



Missouri.

19 May 1833

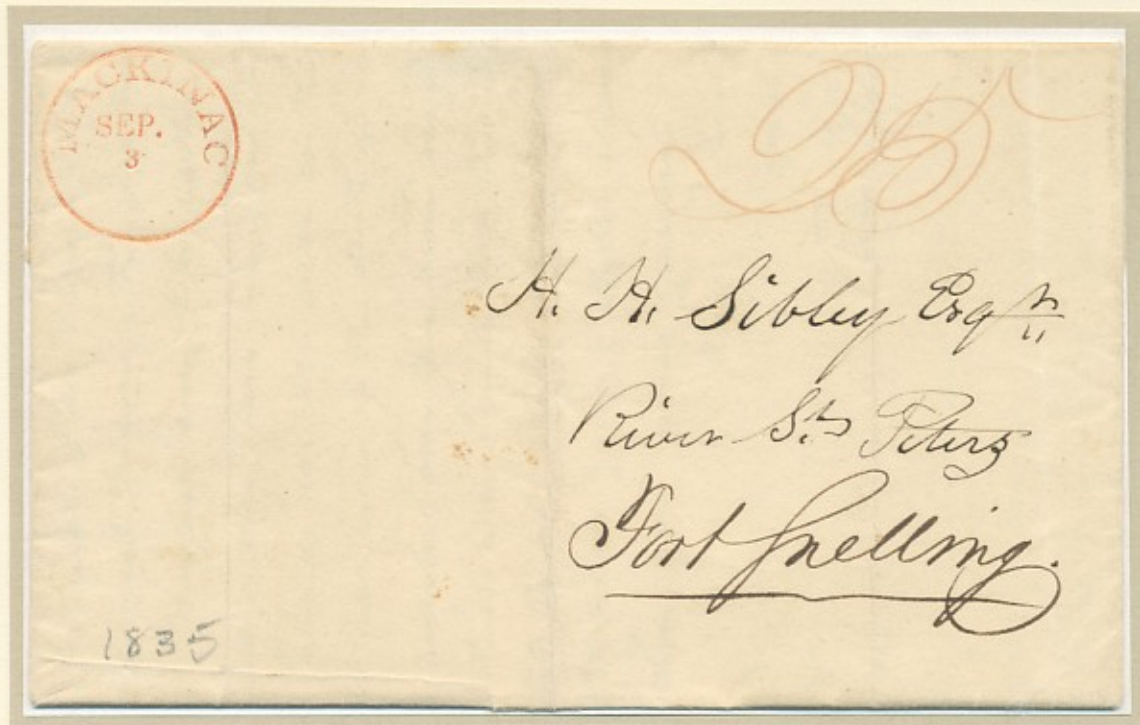
Left to C'iboi!

C. Palmer.

No. 199

RIX ROBINSON TO H. H. SIBLEY AT FORT SNELLING
ST. PETERS RIVER.

MACKINAC
MICHIGAN
TERRITORY
TYPE I
POSRMARK
1835



"Mackinac 22d Augt 1835

Dear Henry/River St Peters. Yours of the 28th Augt. last, came to hand in due time, also my watch, was handed me by Berlangtuth. It gave me much pleasure to hear you were enjoying the great blessing of good health &c, I have nothing important to communicate but deem it so great a privilege to have a little parlance with my friends, I cannot resist the temptation, when a favorable opportunity offers. The returns of Grand River are much as usual, to wit, hard times, and more a coming. But stop tho; what I say; we have some prospect if a treaty being held with the Indians of that place next summer, when we shall all get rich, "sic Kinzie Forsyth, &c , at the treaty of Chicago - Mr. Ferry & family are at Grand River, * much pleased with the country, & were all well when I left them, three weeks since. That country is begining to attract the attention of the public, and will soon be settled. It is in contemplation to build Steamboats to run on the river the ensuing season, & from the there across the Lake [Michigan], to Chicago, & Millwakie. George Dousman, has just returned from Millwalkie where he intends to settle with his Brother Talbot, who is now there. Mr. Crooks [Ramsey] has gone up Lake Superior, to La Pointe. Mr. Halsey [John C.], of N. York, one of the proprietors, of the Fur Co. [American], lately arrived here, & appears to be a very agreeable fine man. Biddle & Drew [Edward Biddle, fur trader, Mackinac] have made no arrangement with the new Compy. and Drew is now absent to N. York for goods - No body lately married or like to be at this place as I can learn. Extreem dull times here. Very few people to be seen in the streets at any time, a pretty general time of health &c - Hubbard [Gurdon, fur trader] of Chicago has made himself independently rich in the speculation of lands, at Chicago this summer. He is worth now from \$100.000 to 150,000 without doubt blundered into fortune. Why not my dear friend Henry & Hercules [Dousman], be born under that fortunate star. Report says the Upper Mississippi has done a great business the year past. I hope it may be a reality. Prospects seem to be rather gloomy while some kinds of skins bring very fair price, and other are very low - Tell Hercules, his friends are all well at this place at this time. He no doubt has heard of the death of his sister Catherine err this will reach you. Give him his full share of this letter so in that way I may hit two birds [with] one stone My respects to Mr Rolette [Joseph [Am. Fur Co. agent at Prairie du Chien] or any other of my [friends] who may be situated nnear you. I shall always be pleased to hear from you when you have leisure -

* Wm. M. Ferry, protestant missionary.

Rix Robinson

[addressed to:] Mr. P. Chouteau, New York.

[dated:] Black Serpent, 1st September 1842.

My dear youngster,

I wrote you a few days ago and the present letter is nothing but a repetition and the pleasure of having you pay 18 cents [?] for postage upon receipt, and at the same time to refresh your memory that I am in dire need of your assistance, which you know beyond any doubt, because I believe that I have undertaken all necessary procedures: petitions by the Savages [Indians] to be paid, approved by Mr. the Superintendent & the agent at Washington or at St. Louis. So do something for me, because I have no idea how to pay you.

You also told me in your letter that you were enquiring when the lands of this country can be sold. I have asked you in my last letter if there was any possibility to prove my right of presumption, or if I could sell any lots.

Last winter I already wrote to the Commissioner of the Lands Office in Washington, as well as to Mr. Benton to have their opinion on the subject. They have both answered me that I could not dispose of anything nor do anything before I received letters patent from the Government.

But since then new laws have been passed, & a permanent preemption Letter (in English in the text, unsure about the word "Letter").

Maybe I might have certain privileges. Finally, my dear, this said, don't go to too much trouble. I beg you to look after the interests of him who wishes you good health & to answer him.

Your most humble servant,

[signed:] J. Robidoux

N.B. It is very late, & too much so, when you will receive this business will be finished & the Savages will be paid.

[address-leaf:] Black Snake Hills, August 31st, 42. 25

Mr. Pr. Chouteau Jr., New York.

[on side:] Can.Amer. Fur Co.

[docketed:] Jos. Robidoux

Black Snake 1 Sept. 1842. Received 20th, answered [same date].

THE WESTERN MAILS



AMERICAN FUR TRADE

BLACKSNAKE HILLS, MISSOURI. In 1827 Joseph Robidoux established a trading house, at an Indian crossing on the Missouri River, at a point called by the Indians Blacksnake Hills. In November, 1842, Robidoux had surveys and plats made by Simeon Smith who named the settlement SAINT JOSEPH in honor of its founder. St. Joe, as it is commonly called, became an important trade center and an outfitting point for miners going to California and the Rocky Mountain regions. The POST OFFICE was established in June of 1840 as BLACKSNAKE HILLS with J.C. Robidoux, a son of Joseph, as the postmaster. The name was changed to Saint Joseph in 1844.

The folded letter shown was written by Joseph Robidoux to Pierre Chouteau Jr. who was in New York making arrangements to buy the Western Outfit at Prairie du Chien from the American Fur Company. It is to the "care Am. Fur Co" and bears the only known postmark of "Blacksnake hills August 31st 42" (1842).



THE WESTERN MAILS

Fort Pierre 15th Dec 1839.

Mess^r. P. Chouteau Jr & Co
St Louis Mo.

Gentlemen

This will be handed you by Mr F. Dervin who has bought out his term and leaves here tomorrow for your City, not being in any want of Mr D and he being desirous to quit the country - I have thought it for the interest of all concerned to set him free. Mr Halsey (Jacob - clerk and partner in the "Upper Missouri Outfit" of the American Fur Company) has written you the particulars of the arrangement made with him as well as every thing else appertaining to acts ect.

It becomes my painful duty to inform you of the unfortunate death of Mr. Wm. Aickson which took place on the Tagoyo river about a month ago, he had left his post with the intention of visiting Canada and it appears (he) commenced drinking to excess so soon as he reached the settlements; finding that he could not abstain from drinking he turned back from Black Snake Hills and the reason he assigned for this change in his movements was that he had not sufficient confidence in himself & that he thought the more he mixed in society the less he would be able to command his passion for drinking; when the accident took place it is said that he had been three days without drinking and it is a matter of conjecture whether his death was caused by the accidental discharge of his pistol or was an act of suicide. I am inclined to think it was the latter. The Post is now in charge of Mr Gant and I apprehend he will do full as good business then would be done were it still in the hands of Mr. D. The Outfit for that Post for the ensuing season will be sent from this establishment.

Mr. Dervin has an order on Mr. R. Hichcock of Tishnan Catonari for some horses left with him by me last fall - Should he take them he will settle with you for the same, he also has a mule saddle of which I loaned him at this place and for which he will acct to you.

It is yet too early for me to give you an idea of our prospects of Trade etc. Buffalo are plenty and ware it not for competition we might expect a good trade. By the last intelligince from Fort Lucien I learn that Bent StVrain & Co have an establishment near that Post and also that they have sent Beckwith (James P. Beckwourth see below) to the Crows with a considerable Outfit. I also hear that Mr Brigier (Probably James Bridger) at the Vermillion (Post) is apposing us with goods which he obtains from A. J. Papin & Co of Belleview in exchange for Peltries.

I hope Mr. Papin (Alexander Laforce) is now at Fort Lucien, it is long since a well assorted Outfit of Goods has been sent there to remain in charge of Mr. Sibille (John Sibille of Sibille, Adams & Co.) until the arrival of Mr. Papin, I sincerely hope that he had long since been relieved for Mr. S. is not the man to be in charge of a large quantity of A..... (Alcohol) at a time when he is surrounded by the white brigands of the mountains and three apponents to contend with in the way of Trade. By the annual express you will hear from me more at length. In the meantime I am Gentlemen

Very Respectfully yours ect & etc
H. Picotte (Honore)

P.S. In the event of Mr. Dervin taking the horses left at Mr. Hichcock he is to be charged \$25 for the horses and the mules at cost (each horse?)

No postmarkes. Carried to St. Louis by Mr. Dervin and delivered by him to Pierre Chouteau Jr. & Co. on January 31, 1840.

H. Picotte

Fort Pierre 15th Dec. 1839.

Wm. P. Chouteau Esq.
St Louis Mo

Gentlemen

This will be handed you by Mr J. Deroin who has bought out his term and leaves here tomorrow for New City, not being in any want of Mr. D and he being desirous to quit the Country I have thought it for the interest of all concerned to set him free. Mr. Halsey has written you the particulars of the arrangement made with him as well as every thing else appertaining to do so.

It becomes my painful duty to inform you of the unfortunate death of Mr Wm. Dickson which took place on the Sagoyo river about a month ago, he had left his Post with the intention of visiting Canada and its adjacent Countries drinking to excess so soon as he reached the Settlements; finding that he could not abstain from drinking he turned back from Black Snake Falls and the reason he assigned for this change in his movements was that he had not sufficient Confidence in himself & that he thought the more he drank in Society the less he would be

the accident
thout drinking
was caused
act of Suicide
it is now in
all as good

Wm. P. Chouteau Jr. Esq.

FORT PIERRE 1839

The Mr. Gant referred to above was John Gantt of Gantt & Blackwell traders. James Pierson Beckwourth was a mulatto born on April 26, 1798 to Sir Jennings Beckwith, an overseer on a plantation and a negro slave known as Miss Kill. He later changed his name to Beckwourth although he was carried on the books of the American Fur Company as Beckwith. In 1824 he entered the fur trade and was adopted and made a War Chief of the Crow Indians. This letter corrects his autobiography, which was dictated from memory in 1856, in which he states that he went to work for Bent & St. Vrain in the summer of 1840. It should be 1839 according to this letter.

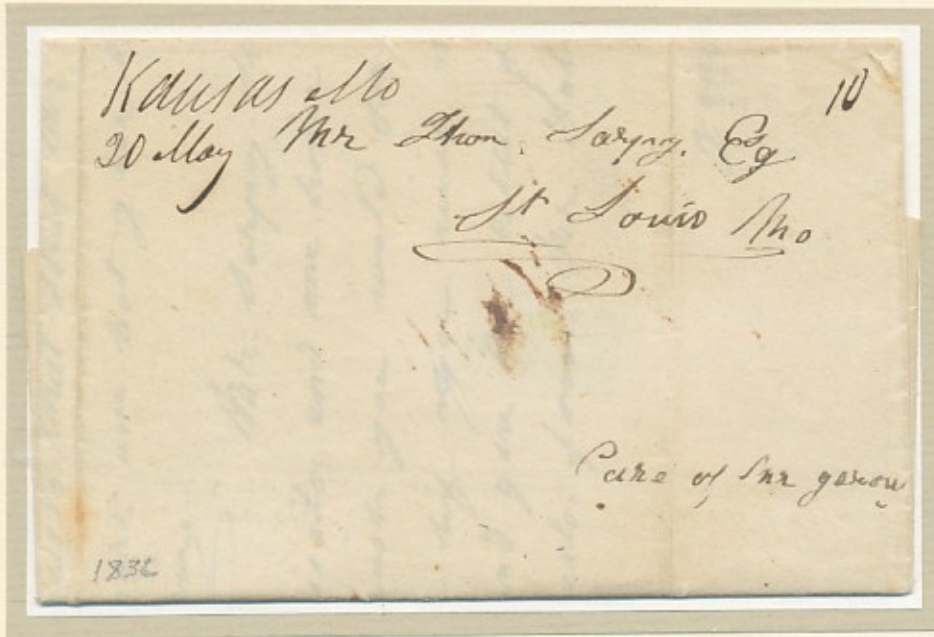


AMERICAN FUR COMPANY POST

FORT CLARK was built by James Kipp for the Upper Missouri Outfit of the American Fur Company in 1831. It replaced Tilton's old log post which had been built in 1818. Fort Clark was located on a high bluff, next to the Mandan village, at an angle on the west side of the Missouri River, about 55 miles up stream from present day Bismark, North Dakota. It was named for General William Clark and was one of the three most important fur trading posts on the upper Missouri. The other two being Fort Pierre to the south and Fort Union near the mouth of the Yellowstone River. All three forts belonged to the powerful American Fur Company which virtually had a monopoly on the fur trade with the Indians.

The reproduction shown above is from a painting made by Karl Bodmer, the Swiss artist, who accompanied Prince Maximilian, of Wied-Neuwied, on his expedition up the Missouri River in 1833-34. The Mandan village can be seen on the point of land in the background and Fort Clark is to the left of the village.

THE WESTERN MAILS



Folded letter datelined at Westport, Missouri and postmarked "Kansas Mo 20 May" 1836 and paid "10", to St. Louis. The 1836 "Table of Post Offices" lists WEST PORT, Jackson County, Missouri, but not KANSAS! This is an early postmark of what became Kansas City, Missouri.

"Westport. Mo. 18th May " 1836.

Joseph Bissonette writes to John B. Sarpy, that when he got to Westport he found the carts and wagons in bad condition, with the wheels broken. He then goes on to say: " Mr. Sarpy Sir I have lost two of my mueals, and one horse - if my mueals are found I wish you wold sent them up by Mr Papin - or if you wish to keep them, you can do so and give me cretet for them, you can git the mueals from Mr Lathrop at Cargo Lnnding. yours Joseph Bissonette "

***** Joseph Bissonette

Joseph Bissonette was born at Saint Louis in 1818. At the early age of 18 years he began to trade with the Indians, buying and selling furs for trade goods. Early on he married an Oglala Sioux woman who bore him seven children and a second wife, an Brule Sioux, presented him with twice that number. Not very much is known about Bissonette before 1840. In 1842 he became a trader for Sybille & Adams the owners of Fort Platte on the North Platte River near Fort Laramie. Most of his active life was spent in the Fort Laramie area and Deer Creek, where he had a trading post, blacksmith shop and post office. At various times he represented the army and the government as an interpreter to the Sioux Indians. In 1875 went to Washington with with Red Cloud and a group of Indians. The following year he was instrumental in persuading the Sioux in relinquishing the Black Hills. By the end of the decade he had moved to the Pine Ridge Agency with his half breed family, and settled on a farm on Wounded Knee Creek. Joseph Bissonette died in August of 1894. See Hodgekiss letter to David Adams for more on Fort Platte.



BEAVER MEN oil, 24 x 36 inches 1966

Detroit March 8. 1831

Dear Sir,

In the moment of making up the mail for the upper country, I have only time to thank ^{you} for the information contained in your letter. I regret that the French population, to whom you refer, are so insensible of their wants as to reject the preaching of Mr Bingham. Or rather, to have induced the latter to relinquish his efforts with them. I had hoped that some changes would have resulted in, what are called the amusements of this portion of our frontier population. But it seems, dancing & drinking, have been as common as usual. And ⁱⁿ this ~~in~~ respect, Satan has lost none of his advocates.

With much regard
Ever yours.

Wm R Schoolcraft

George Johnston Esqr.

PAID

Five Ds

George Johnston Esqr

South St. Maine

PORTLAND
MAR 9
C. T.

1831-



M. W. Schofield Esqr
Maine 9/18/31

Sir,

Treasury Department
2^d Auditors Office
Dec^r 8 1832

Your accounts for disbursements at Lacpointe Lake Superior to the 12th August 1830, and for your Salary as Sub Agent from the 1st of March to the 31. December 1829, have been examined and adjusted in this Office, and a balance of \$ 1,556.40 reported in your favor, and the same, by directions of the Secretary of War, transmitted to Gov. Porter with instructions, to cause the payments to be made to the individuals holding the certificates

In voucher N^o 2 account of Lyman M. Warren a charge of eight dollars for a gallon of Whiskey occurs, of which six have been disallowed, and will account for the difference between your statement and the balance as reported officially.

I am very Respectfully
Sir,

Yr. Obedt Serv^t

Mr Geo. Johnston
Sub Agent
Care of Geo. B. Porter
Sup^t of Ind Aff^s Detroit

M^r Harris

Dr. Dept
L. Ind. Office
FREE
M. Harris

Mr. Geo. Johnston
Indian Sub Agent
Care of N. H. & G. B. Porter
Michilimackinac ~~Detroit~~
Michigan Territory



Rec'd by Feb 4 1833



Official
W. A. Lewis.
Dec 8. 5/1832

Detroit Oct. 16th 1833

Dear Sir,

By the Huron Dep^{ty} Gov & Jones have forwarded
certain supplies for the Indian Office, which I will thank
you to have stored in the cellar. Also private supplies,
consisting of flour, &c, which I suppose you will be
able to designate by the marks, ^{See bills of lading} Let the latter
be put in the small room with my private stores.

I trust all is going on well with you, and that
Wacker will be attention to the duties of the
Garden & stable, &c. With respect to your horse,
should you conclude to winter him, I think it will
be advisable for you to make some arrangement
with Mr Dousman on the subject.

We have nothing new here. The Michigan or Steam
boat, a really splendid vessel, went out, on her first trip
four days ago. Abraham observed to me yesterday
that he would at last comply with your requests.

Truly Yrs.

Henry R Schoolcraft

G. Johnston Esq.

DETROIT
OCT 16
MICHIGAN

George Johnston Esqr.

Mackinac.

1533



Wm. R. Scarborough Esqr.

Sant St Marie Nov 30th 1839

Dear Father

The first Express which leaves to
Morrow affords me an opportunity of sending you a
letter, to inform you respecting myself and friends,
I have been well since the illness which you heard of,
Mr Hubbert intends to have me read up at his quarters,
evenings, this Winter, He says he dont know of any boys
he would let me play with, We have not much business now
in the store only with the soldiers sometimes they
drink a Barrel of Beer in a day, Capt Johnstons sent
some of the soldiers up to White fish Point to get fish,
when they were coming down they nearly got all
srowned, They had twenty one Barrels of fish in the Boat
and they lost the Boat and a part of the fish, Lieut Root
went up this morning get the Remainder of the fish,
There is a vessel here when they are going to take up
this winter over the portage if they can, We have a
singing school up to Mr Bingham every Wednesday
night it was a Soldier that taught us, but after
a while the Doctor would not let him come so
Mr Hubbert teaches us, There is an a good many that
attend, Maskey is very sick, His wife came this
morning to get some provisions, Sophia and Polly,
are well they ^{send} their love to all the family and so
do I,

Geo Johnston
Grand Island
M D

from your affection
H W Johnston

S. M. Mullett & M. W. Johnston
Nov. 30th 1839

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Mr. Johnston Esq
Grand Prairie
Mich



100

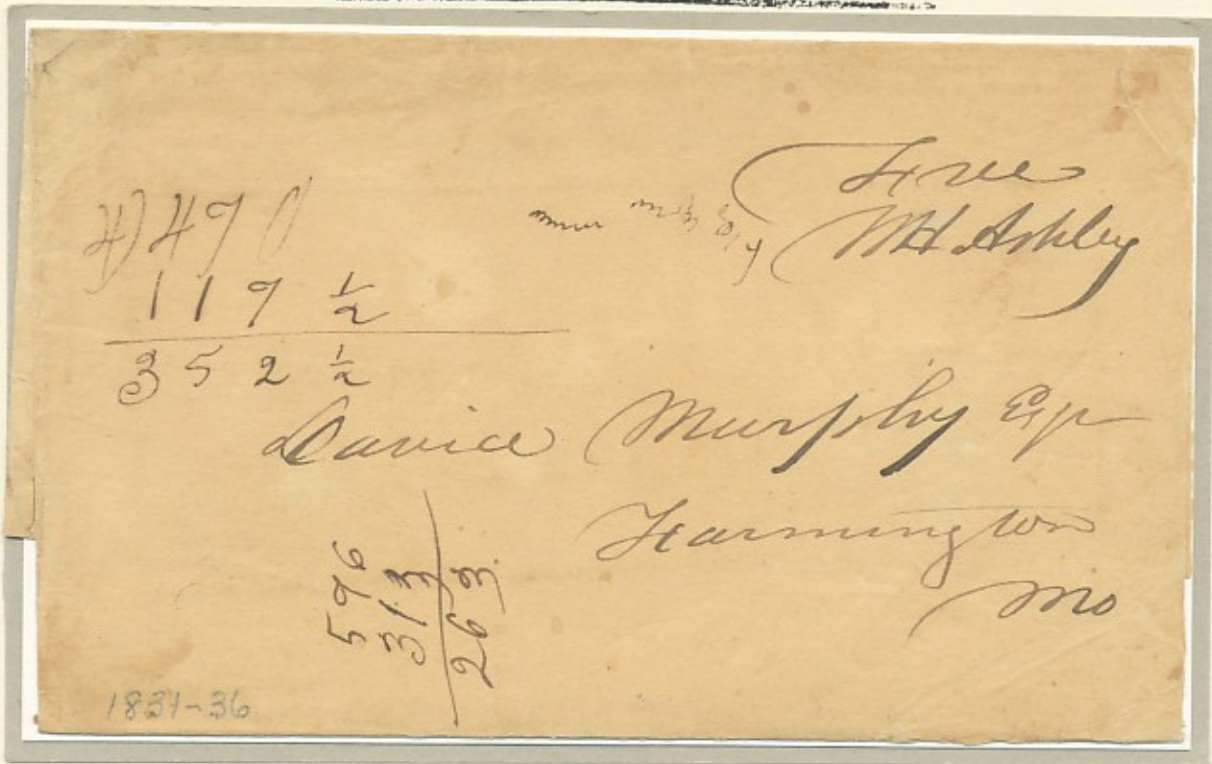
State paid use "M: T"
ASCC - 100⁰⁰

TO
Enterprising Young Men.

THE subscriber wishes to engage **ONE HUNDRED MEN**, to ascend the river Missouri to its source, there to be employed for one, two or three years — For particulars, enquire of Major Andrew Henry, near the Lead Mines, in the County of Washington, (who will ascend with, and command the party) or to the subscriber at St. Louis.

Wm. H. Ashley.

February 13 — 98 1/2



Cover addressed to David Murphy, founder of Farmington, Mo. in 1801, bears the Free Frank of W.H. Ashley as a member of congress.

WILLIAM HENRY ASHLEY was born about 1778 in Chesterfield County, Virginia, according to Dale Morgan. Little is known about his early life. He migrated to the west in 1798, landing at St. Genevieve on the Mississippi River. By 1819 he had established himself at St. Louis and the following year he was elected Lt. Governor of Missouri - 1820/24. In 1821 Ashley formed a partnership with Andrew Henry to trap and trade for furs on the upper Missouri. On Feb. 13, 1822 he ran one of the greatest want ads known to history, in the St. Louis MISSOURI GAZETTE, which was answered by Jedediah Smith, Jim Bridger, Wm. Sublette, David Jackson, Louis Vasquez, Thomas Fitzpatrick, to name a few - "the most significant group of continental explorers ever brought together". * By 1825 Smith had replaced Henry as Ashley's partner and in 1826, Ashley sold out to Smith, Jackson & Sublette, on Bear River Utah, after leaving the rendezvous of that year. For a few years he acted as a confident, banker and sales agent for Smith and Sublette, as testified to by the letters in this collection. In 1831 he was elected to the U.S. Congress as representative from Missouri - 1831/37. He considered himself a Jacksonian Independent, although he differed with President Jackson on the U.S. Bank issue. He was a giant of the exploration and fur trade of the American West. Ashley was preparing to run for congress when he died of pneumonia on March 26, 1838. * THE FUR TRADE AND EARLY WESTERN EXPLORATION, Vandiver, A.H. Clark, p. 202.

Sault St Marie Feb 2. 1840

Dear Father

I have the opportunity of writing to you a letter. I received your letter day before yesterday we are all in good health and I hope you are so too. We have had a very mild winter. There has been but very little snow. The River was frozen over about the first of January. So that the people would cross for two or three days and broke up again. They have that vessel that was going to be taken over the Portage nearly half way up they are going very fast with it. I am studying German & music. I can play some tunes on the Flute. Mr. Huller is showing me how to Post up the Books. He is getting to be very strange. once he called me up to his quarter and asked me if I had any Flannel shirts I told I had two, he went to his drawer and got one of his old Flannel shirts that was torn on the shoulder he was going to give it to me. I told I did not want it. And a notter time he gave me one of his old shirts which he had nearly worn out. it was one of those coarse cotton shirts there was no collar to it he told me to put on a stock so that it would not show I have to mend my clothes because when Mrs. Huller mends them they are as soon as I put them on. and she don't like to mend them. I have no shoes. and my moccasins there is big holes in them. if I should ask him for a pair of shoes he would tell me to put on my moccasins. I have to bring in

W. M. W. Johnston

Feb 2^d 1849

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Mr Geo. Johnston

Grand Travers Bay
Mich



Whitehead use "Mie T"
ASCC - 1000

1813 Moseley Sublet to Mingo Payne Dec 20

Aug 27 To 1 pair Luce shes 22/11 \$ 3.75

Oct 4 Luce shes for son 18/11 3.80
6.75

1812 Moseley

Oct 12 Luce shes 18/11 3.80
6.75



Frederic Remington.



Washington Jan^y 25th 1853

E. Street.

My dear Sir,

Capt. Eastman is ^{engaged in} drawing some
scenes of the buffalo hunt, for my 4th
volume. Will you do me the
favour to describe some of these
animating scenes, as they exist on
the plains west of Red River? Your
frequent participation on these sports
will enable you to describe them,
as they exist. And I trust you will
be able to find leisure for it, before
the close of the session.

I am very truly

Yr Obed^t Serv^t

Henry R. Schoolcraft

Hon^{ble} A. A. Sibley

Ho^{use} of Rep^s
Washington.

KANSAS
To
ST. LOUIS
NOV 5 1844

John J. Seay Esq



Wm. Hunt Esq

Missed on the
day of the 25th

Number of the subject

Ms

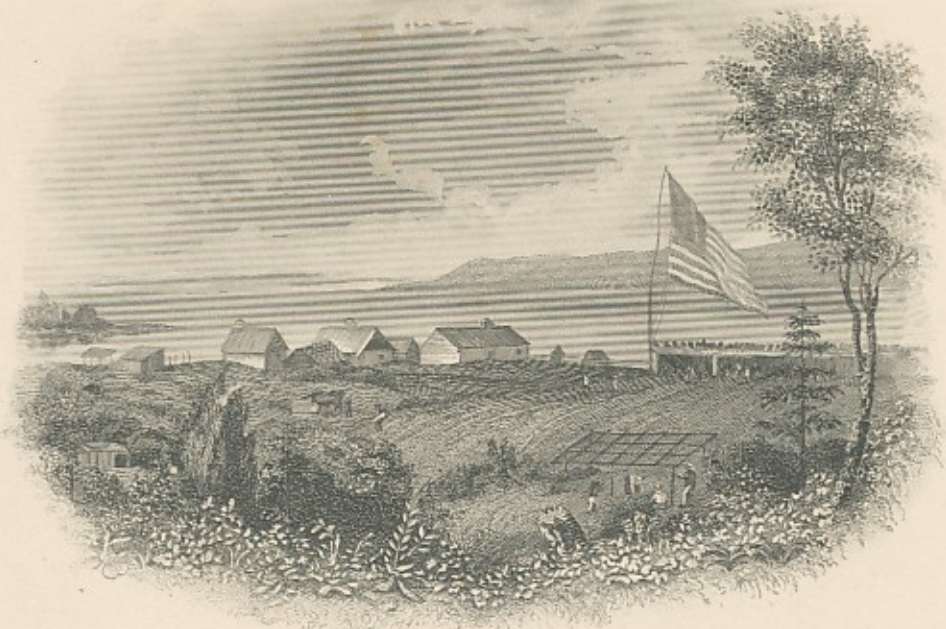
W. R. Schottcraft
Washington Jan 25th 1853

(big game hunt article)



Bellevue near Omaha, Nebraska — 1833

A FUR-TRADING POST, AND THE OLDEST EXISTING TOWN IN THE STATE



ASTORIA

Indian and white trappers in Canadian territory traded regularly at permanent factories or posts. The man seated at the table in the picture below is a British factor, or fur company agent, pricing the furs brought in to him.



certain one of them was, - upon the balance being ascertained, deponent paid the money to the administrator or furnished the money for that purpose - the amount paid appears by a receipt now produced marked A, and admitted by the plaintiff - and hereto attached.

Sworn to & subscribed before
me this 24th day of October
1834 - D Hough J. P.

W. H. Ashley

State of Missouri
County, Saint Louis
I D Hough a justice of the Peace
within and for the County aforesaid, do hereby certify
that, by the consent of Messrs Bates & Beyer both being
present, William H. Ashley the foregoing deponent
was by me sworn to testify the whole truth of his

DEPOSITION OF WILLIAM H. ASHLEY 1834

"William H. Ashley being duly sworn says that Jedediah S. Smith David E. Jackson and William L. Sublette composed the firm of Smith Jackson and Sublette - the partnership commenced in July or August (1826) eighteen hundred & twenty six and ended, as deponent understood in the fall of eighteen hundred & thirty, or the spring of eighteen hundred & thirty one - deponent attended to the business of the firm here, such as receiving the furs and paying over the money - the firm aforesaid was engaged in the fur trade in the extreme west. Deponent does not positively know that David Cunningham was in the employ of said firm, but is under the impression that he has understood from some one of the firm aforesaid that he went with Mr Smith to California or in that direction, and that he was engaged in that expedition when he was killed - that he was employed as a hired man - In Oct 1830 at St Louis there was a settlement between Joseph Cunningham adm. of David Cunningham and the firm - deponent thinks both Smith & Sublette were present. is certain one of them was - upon the balance being ascertained, deponent paid the money to the administrator or furnished the money for that purpose - the amount paid appears by a receipt now produced marked A, and admitted by the plaintiff - and hereto attached.

W. H. Ashley"

Sworn to & subscribed before me this 24
day of October 1834 - D Hough J. P."

W. H. Ashley

THE WESTERN MAILS



FORT OSAGE & THE FUR TRADE.

FORT OSAGE, MISSOURI. Folded letter datelined "St Louis 25 June, 1824. addressed to "Geo C Sibley the postmaster and factor at Fort Osage. Tracy & Wahrendorff, commission merchants, report on shipment of supplies and: "We received the furs &c to your Invoice of 23 April on return of the Steamboat Neville - 7 June - Messrs Basllir and Boggs who will have communicated with you, must have informed you ere now of the sale & disposition of their Deerskins Raccoons &c. Your Deerskins were sold by an agreement to Mr. W, P, Hunt [fur trader & postmaster at St. Louis] before those gentlemen left here.....At the instance of Messrs Basllir & Boggs we have shipped yesterday pr Steamboat Rocket via New Orleans to New York the following on your account

- 1 Pipe conty 214 Beaverskins 272 D[eerskins] 350 Muskrat
- 4 Packs conty 75 inf Bear & 27 Wolves
- 16 Packs " 3224 Raccoon skins
- 10 Bearskins used for covers.

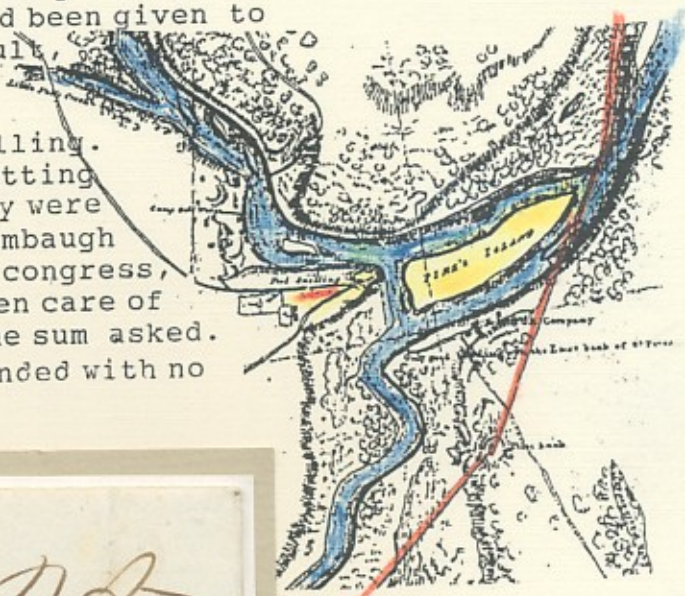
The amount estimated at \$ 1500. has been order'd for Insurance including all risks from the post to New York and to be sold at the best possible advantage.....Governor Mc Nair has been appointed Ind[ian] Agent to be stationed at or near the Missouri establishment. Gov Clark [William] & family, Mr Taliafero [Lawrence] with a large Deputation of Miss[issippi] Indians left here to day. The former for Kentucky - the latter for Washington City." Cover postmarked "ST. LOUIS. MO. T. / JUNE 28 (1824)." The P.O. was still using the territorial postmark although Missouri had become a state in 1821. Letter was sent "Free" because it was sent to the postmaster.

"Col. S. C. Stambaugh
Washington City

Dear Sir, Mr. Faribault who is now here desiers me to say that he would have sent the instrument you requested, with the signatures of the Indians, ratifying their pervious grant of the island, had not the principal men been absent from this place at the Red Cedar, whither it was out of the question to attempt to follow them. Mr. F. hopes that you will not have found it indispen- sible to your success, to have had the confirmation of the grant for- thcoming. It was unfortunate that Mr. F. was not apprised earlier of the necessity of having the consent of the Indians again declared, as there would have been no difficulty in obtaining their signatures before their departure. In regard to allowing you a farther re- muneratation in case of an appropriation being made for the purchase of the island, Mr. Faribault wishes me to state frankly to you, that he cannot consent to allow you more than (4,500 say) Four thousand five hundred dollars, (out of the \$12,000. for which he has authorized the said island to be sold), and which his Attorney, Ramsey Crooks Esq. has been authorized to pay you upon the receipt of the \$ 12,000, afor said. Mr. Faribault desires me to present you his best respects.

The island was Pike's Island at the confluence of the St. Peters with the Mississippi, which is directly across the river from Fort Snelling. See sketch. It had been given to Pelagie Faribault, the wife of J. B. Faribault, by a grant from the Dakota Sioux Indians in 1820. The following year they were evicted from the island by Col. Josiah Snelling. By the time of this letter the hope of getting the island back had been given up and they were trying to get paid the sum of \$12,000. Stambaugh was to get &4,500 for his efforts with the congress, but only got promises that it would be taken care of and that the Faribaults should be paid the sum asked. By 1857 all efforts in the U. S. Congress ended with no appropriations ever being made.

H. H. Ashley



*Fort Snelling }
Feb 2 }
Col. S. C. Stambaugh }
Washington City }
1841 }
D. C. }*

Greatly reduced copy of original manuscript map by E. K. Smith, U. S. A. Mar. 25, 1838, of original copy in this collection. RED line is the east boundary of the proposed military reservation of Ft. Snelling. This clearly shows that Pike's Island was considered part of the reservation. Letter postmarked in manuscript Fort Snelling Feb 2 [1841, Iowa Terr.] 25.

River des Moins Feb 27th 1824 -

Mr Samuel Abbott

Sir

Please pay the bearer the sum of Nine dollars and fifty Cents. being balance due him for services rendered and Charge to the account of My Outfit. It is Probable that I shall be at St Louis about the 18th or 20th of March, but it will be owing to the situation of the river. should the Ice above this continue I shall not be able to get my Packs down so soon, but I shall make all the haste in my power to reach St Louis as early as possible. no news of Consequence

My respects to Mrs Abbott, and the Gentlemen at the big Wigwam &c

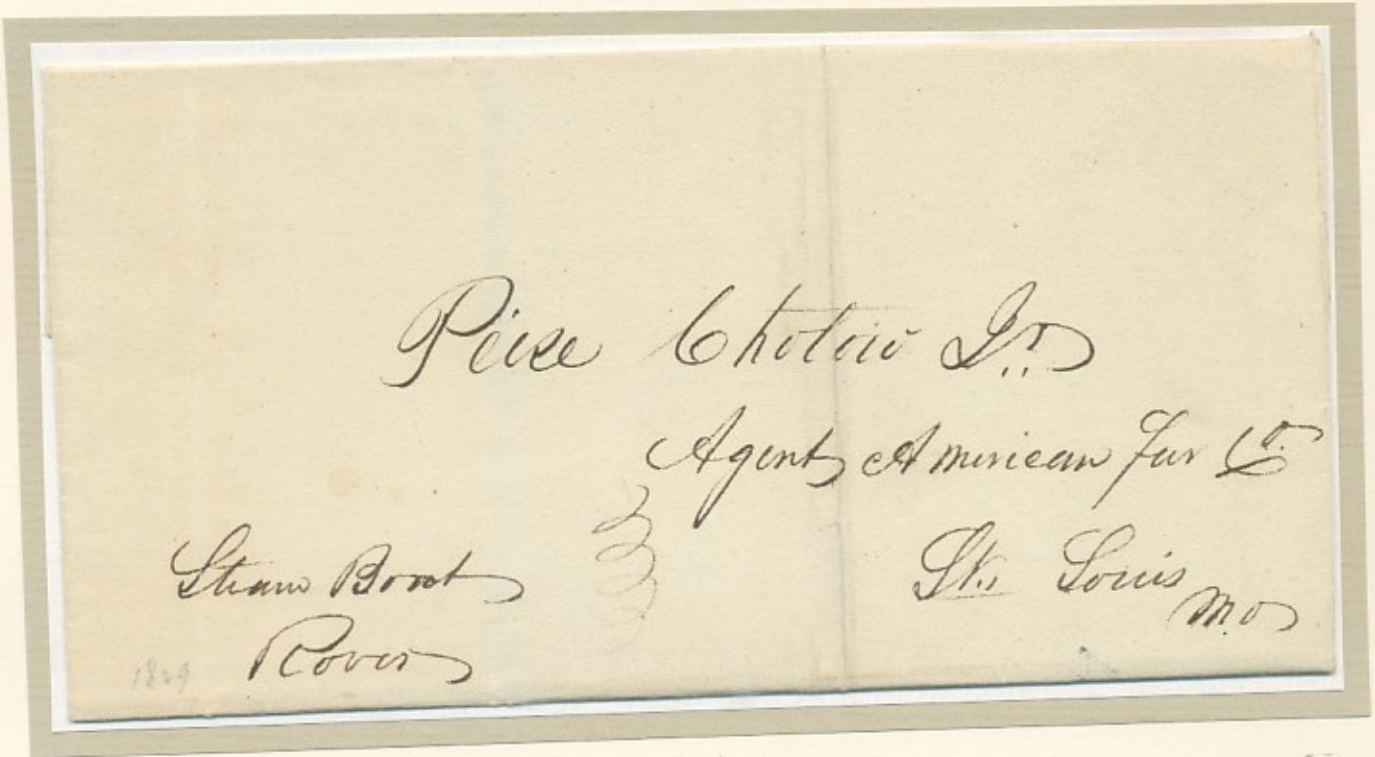
Yours H. H. H. -

Samuel Abbott Esq
St Louis -

Rufus Farnham

THE WESTERN MAILS

Fort Edwards April 6th 1829



AMERICAN FUR TRADE

ROVER was the first of eight steamboats to bear the name. She was a side-wheeler of 103 tons, built at Cincinnati, Ohio in 1827 and abandoned in 1831. Letter was carried by the Rover outside of the regular mails.

" Fort Edwards April 6th 1829

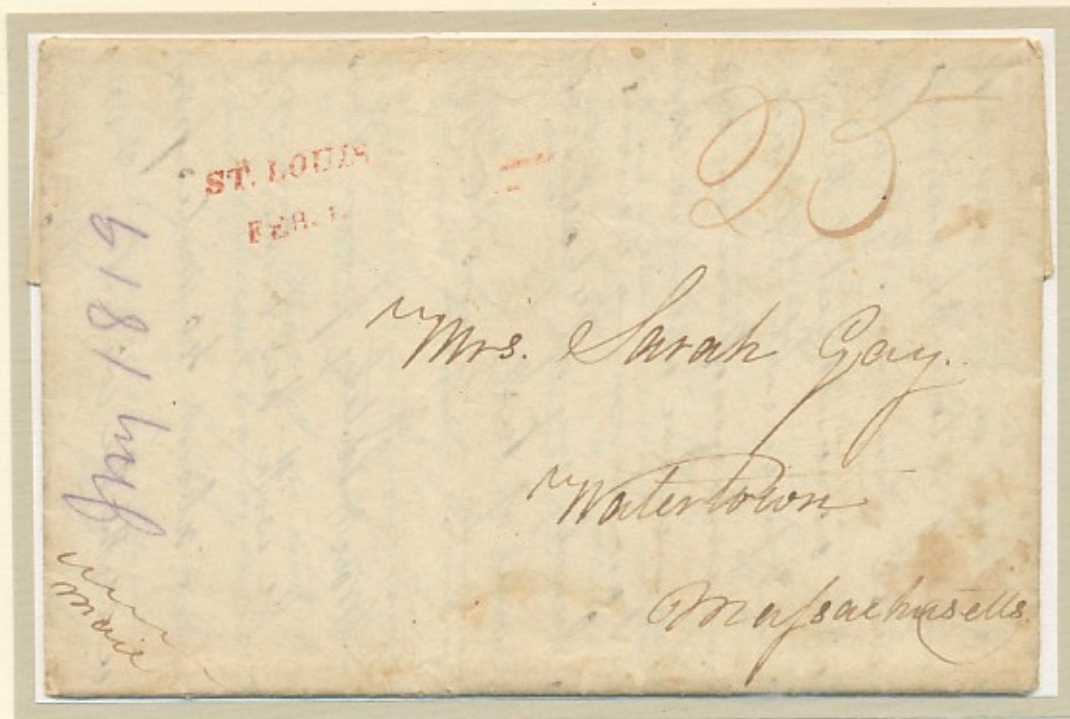
"Mr. Piere Chatou Sir you will receive by the Steam Boat Rover 76 packs - We had no other way of getting them down and was very much hurried - You will not find them in as good order as I could wish on account of our great haste - I shall be down in the course of a few days - Russell Farnham"

I have started two Macana [Mackinaw] Boats Loaded with Packs which will be down in a few days. - R F "

Russell Farnham

Russell Farnham was born in Massachusetts in 1784. A few years before 1810 he was recruited by John Astor of the American Fur Co. and on Sept. 6, 1810 sailed aboard the ship "Tonquin", along with 33 others, for Oregon. Here they were joined by Wilson Price Hunt and the Astorian Expedition which had come overland the same year. For this service he was rewarded by being in charge of operations on the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. At the time of this letter he was located at Fort Edwards, the A. F. Co. post near present day Warsaw, Illinois on the Mississippi. Farnham died from cholera at Saint Louis on October 23, 1832.

ST. LOUIS
FEB. 1



ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI TERRITORY. Folded letter above bears a fine strike of the straight line postmark in RED. There are several types of the straight line all being struck in black with the exception of the above which comes in black and only 3 known in red. Letter below mentions the army steamboat expedition up the Missouri in 1819: "The Missouri expedition has had much trouble with their Steam Boats ascending the Missouri - one we learn has arrived at Boons Lick - the others are scattered by the way and the general opinion is they will have to abandon the idea of reaching their point of Destination in them." As it turned out the expedition was a failure. SEE Missouri River Expedition in this collection.



1824

Office of the American Fur Company
New York, 24 March 1824

Mr Robert Stuart
Michilimackinac

Dear Sir

Since writing you on the 29 Jany
your favors of 14 December & 25 January to Mr Crooks
have been received, and their contents duly noted

I have not at this moment time to say
more than that by recent advices from our Mr. Astor in
Europe, it appears the prospects for skins of all kind
were never less encouraging than at present. It therefore
becomes our duty to make our business conform to existing

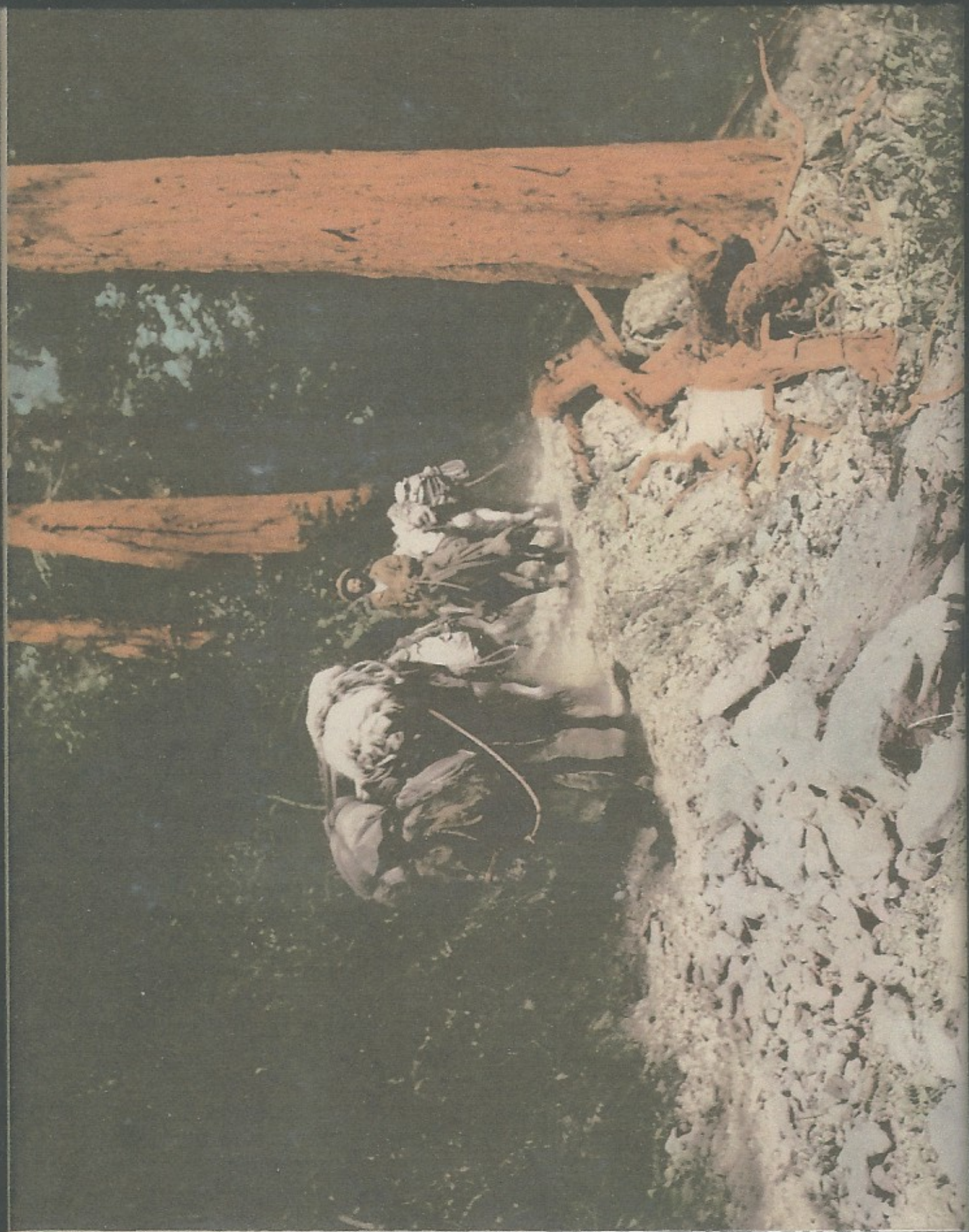
"Office of the American Fur Company
New York, 24 March 1824"

"Mr Robert Stuart/Michilimackinac

Dear Sir/Since writing you a letter on the 29 Jany your favors of 14 December
& 25 January to Mr Crooks [Ramsey] have been received, and their contents duly
noted. I have not at at this moment time to say more than that by recent
advices from our Mr. Astor [John Jacob] in Europe, it appears the prospects for
skins of all kind were never less incouraging than at present. It therefore
becomes our duty to make our business conform to existing circumstances. **Fewer
goods must be sent into the [Indian] country, and the Indians must pay more for
them.** Thr number of Traders. Interpreters, Clerks & Boatmen should be reduced as
much as possible. Avoid expence wherever practicable, reduce within the narrow-
est limits such as are strictly indispensible; and observe the most rigid econ-
omy in every branch of your concerns; for this has now become absolutely necess-
ary to ensure the companys safety - Deer skins have fallen - Racoons are not
even enquired for, and muskrats are almost wholly superseded by foreign furs -
we have tried to get a duty laid on imported skins generally, but unless the gen-
eral tarif Bill passes, which is not probable. we will not succeed. We place no
reliance or any protection from Congress this year; and I give you a foot note of
such alterations as you will make in the list of prices which I authorized you
to pay for skins at Mackinac, in my letter of 20th January last - Our last dates
from Prairie des Chiens are to 14 Jany - Mr Rolette [Joseph] thinks better of his
trade than he did previously. From St Louis we have letters to 18 ulto: where the
affairs of the western Department more favorable appearance. In the Detroit Dep-
artment the trade is unpromising - Our English goods would be ready to ship
by the middle of the present month - WM. B Astor/Presdt. pro. tem. Am'f'Cy"

William Backhouse Astor was the son of John J. Astor.

Wm B Astor



THE WESTERN MAILS

Campbell Papers
Risvold Collection

[James L. Dobbin to Robert Campbell]

Old Franklin 5 feb. 1832

My Dear Friend

Since I wrote you I have obtained from a friend at Lexington the following information which I am sorry to find presents such a poor prospect of your obtaining a supply of Mules in that quarter. --"From the enquiries I have made I find there are but Eight Mules in the County. Capn. Bonneville, perhaps Roubedeaux, having purchased all except Six, that S Rennick reserved for his own use, and Two that David White owns, who holds them at Fifty Dollars each, which I think above their value."

I still remain under petticoat patronage as yet.--Business here is extremely dull;--a few days since there appeared some prospect of the ice leaving the River, but like us human beings in order to be a little capricious it has again blocked up and foot passengers are Crossing over to Boonville this morning.

When it suits your Convenience I would be much pleased to hear from you giving me some idea of the extent and number of the Adventurers to the Mountains and Santafe.--

Let me know if it is expected that a military escort will be granted to the Santa fe Compy this Spring--

I trust your hours pass less tediously since you have determined upon your future bold and adventurous employment.--I hope it is not an affair of the heart which causes time to hang so heavily on your hands; if so on your way out I would recommend a short residence in the Tubbs Grove about 1 Mile from the Bridge as an effectual Cure for such a Complaint.--

THE WESTERN MAILS

Dobbin to Campbell Feb. 5, 1832 -2-

Do not let Mr. Fitzpatrick know about my prescribing for you in this way as it might make him very uneasy indeed.

Excuse trifling for want of something more substantial from your Sincere friend

James L. Dobbin

[Addressed:] Robert Campbell Esq^r

Saint Louis Mo.

[Postmarked in MS.:] Franklin Mo Feb. 7th

[Rate, unpaid:] 18 3/4

[The letter also has on the address-leaf various calculations.]



OLD FRANKLIN ON THE SANTA FE TRAIL.

James L. Dobbin writes to Robert Campbell under date of "Old Franklin 5 feb. 1832", regarding the procurement of mules in his county. The following is from the letter: "From the enquiries I have made I find there are but Eight Mules in the County. Capn. Bonneville [Benjamin L.E., Brig.Genl.1865, died June 12, 1878], perhaps Roubedeaux [Joseph], having purchased all except Six, that S Rennick reserved for his own use, and Two that David White owns, who holds them at Fifty Dollars each, which I think above their value..... I would be much pleased to hear from you giving me some idea of the extent and number of the Adventurers to the Mountains and Santafe. Let me know if it is expected that a military escort will be granted to the Santa fe Compy this Spring----" See oposite page for letter.

Folded letter postmarked "Franklin Mo Feb. 7th - rated 18 3/4 cents postage.

THE WESTERN MAILS

"Messrs Pratte & Chouteau* Gentlemen Mr Fitzpatrick* is about to leave for the Rocky Mountains and I wish to write my Brother [Milton Sublette] respecting his affairs in this place. Will you be good enough to give me a statement of the amount Fontinell & Drips* turned in in goods Horses &c and also the debts they Reced and also the amount owing to them. There is a debt which you are aware of due by Fitzpatrick Sublette and Bridger* to J S Smith* Decsd amounting to Some 2600\$ - this amount Mr Smiths Adm. is willing to wait for in Case you assume the payment - I would be pleased to know if you will Settle this amount as he has anoied me much on the subject and will agree to wait One and two years if it can be Secured to him - please Excuse me for troubling you in writing for I would call my Self if I was able - Please answer this if you Can as Soon as possible as Mr Fitzpatrick intends leaving on the [Steamboat] Boonville which will be in a day or two and I wish to write him as he will be anxious to hear no doubt how affairs stand - Your Obediant Servt/Wm.L.Sublette"

St Louis Mo/12th Noveb 1836"

* The following in order are : Bernard Pratte & Pierre Chouteau Jr. - Thomas L. Fitzpatrick (Broken Hand) - Lucien B. Fontenelle & Andrew Drips, partners - the firm of Thomas L. Fitzpatrick, Milton G. Sublette & James Bridger, known as the Rocky Mountain Fur Co. which also included as partners, Henry Frabe and Jean Baptiste Gervais. SEE Wind River Rendezvous in this collection. - Jedediah Strong Smith's administrator was Genl. Wm. H. Ashley - all of these men were giants in the International Fur Trade of North America.



THE DEATH OF VANDERBURGH

From the painting by Irvin Shap, now in Montana State University Library. Photo by Haugen's Studios.

The surrounding country is pictured as it appeared a century after the battle, but the country has changed little during that period. The costumes and equipment of Indians and whites are typical of the period when the battle was fought.

Messrs Tratte & Charleau

Julien Mr
Fitzpatrick is about to leave for the Rocky
Mountains and I wish to write my Brother
respecting his affairs in this place

Will you be so good enough
to give me a statement of the amount
Frontiers & Drifts turned in in Goods Horses &c
and also of the debts they owed and also
the amount owing to them.

There is a debt which
you are aware of due by Fitzpatrick Sublette
and Budge to J S Smith Doose amounting to
Some 2500 of this amount Mr Smith Adams is
willing to wait for in case you assume
the payment I would be pleased to know if
you will settle this amount as he has annoyed
me much on the subject and will agree
to wait one and two years if it can be
settled to him please excuse me for
troubling you in ~~the~~ writing for I would call
my self if I was able

pleas answer this if you
can as soon as possible as Mr Fitzpatrick in-
tends leaving on the Bonville which will
be in a day or two and I wish to write him
as he will be anxious to hear no doubt how
affairs stand Your Obedient Servant

M. L. Sublette

St Louis Mo
12th Street 1836

THE WESTERN MAILS

WILLIAM L. SUBLETTE TO ROBERT CAMPBELL

"St Louis Mo February 9th 1836

Dear Campbell On yesterday I was busily Engaged in Burying uncle Andrew Thompson who departed this life the night previous - he had been ill for one week but not thought dangerous until the day before he died - he had been disipating freely and took a Severe Coald which turned to a disentary and took him off within a fiew hours. On the 3 inst I Called On the American Furr Co - Chouteau [Pierre Jr.] was confined to his bed - there was no One in the office but the Clerk - he wisht me to call the next day as he said he had not the money to pay there note - On the 4 I calld I found the Clerk & Sarpey [John B., partner of Chouteau] there - they paid me there note - I told them That Fontenells [Lucien B.] & Cabene's [John Cabannè] note was also due - they Said they were not aware it was yet due - I also Spoke to Sarpey that day about those two notes that is yet unpaid to Know who I must Call On for the payment of the notes (Fontinell has yet not Came down from Liberty [Missouri].) I ask him if I must call On Cabena - he said no that to Wait a fieu days until Fontinell Or Milton [Sublette, bro. W.L.S.] would Come down that there was no doubt but it would be Setled as Soon as Mr Chouteau Could See & Converse with them that I need not be un easey about the matter - I then spoke of Fontenells Fitzpatrick & Cos note - He Said he hope that Fontinell would doe what was rite and it would be Setled also in Some way - it appears like Fonrinell has Got the whip hand in Some Way from what I can learn in Setling up Vanderburgs* Business in the mountains - I told Sarpey the reason why I was anxious to Know what we had to depend upon - that if Wee Could not Get Our pay here we Would have to Go to the Mountains for it and I Wanted to Know in time for as you was East you would lay in Goods for the Expedition and if we did not Get a poitive answer we Would doe So any way at a risk - he Said he hope it Would all be Setled to our Satisfaction - in the last letter I Wroat you that Fontinell was at St. Charles it was a mistake - The two Prevoes [Etienne & Baptiste Provost] left him at Liberty Sending whiskey up to the Black Snake Hills [trading post of Joseph Robidoux]. On Saturday last I see N.W. Wilson On his road East - he See Fraeb [Henry] a fiew days previous in Columbia who had been up to Independence and I have been Informed Milton & Fraeb is in Fulton waiting for Fontinell - there is no doubt but they will be here in a fiew days as I have Written Milton to Come down Imedeately as Sarpey requested.

Old Prevoes tale he says Fitzpatrick [Thomas] talk of Coming down this winter that Sebille [of Sibelle & Adams] was there and that Mitchell [David D.] had came there from the Missuri to make Some arangmt about that part that Fitzpatrick Ofered to Sell to him on Sertain Conditions &c - he Says Sebill Came there with a chien [Cheyenne] Indian to See the Sioux about Making peace & Was Caught there in the first Snow Storm that fell and Started to return - he Brought One man with [him] _ there Horses died and they had to Come back to laramies fork and purchase Doggs of the Inians and that his man would not return with him - that he had got a fre-man and the Chien Indian to return with him and that Sebill Intended Starting in One or two days after him - the Winter has been So Severe in the mountains that Indians within 50 miles of the fort [Williams] Could not get in to trade - Fitzpatrick had about 50 lodges of Sious at the fort but there was a great many lodges of the Sioux Started to Come in to trade but Could not when they left - Report Says that Vasques [Louis] & Sublette had about 50 lodgis of Chiens at there fort on the South fork [of the Platte River] and the balance was to Come On to meet the Sioux towards Spring to make a treaty with them - So no doubt they will have



a [good] trade in the Spring - if that be the case Forcythe who Came in with Bent & Savery [St.Vrain] Last fall Says the Chiens all Spoke of wintering on the platte when he left - this is the amount of what I can Gather - Prevoe Say Fitzpatrick talk of Coming by the little Missouri [river] as he spoke of Selling Out the fort [William] on Larameis Fork in Case they would furnish them goods there for the mountains on reasonable terms - I have nothing more to write worth your atention at present - yours of 14th & 18 of Jany is at hand - Solomon [Sublette, Brother of W.L.S.] Speaks of leaving for Independence as Soon as you acknowledge the recipt of his bill of goods there to make atangets against they Get On - Our Ball of the 22 of Feby will Come On the 10th Owng to lent Coming in (War is spoken of here with France South america Both and also the Florida Indians all for the Best (hizah) - You Can Say to the young ladis I am yet a free man, and matrimony has not Entered my mind Since I left Philada - Only when I Imagine I See there Sweet faces -

your frd Wm.L. Sublette

My Respects to Mr Gill & Archulate I hope he is untid for life but I have as as yet had no a count of it remember me to Mary [wife of Robert Campbell's brother Hugh] & Family - yours until death - Wm.L.S. R.C.

On yesterday I see Donel from Mrs Kyles - they was all well & Will please Wm Edgar & mr Homes Came down with him - I Will Writee shortly again yours &c Since I came to St Louis your Letter dated Jany 18th and your Bill of goods Dated Jany 22 Both Came together and I have Just Read them -- I was glad to to see you had Sold Our Furr as it allmost a matter Imposible to Get furs to Send East as the Bank here Will not give a check East and the Money I got from Chouteau there Out of Bank there was none larger than twenty Dollar Bills - And Augustus Kerr Refused me to take it and pay Interest to Let me draw When I pleasd and that Is One reason why I have not Calld On Charles Cabena & urge the paymt of his note as it Bears Interest there Yours &c"

Folded letter addressed to Mr Robert Campbell/Care of Gill Campbell & Co/ Philadelphia Pnn. Postmarked at ST LOUIS MO FEB 10 [1836] "25" cents.

THE WESTERN MAILS

SUBLETTE TO ROBERT CAMPBELL

" St. Louis Mo February 25th 1836 [overwritten
from 1835]

Dear Robert Your Letter of January 28 Came to hand the next day after I Wrote to you about Fontenell [Lucien B.] & Miltons [Sublette] arival which I Would have answered before this date If I Could have Brought Our Business to aney Kind of a bearing - in my last letter I Wrote you fontinell was then gon to the Country and did not return until the 21st Inst On the 22nd I found him & Sarpey [John B. Sarpy a partner of Pierre Chouteau] together in his room - I took fontinell Out and told him the american furr Co had refused paying us On there account notes due us and I wanted to Know what I Could depend On - he said it would take him two Or three days to arainge his paipers and as Soon as he got through he would pay us &c - Sarpey On that day Got the trunk of papers & Sent them to the Citty Hotel to Pilcher [Joshua] who Said would asist him to make them Out which Fontinell agreed to - Fontinell went to the Ball at the Nation Hotel On the 22nd and of Course Would doe nothing on the 23rd - On the 24th Sarpey Got him to Pilchers room for about two hours where he agreed to remain until he finisht - I then went to See Milton - He requested me to Call & See Chouteau [Pierre Jr.] & Sarpey together about the business as he Said he thought Chouteau Would agree to pay the amount in Case we Would Waite a While - I Sheud the first part of your letter to Milton as It respects the mountain Business - he apears anxious to have it Settled - I then went to Chouteau and Sarpey was absent - he Comence talking about Fontinells Business and Said he Would dou nothing for him that if Fontinell Would have a Setlmt he would then See what he Would dou - I told him you was in Philadelphia making Some Small purchases for Solomon [P. Sublette] and was Waiting to hear from me to know what you could doe - that you Was Out OF business and Could doe Nothing until we Knew what we had to depend On about geting money from Fontinell - that it was Our Intention (If we Could have got what was due us to have Engage in Business here but as matters Stood we Could not without Money - I Said as for Cabane's [J.P. Cabanne] Note that was good and I would See him - that you had Written me to forward you two thousand Dollars to pay for Solomons Good[s] and I must have the money that we had non on hand - I ask him if he wisht to draw for Money East - he said yes and that if I would Wait three or four days he Would let me have a draft for two thousand dollars and I left him at that - he Invited me to Call frequently & See them (and as Soon as I get the draft I Will forward it to Gill Campbell & Co Philada

I then returned to Miltons Room and told him what past - I told him if they would pay Cabenis note - which they could not help - that I would wait 6 & 12 months for the Other - He Said he feared Chouteau Would pay none of it under 12 months or 18 months though he Said he would See Sarpey & Chouteau to Gither and tell them - I then Started down Town and met Sarpey at Savages auction and told him what I had told Milton - he Said that was fair and it must all be Settled - that he had told Chouteau that we Must have Cabenis note and he thought we Would Wait a while for the Rest in Case they Could Settle with Fontinell - I told Sarpey Our Object was to Settle in Business here and that you was Waiting to hear from Fontinelle before you Would doe any thing - that the money we wanted in 6 & 12 months was to meet Our purchases you might make, that you had been now Out of Business for 12 Months waiting for Money and I thought it hard that they would not give us a decided answer - he Said he thought it would all be settled and if Fontenell did not finish his papers in three days he would take them and fontenell could doe as he please, that let him Settle as he might they would never have any thing more to dou with him in any way, that if Milton would gow on that they would advance him any amount he wanted - they apear also disatisfied with Fitzpatrick and betwen you and me I beleave they are determined to have them Both Out and they want to get Some other person in - Milton is in fine health and his legg in a good Condition - His Calk legg has Just [come]? On but it wants Considerable alteration which he is having done - Brother Solomon left here On the 23 for Independence to make Some araingmts there for his goods - Fitzpatrick is Expected down Shortley

THE WESTERN MAILS



Cover postmarked at St LOUIS MO FEB 28 [1836]. Rated 25 cents to Philadelphia.

I have Been talking to Holt about Pratte House but can dou nothing much with him - I will waitt your arival Here before I doe any thing more - Only to see Pratte [Bernard] & talk to him On the matter as I have not done so as yet as Holt requested I should not - Holt Says he prefers leasing for three years & that Deavers time is not up until July - he is now paying 600 \$ pr year for his house - Time gows On much as usual in St Louis - I will direct this letter to Gill Campbell & Co In case of your absence and will write again as Soon as I Can get matters Settled - I expect another letter from you shortly - the weather has been fine for a few days but change On the 24th and it now Snowing fast and has all apearances of Winter again - Give My Complmts to Mr.Gill if he is yet living not forgetting Mr Archbald - I hope Hugh [Campbell, Robert's brother] will be at home against this reaches You - my respects to Him & Mary & family/ yours Obedient Sevt/ R.Campbell W.L.Sublette

I have no farther news from Vasques[Louis] & Andrew[Sublette, brother of Wm.L. and partner of Vasques] - Only what I have Written that they had about 50 lodges . of Chiens trading with them on the South fork of the Platt[River] I shall leave for the Country [Sulpher Spring Farm of 779 acres he purchased in 1830 near St.Louis] to day where I will be for three or four days when I will give you the news again - I am anxious to See you here as I am Loansome & c - farewell/W.L.S."

Sublette reports on the financial affairs of Sublette & Campbell in relation to money owed them by Fontenelle, Cabannè, Chouteau and others. It is one of seven letters by Sublette to Campbell on the affairs of the mountain men and the fur trade between November 2, 1835 and April 30, 1836 in this collection. *Milton Sublette died at Fort Laramie on April 4, 1837, about ten months after this letter was written. The cause was probably a bone cancer which resulted in amputation of his left leg to no avail.



Cover addressed to Genl Wm H. Ashley, St Louis, Mo.
Postmarked at "Lexington Mo/Oct 17 [1831] 18 3/4".

SUBLETTE TO GENERAL ASHLEY

Folded letter written by Sublette to Wm. H. Ashley en route home from Santa Fe, on reaching Lexington, Missouri on October 16, 1831. This follows the letter he wrote from Walnut creek near the Arkansas River on September 24th, in which he reports the death of Jedediah S. Smith, at the hands of the Comanche Indians. On reaching Lexington Sublette reports Ashley's progress in the Congressional election of 1831 in up-state Missouri, in which Ashley was elected.

"Lexington Lafayette [County] Oct 16th 1831

Dear Sir I have Just arrived in Good health and all well - I have not lost any animals since I wrote to you from the Arkansas [River] - my animals was weak at the time & I had to travel Slow - Mr Smith [~~Smith~~] Left here this Morning - I have Engage him to hall apart of my Loading down & I will be able now to make tolerable days marches - I dont expect to halt any more until I reach St Louis which will be as soon as possible - the Majority of the people in this County & Jackson appears to be in favour of your Election - I dont think there is the least doubt but you will get a Majority in those two County - I have Just recd a letter from Mr Fitzpatrick [Thomas] & Mr Campbell [Robert] which Supprises me Some What - Excuse haist - Yours Most Obt Servant Wm. L. Sublette
Genl Wm H Ashley
I have not ascertain any thing Certain how furrs Sell but report large fine ones five to Six Dollars pr lb - W.L.S"

St Louis 15 Sept. 1831

Doll^{rs} $\frac{62\frac{1}{2}}{100}$

Three days after date of promise
to pay Robert Henry or order Seventeen Dollars Sixty
two & a half cents for value received & send my hand
& seal.

John Smith Seal



Ramington.





Henry Johnston Clerk
(Filed 22nd May 1838)

Wm. Smith
27. Coz.
No. 6

From J J Astor Fur Co to
New York March 26th 1812

John J. Astor on
the proceeds
of the American Fur
Company - Rec'd
at New York - memor.
of the present state of an-
swer given 30th 1812

Dear Sir

The necessity of the case is the best and
which I can offer to you, for the trouble of which I
take the liberty of giving you.

You are pretty well acquainted with the extensive
plan which has been form'd here by the American Fur Company
of which I am principal and for which I do and have
acted for the purpose of carrying on the Indian trade.

That trade as you know has been long in the hands of
the British and conducted by an association of Canada
Merchants; one under the form of the North West Company
and another of the Michilimackinac Company, who had
acquired such power and form'd such systems, that individ-
uals could not enter into competition with them; on acc^t
of which a Company was form'd here with a large Capital.

The trade with Indians being different from all
others, and particularly inasmuch as it can not be
carried on by opposition without ruin, to the one or other
of the Parties, and the Canada Companies being very
strong it became the policy of the American Fur Company
to attack them on the weakest point, which was conceiv'd
to be from the Western Shore of this Continent, and for which

be well to have it referred to the Committee of Indian affairs?

Least that it should be imagin'd that something else should be intended more than what is stated. I have thought best to enclose you a list of the Goods which we have & which are for the sole & only use of the Indians. —

In the petition we pray as you will observe that an Act may be passed to authorize the President, or one of the Heads of Departments, to give presents supposing that it will be a Check against the practice of Frauds &c. — Should you have a desire for any other or more particular information on this Subject, I will thank you to have the goodness to inform me thereof. — From the nature & extent of this undertaking you will readily conceive how great is my anxiety to obtain relief, as on it depends the success of the whole enterprise, in which many hundred persons are concerned and more than half a Million of Dollars is invested and which, if it reverts will not for many years be invested again from the British. —

I am Dear Sir

With great Respect,

Your Obedt. Serv^t

The Honble J. P. Mitchell,


Washington,

John Jacob Astor

THE WESTERN MAILS

JOHN JACOB ASTOR ON THE FORMATION OF THE AMERICAN FUR COMPANY AND THE COMPETITION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL FUR TRADE OF NORTH AMERICA.

This highly important letter was written about four years after Astor had established the American Fur Co. on April 6, 1808 and only twelve weeks before President Madison declared war on Great Britain - June 18, 1812. Astor writes to New York Congressman Samuel Latham Mitchell about the competition with the Canada Companies for control of the Indians and the fur trade. That the policy of the A.F.CO. is to attack the Canadians at their weakest point - "the Western Shore of this Continent" for "which purpose 3 ships have been sent to the Columbia River, viz the ENTERPRIZE in 1809, the TONQUIN in 1810, & the BEAVER in 1811" - as well as a party of 80 men overland to the Columbia under Wilson Price Hunt. A very informative letter on the problems and affairs of the American Fur Company during its first formative years.



"New York March 26, 1812

Dear Sir: The necessity of the case is the best and only apology which I can offer you, for the trouble of which I take the liberty of giving you. You are pretty well acquainted with the extensive plan which has been formed here by the American Fur Company of which I am the principal and for which I do and have acted for the purpose of carrying on the Indian trade. That trade as you know has been long in the hands of the British and conducted by an association of Canada Merchants; one under the firm of the North West Company and another of the Michilimackinac Company, who had acquired such power and form'd such systems, that individuals could not enter into competition with them; on acct of which a Company was form'd here with a large Capital. The trade with Indians being different from all others, and particularly in as much as it cannot be carried on by opposition without ruin to the one or other of the parties, and the Canada Companies being very strong it became the policy of the American Fur Company to attack them on the weakest point, which was conceiv'd to be from the Western Shore of this Continent, and which purpose 3 ships have been sent to the Columbia River, viz the ENTERPRIZE in 1809, the TONQUIN in 1810 & the BEAVER in 1811, - besides which a party of 80 men under the direction of Mr Hunt [Wilson Price] of Trenton have been sent up the Missouri to penetrate across the Country, with a view to make Columbia River and to form a junction with those who have gone round by Capr Horn, - Our arrangements having thus far been completed to commence operations from that quarter.

A quantity of Goods was in the meantime ordered from England for the purpose of commencing operations in this quarter. Having proceeded thus far information was given to the people in Canada, that if they would relinquish that part of the Indian trade which is within the boundaries of the United States to the American Fur Company - we would in lieu thereof engage not to oppose them in that trade with Indians in the boundaries of Great Britain - to which they reply'd; pay us for the stock of Goods & the Establishments which we have in the Country and we will sell to you and relinquish the Country to you. In the statement which they produc'd they valued the property at about \$100,000 more than I conceive it worth: however after long negotiations an arrangement took place, by which the American Fur Company became the purchasers of great part of their stock in trade and by which some of the Establishments have been given up, and all the rest are to be surrendered this year to the American Fur Compy. In the meantime the Presidents Proclamation prevented the Goods ordered by the American Fur Company from being Shipp'd to New York as was first intended; they were shipp'd to Canada & from thence transported up Country - application being made to Government in 1811 for permission to bring them into the territory of the U.S. we were

THE WESTERN MAILS

inform'd that the President had no power. In consequence of which they were stored at one of the Establishments on the Island of St. Joseph, between Lake Huron & Lake Superior, where they now are. I wish not to repeat here the loss sustained in the last year in consequence of these restrictions as we are not only prevented from selling our Goods but were oblig'd to keep up all our Establishments and retain all the men in pay, the same as, had we been doing business. It becomes now necessary to look for relief, and through you I beg leave to apply to Congress; for which purpose I send herewith a petition to which I request your kind care. I know you are on the Committee of Commerce & Manufactures where you are crowded with applications of one kind & another. I would therefore beg leave to suggest whether it would not be better to keep this distinct from the common applications, and for the sake of greater facility would it not be well to have it referred to the Committee of Indian affairs? Least that it should be imagin'd that something else should be intended more than what is stated I have thought best to enclose you a list of Goods which we have & which are for the sole & only use of the Indians.

In the petition we pray as you will observe that an act may be passed to authorize the President or one of the Heads of Department to give presents supposing that it will be a check against the practice of frauds etc etc. Should you have a desire for any other or more particular information on this subject, I will thank you to have the goodness to inform me there of. From the nature & extent of this undertaking you will readily conceive how great is my anxiety to obtain relief, as on it depends the success of the whole enterprize, in which many hundred persons are concerned and more than half a million of Dollars is invested and which, if it reverts will not for many years be rested again from the British.

The Hon'ble S.L. Mitchell
Washington

I am Dear Sir/With great
respect/Your Hon. Servt./
JOHN JACOB ASTOR "

Docket note: John J. Astor on the proce[dings] of the American Fur Company - Recd 29th March - memorial presented, & answer given 30th 1812.

Note appended: The following letter from Mr. Astor concerning the inland fur trade with the Indians, contains matter worthy of consideration, & which appears to have been neglected by the government of the United States."

The following letter from Mr Astor concerning the inland fur trade with the Indians, contains matter worthy of consideration, & which appears to have been neglected by the government of the United States.

The note above is in the hand of Congressman Mitchell. On March 2, 1811 the U.S. created the Nonintercourse Act, forbidding the importation of goods from France and England. Thus Astors reason for the above letter. At first President Madison stated that he did not have the power to make an exception in this case. Astor finally convinced the President that if he failed to act the furs, goods and added "guns & amunition" would fall into the hands of the Canadians and hostile Indians. As it turned out, Astor was able to get his furs and goods across the lines before the war broke out. This was a self-serving act on Astors part, but after all he helped finance the War of 1812 which cost the U.S. well over one hundred million dollars.

Green June 27 1828

Dear Sir

I received by Mr Pollette your letter of the 21st Inst. The Commissioners appointed under the last Act of Congress to trade with the Winnebagoes &c are Col: P Menard & Gov Cap. I called immediately upon Col Menard who was here and stated your willingness to act as Secretary to the Commissioners, & urged upon him the very great propriety of your being appointed - He professed the most friendly feelings towards you & promised to exert himself to obtain the appointment. I have ^{no} Correspondence with Gov Cap & cannot write to him. I take the liberty however of suggesting that you should do so, & the Character of my conversation with Col. Menard will perhaps your stating his acquiescence in the appointment. perhaps it would also be well to write to Col Menard

Mr Sargham is my Agent at Fort Snelling & at Prairie des Chiens.

The article of Seal Skin Caps is here. but I feel apprehensive of not getting those of a proper size & as the Communication is so ready between this & the prairie I have determined to wait until you send me measures of the proper Circumference - I dont know if I shall be the summer at the Prairie but I will be at the Mines & the opportunities will be frequent for to send the Caps.

I am glad to hear that your family are
in good health & it will give me much
pleasure to see you in any shape that I
can.

Make my respects to Mrs Street

I remain Your friend &

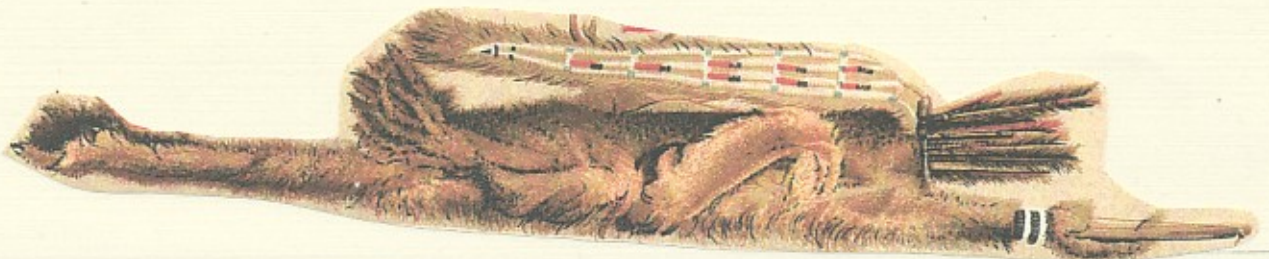
Wm B. Biddell

Wm B. Biddell

Galena March 24th 1830

".....It may seem strange to you that after a residence of Eleven years in this western country & part of the time Risking my life & health for gain that I should still be so poor - but such is the fact and to account for it I will give you a sketch of the manner in which my time has been spent for the last Eleven Years - The first 3 1/2 Years I spent in St Louis as a clerk principally in an auction house in the employ of W.H.Savage who still resides there and is one of the best friends I have in this country. I received a salary for my services of \$400 and board, this just about paid my expenses - this I got tired of and thinking to make a fortune at once as most young men at that time do I associated myself with five other young men like myself - obtained a credit for about \$20,000 worth of Indian goods and went into the Indian country. in this business I spent five years returning every spring to St.Louis with my peltries for supplies. We traded on the Upper Missouri as high as the Yellow Stone - on the Upper Mississippi above the falls of St Anthony and up the St Peters (Minnesota river) to its source - we kept extending our business yearly and the last year we returned to St Louis furs and peltries to the amount of \$90,000 - yet notwithstanding all the exertions that men could make, we wound up our business at the end of five years with a loss of \$2000 pr share, this was owing to the great opposition in prices we had to contend with in the Am. Fur Co. together with a loss in one Spring that we sustained by the rise of the Missouri River of about \$10,000. I settled my \$2000 by a note of hand due now in two years - got discouraged and forming a co-partnership with a Mr (Lemon)Parker came to Fever River (Galena) about 2 1/2 years ago and my usual bad fortune has attended me here . My partner had about \$8000 in Cash when we came here and the whole of it has been sunk in consequence of the great and until within two years unprecedented depreciation to the price of Lead - we made large purchases of ore on our first arrival in the country and when manufactured lead had depreciated in price So much that we did not realise the first cost of the raw material apart from the expence of manufacturing - we pushed the business of Smelting at the worst time possible - To give you an idea of the extent of our business we made in the first 18 months 1000 tons of Lead on all of which we suffered a loss in consequence of the fall in the price. We are now laying on our oars collecting our debts & bringing our business to a close finding that we have no more property than will pay our debts. I shall remain in the mines myself in hopes that business will revive, but lead must take a rise before this can be the case - for at present the Country is almost depopulated because the price of lead affords no encouragement to people to come here to dig -there is at present consequently no ore rasing - no lead manufactured and consequently nothing doing in any branch of business. this is about the Situation of these mines at present and this is the way that every thing that I take hold of seems to eventuate, but I hope by this time my bad luck is nearly exhausted and I must certainly hold some trumps after awhile - meantime I am not at all discouraged but shall always push on. I do not wish you to communicate these things to my mother as I do not wish to give her uneasiness for a moment. Write me often my dear father and believe me always y affectionate son

William P. Tillton



(Philadelphia)
2126
Harris, etc

For Gibson August 15th 1815
Charles Netter
Sister Turtling

Dear Annpstead

I must claim pardon from you
for not writing before granted upon this lease
that I did not wish to trouble you with my
Complaints against Providence for its Good dealing
with me - I believe myself Annpstead the most
unlucky miserable poor devil in the world
it appears to me I am a doomed man - and
if I was a Presbyterian should think that it
was preordained from the Commencement of
the world that I should never have either luck
or Comfort in this world so long as I inhabit
it - The only favor God can do me he has
taken away from me again - I have lost the
best, the kindest, the most affectionate and
the most noble of Women kind - a loss that
Can never be repaired, Annpstead you know
nothing about it you have not the most distant
idea of such a loss and God grant you never
may have - but this is enough of Complaining
The only thing I meant to say when I began writing

For Dublin
Aug 21

95

Mr. William Champstead
Merchant
Saint Louis
Mo

1835
Engl
Watermark



Wm. C. Miller
Aug 21 1835

John Gibson July 4th 1836

Dear Hempstead

Enclosed please find a Check drawn
by Major W. S. Hamer for \$5000 which please acknow-
-ledge the receipt of by first mail, this sum I have
drawn from the Concern as a part of my profits and
advised March of the same telling him I had use
for it I do not wish it placed to my credit on your
books because I do not care he should know what
I wanted of it - If it is worth Bank interest to
you for six months, use it; and if not keep it until
called for. Should I die in the mean time, advise
my mother Mary M. Fittlow. Fittlow Maine
that you have that amount in your hands subject
to her order

Your friend

W. S. Fittlow

W. Hempstead Esq
Merchant St Louis

Dear Mr. Risvold:

Glad I can supply these, particularly in view of your anguished telegram! By the way, you got this catalogue very quickly; perhaps the zip code will actually speed up the mail. The William Hempstead to whom these letters were written was the brother-in-law of Manuel Lisa, famous fur trader. The town of Hempstead, Long Island is named for his family.

Regards,

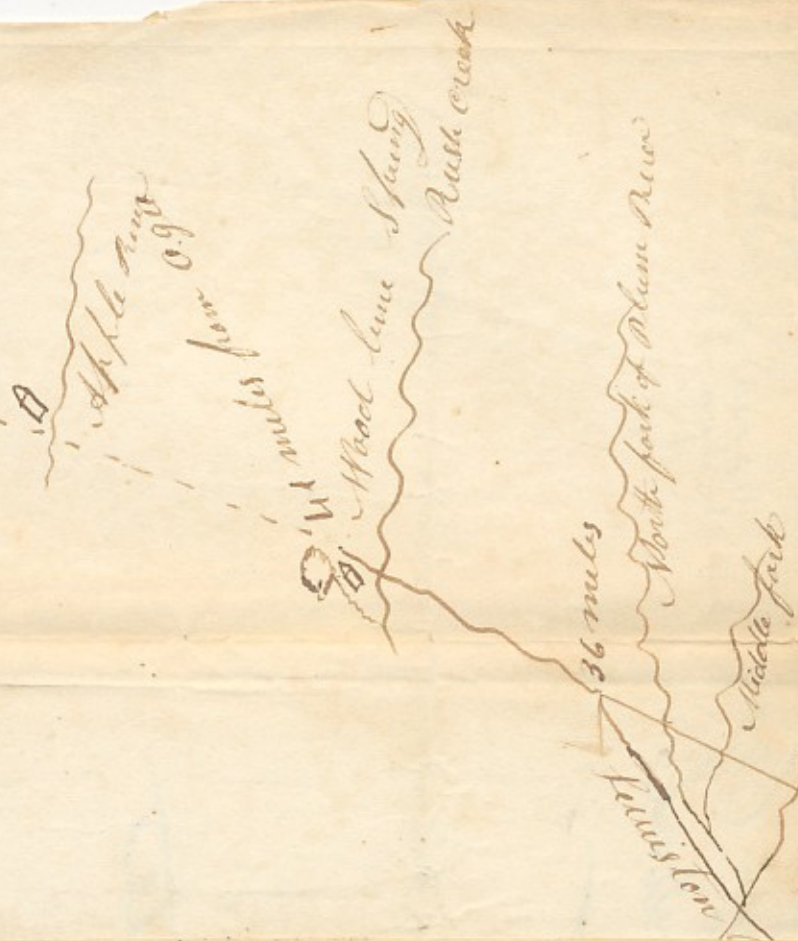
Robert Black

William Hempstead Esq
Hempstead
Long Island
New York
New York
New York

Primo Carter
July 4, 1831
New York

244

60 Gallons
60 miles



The undersigned appointed by County Commissioners
 Court to Review a Road Compendium at Gallena
 to intersect the Apple River road at Curys farm
 No Report. that the Road shall cross Muley Branch
 near John S. Miller at the present ford thence by the present
 tree past Pillsy House to the Ottawa Mills thence near
 the House of Th. D. Bowditch leaving his field on the
 the left and cross Small Fox Creek near J. Pillsy
 thence take a Ridge to the present Court Farm

Gallena Dec 1830

William P. Atter

William Bennett

The supposed distance from the
Wood Lane Spring to Cgee ferry
on Rock River - Beginning at the Ferry



Dr
H

THE COLUMBIA FUR COMPANY

This company was organized at St. Louis in 1822 by two Americans, Wm. P. Tilton, S. S. Dudley and five Canadians, Joseph Renville, Kenneth McKenzie, Wm. Laidlaw, Daniel Lamont and James Kipp, who had registered their intent to become American citizens. Because foreigners were debarred from engaging in the Indian trade, the license was issued to Tilton and Dudley on July 17, 1822, to trade with the Indians on the Upper Mississippi and St. Peter's rivers, as well as the Upper Missouri. James Kipp began building several forts or trading posts on the Missouri including Fort Tilton near the Mandan village which was replaced by Fort Clark in 1831. In July of 1827 the Columbia Fur Co. merged with the American Fur Co. and became the Upper Missouri Outfit of the Western Department of the American Fur Company. Tilton and Dudley dropped out, Renville went back to the Minnesota country and the others remained with McKenzie in overall charge of operations.



Postmarked at GALENA, IL/MARCH 28. Rated 25¢ to Washington, D.C. and then forwarded 10¢ to Leesburg, Va. Daniel Tilton was an officer in the U.S. Army 1791-1795. At the time of this letter he was a judge in the Pennsylvania courts. He died Dec. 10, 1830.

The folded letter above was written by William P. Tilton from Galena, Illinois after severing his interests in the Columbia Fur Co. He has formed a partnership, in the lead trade, with Lemon Parker of St. Louis. In the letter Tilton gives an account of his five years in the fur trade on the Upper Missouri. How he came to St. Louis in 1819, organized the Columbia Fur Co. in 1822, sold his interests in same September 24, 1827 and ended up in Galena in October of the same year. He gives a surprising inside view on the operations of the Columbia Fur Co. It is almost astonishing that after bringing down the river to St. Louis, \$90,000 in peltries, that the firm was in debt, after he pulled out. The \$10,000 loss could only have been by the loss of a mackinaw boat load of furs to the wild Missouri river.

THE WESTERN MAILS

RIX ROBINSON to ROBERT STUART at MIICHILIMACKINAC

"Grand River 21st April 1824"

"Mr. Robert Stuart Sir agreeable to our arrangements last fall I send you a man (the bearer of this) to pilot the vessel to this place for the purpose of transporting our packs &c to mackinac. I also enclose you a memorandum for a few articles which I hope you will have the goodness to send me or as near that as possible. I am about purchasing the few Peltries and skins of Joseph Schindles which he has been able to buy with goods obtained from Detroit (I suppose on credit) & think I shall be able to purchase them at a good buy provided you can send me the above articles mentioned in the memorandum. He is anxious to sell and wants the goods for the purpose of passing the summer here. The Why [whiskey?] is for my owen use and of which he need know nothing about - We have had a monstrous bad winter for the hunts although the prospects were very fine last fall. However we shall be able to muster a little rising of one Hundred packs of skins without counting the outfits of Pierre Coon, a handsome share of which are fine Peltries besides Sugar [maple?] all of which will be ready to put on board the vessel as soon as it arrives at the Entry to this River [Grand] - I purchased a considerable quantity of corn last fall and wrote to Mr. Crooks [Ramsey] apprising him of it last fall which has been the only opportunity I have had of sending a letter into a white mans country since my arrival here - A great part of the Indians have been in a starving condidtion a great part of the winter in consequence of which I have sold all my corn back to them again for peltry [furs] in so much that we are even short for provisions to come to Mackinac. I wish you to start the vessel with all possible dispatch for this place on receipt of this. The man (Joseph Bablien) is a very trusty man and perfectly capable of Piloting her here. We are all in good health and hard at work. Please Excuse this awkward letter as my head is a good deal troubled with Indian business, and I have yesterday just arrived from a trip along the Lake [Michigan] of 26 days and tomorrow start to go up the river to settle the affairs of the outfit above -

R. Robinson

P.S. Try to send me the articles mentioned so that I may be able to administer a Pill to young Godfry of whom I understand Schindles obtained his goods. Please send me an Invoice of what articles you send me at the prices of my goods in 1822."

R. Robinson

R.R.

R - R

RIX ROBINSON was the Agent in charge of the American Fur Company post, at the mouth of the Grand River, on the eastern shore of Lake Michigan, near present day Grand Haven, Michigan.

The letter was carried out of the mails by Joseph Bablien as noted in the letter. It was "Recd. 6, May" 1824 and answered on the 12th.

Grand River 31st April 1824

M^r Robert Stuart

Sir agreeable to our ar-
rangements last fall I find you a man (the
bearer of this) to pilot the vessel to this place
for the purpose of transporting our Packages
to Mackinac. I also Enclose you a Mem-
orandum for a few articles which I hope you
will have the goodness to send me or as near
that as possible. I am about purchasing
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(I suppose on credit)
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M^r Robert Stuart

agents American Fur Co^{rs} to

Michilimackinac

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letter as my head is a good deal troubled
with Indian business. and I have ~~not~~ yesterday
just arrived from a trip along the Lake of
26 days and tomorrow starts to go up the river
to settle the affairs of the outfit above

Adieu. until I see you

with sincere respects

Sir Yr. Obedt. Servt

V. R. Robinson

P. S. try to send me the articles mentioned so that I
may be able to administer a Pill to Young Goafry
of whom I understand Schindler obtained his goods

R- R

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family I have had of sending a letter into a
white man's country since my arrival here
a great part of the Indians
have been in a gathering condition a great part
of the winter in consequence of which I have
sold all my corn back to them again for better