



The Indian Frontier on the Upper Missouri to 1865

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THE INDIAN FRONTIER ON THE UPPER MISSOURI TO 1865

BY RAY H. MATTISON

WHEN the United States purchased the vast empire known as Louisiana Territory from France in 1803, it removed the danger of a foreign power on the west. The nation acquired in this transaction, however, a number of Indian tribes, some of which it found necessary to pacify. Others would require protection.

The various Indian groups inhabiting the Upper Missouri, which was considered by contemporary explorers and traders as beginning at the mouth of the Platte, were a heterogeneous lot. In the vicinity of present-day Bellevue were the Oto and Missouri; above present Omaha was the Indian tribe by the same name. Near the mouth of the Niobrara River were the Ponca. These tribes lived a part of the year in earthlodge villages and earned their living partially by farming and supplemented it by hunting. With the exception of the sedentary Arikara who lived in several

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villages near the mouth of the Grand River, various roving Sioux bands, such as the Yankton, Santee, Brule, Oglala, Yanktonai, Hunkpapa, Sans Arc, Blackfeet, Two Kettle and Miniconjou, inhabited most of present South Dakota and the southern half of North Dakota. Above the site of Bismarck were their hereditary enemies, the Mandan and Hidatsa (Gros Ventre of the Missouri, also called Minitaree), both of whom were peacefully disposed toward the whites and, like the Oto and Omaha, were sedentary in character. In the vicinity of the mouth of the Yellowstone were the Assiniboin. Still farther up the Missouri were the Gros Ventre (Atsina) and Blackfeet, the last of whom proved to be for many years a formidable foe of the Americans. These last three tribes, like the Sioux, were nomadic and lived principally by hunting the buffalo.

Years before, the white man had learned how to deal most effectively with the aborigines. In common with its earlier practices the government found one of the best ways of purchasing the friendship of the Indians was by gifts of tobacco, beads, paints, bright colored cloths and "gew-gaws." No expedition went into the Indian country and no important treaty council was held with the red man without an ample supply of presents. The government from the earliest time also followed consistently the policy of bringing chiefs to the nation's capital to impress upon them the numerical and mechanical strength of the whites and the futility of resistance. The nation was to continue to follow these patterns for much of the nineteenth century.¹

The ink was scarcely dry on the treaty ceding the Louisiana Territory to the Americans when the government took initial steps to cultivate the friendship of the Upper Missouri tribes. Prior to Capt. Meriwether Lewis' embarking on his historic journey in 1804 up the Missouri

¹ Katherine C. Turner, *Red Men Calling on the Great White Father* (Norman, 1951), *passim*; Verna A. Elefson, "Indian Agencies on the Upper Missouri to 1850" (M.A. thesis, State University of Iowa, 1927), *passim*.

en route to the Pacific Coast, President Jefferson instructed him to treat the Indians he encountered "in the most friendly and conciliatory manner in which their own conduct will admit;" also, "If a few of their influential chiefs, within a reasonable distance, wish to visit us, arrange such a visit with them." The President also supplied the explorers with a liberal amount of tobacco, medals for the chiefs and "fofarrow" suitable for presents to the various bands they might meet.² In July 1804 President Jefferson appointed Pierre Chouteau, prominent St. Louis fur trader, as Agent of Indian Affairs for Upper Louisiana.³

During the first decade and a half following the Louisiana Purchase, Indian unrest was particularly strong in the old Northwest. For many years the British traders had united the Indians along the northern borders of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Michigan against the Americans. When the War of 1812 broke out, practically all of these tribes joined the British. The end of the war found these tribes strongly aligned to the English traders and unfriendly toward the Americans.

In the same period the American fur traders found themselves unable to penetrate the Upper Missouri regions. The tribes were little affected by the war, but the powerful Hudson's Bay and Northwest companies continued to push into present North Dakota and Montana. The Missouri Fur Company, under the leadership of Manuel Lisa, tried in vain to establish trading posts on the upper portions of the river. Opposition of the Blackfeet, together with the impending War of 1812, forced the company to withdraw its posts down the Missouri. The Arikara attacked the traders several times. Other tribes might prove friendly or hostile to the traders according to circumstances over which the latter had no control. In 1813 the hostilities of the Sioux

² Elliott Coues, ed., *History of the Expedition Under the Command of Lewis and Clark* (New York, 1893), I, xxix-xxx.

³ Clarence E. Carter, ed. and comp., *Territorial Papers of the United States: The Territory of Louisiana-Missouri 1803-1806* (Washington, 1948), XIII, 31-33.

and Arikara forced Lisa to abandon Fort Manuel, near the South and North Dakota line. During the war, Lisa concentrated his activities in the vicinity of Council Bluff, near present Fort Calhoun, Nebraska, where he built Fort Lisa.

The government took early action to counteract British influence and strengthen its friendship among the Indian tribes along the Upper Missouri. In 1807 William Clark was made brigadier general of the militia and also Indian Agent for Missouri Territory. Many of the chiefs made periodic visits to St. Louis to see him. In 1814 the government appointed Manuel Lisa "agent for the Tribes on the Missouri above the Kanzie." Late the following year, William Clark, who in 1813 had been appointed governor of Missouri Territory, wrote the Secretary of War that he had earlier sent Lisa with some merchandise to the Sioux, Pawnee and Omaha with the view of strengthening the government's friendship with those tribes. Clark commented, "he [Lisa] succeeded to my expectations and has produced valuable changes in the disposition of those tribes."⁴

Following the war, the government took additional steps to prevent attacks along its western and northern frontiers by establishing a line of posts from the Great Lakes to Arkansas. To thwart the British traders on the Red River of the North, the War Department in 1818 planned to establish a permanent garrison at the mouth of the Yellowstone and at the Mandan villages. An expedition was sent out in that year which wintered on Cow Island north of Leavenworth. In March Col. Henry Atkinson was placed in command with orders to establish two posts on the Missouri, one at the mouth of the Yellowstone, the other at the Mandan villages. In September 1819 the first detachment of the Yellowstone Expedition, numbering 1,100 men, arrived at Council Bluff and began the erection

⁴ Clarence E. Carter, ed. and comp., *Territorial Papers of the United States: Louisiana-Missouri Territory 1815-1821* (Washington, 1951), XV, 95-96.

of Camp Missouri. Fearful of incurring Indian hostility, the House of Representatives refused further appropriations for the expedition. Consequently, in 1820 the Secretary of War ordered Atkinson not to go beyond Council Bluffs. In the same year the Army began the construction of Fort Atkinson and abandoned Cantonment Missouri.⁵

In March 1819 the Secretary of War ordered Benjamin O'Fallon, the newly-appointed Indian Agent on the Missouri, to precede the military expedition "in order to prepare the Indians for it, by a representation of our pacific views, and by a judicious distribution of presents." The Secretary authorized O'Fallon to purchase "goods suitable for presents, not exceeding \$5,000." Apparently the latter established his agency at Camp Missouri about the time the army post was established. Late in 1819 Secretary Calhoun appointed John Dougherty, who had been a fur trader for a number of years on the Upper Missouri, as subagent at Council Bluffs.⁶

O'Fallon served as Indian Agent until 1827, and his tenure was both eventful and uneasy. The Arikara, near the mouth of Grand River, who had earlier caused the traders considerable anxiety, continued to be troublesome. Early in 1823 a party of some ninety fur traders under Gen. William Ashley were treacherously set upon by that tribe; twelve men were killed and eleven wounded. When O'Fallon learned of the incident, he called upon Col. Henry Leavenworth, commandant of Fort Atkinson, for assistance. As a result Leavenworth set out within a few days with a military expedition, numbering 220 men, joined by 120 trappers and four to five hundred Sioux allies. The com-

⁵ Henry Putney Beers, *The Western Military Frontier, 1815-1846* (Philadelphia, 1935), pp. 1-48; Edgar Bruce Wesley, *Guarding the Frontier: A Study of Frontier Defense from 1815-1825* (Minneapolis, 1935), pp. 1-15; Sally A. Johnson, "Cantonment Missouri, 1819-1820," *Nebraska History*, XXXVII (June 1956), 121-133.

⁶ *Territorial Papers*, XV, 520-521.

bined party attacked the Arikara villages and forced the Indians to sue for peace.⁷

Still several of the Indian tribes, including the Arikara, continued to prey upon fur traders. In 1825 Brigadier General Atkinson, accompanied by O'Fallon, set out with a military expedition of some 475 infantry and mounted troops to impress the tribes on the Upper Missouri with the power of the United States. The expedition reached a point above the mouth of the Yellowstone and returned. Twelve treaties of friendship were signed in that year by O'Fallon and Atkinson with the various Upper Missouri tribes. The Arikara, nevertheless, continued to attack fur traders and white trappers. The Mandan subagent wrote in 1830, "The number of whites killed by the Aricaras in the last seven Years amount to about thirty which fact I think make it apparent that nothing but a good and sound flogging can or will put a stop to their Murders and robberies and insure a safe passage through their Country to our Traders or, the Agent of the Government. . . ."⁸

Meanwhile a number of administrative changes had taken place in the governing of the Indians on the Upper Missouri. In 1822 Congress created the superintendency of St. Louis "for all the Indian country not within the bounds of any state or territory west of the Mississippi River." The President appointed William Clark, who had served earlier as agent and from 1813 to 1820 as governor of Missouri Territory and *ex-officio* superintendent of Indian Affairs, to fill the position. Clark served as superintendent until his death in September 1838. In 1824 the

⁷ *South Dakota Historical Collections*, I, 212-241; Hiram M. Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West* (New York, 1936), I, 267-268; II, 584-602.

⁸ Russell Reid and Clell C. Gannon, eds., "Journal of the Atkinson-O'Fallon Expedition," *North Dakota Historical Quarterly*, IV (October 1929), 5-56; Charles J. Kappler, comp. and ed., *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties* (Washington, 1904), II, 225-246; B. O'Fallon to Gen. H. Atkinson, July 7, 1824; William Clark to Secretary of War, November 16, 1830, Ms, St. Louis Superintendency (SLS), Records of Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), National Archives (NA); J. F. A. Sanford to William Clark, October 20, 1830, William Clark Papers, Ms, Kansas State Historical Society (KSHS).

War Department authorized O'Fallon to appoint two sub-agents "to be stationed as high up the Missouri as might be consistent with their personal securities." O'Fallon appointed Peter Wilson as subagent at Fort Clark among the Mandans. Wilson died two years later and was succeeded by John F. A. Sanford, who served until 1834. The other subagency was first at Fort Lookout, near the Big Bend of the Missouri. Later it was at the mouth of the Vermillion River. In the early 1840's the subagency, and later the Upper Missouri Agency, which took over the jurisdiction of the tribes on the Missouri above the Omaha, was at or in the vicinity of Fort Pierre. George H. Kennerly was the first subagent.⁹ Poor health forced O'Fallon to resign as agent effective March 1, 1827. Dougherty succeeded him in the same year.

In 1827 the Army abandoned Fort Atkinson and withdrew down the river to establish Cantonment (later Fort) Leavenworth, located on the west bank of the Missouri near the mouth of the Little Platte. Dougherty, claiming that the presence of the military was necessary to enforce the laws, protect government property, and effectively control the Indians,¹⁰ requested permission to remove the

⁹ Annie Heloise Abel, *Chardon's Journal at Fort Clark* (Pierre, 1932), pp. xxxviii-xxxix; Chester L. Guthrie and Leo L. Gerald, "Upper Missouri Agency: An Account of Indian Administration on the Frontier," *The Pacific Historical Review*, X (March 1941), 47-56; Laurence Schmeckebier, *The Office of Indian Affairs: Its History, Activities, and Organization* (Baltimore, 1927), p. 28; William Clark to Secretary of War, November 15, 1829, William Clark Papers; Reuben G. Thwaites, ed., *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846*, XXII, Part 1, *Maximilian, Prince of Wied's Travels in the Interior of North America, 1832-1834* (Cleveland, 1906), 303; Joshua Pilcher to Gen. William Clark, July 1, 1835, February 3, 1838, September 5, 1838, NA; D. D. Mitchell to Andrew Drips, October 6, 1842, William Clark Papers; Andrew S. Hughes succeeded Kennerly in 1828. Jonathan L. Bean replaced Hughes in the following year. (Andrew S. Hughes to Secretary of War, April 13, 1828; Dougherty to Secretary of War, May 18, 1829, NA.)

¹⁰ At that time practically all of the Indian agencies were located near or contiguous to military posts. For the work of the Army in assisting the Indian agent enforce the laws, etc., see Francis Paul Prucha, *Broadax and Bayonet: The Role of the United States Army in the Development of the Northwest, 1815-1860* (Madison, 1953), pp. 84-91; Wesley, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-30.

agency to Cantonment Leavenworth. Superintendent Clark complied with the agent's request with the stipulation that the agency be returned to Council Bluff by the end of 1828. As the end of 1828 approached, however, Dougherty failed to take steps to move the agency back up the Missouri. In spite of Clark's repeated insistence for him to return the agency to or near its original location, Dougherty continued to maintain his official headquarters at Fort Leavenworth.¹¹

The problems confronting Dougherty as agent were similar to those of other administrators of Indian affairs along the western frontiers. Most of these problems were directly or indirectly the result of the inroad of the whites. Starvation, disease, and liquor always seemed to follow the coming of the white man. Dougherty wrote in 1830:

... I can only say that, the Kansas, Ioways, Omohaws, Otoes and the Yankton bands of Sioux, from the diminution of the game in their country, starve almost half the year—and are very badly clad—The other tribes, who reside higher up the river and near the mountains, in the buffalo country live plentifully and are well clothed.¹²

It was not until the supply of buffalo and other game began to decline to a marked degree among the Sioux and other tribes farther up the river, as the result of white penetration, during the 1850's, 1860's, and 1870's, that these tribes became troublesome.

¹¹ Dougherty to Clark, August 20, 1827; Clark to Dougherty, August 25, 1827; Dougherty to Secretary of War, July 4, 1829; Clark to Secretary of War, November 15, 1829, NA; Clark to Secretary of War, April 12, 1830, December 7, 1831, William Clark Papers; Joshua Pilcher to Clark (n.d.); Clark to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, January 8, 1835; Pilcher to Commissioner, June 12, 1839, NA; Guthrie and Gerald, *loc. cit.*

The name, "Indian Agency at Belle Vue, Upper Mo.," according to the official correspondence of the agency consulted by the writer, was first used June 30, 1832. Apparently, in accordance with the treaty of Prairie du Chien, July 15, 1831, blacksmith shops were established in 1832 at the trading post for the Omaha and Oto. (See Vol. XXI, William Clark Papers; Thwaites, *op. cit.*, 266; John T. Irving, Jr., *Indian Sketches* [London, 1835], I, 184.)

¹² Dougherty to Col. T. L. McKenney, January 30, 1830, Ms, John Dougherty Papers, Missouri Historical Society (MHS); see also Dougherty to Secretary of War, June 28, 1827, NA.

During the 1820's and 1830's, the Upper Missouri Agency and the subagencies under its jurisdiction, in common with the general practice, endeavored to keep the good will of the Indians by gifts. In 1828 Dougherty distributed presents, valued at about \$1,960, to the Pawnee, Oto, Omaha, and Iowa tribes. In 1830 and 1831, Sanford, of the Upper Missouri Subagency at the Mandan villages, made a distribution of goods valued at \$700 and \$480 respectively to the Mandan, Chippewa, Hidatsa, Blackfeet, Assiniboin, and other tribes.¹³

In the 1830's the government distributed annuities to the Oto, Missouri, Omaha and the Santee and Yankton Sioux in accordance with the Treaty of Prairie du Chien. It also supplied these tribes with blacksmiths and agricultural tools. By the treaty signed with the Oto in 1833, the government provided that tribe with a corn mill, two farmers to instruct them in agriculture, and a school teacher.¹⁴

Most of the agents attributed the pauperism and degradation of the Indians to the uncontrolled liquor traffic among the various tribes. By the early 1830's most of the Indians had become addicted to its use. Superintendent Clark described the evils from it in 1831:

... it is well known that not an Indian could be found among a thousand who would not (after a first drink) sell his horse, his gun, or his last blanket, for another drink, —or even commit a murder to gratify their passion for spirits. . . .¹⁵

Although it had always been unlawful to sell or trade liquor to the Indians, the Office of Indian Affairs, in 1828, had authorized Clark to issue traders permits to take

¹³ Vol. XXI, William Clark Papers. The presents included tobacco, gunpowder, lead, gun flints, scalping knives, fire steels, awls, vermilion, rings, gun worms, looking glasses, combs, tin kettles, Indian hoes, hawk bells, handkerchiefs, calico, half axes, gartering, black silk handkerchiefs, German glasses, tinsel, buttons, needles, thread, binding, scarlet, butcher knives, horse bells, makinaw blankets, stroud, flannel, brass nails, fishhooks, and percussion caps.

¹⁴ Kappler, *op. cit.*, II, 305-310, 400-401.

¹⁵ William Clark to Secretary of War, December 3, 1831, William Clark Papers, KSHS.

whisky for their boatmen to the amount of a gill a day to each but none of this was to be given to the red man. Nevertheless, in spite of these prohibitions, liquor somehow got to the Indians. J. L. Bean, Upper Missouri subagent, located at Fort Lookout, wrote Dougherty in 1831:

Liquor flows as freely here as the Missouri, if we might judge from the number of drunken Indians, yet no one gives them a drop, or at least, no proof can be had . . . If it was possible for you to imagine half the human misery which I have witnessed, in consequence of the free use of this article you would use utmost influence in having it stopped. If I can place any confidence in the word of half Breed's and Indians, 2200 Packs of Buffaloe Robes have been purchased this year for whiskey at from 24 to 32 dollars per Gallon besides Beaver, Horses &c.¹⁶

The conditions among the Oto and Omaha tribes were little better.

In 1832 the government took additional steps to stop the liquor traffic. In July Congress enacted legislation making the introduction of intoxicating liquors of any kind in the Indian country unlawful and provided severe penalties for offenders. In compliance with orders received from the War Department, the commanding officer of Fort Leavenworth proceeded to search all boats destined for the Upper Missouri and confiscated all liquor found aboard them. Dougherty apparently received similar instructions, since he confiscated all liquors found in the trading establishments at Council Bluff and Bellevue.¹⁷

Liquor continued to flow freely at the American Fur Company fur trading houses on the upper river. The factors of the various company posts complained that, without whisky and alcohol, they had difficulty in competing with companies opposing them, known as the "opposition." Un-

¹⁶ Dougherty to Secretary of War, July 1, 1827; T. L. McKenney to Clark, January 10, 1828; Dougherty to Clark, November 10, 1831; Clark to Secretary of War, December 3, 1831, William Clark Papers; Irving, *op. cit.*, I, 129-135.

¹⁷ J. Freeman to William Clark, October 10, December 8, 1832; Dougherty to Clark, November 12, 1832; Elliott Coues, ed., *Forty Years a Fur Trader on the Upper Missouri: The Personal Narrative of Charles Larpenteur* (New York, 1898), I, 57-58.

able to ship liquor by boat to its establishment at Fort Union, the company smuggled a still through and proceeded to manufacture its own whiskey. When this information reached Washington, the company almost lost its license to trade.¹⁸

The American Fur Company, which had a virtual monopoly of the fur trade on the Missouri, was generally able to nullify all efforts of the Indian Service to prevent the liquor traffic. Through its representatives in Washington, such as Thomas H. Benton of Missouri, the Company wielded a powerful influence in the administration of Indian affairs throughout the region. This is very evident from the number of Indian Service employees on the Upper Missouri during the 1830's and 1840's who were prominently identified at one time or another in the affairs of the American Fur Company.¹⁹ In several instances, the Upper Missouri agents and subagents were stationed in American Fur Company posts. The government's gifts and annuities to the Indians were often distributed there, so the red man was unable to make any distinction between the presents from the government and those from the Company. Men such as Dougherty, Bean, and William

¹⁸ Bernard DeVoto, *Across the Wide Missouri* (Cambridge, 1947), pp. 119-122; K. McKenzie to Pilcher, December 16, 1833, McKenzie to Ramsey Crooks, December 16, 1833, Fort Union Letter Book, 1833-1835, MHS.

¹⁹ These included: John F. A. Sanford, Upper Missouri Subagent, 1826-1834 (Sanford in 1832 married the daughter of Pierre Chouteau, Jr., one of the principal owners of the Company); Joshua Pilcher, Upper Missouri Subagent and Agent, 1835-1838, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, St. Louis, 1839-1841; D. D. Mitchell, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, St. Louis, 1841 intermittently until 1852; Andrew Drips, Upper Missouri Agent, 1842-1846.

The influence which the American Fur Company exerted in the choice of the St. Louis superintendent is indicated in the excerpt from a letter from Ramsey Crooks to Pierre Chouteau, Jr., both of whom were prominent officials in the company, June 27, 1841:

I am truly sorry there remains no chance of reinstating Major [Joshua] Pilcher [at that time St. Louis Superintendent]; but since that is impracticable you have gained an important point in excluding [John] Dougherty . . . If you can make [D.D.] Mitchell *more industrious* he might fill the station. . . .

Mitchell received the appointment. (Ms, Chouteau Collection, MHS.)

N. Fulkerson, the Mandan subagent from 1834-1838, who were not controlled by the company, were relatively ineffective in curtailing the traders.

Companies and individual traders competing with the American Fur Company, such as William Ashley and others, continued to agitate in Congress for stricter enforcement of the liquor laws and curbing the power of the Company. However, these also violated the liquor laws as flagrantly, if not more so, than the Company. Charles Larpenteur, Missouri River fur trader, wrote that Milton Sublette, who headed an opposition company in the early 1830's was always able to smuggle through all the liquor he wanted for the Indian trade.²⁰

The daily life of the Indian agents and their employees was apparently little different from that of the military and the fur traders. Dougherty complained in 1830 that, since his appointment three years earlier, he had lived in "a small unhewn log cabin and even at the mercy of military, many of whom look upon me as an intruder."²¹ Maximilian, Prince of Wied, who made his well-publicized trip up the Missouri in 1833, described the Oto and Omaha agency as follows:

Belle Vue, Mr. Dougherty's post, is agreeably situated. The direction of the river is north-west. Below, on the bank, there are some huts, and on the top the buildings of the agents, where a subagent, Major Beauchamp, a blacksmith, and some servants of the company, all lived with their families, who attended to the plantations and affairs of the company. These men were mostly married to women of the tribes of the Otos and Omahas; all, on our landing immediately came on board. . . . Their children had dark brown hair, and agreeable features.²²

Bean, however, at the Sioux Subagency, lived in a stockaded post at Fort Lookout. The fort was sandwiched between an American Fur Company post and an opposition

²⁰ Abel, *op. cit.*, xxxviii-xliii; Coues, *loc. cit.*

²¹ Dougherty to ———, February 1, 1830, John Dougherty Papers, MHS.

²² Thwaites, *op. cit.*, I, 266.

post belonging to Sublette and Campbell. Maximilian wrote:

Sioux Agency, or, as it is now usually called, Fort Look-out, is a square, of about sixty paces, surrounded by pickets twenty or thirty feet high, made of squared trunks of trees, placed close to each other, within which the dwellings are built close to the palisades.²³

During the early and middle 1830's the government did little toward the betterment of its wards under the supervision of the Sioux and Mandan subagencies. In accordance with the Treaty of Prairie du Chien, it maintained a blacksmith at the Sioux subagency for the benefit of the Santee and Yankton Sioux. It also, in accordance with the treaty, distributed four hundred dollars' worth of agricultural instruments and annuities, valued at three thousand dollars, to the two tribes. Sanford, located farther up the river, was more interested in advancing the cause of the American Fur Company than that of his wards and made periodical visits with Kenneth McKenzie of the Company, to the Mandan and the tribes farther up the Missouri. Bean during the winter of 1830-1831 and Sanford in the following winter, took deputations of chiefs to Washington to visit the Great White Father. In 1834, Sanford resigned and William Fulkerson, brother-in-law of William Ashley, succeeded him. Although Fulkerson appears to have had the interest of the Indians at heart, he felt that, on account of the opposition of the traders, he was very ineffective as a subagent.²⁴

The lot of the Oto, Omaha, and Pawnee continued to become worse. In compliance with treaties signed in 1833,

²³ *Ibid.*, 303.

²⁴ Abel, *op. cit.*, xxxvii-xxxix; Kappler, *op. cit.*, II, 306-307; Jonathan L. Bean to Clark, November 11, 1830, June 28, December 31, 1831; Clark to Secretary of War, September 3, 1831; Sanford to Clark, June —, 1831, William Clark Papers; Clark to Secretary of War, June 21, 1830, Sanford to Secretary of War, February 10, 1832; Sanford to Clark, October 31, 1834; William H. Fulkerson to Clark, March 1, 1838, NA, Kenneth McKenzie to Fulkerson, December 10, 1835, Fort Union Letter Book, MHS; John C. Ewers, "When the Light Shone in Washington," *Montana, The Magazine of Western History*, Autumn 1956, 2-11.

both the Oto and Pawnee surrendered certain lands west of the Missouri to the United States. Both agreed to locate themselves in convenient agricultural districts. In return, the government promised to provide them with farmers for several years to teach them agriculture, and supply them with stock, agricultural implements, schools, and each a corn mill.²⁵ In compliance with their treaty, the Oto moved from their village near present Yutan, Nebraska, to a point near the agency where the government endeavored, with some promise of success in the early years, to teach them farming. The supply of game continued to diminish. The agent described their condition in 1838:

They [the Oto and Missouri] are well enough supplied with bread stuff, but no means, whatever, of procuring a mouthful of meat, unless they leave their village and go out in a body to the buffalo plains of the Rocky Mountains, where they would almost certain lose their horses, and perhaps [be] cut off themselves by numerous and hostile tribes of that region.²⁶

The condition of the Omaha and Pawnee was little better. The agent's efforts to improve the lot of these tribes met strong resistance from the traders who were continually urging the Indians to search for skins and spend their annuities for liquor.²⁷

New arrivals of Indians from the East created new difficulties for Dougherty. In 1837 the Potawatomi and their subagent arrived on the east bank of the Missouri at Traders' Point, in present Mills County, Iowa, and were placed under Dougherty's jurisdiction.²⁸ These were a part

²⁵ Kappler, *op. cit.*, II, 400-401, 416-418. By the treaty of October 8, 1833, the Pawnee were promised annuities for twelve years. By the Treaty of Prairie du Chien of 1830, both the Omaha and Oto were promised annuities for a term of ten years.

²⁶ *Sen. Doc. No. 1, 25th Cong., 3d. Sess., 503-504.*

²⁷ *Sen. Doc. No. 1, 25th Cong., 2d Sess., 347-349; Sen. Doc. No. 1, 25th Cong., 3d Sess., 503-504; Petitions, Chiefs, Oto and Missouri Nation, October 8, 1834; Omaha Chiefs, Bellevue to Commissioner, October 20, 1834; Dougherty to Clark, November 13, 1834; June 8, 1836, NA.*

²⁸ In accordance with a treaty signed September 26, 1833, western Iowa was assigned the Ottawa, Chippewa, and Potawatomi. (Kappler, *op. cit.*, I, 402-410.)

of a large tribe which once had considerable land in Indiana, Michigan, and Illinois. Many of these had been forcibly removed from their lands in the East. A large number were recipients of cash annuities so they were continually preyed upon by whisky peddlers and traders.²⁹ Drunkenness among them at this time was notorious. This letter, describing their condition, from their subagent, Stephen Cooper, is quite typical.

... I arivd hear on yesterday and found the Indians in drunkeniss and the country full of whiskey and from what I can learn it has been the case ever since they receivd there annuity. I understand there was two kild last night and two died with drunkenness. . . .³⁰

During the winter of 1837-1838 a catastrophe struck the Northern Plains Indians which almost exterminated several tribes. While smallpox had killed numbers of Indians previously, the epidemic of 1837-1838 was unprecedented. According to Joshua Pilcher, who became agent of the newly established Upper Missouri Agency which had jurisdiction over the Indians above the Omaha in 1838, the disease was transmitted during the summer of 1837 by a mulatto on board the American Fur Company steamboat, the *St. Peters*. The mulatto had become afflicted near Fort Leavenworth but was kept on board the boat and transmitted the disease to the various tribes along the Missouri.³¹ Within a short time, the disease had become a full scale epidemic. Fulkerson, the Mandan subagent, wrote in September:

It is with regreat I have to communicate to you that the small pox has broke out in this country and is sweeping all before it—unless it be checked in its mad career I would not be surprised if it wiped the Mandan and Rickara Tribes of Indians clear from the face of the earth. I also understand that it has broken out among the Assinnaboine and Black feet Indians where it is also causing great havoc and distress.³²

²⁹ Grant Foreman, *The Last Trek of the Indians* (Chicago, 1946), 100-125; Ruth A. Gallaher, "Indian Agents of Iowa," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, XIV (1916), 571-572; *Sen. Doc. No. 1*, 25th Cong., 2d Sess., 548.

³⁰ Stephen Cooper to Joshua Pilcher, June 17, 1839, NA.

³¹ Pilcher to Clark, February 5, 1838, NA.

³² Fulkerson to Clark, September 20, 1837, NA.

Perhaps the best day-by-day account of the spread and the high mortality which resulted from the disease is told by the fur trader, Francis Chardon, in his diary written at Fort Clark during the epidemic.³³

There is no way of determining accurately the toll which the epidemic took among the Indians. Pilcher, in September 1838, estimated the losses among several tribes as follows:

Sioux	1,200
Mandan	1,500
Arikara	1,200
Hidatsa	1,300
Assiniboin	3,840
Blackfeet	8,160
Total	17,200 ³⁴

The heavy losses resulting from the epidemic greatly affected the balance of power among the Indians. It left the Sioux more formidable than ever. On the other hand, the epidemic weakened the Mandan, Hidatsa and the Arikara to such a degree that these tribes eventually had to band together for protection against the Sioux.

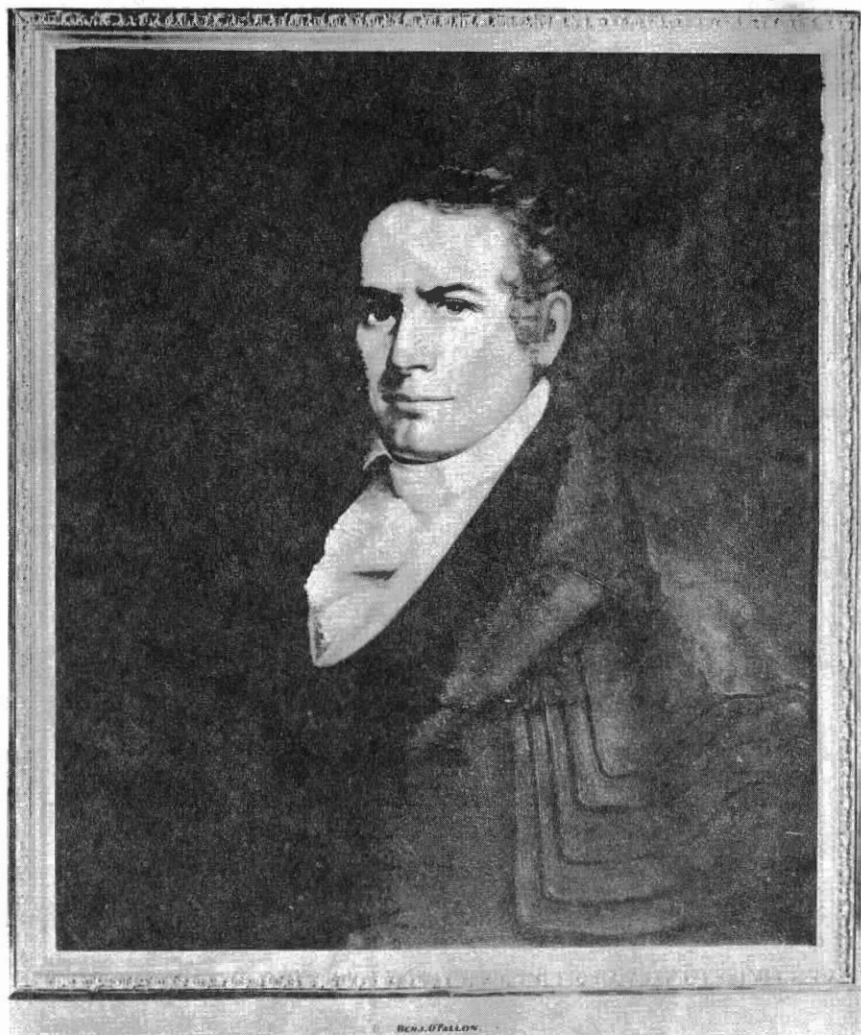
The smallpox had a marked effect on the Indian administration on the Upper Missouri. Complaining that, because of the heavy losses from the epidemic, there were not enough "souls to answer the object of an agency" and that the subagency was of "so little importance as to demand its entire abolishment," Fulkerson resigned early in 1838. In the same year William Clark died and Pilcher succeeded to the St. Louis superintendency. Neither Fulkerson's nor

³³ Abel, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

³⁴ Pilcher to Clark, September 12, 1838, NA. Pilcher wrote: "The number of each tribe or band carried off by the small pox, no human power can estimate. . . . Most of the Sioux escaped it altogether, and I think about 1,200 the greatest number that perished among the Sioux of the Missouri—the Mandans are literally annihilated; out of about 1,600 persons there remains only from 60 to 80 including all ages and sexes—Of the Riccaras about one third perished—Say 1200 souls—Of Minitarries, one half 1200 to 1300 persons—Of the Assiniboines, one band of 480 lodges were entirely destroyed—they would probably average 8 persons to the Lodge—Of the Blackfeet, one band of 1020 Lodges were entirely cut off and from some of the more remote bands, no information had been received."



Major Dougherty's Post, Bellevue
(From a painting by Charles Bodmer, 1833)



Major Benjamin O'Fallon, Indian Agent for the Upper Missouri,
1819 to 1827

(Photo of portrait, courtesy Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Mo.)

Pilcher's position was filled and, from the fall of 1838 to early in 1842, the entire Upper Missouri above the Omaha was without an Indian agent or subagent.³⁵

In 1839 Dougherty resigned from the Council Bluff agency and Joseph V. Hamilton was appointed to succeed him. The Indian Service required him to live at his post, so, for the first time, Bellevue had a resident agent. In common with many new appointees, Hamilton was very critical of his predecessor. He described the agency buildings soon after his arrival there as being "in a shocking condition and certainly cannot be inhabited by anything else than Rats & bugs." He complained that "The various persons employed by the U. States, among the Indians . . . do not appear to have been doing much if anything for some time past."³⁶

Within a few years it became more and more apparent that the government's attempts to make the Indians self-supporting farmers were destined to fail at the Council Bluff Agency. Because of discontent and jealousy that had led to bloodshed, the Oto believed that evil spirits had entered their lodges. During a drunken riot in 1841, they set fire to the village they had built near the agency and burned it to the ground. They also abandoned their farm and moved to a new location south of the Platte. Two years later the agent described them as being in "a starving condition." They had become increasingly bitter toward the government and the whites in general because the agent endeavored to enforce the liquor laws. In 1843 they fired upon an American Fur Company boat and wounded a white man. At an open council held with the agent in June that year, the Oto charged that "their Great Father had cheated them out of all their lands and had given them nothing for it, that their agent was a good for nothing." The agent became so fearful for the safety of his family that he moved them across the river so they might be under the

³⁵ Fulkerson to Clark, September 20, 1838; Abel, *op. cit.*, xl.

³⁶ Pilcher to Joseph V. Hamilton, August 1, 1839; Hamilton to Pilcher, August 18, October 4, 1839, William Clark Papers.

protection of the military. The situation was so tense that when Superintendent David D. Mitchell distributed the cash annuities that year, the commanding officer at Fort Leavenworth dispatched a company of dragoons to accompany him.³⁷

The Indian Service had even less success making the Omaha self-supporting farmers. The Sioux, who continued to make raids on this tribe, drove the Omaha from their favorite village near the Missouri some one hundred miles above Bellevue. The Omaha then established a new one on the Elkhorn River some fifty miles from the agency. The Omaha annuities by the Treaty of Prairie du Chien expired in 1840. They made some half-hearted but unsuccessful attempts to farm. Also, their country was becoming destitute of game. The agent described the Omaha in 1842 as "so reduced in number, and so poor in horses, that their hunting trips are attended with but little success." In the winter of 1843-1844, their condition was so bad that parties crossed the Missouri and committed depredations, killing a number of cattle and hogs belonging to the Potawatomi.³⁸

The Potawatomi likewise showed lack of initiative in adopting the white man's pattern of earning a livelihood. The Council Bluff subagent wrote in 1845:

. . . A few of them do a little work and make some feeble attempts at farming operations, in the white man's way; but the majority prefer an idle, listless life of smoking and sleeping, so long as they have anything to eat, or hunting and visiting among their better supplied neighbors when their larder is empty.³⁹

The Potawatomi subagents blamed the lack of progress of their wards on the continued running of liquor into the country by the half-breeds. They also complained of their inability to cope with the situation without additional aid

³⁷ *Sen. Doc. No. 1, 27th Cong., 1st. Sess., 437; Miller to Mitchell, June 11, 1843; Mitchell to Commissioner, June 23, September 27, 1843, NA.*

³⁸ *Sen. Doc. No. 1, 27th Cong., 3d Sess., 438; House Doc. No. 2, 28th Cong., 1st. Sess.; Mitchell to Miller, July 1, 1843; Richard S. Elliott to Thomas H. Harvey, March 18, 1844, NA.*

³⁹ *Sen. Doc., No. 1, 28th Cong. 2d. Sess., 448.*

from the government. Fighting between the Sioux and Potawatomi also created additional difficulties.⁴⁰

Early in the 1840's the government made a superficial attempt to enforce the liquor laws more rigorously and quell the tribal wars on the Upper Missouri. The Army, in 1842, ordered a company of soldiers to the Council Bluffs subagency to assist the subagent. The troops established Camp Crogan, near the present city of Council Bluffs, and proceeded to examine boats passing up the Missouri and to confiscate the liquor on board and also that found on the Potawatomi reserve.⁴¹

The attempts of the Army to put an end to the liquor traffic among the Potawatomi met only with indifferent success. The subagent complained that the prosecution of the laws in the United States Courts was too involved and hence they were impracticable to enforce. The half-breed liquor dealers boasted that if they were only to suffer no other penalty than confiscation and if they lost half of each barrel of whisky, they could still make a good profit in the trade.⁴²

It is doubtful if the military made more than a feeble attempt to curtail the traffic. It was reported in one instance that a half-breed Indian introduced a saddlebag full of liquor near the camp of the dragoons who proceeded to confiscate it. When the commander sought the liquor to destroy it, he found it had already been consumed by the soldiers. Some of the river boats also managed to get liquor through the inspection without detection. John Audubon, the naturalist, and his party went up the Missouri on an American Fur Company boat to Fort Union in 1843. A

⁴⁰ *House Report No. 2*, 27th Cong., 2d Sess., 335; *House Doc. No. 2*, 26th Cong., 2d Sess., 321-322; *Sen. Doc. No. 1*, 28th Cong., 2d Sess., 448; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (hereafter abbreviated CIA), 1846-1847, 104-107; Cooper to Superintendent of Indian Affairs, October 2, 1841.

⁴¹ Adjutant General's Office to Gen. H. Atkinson, April 19, 1842; Mitchell to Miller, June 1, 1842, NA.

⁴² Richard W. Cummins to Mitchell, June 14, 1842; Miller to Mitchell, July 2, 1842, NA.

member of the party explained later how the company smuggled its liquor past Camp Crogan by a clever ruse. All military attempts to control the liquor traffic at Council Bluffs soon ended, however, and a flood on the Missouri in the fall of 1843 caused the Army to abandon Camp Crogan⁴³ permanently.

At the same time the government made a gesture of attempting to enforce the liquor laws more effectively farther up the Missouri. In 1842 it re-established the Upper Missouri Agency. Through the influence of D. D. Mitchell, the St. Louis superintendent who had been a former official, the American Fur Company succeeded in securing the appointment of Andrew Drips as agent. Drips had served as a trader with that fur monopoly for many years. The Company's correspondence on the surface would lead one to believe that it was very much interested in stopping the liquor trade. The agent made his headquarters at the Company's post at Fort Pierre where he arrived in November, and soon wrote to several of the factors of the firm's houses to confiscate all liquor they might find. Drips wrote Mitchell the following January, "Since my arrival I have not been able to lay my hands on any liquor." Mitchell, in April, expressed his regrets that Drips' efforts had not been more successful. He added, "From the reports brought down this spring it would seem there is no lack of whiskey in the country." In July, Drips reported that there was no liquor among the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara. Charles Larpenteur, who was then at Fort Union in the employ of the American Fur Company, wrote years later that when Drips visited that post, he first sent his interpreter to let the company know he was coming. On his arrival, the agent looked in all places except the cellar where there were thirty gallons of alcohol. His sleuthing at other American Fur Company posts must have been of a similar na-

⁴³ Maria R. Audubon and Elliott Coues, eds., *Audubon and His Journals* (London, 1898), II, 478-480; John Francis McDermott, ed., *Up the Missouri with Audubon: The Journal of Edward Harris* (Norman, 1951), pp. 59, 183; Charles H. Babbitt, *Early Days at Council Bluffs* (Washington, 1916), p. 60; Miller to Mitchell, July 2, 1842.

ture. By June 1845, however, the agent boasted that since his appointment "the illicit trade in whiskey has almost disappeared from the Upper Missouri country."⁴⁴

An opposition company, however, soon complained of Drips's partiality toward the American Fur Company in the performance of his duties. In 1844 F. Cutting, of the opposition post at Fort George, accused Drips of being a "partner" of the fur monopoly and of making his headquarters at the Company's post at Fort Pierre. Cutting requested "that another agent be sent out to this country whose objects it may be to carry out the views of our government solely, without being influenced by private interests being engaged in the Indian trade of this country." Drips disclaimed being a "partner" in the Company and asserted that Cutting was inspired by revenge. The agent nevertheless was removed in July 1846 and went back to his old employment under the sponsorship of the Company. The St. Louis Superintendent in 1846 indicated that the liquor traffic on the Missouri continued unabated. He complained that it was impossible for the Upper Missouri agent to cope with the problem and recommended that the latter be assisted by a body of troops.⁴⁵

During the late 1840's and the 1850's the Indian Service on the Upper Missouri was forced to turn its major attention from the problem of enforcing the laws regarding liquor traffic among the Indians to the more immediate one of removing those tribes who were in the way of the whites'

⁴⁴ Larpenteur, *op. cit.*, II, 416-417; J. Hartley Crawford to Sanford, July 2, 1842; Pierre Chouteau & Co. to Andrew Drips, September 12, 1842; John Sarpy to Drips, September 15, 1842; Mitchell to Drips, October 6, December 31, 1842; Drips to Colin Campbell, November 28, 1842; Drips to Antoine Reynolds, December 18, 1842, MHS; Mitchell to Drips, October 6, 1842, April 30, July 25, 1843; Drips to Mitchell, January 2, 1843; Drips to Thomas H. Harvey, April 29, July 6, 1844; n.d.; Drips to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, June 1, 1845, NA.

⁴⁵ Abel, *op. cit.*, xliii, n. 247, pp. 259-263; Larpenteur, *op. cit.*, II, 417; CIA, 1845, 96; 1846, 77-83; Harvey to Drips, December 26, 1844; Drips to Superintendent of Indian Affairs, June 1, 1845; F. Cutting to Harvey, September 16, 1844; T. P. Moore to Commissioner, May 14, 1845, NA.

westward advance and pacifying the more hostile tribes. In June 1846 it made a treaty with the various Potawatomi bands, the Chippewa and Ottawa, whereby these tribes agreed to relinquish their lands in Iowa for new lands in Kansas. By the end of the following year, they had moved from their homes on the east bank of the Missouri to new ones farther west.⁴⁶

Increased travel over the Oregon Trail during this period, resulting from the opening of Oregon Territory to settlement and the discovery of gold in California, created new difficulties. Additional white hunters aggravated the depletion of the game supply, so the Oto, Omaha and Pawnee had to send their hunting parties farther and farther west into the territory of the Sioux and other tribes to obtain game for their livelihood. Their condition continued to degenerate.

The Sioux became increasingly restive. Pilcher, in 1838, had written that "no other Indians ever manifested a greater friendship for the whites in general, nor more respect for the Government than the Sioux." During the next several years that nation became more and more hostile. In 1844 Drips reported that since the 10th of May of that year the Sioux had killed twenty-two white men in different places in their territory. The attacks by them on the Oto, Omaha, Pawnee and other peaceful tribes also increased. The agents continued to complain that they were unable to control the traders, stop the liquor traffic, and prevent the warring among the different Indian groups. They increasingly urged that troops be sent to assist them.⁴⁷

In 1851 the government attempted to appease the vari-

⁴⁶ Kappler, *op. cit.*, II, 557-560; R. Jones to Col. C. Wharton, August 27, 1847; T. H. Harvey to Commissioner, October 11, 1847, NA.

⁴⁷ *Sen. Doc. No. 1*, 25th Cong., 3d Sess., 498; *Sen. Doc. No. 1*, 28th Cong., 2d Sess., 435-439; CIA, 1845, 85-86; 1849, 85-86, 135; 1850, 40-43; 1851, 94; 1852, 68; 1853, 105-106; Drips to Harvey, n.d.; Harvey to Drips, December 26, 1844, William Clark Papers; Jonathan L. Bean to Harvey, December 15, 1846; John Miller to Harvey, December 15, 1846; Miller to Secretary of War, January 20, 1848, NA.

ous Plains tribes. At Fort Laramie it concluded a treaty with the Sioux, Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara, Assiniboin, Blackfoot, Crow, Cheyenne and Arapaho. According to this treaty, the United States recognized the tribes' claims to lands within certain specified boundaries. The Indians granted the right of the government to establish roads and posts in their territories. For this privilege, the latter promised them an annuity of \$50,000 for ten years and, at the discretion of the President, reserved the right to extend it for an additional term of five years.⁴⁸

In accordance with this treaty, the Indian Service each year dispatched annuities for the various tribes up the river by the Upper Missouri agent. The trip of Alfred J. Vaughn in 1856 was quite typical. He left St. Louis with the annuities June 7 on the Steamer *St. Mary*. At Fort Lookout he met the Yankton Sioux, who had been waiting some time for their presents and were in a "destitute condition" on account of the scarcity of game. From that point, he proceeded to Fort Pierre where he met some of the principal men of the Sioux, but most of their people were not with them. He left the goods in charge of Fort Pierre and went on up the Missouri to Fort Clark where he distributed presents to the Arikara and Mandan. The following day he arrived at the Gros Ventre (Hidatsa) village near Fort Berthold where he was welcomed with "shouting and firing of guns." From this place he proceeded to Fort Union where he arrived on July 10. Here he waited for the Assiniboin. On the 13th they made their appearance. "As far as the eye could reach," Vaughn wrote, "the prairie was

⁴⁸ LeRoy R. Hafen and Francis M. Young, *Fort Laramie and the Pageant of the West, 1834-1890* (Glendale, 1938), pp. 177-196. The original treaty provided that "in consideration of the treaty stipulations," the United States agreed to pay \$50,000 for fifty years. However, the treaty was ratified by the Senate with an amendment changing the annuity in Article 7 from fifty to ten years subject to the acceptance by the tribes. Assent of all the tribes except the Crow was procured. (Kappler, *op. cit.*, II, 594-595; See also Harry Anderson, "The Controversial Sioux Amendment to the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851," *Nebraska History* XXXVII [September 1956], 201-220.)

covered with them; an immense throng of men, women and children moving about in all directions."⁴⁹

Having heard nothing from the Crow, who had not come for their annuities for three years, the agent set out on July 24 with five men and three horses loaded with presents to visit them. After traveling for fifteen days, the party found the Crow camp where they were met by the principal men "with much rejoicing." In a council with the chiefs, Vaughn learned that white men, who had visited the Crow country, had warned this tribe if they went to Fort Union to get their annuities they would get the small-pox and die. As a result, they were afraid to venture to that place to obtain their presents. Vaughn wrote that since January 1 of that year, in the discharge of his duties, he had traveled some 4,800 miles, 2,000 by horseback and 2,800 by water.⁵⁰

The distribution of annuities was often preluded by much feasting and speech-making on the part of both the representative of the Indian Bureau and the chiefs. Charles Larpenteur described the ceremonies preliminary to the delivery of goods to the River Crow and Assiniboin at Fort Union in June 1864 by Agent Mahlon Wilkinson.

Great Speeches and dog feasts were given today by the Indians in honor to their Father but their father did not partake . . . with much desire . . . the taste of the growing dog, but still gave them a good feast of Sugar, Coffee and bisquit, which appeared to please them well. . . . These great Speeches were kept up until twelve o'clock, after which a dog feast dance was given to the Squaws of the Fort. . . .⁵¹

When the actual distribution of presents took place eleven days later, at the request of the Crow, Larpenteur recorded that the "Indians appeared to be Satisfied but perhaps the Soldiers being here might be the cause of everything going on So Smooth."⁵²

⁴⁹ CIA, 1856, 78-80.

⁵⁰ CIA, 1856, 77-85.

⁵¹ Charles Larpenteur's Original Journals, Ms., Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Book II, 32; the spelling, punctuation, and capitalization here are those of the author of the journal.

⁵² *Ibid.*, II, 36.

The delivery of the presents to 250 Mountain Crows, who appeared at the fort in September of the following year for their accumulated two years' annuities, however, was beset with much difficulty. On the day of the Indians' arrival "a big feast was given." At sunrise of the following day, when the great council was to be held, a band of Assiniboin and Sioux attacked the Crow and apparently stole a number of horses from them. Five of the raiding party were killed and scalped. The next day, Larpenteur, in behalf of the Great White Father, distributed the annuities to the Crow, who demanded in addition the goods due the Assiniboin as compensation for the horses which had been stolen from them. After a "debate" which was caused by several who had become "quite drunk towards the last of the delivery," the Crows "appeared quite pleased" with their presents and left for their Montana homeland.⁵³

During the 1850's the whites continued to push into the country of the Oto, Pawnee and Omaha. The subagent at Bellevue wrote in 1850, "These three tribes . . . from their present deplorable situation, suffer and feel the effects of this vast emigration more than all other tribes put together." Settlers continued to urge that eastern Nebraska and present eastern South Dakota be opened to them. Even some of the Indians became increasingly anxious to be removed to a location more distant from the whites.⁵⁴

In 1854 the government began the work of relinquishing the Indian titles and opening large areas to settlement on the Upper Missouri in Nebraska. It concluded treaties at Washington in that year with both the Oto and Omaha. In accordance with these treaties, the former tribe agreed to cede their lands along the Missouri in return for a reservation centered at present Barneston, Nebraska. The Omaha relinquished a portion of their lands in return for a reservation at Macy, Nebraska. In the following year, the Blackfeet in Montana agreed to reside on a reserve as-

⁵³ *Ibid.*, II, 157.

⁵⁴ CIA, 1850, 40-41; 1851, 94-97; 1853, 105-112.

signed them. In 1857 the Pawnee, at Table Creek, Nebraska, gave up their claims to lands in the eastern portion of that Territory and reserved the lands now included in present Nance County. Two years later, the Ponca ceded their lands, except a strip along the Niobrara, to the Government. In the same year the Yankton Sioux sold the United States their land in eastern South Dakota and reserved a tract of some 400,000 acres along the Missouri. In all of these treaties, the government agreed to pay annuities for a specified time to each of these tribes. It also promised to teach them to become self-supporting farmers and in some instances to provide them with schools.⁵⁵

In spite of the treaty of Fort Laramie, the government's relations with the nomadic Plains tribes, particularly the Sioux, continued to deteriorate. The destruction of Lt. J. L. Grattan and his command near Fort Laramie by the Sioux in 1854 marked the beginning of a series of events which was to end finally in the destruction of the powers of the Plains Indians. The Sioux uprising in Minnesota in 1862 and the military campaigns resulting from it, together with the migration by the whites to the gold fields in Montana and Idaho in 1864 and the following years, made all the Plains tribes uneasy. The end of the Civil War found the government on the verge of a general war with most of the more powerful tribes. The decade following the war found the nation ready to effect far-reaching reforms in its administration of its long-neglected wards.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Kappler, *op. cit.*, II, 608-614, 660-661, 736-740, 764-767, 772-780.

⁵⁶ Ray H. Mattison, "The Indian Reservation System on the Upper Missouri, 1865-1890," *Nebraska History*, XXXVI (September 1955).