



**MOUNTAIN MAN**

This carte-de-visite photograph of **SETH KINMAN** has been used to illustrate a **MOUNTAIN MAN**, although the caption proclaims him as a California Hunter and trapper. Seth was born on September 29, 1815 near Uniontown, Pa. He went to California in 1849 where he gained his reputation as a hunter and a storyteller. He always dressed in buckskin which became his trademark. Seth presented elk horn chairs to Presidents Buchanan, Lincoln, Johnson and Hays. He died February 24, 1888. The CDV is by Brady. Illustrated below is Remington's version of a **MOUNTAIN MAN**.



"Detroit 19th September 1823

"Dear Sir,

Since writing you on the 6th instant I have been favored with yours of the same date and in reply have to observe, that the few goods I have sold here have been disposed of on the following terms, viz goods from Europe 87½ per cent sterling : and those from New York at 30 & 35 pct. Annexed you have schedule of my outfits, as also those made by Messr. L & T. Dequindre and Henry J. Hunt. The persons equiped are all on their own individual account and have been instructed not to sell without a good profit, otherwise to keep the goods. Some of them however, I am fearful, will care nothing about their instructions when they get into the woods. The Messr. Eurings have returned to Fort Wayne without purchasing any goods from the Company or gaining a connection elsewhere. What their views are I know not, as they departed in haste. Messr. Barnatt & Hauna have no purchases here this season. One of these firm has gone to Boston, and as he took with him about \$2000 in bills of exchange will probably purchase and take to Fort Wayne an assortment of double that amount. Callicoes, shawls and low priced fine cloths are scarce here this season: other articles for the Indian trade are plenty in many stores, many of which will, I have no doubt, before the winter sets in, find their way into the interior. Exclusive of the schedule now transmitted M. Schwartz has made an out-fit to Fort Wayne amounting to  $\approx$  1200, and has now on hand at this place goods to the amount of about \$ 4000. I cannot learn that there has been any [understandings ?] between Mr Stone [David] and Messr. Dequindre's traders as regards the Company's outfit. Mr. Stone however informed those gentlemen, that the Person who had charge of your outfit ~~of~~ to the Wabash would be instructed to sell at a good profit and not otherwise, and that they must do the same. The number of packs [furs] sent from hence this season is good: their valuation \$ 60,000. Previous to the arrival of Mr. Stone here in May last Mr. W. T. Dequindre of the firm of L. & T. Dequindre had been to N. Y. and brought with him an assortment of Factory and printed &c to the amount of from two to three thousand dollars. . . . James Abbott"

"Ramsay Crooks Esq."

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**JAMES ABBOTT** was a agent for the American Fur Company and the U.S. Postmaster at Detroit,, as indicated by his FREE FRANK on the address sheet, A fine example of the territorial postmark of DETROIT M. T. SEP 20, 1833. Samuel Abbott was the brother of James Abbott.

# THE WESTERN MAILS

"Detroit July 6, 1824

"Dear Sir, I Have been at Lower and Upper Sandusky and closed those two concerns. I found they had done but very little, the goods imported for them had all been returned to Mr. Abbott [James], except one Bale Blankets which had not been opened those I took, it left them to account for the Stock only which was transferred. I found \$ 4475 worth of goods on hand which I sold them on a credit of one, two & three years in equal payments well secured by Bond & Mortgage with Interest. For the balance I get their furs, some pork, Beeswax &c, all which will not pay the account the balance I shall have well secured by personal security; This Establishment will close up without loss or gain to the Company. I sold J.C.Hunt about 1200 dollars worth of Goods last season for Fort Meigs & he had only sold about one half those he will pay us Cash for or let us have a small lot of Furs. The balance of the Goods he offered to give us back as they were in a situation, not to interfere with any of the Company Outfits and the eventual pay I consider certain. I thought but to let them remain with him. Col. H.I.Hunt has a large proportion of the Goods sold him last fall on hand, he has made but few Outfits the past season. I think I shall receive back such Goods as I can sell without loss, and I hope to get the balance of his a/c [account] well secured or paid. As respects the Dequindre's [L. & T., Company] I believe they will pay up, their returns are all good, they have not all arrived [outfits paid up]. Their Wabash and Fort Wayne traders all pay except Geo. Cnot, he will get no more Goods. The small outfits made by Mr. Abbott will not amount to much they are generally in. I shall take what few Goods are in Mr. Abbotts hand, they are entirely disassorted and sell them to the Dequindres together with this years importation. I shall not give Goods to any other house without Cash or Furs paid down. If the price of Skins continue as low as they are now, I see no possible chance for this Department of the business to make any money. I hope so to manage the affairs in this Quarter as not to loose. Last year I sent to St. Louis a few articles of ready made clothes which I had spoken for previous to the junction of the two Campany's, they did not arrive in time for the Company, therefore they remain on my hands. I have written Mr. Codman, to close the sale if the Company can do anything with them, I shall be glad were it at very reduced prices. If I must make a sacrifice I had rather the Company should profit by it, than have them sacrificed at Auction, please to make my compliments to our friends at St. Louis and write me on receipt of this letter directed to Walpole [?] and say when you expect to be in New York. in haste yr friend &c."

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*David Stone*

DAVID STONE was the senior partner in the firm of Stone, Bostwick & Company, who were strong competitors of the American Fur Co. On April 1, 1823, Astor bought them out and then hired David Stone to replace Abbott at Detroit and Bostwick to take charge at St. Louis. Just like he had done when he bought out the Mackinac Co. 1811 - if you can't beat them, join them or, better yet, buy them out! SEE James Abbot letter to Ramsay Crooks about six months after the "buy-out", under date of September 19th, 1823.

Detroit July 6. 1824

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which was t



Ans<sup>d</sup>

*DS*

By

Ramsey Crooks Esq. & all  
agent of the Am. F. Comp.  
St. Louis  
m. D.

1824

... for I am obliged & he had only sold  
about one half those he will pay us the Cash for or let  
us have a small lot of Fine. The balance of the Goods he  
offers to give us back as they were in a situation, not to  
interfere with any of the Company Outlets and the eventual  
pay I consider certain. I thought but to let them remain

St. Minard (Monday) 12<sup>th</sup> June 1820

Dr. Peter. Yours we have Rec<sup>d</sup>. by the Indian the  
messenger we send you two kegs of powder  
the money that you had sent, you  
will also receive by the same. One fine  
Comb, one Coarse Comb and  $\frac{1}{2}$  # boxes  
which we had a great deal of trouble  
in getting. It is very dear but we send  
you all what you wish according to your  
letter and as you appear to be a very  
great hurry we have not detained the  
Indian not one half a day. Peter Minard  
jun<sup>r</sup>. is expected here every day all Mr.  
Minard's family and himself are well  
and so is Mr. B. Valu's family.

Remember us as some of  
your best friends  
for B. L. Valu to  
Felix Valle

Mr. Peter Loximier  
Carrasant River



~~Parish Browns~~  
~~Cart Drive~~ 3

PARISH BROWNS CART DRIVE

Letter by Felix Valle to Peter A. Larimer regarding accounts between the two under date of "St. Genevieve 12th Novemb. 1824". The following extract is from the letter: "The Skins we received from your Cart (Parish Browns Drive, chs Boalin[?]) \* are credited on our Books on 6th October, thus, 472 pounds of Sound Red Deer Skins, 39 Damaged by Tearing in which is included one Elk Fawn. The price on those Skins is not yet affixed, not knowing the price that will be allowed this year, the probability is that they will not be worth as much as last year, the prospect for Skins generally appears dull, except the Otter Skins which are still in demand. Felix Valle."

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*Felix Valle*

The "Parish Browns Drive" in the letter is crossed out - // //. It is not certain if the carts were Browns or Larimers as it indicates. However Felix Valle's letter is directed via "Parish Browns Cart Drive" to Peter A. Larimer at Port Deposit, Missouri, November 12, 1824.

Felix Valle was an early associate of Pierre Chouteau Jr. and in 1838 became a partner in the firm of Pierre Chouteau Jr. & Company.



Folded letter postmarked at "Lexington Mo 5 Oct" 1832, addressed to Robert Campbell, in regards to furs sold to the American Fur Company by Minatree Catron. John Catron inquiries for his brother if Wm. H. Vanderburgh has the authority to pay for the furs that P. Chouteau has refused to pay. File note on letter spells the name Minatree Catron. The letter was written on October 13th, just one day before Vanderburgh was killed by the Blackfeet - October 14, 1832. See below.

**WILLIAM HENRY VANDERBURGH 1800-1832.** Born at Vincennes, Indiana on December 6, 1800. Attended West Point Military Academy, but did not graduate. In 1818 he went to St. Louis and spent the next five years in the employ of the Missouri Fur Company. He was with Joshua Pilcher and Ashley's men, under Col. Henry Leavenworth's Army troops, in the attack on the Arikara villages in August of 1823. This action had been preceded by the defeat of Ashley by the same Indians, in which Jedediah Smith first came to prominence. It was one of the three greatest disasters in the history of the western fur trade. The other two being the Mojave Massacre and the Umpqua Massacre. With the failure of the Missouri Fur Company in 1826, Vanderburgh joined with Pilcher, Fontenelle and Drips and they were at the Bear Lake Rendezvous in 1828. In 1829 he was employed by the Western Department of the American Fur Company and was sent up the Missouri to Fort Union, where he became one of Kenneth McKenzie's captains. He fought in the battle of Pierre's Hole on July 18, 1832, following the Rendezvous of that year and place. With the breakup of the Rendezvous, Vanderburgh and Drips deliberately set out to follow Fitzpatrick and Bridger, who were leading their Rocky Mountain Company brigade northward into the ever dangerous Blackfoot country. Near the Three Forks of the Missouri they separated while Drips continued on the trail of Fitzpatrick and Bridger. Vanderburgh with about fifty men began to trap the Madison and Ruby rivers. On October 14th, while out with seven men looking for signs of beaver, they were ambushed by about one hundred Blackfeet. Vanderburgh and a trapper named Pilou were killed, while the others escaped to tell the story. Pilou's body was found and buried, but Vanderburgh's has never been found.

GLAUCUS, a sidewheel steamboat, of 191 tons, built at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1839. Was lost in 1842.

Messrs. Chouteau & Mackenzie  
for Glaucus } St. Louis Mo

Prairie du Chien 19<sup>th</sup> June 1839

Messrs. Chouteau & Mackenzie

Dear Sirs,

I send for Glaucus  
Two hundred and nine dollars for amt. of H. S. Sibley's draft  
on me, sent in yours of 13<sup>th</sup> Inst. - The Plateau Boat  
for Mr. Aitken was considerably damaged on board the  
Glaucus, as Mr. Sibley writes to me from St. Peter where it was  
delivered - Mr. Aitken has never said a word to me on the  
subject of this Boat and of course I cannot pay for it till  
I have his direction -

Yours Very truly,

H. L. Doussman  
Ct. Agt. for Am. Fur Co.

HERCULES L. DOUSMAN, 1800/1868, came to Prairie du Chien in 1826. He was the agent for the American Fur Company, in a partnership with Joseph Rolette and Henry H. Sibley. Although they used the name A. F. Co., they were in some fashion associated with J. J. Astor's A. F. Co. After Rolette died they sold their interests in what they called The Western Outfit, which operated on the Upper Mississippi, to Pierre Chouteau, Jr. in July of 1842.

WILLIAM ALEXANDER AITKIN, 1785/1851, was born in Edinburgh, Scotland. He was the agent for the A. F. Co. at Sandy lake in northern Minnesota





"FORT PLATTE FEBY 25th 1844"

"Mr David Adams/Dr. Sir/ Having fixed upon the 10th day of March as the time when we shall start for the settlements we send Mr Tucker to you to bring us the latest intelligence from yr post - You will please write us particularly by him concerning yr affairs ,as to the exact number of Robes traded and the prospect as to quantity in the winding up . Should you have traded any good horses you will send them over by Mr T.,and in case of yr having any of the water \* left we should prefer yr trading horses with it, to bringing it back. The Sioux will all be with you before long, and it will be best for you to hold firm on yr prices of Goods, as they will have an abundance of Robes to trade you. We shall forward you the man you require, with the Oakem nails &c for the Boats in due season.

Tell Sigler he need not be in a hurry about coming over, it will not be necessary for him to go to the Missouri untill some time in June. So the prospect of the water being very low this season, do not neglect to trade Hides for Bull Boats to aid you in getting on to the Missouri.\* Send over all the flour you possibly can. We have made five hundred & sixty packs here and will without doubt make six hundred. /Respy Yrs/Sibille Adams & Co./W.D.Hodgekiss"

Please send me some of your quills, I have none to write with / W.D.H.

If you send us horses & flour by Tucker send a man with him, we will send him back to you with Ladaroute & Sharp, who will start as soon as Tucker returns./S A & Co./WDH"

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\*The Fort Platte traders did well during the winter of 1843-1844, utilizing liquor brought in from Taos. This of course was a government violation which prohibited liquor in the Indian country. Thus the use of "water" in place of liquor.

FORT PLATTE was an adobe-walled trading post built in 1841 by Sybille & Adams. It was located on the south bank of the North Platte River, near the mouth of the Laramie River, very close to Fort Laramie, which at that time was known as Fort John. In 1843 Bernard Pratte and John Cabanne became the owners of Fort Platte and in the summer of 1845 the post was abandoned.

\*Bull boats were used to transport furs and robes down the Platte and Missouri rivers to Saint Louis, sometimes with disastrous results. In 1842 Sybille & Adams almost - lost 2 boats to the wild river and had to land them and then carry the robes to Saint Louis in wagons. See Tillton letter in this collection.

\*Name is spelled SIBILLE or SYBILLE - either is correct.

Letter was carried by "Tucker" to David Adams who was on the South Fork of the Platte River.

Port. Hatter Feb. 25 1840

Mr. David Adams

Dear Sir

Having fixed upon the 10<sup>th</sup> day of March as the time when we shall start for the settlements we send Mr. Chalker to you to bring us the latest intelligence from your post - You will please write us particularly by him concerning your affairs, as to the exact number of Robes traded and the prospect as to quantity in the winding up.

Should you have any good horses you will send to Mr. S. and in case of your having any water left we should prefer to wish it to bring you

Respy  
David Adams  
J. Messing

we will all and it will be best for you to go for pieces of good abundance of Robes

shall forward you the Men you wish the Oaken Nails &c for the Boats in season -

Tell Saylor he need not be in a hurry about coming over, it will not be necessary for him to go to the M<sup>rs</sup>...

until some time in June -

As the prospect of the water being very low this season, do not neglect to trade & hire for Pull Boats to aid you in getting on to the Missouri -

Send over all the flour you possibly can - We have made five hundred & sixty packs here and will without doubt make over six hundred -

Respy Vrs  
Sibille Adams & Co  
J. W. D. Hodgkiss

Please send me some of your Quills, I have none to write with  
J. W. D. Hodgkiss

If you send us horses & flour by Tucker send a man with him, we will send him back to you with Ladaroute & Sharp, who will start as soon as Tucker returns  
S. A. & Co  
J. W. D. Hodgkiss

1847

Little Rock Ark<sup>d</sup> 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb'y 1847Major P Chouteau Jr & Co  
St Louis Mo

Gentlemen

I had this pleasure last from Beaties Prairie 28<sup>th</sup> Ult: giving you a brief sketch of Mr J. M. Bryants business matters. I left there the same evening but was delayed two days at Maysville by a snow storm & sickness. Since that time I have perambulated the country both sides of this river, visiting Benton ville, Fayetteville, Van Buren, Fort Smith, Ozark, Morrison's Bluff, Spadra, Clarksville, Dover, Norristown & Lewisburgh, and finally reached this place without much success in buying Deer skins, in fact the quantity is much less than last

"Little Rock Arks 23d Feb'y 1847"

Messrs P Chouteau Jr &amp; Co/St Louis Mo/Gentlemen

I had this pleasure last from Beaties Prairie 28th ult giving you a brief sketch of Mr J. M. Bryants business matters. I left there the same evening but was delayed two days at Maysville by a snow storm & sickness. Since that time I have perambulated the country both sides of this river [Arkansas], visiting Benton ville, Fayetteville, Van Buren, Fort Smith, Ozark, Morrison's Bluff, Spadra, Clarksville, Dover, Norristown, & Lewisburgh, and finally reached this place without much success in buying Deer Skins, in fact the quantity is much less than last year throughout the country, and the holders were not disposed to part with them at any thing like M Sanford's \* limits., add to that in most instances the skins were packed up and they would not open the baies for examination I have only purchased 7000 [at] 13¢ and 2300 Raccoon cat & Fox at 12 1/8¢ with a few Bears & Otters. I saw a fine lot of Deer at Fort Smith, but M Brooks \* of N Y was there a head of me and bought them under cord [cover ? - secret] at 14¢, he went as far as Fort Gibson. I regretted very much on calling at the Post Office last evening to find no letter from either St Louis or N York for my future guidance. I am out of funds, and from enquiry I find I cannot dispose of any drafts on either House at this place. My purchases are scattered along the river, from Van Buren down with the exception of a few Packages I purchased a little above this place and which I brought down with me. I shall remain here to have those, and what I expect down to ship them to N. Y. via New Orleans, so soon as I am made acquainted with the name of your Agent there. I shall look with anxiety for one of your favors to direct my future movements. I wright by this mail to M Sanford. /Very respectfully Yours &c/

G. Francher

## THE WESTERN MAILS

"Sir William Drummond Stewart writes to "Timothy Brown Dix/Care of M John P. Morgen/14 Bond Street/New York", under date of "St. Louis Nov 4th 1838". The following extracts are from the letter, after saying that he misses hearing from him " . . . . Send me therefore a little line to New Orleans Care of the British Consul - I hope you have not suffered from heat this season as we had enough in the Mountains for both thermometer 98 in the shade 8000 feet above the level of the sea. Business occasioned by the death of my elder Brother obliges me to return to England in spring do not let us miss each other

Postmarked at St LOUIS MO NOV 5 [1838] PAID 25.

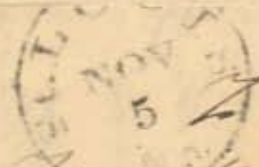
W.D. Stewart"

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*W. D. Stewart*



Captain Stewart was born Dec. 26, 1795, at Murthly Castle, Perthshire, Scotland. the second son of Sir George Stewart, the 17th Lord of Grandtully. He joined the army in 1813, at the age of 18 and as a Lieutenant of the 15th King's Hussars, fought, under Wellington at Waterloo. On his return from the war he was awarded the WATERLOO MEDAL, given only for exceptional bravery at the battle. In April of 1832 he sailed for America, going to St. Louis. Here he met Wm. L. Sublette, Robert Campbell and others prominent in the fur trade. He went with Sublett's caravan to the fur trade rendezvous at Green River in 1833. Thereafter he traveled to all of the annual rendezvous to and including that of 1838. In 1837 he had engaged Alfred Jacob Miller, an artist to come along and record in paint the expedition - the country and the Indians. The illustration is from a painting by Miller, depicting Capt. Stewart and his hunter/guide, Antoine Clement, in confrontation with Crow Indians. With the death of his brother John on May 20th 1838, he became Capt. Sir William Drummond Stewart, 19th Lord of Grandtully. As mentioned in the letter he returned to Scotland in 1839. He did return to the United States in 1842 and made one more excursion to the Rocky Mountains, but the days of the rendezvous had passed into history, leaving him the memories and the paintings of Alfred Jacob Miller. Captain Stewart died at Murthly Castle on April 28, 1871.



Paid 95

Stewart

Timothy Bernard Dix Esq  
Care of Wm Ruf Morgan  
750 14 Bond Street  
New York

PAID

95-11

Dear Sir

Wm Ruf Morgan  
1888

Do not pay money  
to any correspondent  
so to be satisfied at  
leaving from me I am  
anxious to have you  
are likely to be at New York  
the spring & when we  
may have a chance of  
meeting as I fear you  
may be very busy with

by Emerson on some  
such occasion as last  
year without my being  
happy enough to see you  
and me therefore a  
little here to New Orleans  
Care of the British Consul

I hope you have not  
suffered from heat this  
season as we had enjoyed  
in the Mountains for  
both. Thermometer 98 in.

the shade 8000 feet above  
the level of the sea.  
Business transacted by the  
death of my elder brother  
obliged me to return  
to England in spring  
I will let you my  
brother

Believe me truly  
your friend  
W. Stewart

1836

Saturday April 30<sup>th</sup> 1836

Dear Campbell

I was very sorry to hear  
 you had resumed your shaking  
 habits & would strongly recommend  
 some other religion. Take a dose  
 of morphia when you first feel the  
 chill & one of genuine every two hours  
 & I think with betters you will get  
 the better - this cured me - found  
 at Booneville that my horse had been

I. A letter from William Drummond Stewart to Campbell, written April 30, 1836, while en route by steamboat up the Missouri, on his way to the mountains for the second time. This letter is of more biographical than general historical interest, in that it helps to limn Stewart's really engaging personality, still too little known despite the recent labors of students working in the field of fur trade history. Other allusions to Stewart appear in the letters by Sublette described immediately above.



SIoux & WINNEBAGO FUR COMPANY

Letter dated at Saint Paul Oct. 7, 1852. S. B. Sutton writes to his brother that he is now situated " as first Clerk in the Sioux & Winagago Fur Company store at a salery of five hundred Dollars a year and boarded; which I accepted and have been with them six weeks and am well pleased. . . we have been selling & Receiving large invoices of goods, but hav now got things arranged in the store. . . . The firm that I am with sells about one hundred and fifty thousand a year, about two thirds of which is sold to the Indian Traders and Indians. We have had a large delegation of Indians at our store for about three weeks, they bid us good by yesterday and I assure you I was not sorry to see them go. They were chiefs & Braves of the Sioux tribe, and assembled here to sign a treaty made by the government for their lands, and they will recive a payment this fall of about 800 thousand for which we will give them a few calico shirts. I slept on the counter with about fifty Indians sleeping in the same room. Four of them got drunk one knight and made so much noise that I ordered them out, and they refused to go. I then armed myself with two revolvers and ordered them to leave; at the same time drawing my weapons, which they did not seam to fancy, as they marched out door and said that I was (Bad very/secha do). I can begin to talk their language some, and think at the end of the year I shall understand it very well. . . the other day, two of us started out in a buggy with a dog following to pick up the game. We drove out on the Prairie, and was gon only about two hours and shot twenty Prararie Hens without getting out of the buggy. " He than says he has bought some land and intends to buy "six town lots in a few days; located at Travers Des Sioux, a new town located on the Minnesota or Saint Peters river, about seventy five miles from here and in one of the richest farmer countreys that I ever laid eyes on. . . . ."

" S. B. Sutton"

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NOTE: The Sioux & Winnebago Fur Company has not been identified

The treaty mentioned above may have been THE TREATY OF TRAVERSE DES SIOUX which was made with the Indians in February of 1851, in which the Indians gave up about 24,000,000 acres of southern Minnesota. It was ratified by Congress in June of 1852 and signed by President Fillmore February 23, 1853.

No biographical information has been located on the writer S. B. Sutton.



SIGNING THE TREATY OF TRAVERSE DES SIOUX

From mural painting by F. D. MILLER  
In office of the Governor of Minnesota, State Capitol Building, St. Paul

St. Paul Oct 7<sup>th</sup> 1852

Dear Brother

It has been some time since I wrote to you, and the excuse I have to offer is the want of time, having been so busy for the last six weeks, that I have not found time to write a single line to any of my friends; and have been hard at work every day Sundays not excepted. Since the last letter I wrote home, I have changed situations; and for the time in all respects getting a large salary, and a more pleasant situation. In the former place I was getting \$25m. month and bonded for \$100,000. I was therefore offered \$50,000 by Winchell & Co. I have accepted and have with me a large amount of money. I have got things arranged in the new place and shall have more leisure time. The firm that I am with sells about one hundred and fifty thousand a year, about two thousand

Mr James Sutton  
 Wilkes Barre  
 Luzerne Co.  
 Penna

3 1852



Fort Union January 17. 1867

Bro Jemey Dy

Dear Sir

We had big vacancies of Sioux here who fought  
Col Rankin but did not molest us thus far  
Major Wilkinson though gave orders to  
tear down all houses outside fearing we  
would be prevented to get fire wood  
As I expected when Pease came up I cannot  
get along in regard to business. He won't  
recognise the agreement. Mr Smith wrote  
to me however that he wants it carried out  
to the letter. Pease is acting like a crazy  
man and already scattered most of his  
goods in Camps and runs this fort now at  
the rate of \$1200 Expenses per month  
They trade thus far 900 Fall Robes against  
my 60. The Assinibainos have not come to  
trade here yet but will after they dress their  
Winter Robes of which they have plenty  
yet. From appearances we will get the  
Cut Head trade who have plenty of Robes  
& Buffaloes and have been here to see if  
they could trade. Some Crows may be  
in also I shall go on slow & by the

# THE WESTERN MAILS

## FORT UNION 1867

Fort Union, January 17, 1867

Mr. Geowey, Esqu.

Dear Sir:

We had big war parties of Sioux here who fought Col. Rankin but did not molest us thus far. Major Wilkinson though gave orders to tear down all houses outside fearing we would be prevented to get firewood. As I suspected when Pease came up I cannot get along in regard to business. He won't recognize the agreement. Mr. Smith wrote to me however that he wants it carried out to the letter. Pease is acting like a crazy man and already scattered most of his goods in camps and runs this fort now at the rate of \$1200 expenses per month. They traded thus far 900 Fall Robes against my 60. The Assinaboines have not come to trade here yet but will after they dress their winter Robes of which they have plenty yet. From appearances we will get the Cut Head [Yanktonais Sioux] trade who have plenty of Robes & Buffalos and have been here to see if they could trade. Some Crows may be in also. I shall go on slow & by the time the main trade takes place I shall best Pease in goods. I have got now \$15,000 worth against his \$10,000. All will be right I think by the time the boat comes up.

Do not fail to bring up a good full assortment as my stock will no doubt be down to about \$5,000—or less towards Spring and particular all Indian trinkets & Beads ordered. Buy everything you can get in market in the line of turquoise Beads of all kinds and you cannot bring too many, same in tin ware of description sent in my Requisition. But don't buy any blue Beads except the very lightest sky blue shade—turquois.

The Crows are going to have \$20,000 a year at Milk River. If you build don't fail to bring cattle and all tools necessary to build also Glass & Hardware and provisions to last one year, unless you send up in the fall again. The Sioux chased Farwell and shot a horse under him. His wood business is gone up thus & his 11 men came up to the fort, where we pay their board, they assist in getting wood & standing guard.

We must also have a cooking and large base stove with drum & pipes for each post the larger the better.

When you come up you can buy about 2000 large Wolves [i.e. wolf skins] of trappers at \$2 if you bring the cash along. They have done splendid and if the strychnine had been plenty would have poisoned twice the number. They won't sell for drafts. Farwell got thus far \$1,200 advance and I advised him not to go on as after the experience he had it is better to wait than take more chances.

The Indians burnt two of his houses. We had thus far only 6 inches of snow & winds from West are warm. I think we will have an early opening & low River. Very Respectfully yours.

Jno. Kerler

## "Big War parties of Sioux who who fought Col. Rankin" 1866.

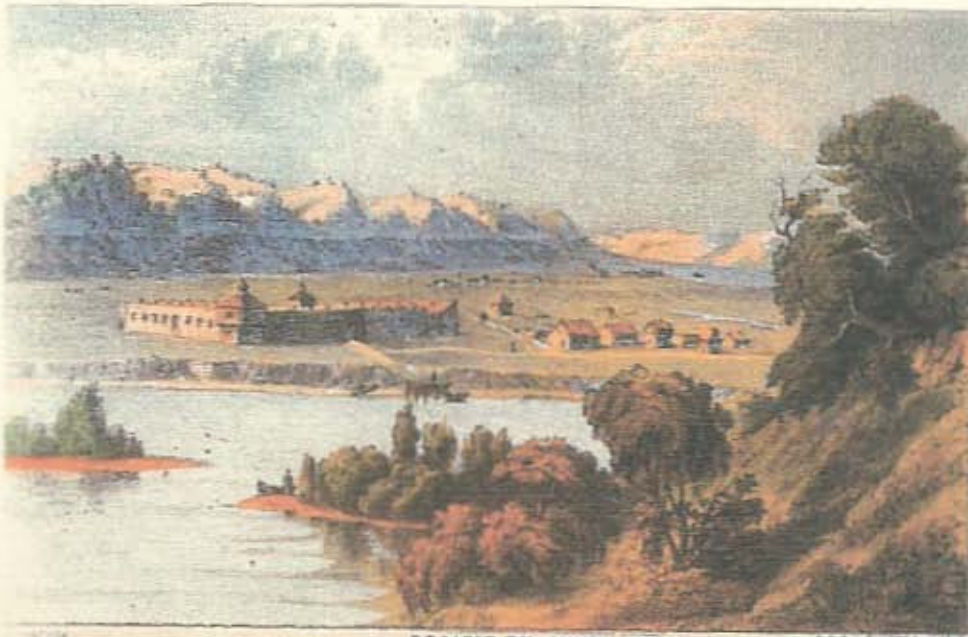
FORT UNION was located on the Missouri River about 4½ miles westerly of the mouth of the Yellowstone River on the N. Dakota side of the Montana border. It was established in 1829 by Kenneth McKenzie for the American Fur Co. In 1865 the fort was sold to the Northwest Fur Co., who operated it until 1867 when it was purchased by the U.S. Government. It was demolished by the army and the salvaged materials were used in completing the construction of Fort Buford which was only 2½ miles east by land. See Fort Buford in this collection. During 1866 and 1867 war parties of Sioux Indians were harassing both forts. On Dec. 23/25, 1866 they attacked Fort Buford, but were driven off by cannon fire with no loss of life. See content of letter opposite.

Colonel Wm. G. Rankin was in command of Ft. Buford with five companies of Infantry. In October of 1867 Rankin and Lt. Thomas Little got into a drunken quarrel but nothing was ever done about the charges they leveled at each other. Rankin was removed from command and he was honorably discharged in 1870 at his own request. He died May 30, 1891.

John Kerler, the writer of the letter, was born in Memmingen, Germany May 28, 1823 and died at Sun River, Montana on Jan. 4, 1885. At the time of his letter he was a licensed Indian trader working for the Sioux City, Iowa firm of Gregory, Bruguier & Goewey trading out of Fort Union. See contract with Black Hawk.

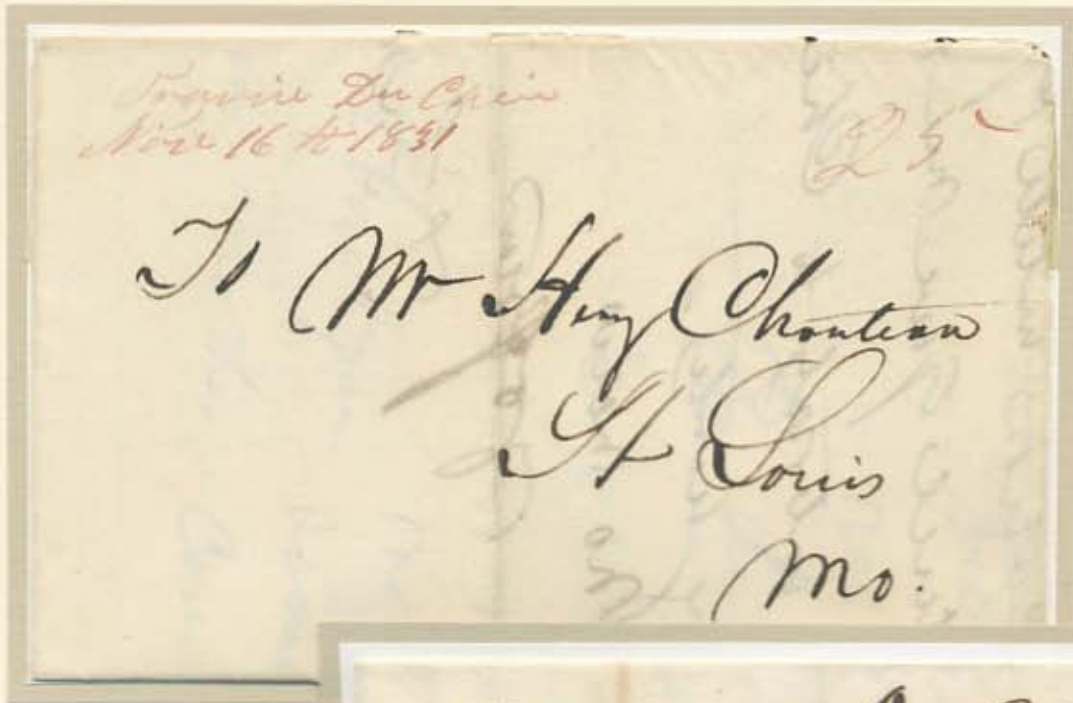


By the early 1840's the Rocky Mountain Beaver trade and the Mountain Men and the Fur Trade Rendezvous had passed into history. However, this letter and steamboat bills of lading, in this collection show that the trade in furs and hides was still big business on the upper Missouri. This letter and a B/L for hardware and 670 pounds of "Traps" is all that remains of John Kerler's experience in the fur trade.



PRAIRIE DU CHIEN 1830

U.S. Pat. Dec. 8/7 1856/67



PRAIRIE DU CHIEN  
MICHIGAN TERRITORY  
1831

Cover bears the only reported manuscript postmark in RED, used during the Michigan period.

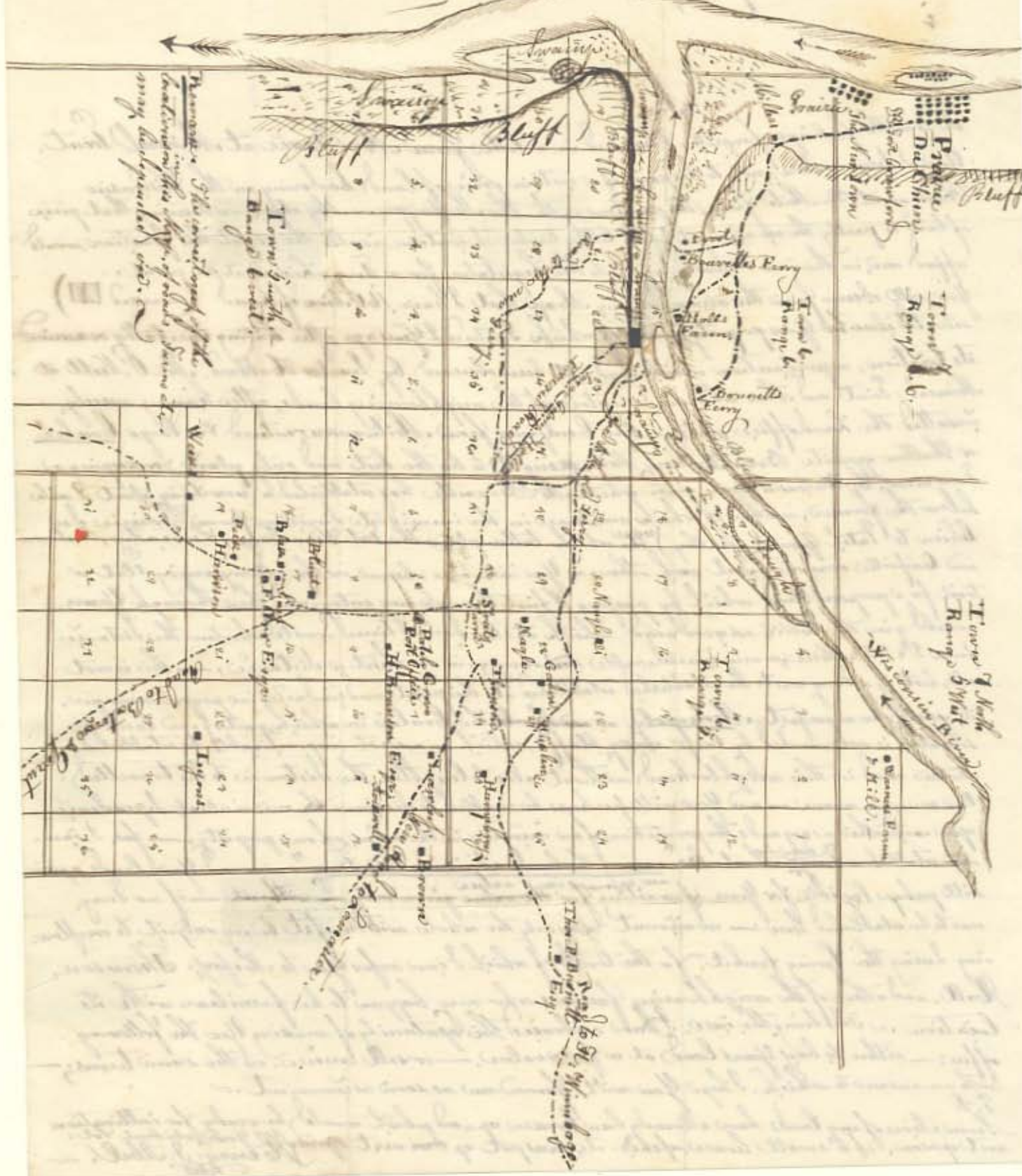
PRAIRIE DU CHIEN  
Wis. 1843

Cover dated FORT  
RAWFORD W.T.  
September 30, 1843.  
Contains report  
of repairs to the  
fort by LT. J.N.  
aldwell.



Survey of the ...

Wabigoon River



Remarks: This is a map of the ...

Wabigoon River

To St. Louis  
To ...

Please to direct your letter

Henry J. Abel

Galena  
Ill.

Henry J. Abel Esq

Dear Sir

Received original

6 Jan'y 1840

Yours of the 27<sup>th</sup> of Dec last

came duly to hand. And I am obliged to you for the map and information given in your letter as well as that on the map. Your views in relation to the materiality of our interest

in relation to  
on my lot for  
miscellaneous as well  
and your views  
favorably, but  
land adjoining  
dent, obtain  
I think you will  
be very desirable  
seeing whether  
I shall  
I should have  
why I receive



Dec 18 1839

25

Oliver Phelps Esq.

Camden N.J.

N.Y.

if I had your opinion of the fair value of your 160 acres. I presume the letter clearing up yours cannot add materially to what it would be worth if there was none made. I believe I fully comprehend your letter and am willing to receive a proposition from you for your land if we can't agree. We

THE WESTERN MAILS



"Pierre Chouteau  
Agent A.M.F. Co

*Pierre Chouteau*

Prairie des Chiens 11 Sept 1829"

Upon my arrival here since the last post I've found your two letters of June 29 and July 17 concerning the balance due Messr McKenzie. I can only acknowledge that after having seen Mr Moore, having heard it said to the latter that this [lot?] had been purchased for Mr. Dickson [Robert] from the Indians for an extraordinary price. Regarding Mr. Renville [Joseph, one of the founders of the Columbia Fur Co.], a thousand piastres was the total amount that he had left in my hands for this thing [purchase of]. I'm satisfied with it, going by appearances he will need to pay me for the equipment of this year. As for the materials for the mill, I am sorry that you had sent to Louisville. I had requested them from St. Louis to [speed] the work. I thank you for your troubles and I will endeavor to resell them. Messr Carlisle & Mason sent me some millstones for the mill and the necessary irons [weights or parts]. If you have knowledge of any, would you be so good as to try to hire some vehicles to carry them.....with- out the arrival of these articles we are going to lack flour. I would have been pleased if you [could] send 50 quarts of flour, it's an article that I never have [can keep] on hand. Mr. Farnham [Russel] came here during my absence having heard that he desired to comply with the arrangement, I [wrote] and sent Mr. Dubois while waiting the arrival of the merchandise that I [bought?] In the rapids, having come myself by land in order to take the necessary plans and [maps?] for this post. Last year, this equipment here earned \$25,000, despite a deduction, in comparison with the preceding year, of \$13,000 on the muskrats. I wrote to Mr. Astor [J.J.] about the troubles with the Sioux and the Fox in order that he arrange that the Secretary of War send direct orders to the agents to [confer?] with them effectually. Two days ago I sent [someone or I went?] to look for the Fox and the Sioux before commencing to give any credits [annuities?]. I forced [asked?] Mr. Farnham to lend himself to that view [to accept?] that our returns etc depend on this objective. Please contract for eleven thousand pounds of tobacco with the same man at the same price, if it's possible. In any case, we need it. If it were possible that you could procure us a thousand gallons [of] whiskey this fall for here at 37 and one-half [\$\$] per gallon, please do that. With my assurances of respect to Mr. Pratte [John B.] I am your devoted servant.  
Joseph Rolette "

P.S. If you paid for our freight, let me know because I will [reimburse Mr. Guyter].  
J.R."



THE WESTERN MAILS

Cartwright Labrador  
5th Novr 1863

My dear Sir

When had the pleasure of  
meeting you at North West River  
November 2nd 1863



LABRADOR 1863

Letter datelined "Cartwright Labrador 5th Novr 1863" .Entered the Canadian mails as per postmark MONTREAL C.E. MY 12 64, which tied the 10¢ stamp, prepaying it to the United States. It must have laid over somewhere until winter was over, because it was five months in transit.

**DONALD ALEXANDER SMITH**, the writer, was born in Forres, Scotland in 1820. He was the nephew of John Stuart, a Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Co., which may have been the influence that brought him to Canada in 1838. From that date to 1868 he was employed by the H.B.Co. on the coast of Labrador. He was married to Isabella Hardisty, the half-breed Cree daughter of Richard Hardisty, a Chief Trader of the H.B.Co., in 1853. Smith's rise to fame was spectacular, from Chief Factor to Governor of The Hudson's bay Co., empire builder, President Canadian Pacific R.R., President Bank of Montreal, Canadian High Commissioner to Great Britain, philanthropist and one of the richest and most powerful men in Canada. Smith and his Cree Indian wife Isabella were raised to the peerage as Baron and Baroness Strathcona and Mount Royal in 1897. Smith died in London, England January 21, 1914 and on the death of Isabella their only daughter succeeded to the title in her own right.



THE WESTERN MAILS



BOONEVILLE, COLORADO TERRITORY

Located about 20 miles east of Pueblo and 62 miles west north-west of Bent's Fort. It was established by Albert Gallatin Boone, the grandson of Daniel Boone, the nephew of Col. Nathan L. Boone, U.S. Army. The Post Office was established Jan. 2, 1863 with Boone as the first postmaster.



Col. A. G. Boone.

The postmark shown above was used as the dateline on Boone's letter and is the only known example of the Type I postmark. Boone writes: "Your favor of Agst 20 by Cape Horn & San Francisco reached me by last nights

Robert Campbell to

Your favor of Agst 20 by Cape Horn & San Francisco reached me by last nights mail written by Mrs Boone

The last I heard of the wool it had arrived at Council Grove Kan and would be shipped by first train to Leavenworth care of H. W. Chuk to be forwarded to you

This line of communication has and will be kept open Indian troubles to the contrary do I therefore pray send no more letters by the Sandwich Islands as the Coach arrives in 11 to 12 days from St. Louis at my door,

Please renew my subscription for the Republican and charge to a/c

and above all drop me a line occasionally I love to hear from America Peace prevails now the Country is

mail....The last I heard of the wool it had arrived at Council Grove Kan and would be shipped by first train to Leavenworth care of H. W. Chuk to be forwarded to you. This line of communication has and will be kept open Indian troubles to the contrary do I therefore pray sent no mor letters by the Sandwich Islands as the Coach (stage) arrives in 11 to 12 days from St. Louis at my door.....And above all drop me a line .....I love to hear from America - Peace prevails now the country is burried in snow but what the spring may bring forth with such a sett of Asses to govern the country is more than I can tell - I keep 50 Garibalda Rifles ready for all emergencys and while Democracy prevails as it did at the last Election I hope to live an other year but I pray for Peace Peace Peace - Could I only hear that Little Mc (Geo. B. McClellan defeated by Lincoln 10 days before this letter was written) was Elected I would send you a Beaver tail - What is Beaver & Castor worth - I have caught 50 for amusiment..."

THE WESTERN MAILS

List of Furs packed by Norman W. Kittson at Camp Cold Water Saint Peter Minn. 1841. Consigned by me and to my credit to Messrs Chouteau & Mackenzie of Franklin Steele

1/2 pack	Pale	Other	Marble	Wishes	Man W	Quarries	Foxes	Sony	Bees	the	March	to	to
1	800	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	3 1/2
2	800	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	2 3/4
3	800	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	3 1/2
4	600	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	3 1/2
5	800	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	2 1/2
6	.	.	.	.	171	63.	3.	16	.	2.	.	.	3 1/2
7	.	.	.	150.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	11
8	.	14	.	.	.	.	13.	.	.	.	.	.	11 1/4
9	.	18	96	.	.	.	.	2.	.	1 1/4	.	.	11 1/4
10	116	.	.	51	58	42	.	.	2	.	.	.	-
10.	3916	62.	96	171	229	165	16	18	2	3 1/4	109 1/4	.	.
	12		10	170						3 1/4	35		
	10	62	144	222	62 1/2	22	165	201	201	4 1/4	40		

**NORMAN W. KITTSO**n was born at Sorel, Canada, March 5, 1814 and died at St. Paul May 11, 1888. He came to Minnesota in 1834 and was engaged in the sutler's store at Fort Snelling for four years. From this experience he became a fur trader and agent for the American Fur Company in northern Minnesota.

**FRANKLIN STEELE** was born in Pennsylvania May 12, 1813 and died at Minneapolis September 10, 1880. In 1838 he became the sutler at Fort Snelling. In 1857 he bought the fort and reservation from the government and the army moved out. With the opening of the Civil War the army reoccupied Fort Snelling and the government bought the fort back and a small portion of the reservation. In 1854 Steele built the suspension bridge connection Minneapolis and St. Anthony, which was the first bridge to span a main channel of the Mississippi River. **CAMP COLD WATER** was adjacent to Fort Snelling where B. F. Baker operated a trader's store.



CHOUTEAU to KENNETH MCKINZIE\*1842  
THE DECLINE IN DEMAND FOR BEAVER.

New York, 20 September 1842.

My dear Sir,

I finally get around to answering your favor of the 17<sup>th</sup> last. That long delay was not due to my lack of willingness to write, but to the desire I had to help you in the present crisis. I found it reprehensible to state as a last resort that I could not do anything, and to leave you to the mercy of our Banks & insurances. I would rather have tried to make even a bad arrangement (leaving you the option to either accept it or not), instead of doing nothing. Your proposition, or to authorize you to draw on Mr. Crooks, or on me, was not feasible under the present circumstances; the fate of the Company is already known to you & as there are people looking (I do not really know why) to amalgamate us into its fall. I need all the credit I can get here as well as my full independence. I desire (and I will be quite disappointed if I do not succeed) that between now and next Spring, that the Credit, & the Paper of the House, will be as good, as desirable in Wall Street as it is in St. Louis. In order to succeed in that goal, I must be in position to postpone for some time the letters of exchange and term notes. For that one must sell & realize. Because my friend Crooks has left me in the direst of circumstances.

All my attempts at borrowing against your properties (underlined in the text) have been useless. I have had only one offer, but it was worse than hanging. Finally today, I have made a preliminary arrangement with the Stevens (underlined in the text). Subject to your consent which, you will send us of as soon as possible. I am enclosing the memorandum of which you are trying to guess the contents. It is the following: you are authorized to draw on him for \$15,000 in amounts which you will consider convenient for your needs, payable in 4 months. Commission for the first acceptance is 2½ per cent, for the second 1½ per cent and for the third 1½. You will punctually remit every 4 months the funds 10 days before they are due. As a final guarantee of payment in 12 months' time, you will supply your "letter of exchange for 12 months in May payable to E. Stevens under name and order" so that the whole remains a private transaction. If you need less than \$15,000, so much the better. Because I must admit that after the awkward situation in which I found myself on behalf of the Company I had made a heartfelt promise to myself never again to endorse, & I believe that you are probably the only person for whom I would swerve from my determination.

Hoping that this arrangement will make it possible for you to meet your most urgent commitments, & will give you time to collect what is due to you, I remain your devoted  
[signed:] P. Chouteau (with flourish).

If possible, tomorrow I will send you at home the result of the sales in London, which are, in general, quite satisfactory, but the beaver has done terrible, there will not be any demand for the ... (one word illegible) until peace is made with the Chinese. I dare not make a prediction about the price of the [buffalo] robes. At least one third of the [fur trading] firms have folded. Another third has had their credit notes renewed every 4 months. The rest pays on the due date. The losses on the sales of [buffalo] robes since 1837 have been enormous.

\*[ The name is also used and spelled Mackinzie ]



New York 26. September 1842

Monsieur Monsieur

J'ai bien enfin répondu à votre lettre, du 17. du passé. Ce long retard n'est pas dû à une mauvaise volonté de la part de l'état, mais au désir que j'avais de vous aider dans la présente crise. Il me semblait de voir un dernier résultat que je ne pouvais rien faire, et non laisser à la merci de nos Banquiers & assureurs. J'aurais pu tenter de faire même un mauvais arrangement, si vous laissiez l'option de l'accepter ou non, l'état que de me rien faire. Votre Proposition de vous ouvrir un crédit de \$20,000. ou de vous louer à titre de Jeur McCrooks, ou Jeur Mori, n'était guère praticable dans les présentes circonstances. Le sort de la Compagnie, vous est déjà connu. H. C. C.

A great letter on the financial situation of Pierre Chouteau Jr. and Kenneth McKenzie, as viewed from New York City in 1842. In 1834 Astor had sold the Western Department (Missouri River) to Chouteau and the Northern Department (Great Lakes region) to Ramsay Crooks, who moved the headquarters from Mackinac Island to La Pointe, on Madeline Island in Lake Superior. In both cases the name American Fur Co. was retained. Following the business depression of 1837 and the decline in demand for Rocky Mountain Beaver, both companies were hard hit. In 1842 Crooks was forced into bankruptcy and that partly explains Chouteau's remark, "my friend Crooks has left me in the direst of circumstances".

The decline in beaver had been brought on from "over trapping" and the demand for beaver, caused by the "silk hat" replacing the "beaver hat". Also, the demand for beaver in China, had been cut off by the "Opium war" with Great Britain in 1842. This letter shows some of the problems of "supply & demand" and financing the business of trapping beaver along the watercourses of North America. The great days of the beaver and the Mountain Man were drawing to a close, but the International Fur Trade continues on into the twenty first century.

## THE WESTERN MAILS

New York, 4 June 1852.

My dear Charles,

I have just received your letter of the 28<sup>th</sup>, that from Chicago has either remained somewhere in the mail or on the way for a very long time. I was hoping for your return (which I believed to be later) to answer it. I see that you have not been successful in your negotiations and that there are many forestalments for the Irons (railways) of the West. But I hope that these detorments will not be for very long. Mr. Neal the Vice-President of the Central Railroad has left some time ago for Chicago, and the line of 50 miles that must be started and completed this year, and thence continue to St. Louis. Sanford has given him a letter for Chouteau Harrison & Vallé, and another one for you. It is a businessman who has the full confidence of the company and whom you must treat as such. Sanford appears positive that you will obtain all supplies for the price you offered. I would have liked to get to know him but he was sent to England by the company, and immediately upon his return he left for the West. The Railroad of Naples, Marais, Darien & Springfield belongs to Messrs. Ketchum & Schuyler & Sturgess. In this city I found out today that Messrs. Ketchum & Sturgess are planning on leaving Monday or Tuesday the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> inst. to visit these Railroads. I will see Mr. K. before his departure, & if he goes as far as St. Louis I will give him a letter for you. In any case I will write you again notifying you of their departure, and to meet them on site if necessary. I will see you here with pleasure and even more so if your good mother would be with you, but from what you tell me I am afraid that she will not make up her mind to leave. But if your trip here is only on account of the railways, it appears to me "that I do not understand at all". At the very least I could follow the plentiful and detailed instructions I have been provided with.

I learn with pleasure that you have obtained a guarantee for the dubious debts, which is a good thing. The Irons (railways) offer too few profits to create bad debts; if it is at all possible, avoid this. The purpose is not to make a sale, but to be paid. One usually finds more buyers than good payers, which is something you have to keep in mind. One has to expect to suffer at least some losses, but one has to try as much as possible to avoid them and above all, avoid that they be considerable. The day of my departure I was to hand twenty-five dollars \$25.00 to Mr. Bates, something I completely forgot. Be so kind as to pay him on my behalf as soon as you receive this letter, telling him it is probably the first time I have been so absent-minded.

I am flattered to learn that you have found everybody in good health, especially our good mother in full bustle. At least this will be a bit of a distraction to her boredom. You tell me you have found her "in good spirits" (in English and quotation marks in the text). That is not what your sister writes me, and on account of your mother's propensity to worry. Unfortunately I tend to believe your sister rather than you, but it is useless to try and reason about these matters. We cannot change the temperament nature has bestowed upon us. Tell Julie that I have received her letter, including one for Ben who left the same day. Beyond any doubt I owe it to the contents (i.e. the letter to Ben) that she wrote me the few lines she did. In that case, no answer, no easy-going until she asks me so. Hug them all for me. Your affectionate father,  
[signed:] P. Chouteau.



New York 4 June 1839

Mon cher Charles

Je t'écris à l'instant ta lettre du 28. Et  
Chicago de l'esté soit à la poste ou en route très longtemps. J'ai vu  
tout cela en vain. Je croyais plus tard, j'espère. J'ai vu que tu es  
de succès dans les négociations, & qu'il y a beaucoup de préventions  
les uns sur les autres. Mais l'espérance que cette prévention ne durera pas  
longtemps. Mr. Neal le Vice Prsident du Central R. R. est parti <sup>depuis</sup> et  
tous pour Chicago, & la ligne de St. Louis qui doit être commencée  
Celle de l'ouest & de la Seconde à St. Louis. Sanford lui a donné un  
bon Chouteau Harrison & Vallé, & une petite. C'est un homme d'affaires  
& qui possède toute la confiance de la Compagnie. J'espère de voir  
en conséquence. Sanford paraît confiant qu'un chemin sera  
obtiens tous les fourchettes. J'aurais désiré faire sa connaissance

#### FURS, RAILROADS & "more buyers than good payers"

With the decline in furs, Chouteau writes to his son Charles, on the railroads being built in the east and the demand for "Irons" (rails) when a road to the "West" would be built. But this was in the talking stage and it would be a decade before ground would be broken for a railroad to the Pacific. In 1849 Chouteau, Francois Vallé, and James Harrison organized the American Iron Mountain Co. to mine the iron ore deposits, at Iron Mountain, 40 miles S.W. of St. Genevieve, Mo. This explains Chouteau's double interest in railroads, such as the [Illinois] Central R.R., which he was developing.

**JOHN F. A. SANFORD** was the husband of Chouteau's daughter Emilie, who died April 27, 1836, leaving a son, **BEN**, mentioned in the letter - Benjamin Chouteau Sanford. John Sanford married Isabella "Belle" Davis in 1852 and died 13 years later, at the age of 76. Sanford, John Sarpy and Kenneth McKenzie were probably the most important partners that P. Chouteau Jr. ever had. See Joseph Rolette letter, in this collection, dated at Prairie des Chines, May 25 1839, for more on Sanford and the famous "Dred Scott" slave case.

**Mr. BATES** was probably **EDWARD**, brother of Frederick Bates, who had defeated Wm. H. Ashley in 1824 for governor and then died the following year on Aug. 4th. Edward had a long distinguished career as a legislator and was probably Chouteau's lawyer. He died Mar. 25, 1869.

**JULIE** was Chouteau's daughter and the wife of Dr. William Maffitt.

**CHARLES PIERRE CHOUTEAU** was the son of P. Chouteau Jr., who had been placed in charge of P. Chouteau Jr. & Co's. operations on the upper Missouri in 1849. He was married to his cousin Julia Gratiot, daughter of General Charles Gratiot, the son of Charles Gratiot Sr. P. Charles Chouteau was taken on a long tour of the company's post, including St. Peters (Ft. Snelling) and Prairie du Chien in the summer of 1838. SEE Ramsey Crooks to P. Chouteau Jr., dated at Prairie du Chien, Dec. 22, 1838, in this collection.

## THE FUR TRADE WEST OF THE MISSOURI 1854

[Translation:]

St. Louis, 4 Sept. 1854.

My dear Cousin,

I have not written to you since the 26<sup>th</sup> last because I have not had the time & this immense heat has completely worn me down and afterwards the whole week went by, a pity for the ones as much as the others. Equipment of Baker & Street, Wm. Bent, Int[endant?] John Gratiot who has needed over 3000 [probably dollars?, not stipulated in the text] of merchandise. I think I will send Gratiot on his way tomorrow or the following day.

The equipment of Bent came to 3200\$ at good prices and my purchase of robes said 564 skins & 337 have been placed to his credit leaving a balance of 1225.83 in our favour due next Spring. Campbell has not liked to see this change but it appears to be Bent's fault, since he reproached him to have sold his robes to us last May. I hope we may be able to obtain their preference upon their return next Spring & I notice that his credit locally is very good, having obtained his groceries by himself and without surety.

The day before yesterday I have bought 1582 robes from Campbell. I am sending you herewith the account. I have paid top dollar but I am certain that we will make 50 net per robe, and I have not liked to leave them in the hands of our competition here. During the last week we have sold for over 18000\$ of robes at our price set locally and in part at our colleagues in Chicago, among whom we find St. Mone (?) & Esterly, who have taken 8,000 between the three of them.

[p. 2:]

You know that the sales we will be making here to our Jews are all guaranteed by mortgages and often we are obliged to give them extentions on which we charge good interest. The other purchases for Chicago have been represented to us as valid and they have given us their Notes for 90 days with interest, &c.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> I have received your favor of the 26<sup>th</sup> and its contents have been noted with respect to add to our old practices for next year. I have not committed myself & I have notified several people that you intend to wrap up your business next year, that we do not want to continue any longer. I have written to Mr. ... & to Messrs. C. & I. Ch... about the matter ... Findlay because Ciprien no longer will take care of business and that after next year we will wrap up our business. He does not believe that with our border suppliers we will lose anything, except with Smart, who in case he cannot collect his debts from the Savages we will be in bad shape, but I cannot believe that finally the credits due will not be settled in one way or another. At least, that is what all traders and the agent tell me, & the Savages have refused to go to Washington, wishing to make their treaties in their country.

My requests for merchandise for next year are very limited & I will see later if there is a need for me to make a second order, because often we are ... to obtain them from your market, but you know the difficulty there is in knowing what we will be needing for the following years.

[p. 3:]

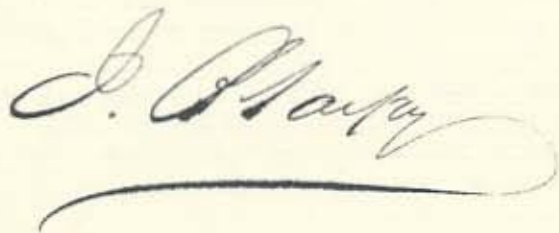
Today I have drawn on your house for 10,000 payable in 4 months as usual & I will do the same whenever necessary at the same terms. As I have already stated, if Sanford had kept his promise when he was with us, to have told you about the most convenient time for us to draw (notes), it would have been done in the manner you desire. At his very moment Staverly (?) is offering me a check for 3643.05 balance due on the transfer of merchandise for last year for Vaughan, you will remember that Mitchell has to receive 2/5 of that freight, finally at last we have been paid the contract with Baker & Street as well as the transfer of this year to Arkansas & la Platte, which comes to already about 14,000\$. I have received receipts for Arkansas to the tune of nearly 5000 since 15 June & there is not a cent in the hands of Cummings (?) For these payments. He thinks however that these funds will do well during the summer, with the annuities &c.

Wishing you good health, I remain always, your devoted

[signed:] J. B. Sarpy

[p.s.:] We have not yet found a proper house to take care of our books. Lebeau still takes care of them, I bet that between the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> of the present, he will be with us, I do have need for him.

[Docket:] J.B. Sarpy, St. Louis 4 Sept. 1854. Received 9<sup>th</sup>, answered 9<sup>th</sup>.



1854

Mon cher Cousin

St Louis 4 Sept 1854

Je me souviens au pas adouci depuis le 24 du  
passé y parce que je n'ai pas eu le temps y que cette grande  
chaleur ma affecté extraordinairement, surtout l'estomac le dimanche  
C'est par là que j'ai dû me faire pour les uns y les autres Equipement  
de Peau y de Robe. Mon Peau le Fort John Gratiot a qui  
Il a fallu au delà de 3000 de marchandise. Je pourrai faire  
partir Gratiot demain en le jour suivant.

L'equipement de Peau est arrivé a 3200 \$ a de bon prix  
y mon achat de Robe dit 564 Peaux y 357 unités place a  
son Credit le tout une somme de 1225 <sup>43</sup> en Pl. faucon due le  
prochain prochain Campbell n'a pas été de voir ce  
Changement mais Il paraît que c'est la faute de Peau  
la l'esp. lui ayant approché de nous avoir perdu ce Robe  
en May dernier. J'espère que nous pourrions obtenir la  
mesure sur ces Robes le prochain prochain. Je suis

#### THE FUR TRADE WEST OF THE MISSOURI 1854

**JOHN B. SARPY** reports to his partner, **PIERRE CHOUTEAU Jr**, the situation of the company in trading in furs and Buffalo robes west of the Missouri River, as of September 1st, 1854. By this time Chouteau had been spending most of his time in New York, taking care of other interests, such as the railroads, Sarpy and Pierre's son, Charles the fur business back in St. Louis.

The following notes will identify some of the persons mentioned in the letter:

**WILLIAM BENT**, Fur trader, builder and proprietor of Bents Fort on the Arkansas River. SEE more on the fort and its builder in this collection.

**JOHN GRATIOT** was probably J.P.B. Gratiot the manager of Fort John on the Platte River?

**CIPRIEN**, could be **CYPRIAN CHOUTEAU**, the half brother of Pierre Jr.

**JOHN F. A. SANFORD** married to Chouteau's daughter Emilie. Partner in the fur trade operation and after 1851 devoted his time to railroad investments for Chouteau. SEE letter of June 4, 1852 for more.

**BAKER & STREET**, may be commission merchants - no record found at this time.

The **Savages** were the Indians who were in debt to the traders and it was hoped would pay when the government passed out the "annuities" in the summer.?

**SARPY & SANFORD** both died in 1857, which was a severe blow to Chouteau in his "fur and railroad" operations. Pierre died in 1865, having been preceded in death by his wife Emilie in 1862. He died a rich man.

THE WESTERN MAILS

Fort Union May 27<sup>th</sup> 1866

I Pierre Hawk do agree to work for  
Mess Gregory Bruguier & Goewey at 75.00  
per month and one Ration, as Interpreter & Trader  
at Ft Union with Goods necessary for the use  
of my family only, at cash charges and  
ten per cent advance, The Ration to consist  
as follows

10 lb Flour	} per week issued weekly
4 " Sugar	
2 " Coffee	

Gregory Bruguier & Goewey  
per mark

Tobacco necessary for smoking with Indians



BLACK HAWK--INTERPRETER & TRADER AT FORT UNION

"Fort Union May 27th 1866

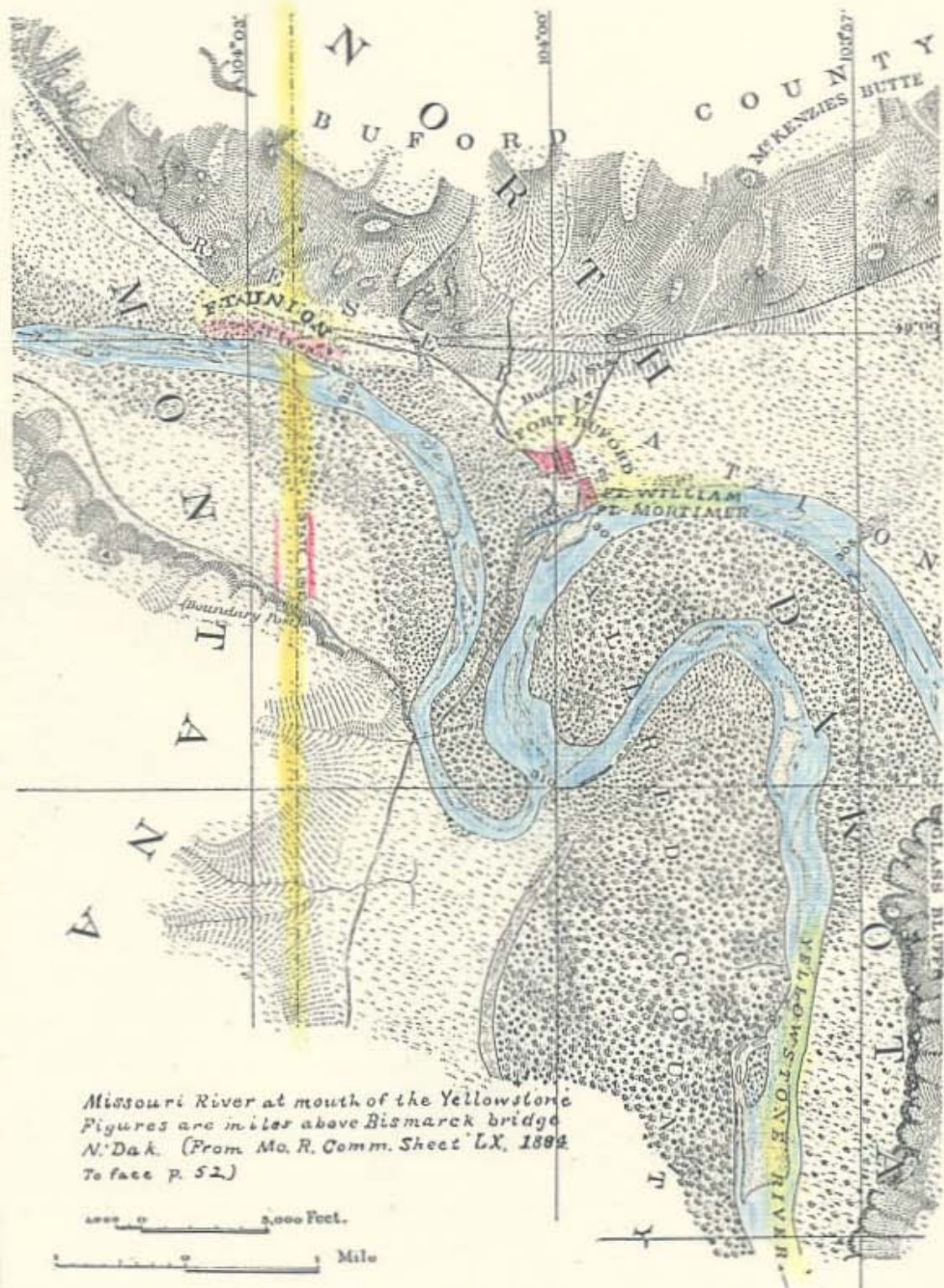
I Pierre Hawk do agree to work for Mess Gregory Bruguier & Goewey at 75.00 per Month  
and one Ration, as Interpreter & Trader at Ft Union with Goods necessary for the use  
of my family only, at cash charges and ten per cent advance. The Ration to consist as  
follows

10 lb Flour	per week
4 " Sugar	issued weekly
2 " Coffee	

Gregory Bruguier & Goewey  
per mark

Tobacco necessary for smoking with Indians"

Endorsed on reverse "Agreement with Black Hawk/Union 1866 May 27"



Missouri River at mouth of the Yellowstone  
 Figures are in miles above Bismarck bridge  
 N. Dak. (From Mo. R. Comm. Sheet LX, 1884  
 To face p. 52)

Reproduced from FORTY YEARS A FUR TRADER ON THE UPPER  
 MISSOURI by Elliott Coues, Francis Harper 1898, New  
 York, 2 Vols., Vol. I, p. 52.

## THE WESTERN MAILS



THE GRAVE OF WAR EAGLE.

PHOTO BY WALTER BROWN.

E. C. KROPP, PUBL., MILWAUKEE, WIS. 1898

\*Rock River , headwaters near Pipestone, Minnesota.

\***Theophile Bruguier** was born at L'Assumpcion on the St. Lawrence river near Montreal on August 31, 1813 and died at Sioux City, Iowa February 18, 1895. His father was half French and his mother a full blood English woman. He spoke both languages as well as the Indian language. Bruguier worked for the American Fur Company on the upper Missouri at Fort Vermillion. In 1865 to 1867 he was a partner in the firm of Gregory, Bruguier & Goewey, operating as sutlers and Indian traders at Old Fort Sully, Fort Rice, Fort Stevenson and Fort Buford. See contract with Black Hawk in this collection. Also see Goewey & Co. steamboat B/Ls for Buffalo robes and furs during the 1870's. Bruguier married two of Chief War Eagles daughters and had 13 children by them. Mentally and physically, Bruguier was a remarkable man of high character. He was respected and trusted by the Indians.

**War Eagle** was a Santee Sioux Indian, probably born in Wisconsin about 1785 and at an early age went to the Minnesota country and married a Santee Sioux girl. About 1830 he moved with his family to Fort Vermillion on the Missouri river. It was here that War Eagle met Bruguier, who was working for the American Fur Co., and married Blazing Cloud and Dawn, two of War Eagles daughters. About 1849 War Eagle and Bruguier settled on the Iowa side of the confluence of the Big Sioux river with the mighty Missouri - the site mentioned by R.I. Cleveland in his survey report. The above notes are based on **WAR EAGLE**, a paper by Constant R. Marks in which he gives the death of War Eagle as the fall of 1851. Cleveland's report clearly shows that War Eagle was still alive in August of 1852 and therefore it should be 1852 or later. As with most Indians before 1900, exact dates of birth and death cannot be established. He was probably about 66 years old at his death.

## CHIEF WAR EAGLE & THE BIG SIOUX RIVER

In 1852 R. I. Cleveland, a government surveyor, made a reconnaissance of the Big Sioux River in Iowa. The following extracts are taken from his very detailed report, dated at Dubuque Sept 1st 1852: "...Tuesday July 27th....Embarked my men equipage provisions &c at 6 A.M. on a log raft hastily constructed for the purpose and proceeded down the Big Sioux [River]". Cleveland then related the difficulty of getting raft over rapids and around sandbars, while recording his measurements and observations &c: "Much impeded today 30th as on previous days with shoal water and rapids requiring great labors to urge the raft over till about 4 P.M. when coming to difficult Rapids, big boulders underneath and above the water barely wide enough for a canoe to pass - our raft in spite of all our efforts, stranded beyond the possibility of getting her off, altho we spared no efforts to effect this object." They unloaded and set up a tent onshore and prepared to build a lighter raft: "At this point called Camp Necessity in the field book we were detained two days July 31st & Augst 1st in obtaining the proper material which could only be found above the Rapids cutting launching & floating it over and finally putting it together below and in making the portage." On the 2nd they continued down river and: "On the 3rd we came to and passed the much looked for junction of the River of the Rock\* The largest & almost only important tributary of the B. Sioux & found .... a greater volume of water fewer shoals & rapids and better navigation. This tributary stream above mentioned.... must contribute a large volume of water to the B. Sioux. On its head waters is said to be located the celebrated quarry of pipestone rock of the Indians [Pipestone National Monument Minnesota]. There were now other elements of delay and opposition not experienced in the early portion of our voyage Viz large trees undermined by the current and laying completely across the river - strong head & baffling winds & counter currents rendering it necessary in many places to use our poles to make head way ..... Thick fog delayed us but the sluggishness of the river gradually increased as we neared the mouth.... I think we experienced the back water of the Missouri. On Friday Aug 6th ascended a high bluff on right bank the last of a long chain about a mile from the river when we first got sight of the bluffs & timber of the Missouri terminating our view in the Western horizon and where the bluffs of the B. Sioux terminated on that bank & then bore away N.W. and the bottom or table land of the two rivers blended together in a vast plain or basin from two to fifteen miles wide..... Monday Aug. 9th P.M. we were hailed by Indians on the bluffs of the left bank the first we had seen on the river .... we were at length on turning a bend awarded with the sight of this Majestic & impetuous Missouri & the union & reception of the B. Sioux into her ample bosom. Just at this bend is located on the left bank an Indian Village, the presiding genius of which is a Canadian Frenchman\* Bruyer [Theophile Bruguiere] by name son in law to the Sioux Chief War Eagle\* surrounded like a Scottish Chieftan with a long tail of dependent children of all ages & sexes dogs etc etc. The patriarch Chief gave us a cordial and friendly reception (his son in law being absent) & we remained over night gladly availing ourselves of his hospitality till 10 A.M. of the 10th when we proceeded on our raft down the Missouri some six miles to a point well known as Sargents bluff Missouri [named] for Floyd\*, bluff where we remained till the morning of the 12th when we proceeded by land transportation onto Kanessville [Iowa] & thence to Dubuque." Cleveland then gives a detailed report on the character of the land along the Big Sioux which forms the N.W. boundary of Iowa - the timber and the soil and the possibilities of steamboat navigation. The best soil is in the bottom land of the river and is subject to annual inundation by the spring floods.: "...unless this country contains valuable mineral wealth within its bosom it is a problem in my mind if it ever becomes settled. The only portion of it possessing a rich black and fertile soil worthy of the emigrant & farmer are the bottoms above mentioned.. .. The Big Sioux is extremely tortuous & serpentine the whole distance we navigated it which I estimate at 280 246 miles.... I confess I can now see no adequate inducement ever to tempt a boat to navigate her waters..... R. I. Cleveland"

To His

Dubuque  
Sept<sup>r</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> 1852

Surveyor General  
of Iowa Wisconsin & Minnesota

Sir

In pursuance of Instructions  
issued to me of date July 24<sup>th</sup> at Station Jackson by Capt A  
Tullcott Chief of the Field operations of the Northern boundary  
Survey of Iowa, a Copy of which is herewith in your possession  
I proceeded to execute them on the morning of Tuesday July 27<sup>th</sup> at  
the same time the whole Camp was broken up to commence  
the retrograde movement Eastward. Embarked my main Camp  
equipment provisions &c at 6 A.M. on a log raft hastily constructed for  
the purpose and proceeded down the Big River to a point mark-  
ed A in field Book where I had left a flag to which point  
the river had been measured under direction of Mr. Schellie -

We did not reach this strictly speaking the initial point  
of my reconnaissance till late in the afternoon altho the distance  
by land as chained did not much exceed five miles being much  
impeded by Rapids in succession which required much labor  
and some skill to pass the raft safely over.

The next day I sent the raft down the river & proceeded  
to take Courses & distances on shore at first supposing it to be the most  
eligible way of performing the duties assigned me. I followed the plain  
on that day 28<sup>th</sup> & the next 29<sup>th</sup> July but was obliged ultimately to  
abandon it from the heat of the weather. Natural obstructions of the Course



inducement ever to tempt a boat to navigate her waters.

Another singular characteristic of the B. River is the paucity, of and insignificance of its tributaries. With the exception of the River of the Rock there were no signs of any excepting a few Spring branches & the dry or almost dry beds of torrent from the hills & hills checked with sandbars & their junctions and yet in rainy seasons doubtless pouring large volumes of water into the parent streams -

I have thus far as concisely as possible endeavored to give you some idea of the results of the duties assigned to me and altho not so copious as perfect or as scientific as could be desired yet I trust they will be received as the efforts of a mind constantly alive to truth nothing more nothing less and as such are respectfully submitted.

I remain Sir Very Respectfully  
Your Obedt Servant  
R. B. Cleveland

Cleveland  
Sept 10th  
1831  
Ohio River  
Sept 11th

My knowledge that I shall from this embarkment and undertake nothing more -  
over of doing has ever interested to me -  
Of the 21st the embarkment again on the night of 21st I could do this

Charles P. Chouteau's travelling expenses from New York, till he left  
Prairie du Chien for St. Louis 10 December 1838 City

From New York to Lewiston on the Niagara River	26.00
" Buffalo to Detroit	9.75
at do do	4.75
From Detroit to Mackinac	12.00
at do do Board \$5. Washing \$1.50	6.50
From Mackinac to Saut St. Marie	5.00
at do do	9.00
Wages, Provisions and Mogsarins of the man who carried his trunk from La Pointe to St. Peters	74.50
Share of expenses from St. Peters to Prairie du Chien	25.00
Board, washing & mending at do do	5.00
	<u>\$ 177.50</u>

No charge on Lake Superior or at La Pointe, or St. Peters, for Board  
or lodging.

A/c at La Pointe. City	
2 Cotton Shirts \$3. 1 pr. Satinet Pantalons 67	10.00
1 Ivory Comb 31 <sup>c</sup> 1 n Buck Skin Gloves \$1.50	1.81
1 pr. Oxhide Boots \$2.75 1 pr. Mittens 50 <sup>c</sup>	3.25
Washing from 7 September to 29 <sup>th</sup> October 1838	5.37
1 Black leather Waist Belt	88
	<u>\$ 21.31</u>

A/c at St. Peters. City	
1 pair Satinet Pantalons	6.00
1 Red flannel Shirt	2.00
2 pr. Blanket Socks	1.25
	<u>\$ 9.25</u>

over

*Prairie du Chien 22 Dec 1838*

In 1834 John Jacob Astor sold the American Fur Company. Pratte, Chouteau & Co. bought the Western Department and Ramsay Crooks the Northern Department. In the summer of 1838 Crooks left New York with Charles Chouteau, the son of Pierre Chouteau Jr., to visit the various posts of the A.F. Company. The following letter relates to this journey, which included the itinerary and expence account thereof. See other pages for same. The following extracts are from the letter:

" Prairie du Chien 22 Dec 1838

Cher Cousin . . . . I am now on the eve of my departure via Milwaukee & Chicago, in company with Mr. Franchere [Gabriel], my old Columbia River friend. I have been detained here fully a week longer than I expected, but every thing is settled with Western Outfit, to the present time, and I have closed with Mr William A. Aitken who has for 4 years had charge of our Fond du Lac trade, whose retirement from our Lake Superior business, with that of 2 others I was willing to part with, can hardly fail to improve the complexion of matters in that region - So if I have been long from home, I have (I hope) done some good in the time towards the welfare of the Company. Annexed is my a/c with you for disbursements on Charles's a/c, balance due me \$289.25, which I shall debit you with in New York as due 31 Dec 1838." He then mentions several money notes that are due the Company and goes on to say: "Assure Emilie of my best wishes, the same to the other members of your family, and tell Charles I expect much of him - My affectionate regards to all our relatives, particularly your worthy Father [Pierre Chouteau Sr.] - Do write me and believe that I am always yours faithfully Ramsay Crooks"

*Ramsay Crooks*

Note: Chouteau was married to Emilie the daughter of Charles Gratiot. Crooks was married to Emilie the daughter of Bernard Pratte. In 1850 Charles Chouteau took over P. Chouteau & Co. relieving his father from direct operation of the business.



*Prairie du Chien W.T*

Folded letter postmarked at "Prairie du Chien W,T, Dec 24, 1838 - rated 25 and then changed to 50 cents for the double weight, as there was an enclosure not now present.

THE WESTERN MAILS

A/c at Prairie du Chien — Vig. —

1 Fur Cap \$4.	1 pr Fur Gloves 22 <sup>5</sup>	1 pr. Mittles 25 <sup>0</sup>	6.50
2 Worsted Shirts \$5.50	2 prs Drawers \$3.	1 Merino Cravat \$2.	8.50
1 pr. Carpet over shoes \$3.	2 prs Mozasins \$1.		4.00
1 Blue Blanket & trimmings \$12.	Making Coat \$4.		16.00
			<u>\$ 35.00</u>

Pierre Chouteau Junr Esq. in a/c with Ramsay Crooked

for disbursements on a/c of his son

1838	July 28.	To cash furnished him at New York to buy presents for sister &c	\$ 20.00
	Aug. 4	" " " " at diff. times	7.00
	5.	" " paid his Board at Washington Hotel	2.25
	"	" " expences of his trip from N.Y. to Boston & back	17.25
	9	" " furnished him for expences to falls of Niagara Buffalo &c	25.00
	Sept. 4	" " for 1 pr. Boots at Saut Ste Marie	2.75
	Oct. 29	" " his a/c in store at La Pointe as he acct.	21.31
	"	" " Blanket Socks	.88
	Nov. 28	" " his a/c at St Peters pro a/c	9.25
	Decem. 10	" " " " " Prairie du Chien "	55.00
	"	" " furnished him for his travelling expences from Prairie du Chien to St. Louis	70.00
	"	" Am't of Travelling expences from New York to Prairie du Chien as per a/c	177.50
			<u>389.25</u>

Deduct. reciev. from American Fur Company in New York  
and charged your private account 100.00  
due R. Crooked. Dollars 289.25

Prairie du Chien 22 December 1838.

Ramsay Crooked

Bond B.

**Know all Men by these Presents,** That we,

*Joseph Laprambosc*

*Chamsey Good* <sup>and</sup> Agent of the AMERICAN FUR COMPANY, are held and firmly bound unto the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, or their certain Attorney, in the penal sum of *Four thousand Nine hundred* Dollars, *Twenty Five*, to which payment well and truly to be made, we do hereby bind ourselves, our heirs, executors, and administrators, firmly by these presents. Sealed with our Seals, and dated at MICHILMACKINAC, this *thirtieth* day of *August* in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty *one*

**The Condition** of this Obligation is such, That whereas a License has this day been granted by *George Doyce Edwards* Agent for Indian affairs, at MICHILMACKINAC, to trade with the Indians *in the Upper Michigan* *Sable, Porcupine, Shishibung, Marten and* and above *the Prairie du Chien.*

until the *10th* day of *July* in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty *two*, unless sooner revoked. Now THEREFORE, if the property mentioned in the Invoice furnished by the said

*Joseph Laprambosc.*

copy of which is hereunto annexed, signed by the said *Joseph Laprambosc*

is actually employed by *him* in *the* trade under the said License, and is truly and bona fide the property of an American citizen or citizens, and if no other property is employed in the said trade by the said *Joseph Lapham*

then this Obligation shall be void and of no effect, otherwise to be and remain in full force and virtue.

Signed, sealed, and delivered, }  
in the presence of

*Am. Lapp*

*Joseph Lapham*

*T. A. Brooks*  
*Agent Am. Ins. Co.*

THE WESTERN MAILS

Invoice of Goods delivered Joseph LaFramboise to be traded  
on the Upper Mississippi for account and risk of American  
Fur Company. Nov. [1821]

30	Pairs Blue Shouds	
51	Pairs Blankets	3/4
90	" "	2/2
25	" "	2
22	" "	1/2
22	" "	1
6	Pairs Scarlet Cloth	
6	" Blue Mottons	
6	" White Mottons	
50	" Indian Calicoes	
28	" Printed Cottons	
32	" Furniture do	
12	" Ingraind Ribbon	
40	" Coloured "	
7	" " "	
110	Black Silk Hdkfs	
1000	Gun Flints	
5	Grass Scalpers	

Amounting to \$9950. —

Michilimackinac Aug 10. 1821.

*T. Am. Fur Co*  
Agent Am. Fur Co



*M. Robt Campbell*

Co Steamer **YELLOW STONE**, Dr.

To Freight on	<i>271</i>	<i>dry Hides</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>108.40</i>
"	<i>118</i>	<i>Bals &amp; Roby</i>	<i>1.50</i>	<i>178.50</i>
"	<i>9</i>	<i>" WTB</i>	<i>2.00</i>	<i>18.00</i>
"	<i>14</i>	<i>Skins a 12 1/2</i>	<i>Lump 1/2</i>	<i>3 25</i>
"	"	"	"	<i>5 25</i>
"	"	"	"	<i>6 25</i>



*S & Ward*

Received Payment.

*St Louis Oct 4 1864* *W. Hutchins Cash.*

**STEAMBOAT YELLOW STONE**

This was the second boat to bear the name. It was a sidewheeler of 378 tons, built at Cincinnati, Ohio in 1864. Her home port was Saint Louis, operating in the upper Missouri river trade. Lost in 1867.

The B/L is for Buffalo Robes and Wolf & Bear skins, shipped to Robert Campbell, St. Louis, by Seth Ward, the sutler at Fort Laramie.



THE WESTERN MAILS



TAKE IN LESS GOODS TAKE OUT MORE FURS!

"New York 26 April 1823"

Dear Sir Since I last wrote to you we have no letter from you nor have I any thing new to communicate except that the sale of furs in general is worse than it has ben & we fear that both Beaver & Muskrat [Muskrat] will fall even below our expectations - proveble the latter will not sell over 33 1/3 [cents per pound] & the former 3 & 4 \$ - [at] the very best - good Otter will Do prety well & so will Deer Sell well, but nothing elist - All goods have not yet arrived - Mr Crooks [Ramsey] not very well left here 3 Days ago for St Louis - I inclose you Copy & of letter to the agents & Resolution passed by the Directors - **we must Send less goods in [to] the Country & also lesson our expens or we shall Sink our Capitol.**

John Jacob Astor

P S. when you make any bills on the account of new Con[signee] address or Draw tham on me as president of the Company [American Fur Company]"

\*\*\*\*\*

Letter addressed to Mr Robert Stuart Esq/Mich[ilimackinac] [Mackinac Island]. It was carried from New York to Detroit outside of the mails, where it was put in the Post Office and franked "Free/Jam Abbott P.M." and forwarded to Mackinac Island. James Abbott was also an agent of the American Fur Company at Detroit.

Note on reverse "New York 26 april 1823/John Jacob Astor/Received 1 June/ answered 14/ saying due attention would be paid to the contents. R. Stuart. Enclosing Resolution of Directors A.M. Fur Co."



MONTREAL to U.S. rated "PAID 6" to the line. On arrival at the border the PAID 6 was crossed out and the cover was forwarded "18 3/4" collect. No postmark.

"Montreal 12th April 1823

R. Stuart Esq Dear Sir/ Your favor of 17th October last by Mr. Currie came to hand in Nov. I have orders to bring the men you speak of but not the Cook. You are aware of the new arrangements to the east ward, and things go on quietly here - the H.B. [Hudson Bay Co,] have all their own way - they have engaged Some men conditionally to winter or return in the fall as may be required. I am told they have Seized all the petty traders who were within their limits - young Forrest with the others, it is also stated that Some of our people have met with the same fate! I will try and bring you a Dog but as yet I have Seen none to Suit. Every precaution Shall be taken to have the Trap Springs good - Your letter of 17th[?] Nov. I found here on my arrival from New York on the first of March, I was happy to learn you were all in good health and that things went on well - I Shall attend to what you say about the charges on goods for entry [between Canada and U.S.] - I will bring you a Cap, and a Game Bag if I can find one, I have a Small order to execute for Mr. Rolette [Joseph], the Same you speak of I presume - Varin is doing nothing nor will he pay the amount I hold against him. - I was in Quebec in the fall where I had the pleasure of Seeing your Uncle - he was in good health and had done very well the last season, he was perfectly happy, he wrote me a few days ago, and I expect him up by the first Steam Boat, I intend leaving this on the 14 May and hope to reach you in good time, mens wages Same as last year - Please make my respects to all friends and particlarly to Mrs. Stuart, and believe me to be Dear Sir/your Obt. Svt/W.W. Matthews"

\*\*\*\*\*

*W. W. Matthews*

The writer was probably William W. Matthews who worked for the North West Co. in 1814, as reported in Alexander Henry's Journal. At the time of the letter he was Astor's agent in Montreal.

THE WESTERN MAILS

"New York 17, June 1823

Robert Stuart Esq / Mackinac

Your letter of May 20 addressed to our J. J. Astor [John Jacob] is at hand - He left here on the 1<sup>st</sup> for Europe. We regret that there is any part of his instructions respecting prices of Furs which should not be clearly understood by you, as in the case of Beaver mentioned in your letter. We presume the assortment of this article [Beaver] at Mackinac will be much the same as last year, and that the price of \$ 3. per lbs was intended to apply to the whole collection as an average - You may judge (as Mr J. J. Astor doubtless did) from the fact that the article will not sell to any extent in our market. The manufactures are substituting other Fur for it [Beaver] with great success, and if we may judge from the sales of the season past, we have now more on hand than will supply the demand for a year to come. In London, the last sales of which we have advice, was at 16/[shillings] ! At the distance you are from us, and from the variety of circumstances which may occur, of which we can know nothing, it is impossible to give such instructions as can govern you to the letter. - nor are we able to render any better construction of the letter of 16<sup>th</sup> April than yourself. We trust Mr Crooks will be with you early in July, and that you will long ere this be in possession of every information necessary in relation to the arrangement with Stone & Co., & the transfer of the property - [Stone had sold out to Astor on April 1, 1823. See Stone to Crooks, July 6, 1824 in this collection] . Mr. James Abbott has remitted \$180. on a/c of American Fur Company which has been passed to Cr[edit] of a/a[?] agreeably to your directions. Capt. ? Legate [?] has not yet called - You will be advised of the receipt of the money from him, when paid. No change or improvement in the price or demand for Furs.

*John Jacob Astor & Sons*

Letter written and signed "John Jacob Astor & Sons" by Wm. B. Astor, regarding the price and demand for Beaver. It is interesting to see the effect that the manufacture has on the demand for Beaver!

*Robert Stuart Esq*  
*Agent American Fur Company*  
*Michilimackinac.*

State of Illinois  
County of St. Davids

1829  
3<sup>rd</sup> Feb.

Circuit Court  
Nov. T. 1829.

Bernard Pratte, Peter Choteau jr, Beathold  
Beithold of In. P. Cabanne partners trading,  
doing business under the name of style of Bernard  
Pratte & co. complain of A. Rollette of a plea of  
trespass on the case on promised, It is that  
whereas the said A. Rollette, heretofore, to wit on  
the 15<sup>th</sup> day of May A.D. 1828, at St Louis in  
the State of Missouri, do wit at Galena in  
in the County of St. Davids of State of Illinois  
made his certain promissory note in writing, bearing  
date, the day of year aforesaid, and then & there  
promised to pay at St Louis aforesaid in the State of  
Missouri aforesaid, do wit, at Galena aforesaid  
in the County of St. Davids of State of Illinois  
aforesaid, thirty days after the date thereof, to  
the said Bernard Pratte, Peter Choteau jr, Be-  
thold & In. P. Cabanne, <sup>(partners trading)</sup> the sum  
of one hundred & ninety five dollars &  
thirty one cents for value recd. By means  
whereof the said A. Rollette, then & there became  
liable to pay to the said Bernard Pratte & co.