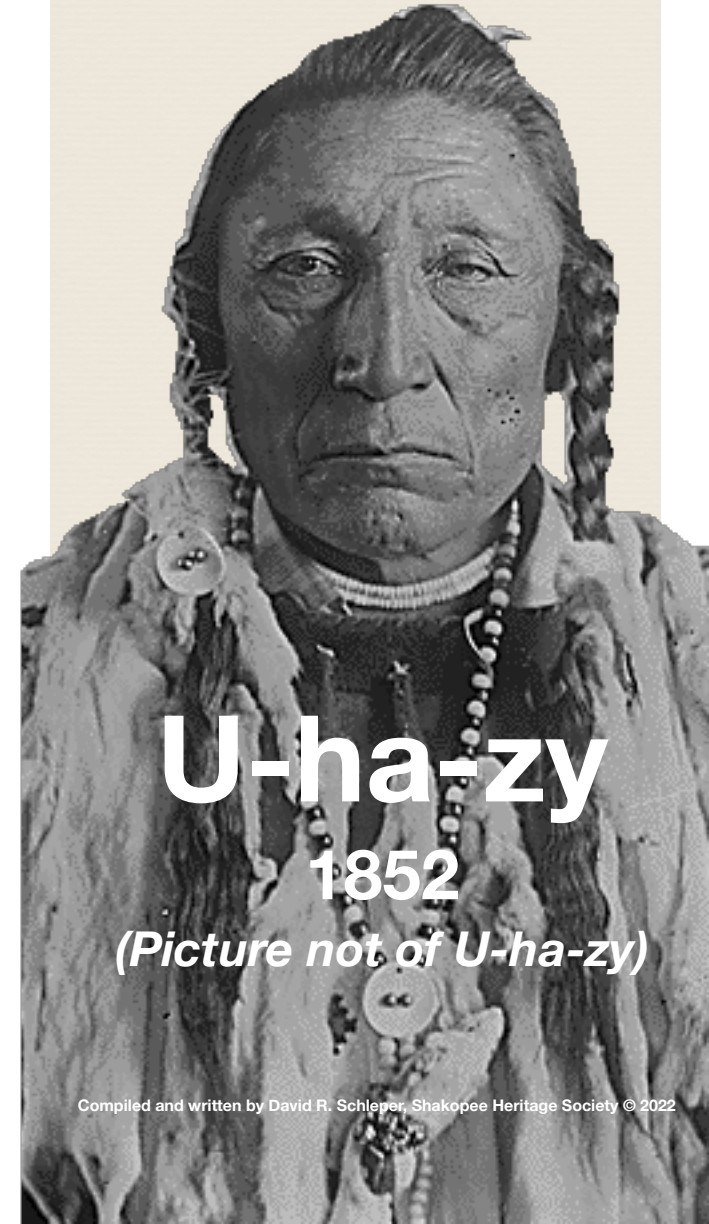
SHAKOPEE HERITAGE SOCIETY  
2109 Boulder Pointe, Shakopee, MN 55379

952-693-3865

[shakopeeheritage.org](http://shakopeeheritage.org)



## SHAKOPEE HERITAGE SOCIETY



# U-ha-zy

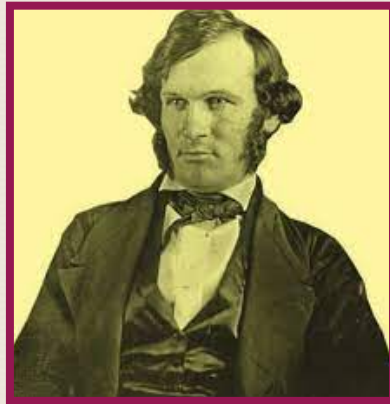
1852

*(Picture not of U-ha-zy)*



Bridget Keener recently arrived in the United States. Some people said she was born in Germany. Others say she was born in Ireland. But what is known is that Bridget and her husband were living in St. Paul. In the fall of 1852, H.H. Spencer made a claim in Belle Plaine, near the Big Woods. He wanted to find someone to work with him. He ended up employing Mr. Keener and his wife, Bridget, to work and keep house while Henry H. Spencer cleared up his claim, according to the book **History of the Minnesota Valley: including the Explorers and Pioneers of Minnesota** by Edward Duffield Neill, in 1882.

Henry H. Spencer was originally from Spencer County, Kentucky, where the Spencer family enslaved people. He and his relatives moved to the state of Indiana in mid-century, and then to Minnesota Territory, according to Dr. Christopher P. Lehman in his book in 2019 called **Slavery's Reach: Southern Slaveholders in the North Star State**. The book is by the Minnesota Historical Society. In 1852, 30 year old Henry H. Spencer arrived in Shakapee City, Minnesota Territory. One year later, his nephew, Spier Spencer, arrived. Henry moved to Louisvile Township in western Shakopee.



Bridget Keener became the first European-American settler-colonist to be killed near the Minnesota River near what was later Shakopee on October 27, 1852.

U-ha-zy, who was drunk, fired a bullet that killed Bridget. The state's governor, Alexander Ramsey, listed as one of three defense witnesses, and his wife, Anna Ramsey, the wife of Minnesota's first territorial governor and other women from St. Paul had a pardon campaign, but after two years, U-ha-zy was put to death on December 31, 1854.

Henry H. Spencer, along with John Schroeder, Mr. Keener and his wife, Bridget Keener, and a baby headed from St. Paul to Scott County in the fall of 1852. Their outfit consisted of the necessaries for housekeeping. They crossed the river by the Bloomington Ferry and encamped there at night. They followed the steamboat landing trail, that wound down the river bluffs to the steamboat landing on the river bank, according to Neill.

During the night a drenching rain soaked everything through. They therefore spent part of the next day drying their clothes and spent the second night at the house of Samuel and Melinda Perry Apgar, in the embryo village of Holmesville or Holmes Landing, later called Shakapee City. Samuel and Melinda kept a small house for travelers on the banks of the St. Peter's River. The small house was the log cabin that Thomas A. Holmes built before he built the bigger building next door.

The next day, Henry H. Spencer, Keener's, and John Schroeder continued on. They were walking behind the wagon when two Dakota Indians arrived. The two Indians were from the Sand Creek band, including U-ha-zy, also called Yu-ha-zee, who looked at the outfit, including the guns

which they saw to be useless from the soaking rain. U-ha-zy, who was drinking, made fun of the white people, especially Bridget's husband, who was holding their child. At that time, Dakota women took care of the babies, not the men.

Henry H. Spencer walked over, shaking the cane he carried, threatening the Dakota men. H.H. Spencer enslaved African American in Kentucky, so he thought he was in charge (even though he wasn't), and as they came back, he, as Neill's noted, "threatened them, perhaps showing a little of a southerner's temper."

U-ha-zy loaded his gun to shoot Henry, but the other Indian attempted to dissuade him, holding up his blanket before him. He also diverted the aim by pushing the gun aside, and the bullet struck the Bridget in the back of the neck, passing clear through and killing her instantly.

The frightened party placed the dead body therein and returned as rapidly as possible to Shakapee City, where Melinda Apgar tenderly cared for the body and prepared it for removal to St. Paul, where it was taken the same day in a skiff.