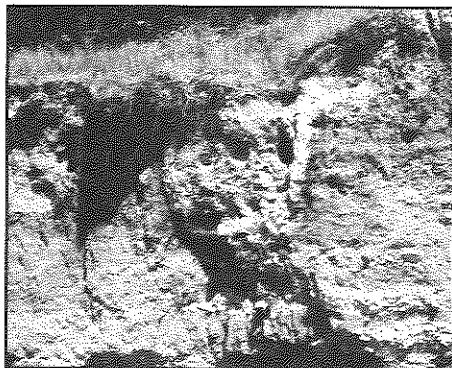


The Beginnings

The Missouri River flowed languidly, yet purposefully, long before it was named, its unpredictable waters parting fertile soils from the upper reaches of Montana to the flat lands of Missouri, where it emptied into the mother Mississippi. For eons, only tracks of animals and later migratory trails of Native Americans disturbed its banks.

Prehistoric sites, affirming early civilizations, have surfaced and disappeared along the Missouri's banks. In southwest Bon Homme County, a circular tribal hearth locally called "The Cooking Pot" was until recent years visible on a bluff high above the river. Archeologists from the University of South Dakota measured its depth and width each at about six feet. Wave action had exposed multi-colored layers of burned earth, ash, charcoal and rocks. Unfortunately, eroding bluffs have destroyed this historical find.

White men from Europe and Canada began exploring the Missouri River and its bordering plains before 1700. Frenchman Charles Pierre LeSeuer is said to have explored the Big Sioux River in 1684. A map credited to him showing both the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers was published in 1701. In mid-18th century, the Verendrye Brothers visited the Fort Pierre area, and in 1794, Jean Baptiste Trudeau studied the river basin from St. Louis through the Upper



A prehistoric "Cooking Pot" as it looked in 1996 would soon erode into clay-colored waters of the Missouri.

A faded sign on Highway 37 north of Springfield in Bon Homme County notes historic and important sites in Bon Homme and Charles Mix Counties: 1-Fort Randall, 1856-1892; 2-Trudeau House, 1794; 3-Struck by the Ree Flag Pole, 1859; 4-Struck by the Ree tombstone monument, 1804-1888; 5-Treaty 1857 Monument; 6-First School in Dakota, 1860; 7-Bon Homme Village, 1859-1884; 8-Burleigh House, 1864; A-Dugway; B-Lewis and Clark Tower, 1804; C-Marty Indian Mission, 1918; D-Rising Hail Colony, 1935; E-Fort Mitchell, 1835; F-Ghost Town, Running Water, 1879; G-Santee Agency, 1863; H-Yankton Agency, 1859.

published in 1838 in Germany but were not translated into English until 1973 under the title of "Travel in North America 1822-1824." George Catlin, famed Indian portraitist, traveled upriver in 1832 on Pierre Chouteau's newly-built steamboat *Yellowstone*; and in 1833, scientist Maximilian, Prince of Nieuweld, accompanied by artist Karl Bodmer, produced an engrossing scientific and picturesque record. In 1838, James Joseph Nicollet in the company of Lieutenant John C. Fremont explored and mapped the river and area; and in 1843, wildlife artist John James Audubon traveled the river studying and recording species of nature.

The Pawnee House

Jean Baptiste Trudeau was teaching school in St. Louis when the Missouri Fur Company based there recruited him in the summer of 1794 to lead an expedition instructed to explore the Upper Missouri River Valley. A primary goal was to study local Indian tribes for the purpose of establishing trading relations. Trudeau and his party of eight men ascended the river in June 1794, in a pirogue as far as the Cheyenne River, where he found that the Arikaras, with whom they'd expected to trade, had been nearly decimated by smallpox.

By October, Trudeau and his men had backtracked 250 miles to a location at the mouth of Black Timber Creek on the Missouri's north shore about two and one-half miles below the present location of Fort Randall Dam. They chose a site in a wooded area near the creek to build a cabin which would become known as Pawnee House. However their winter was made unpleasant by exploitation from a ruthless band of Omahas led by Chief Blackfoot. Had it not been for a friendly band of Poncas, the expedition leader and his crew may well have starved. In 1797, Trudeau left the Missouri Fur Company and returned to his cabin. It was destroyed by fire in 1817.

Historians suggest that the Pawnee House was the first permanent structure in the territory. In 1955, the Charles Mix County Historical Society placed a marker near where the cabin had stood, likely close to the "Dugway," a road Fort Randall soldiers had cut into lofty chalkstone bluffs along the river which shortened by several miles the distance from the fort to Greenwood.

The Fur Trade 1840-1860s

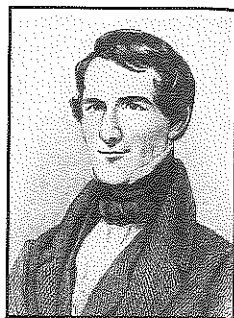
By the early 1800s, and particularly in 1815 after termination of the War of 1812 with Great Britain, fur trade flourished in Canada, the northern half of the United States and the Upper Missouri River Valley from Sioux City, Iowa, as far west and north as the river was navigable. A complex relationship forged the nature of the industry: 1) raw materials in nature (forests, plains, streams); 2) natives (Indians and others who provided the furs); 3) traders (middle men); 4) buyers (primarily Europeans and Chinese); and 5) the proliferation of intoxicating liquors.

Although the United States government had passed a law in the early 1830s prohibiting the carrying of liquors into Indian Territory, it was difficult to enact and widely disregarded. Tradesmen were known to adulterate whiskey with various ingredients, some bordering on poisonous, sometimes darkening the color of their product with tobacco or another agent while making sure to leave sufficient "kick" to satisfy their customers.

As an example, prominent trader in the lower Big Sioux River area, French Canadian Paul Pacquette, sold liquid refreshments in his store to all who could pay. In response to a query of whether or not his whiskey was good, his reply (according to *SDHC*, vol. 23, p313) might be "Don't know, not very bad, not very good, drink it myself, don't kill me, won't kill you, buy of Joe

Marks, \$3 a gallon." Joe Marks was a wholesale liquor dealer, the article continues, and it was said by some that his wares "were dear at \$3 a gallon!"

For many years Pierre Chouteau and his son Pierre Chouteau, Jr., operated fur companies from St. Louis under different names. They eventually dominated the industry as the American Fur Company. In 1841, the Chouteaus tried without success to promote one of their employees, Colin Campbell, a half-blood Sioux, whom they felt exerted great influence among the Indians, to be appointed federal agent charged with curbing the liquor trade. When occasion demanded, the Chouteaus were, like many traders, with indeterminate scruples when opportunity presented itself, and having a friend among the Sioux who could persuade natives to indulge was a distinct advantage to the trader. Campbell later operated posts for the company at the mouth of Crow Creek below Big Bend and briefly at Running Water.

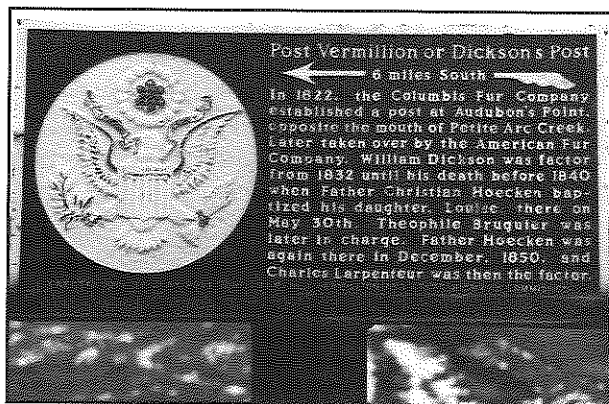


Pierre Chouteau, Jr. and his father, co-owners of American Fur Company, dominated the fur industry for many years.

Trading Posts

Competition between French and English fur traders was furious. By the mid-1800s, as many as one hundred trading posts functioned along the Big Sioux River and both shores of the Upper Missouri River. Sites of most have been cut away by years of unpredictable currents and resultant altering of banks. Crude trade cabins served as gathering sites and winter residences. With the advent of the steamboat (in 1832 the *Yellowstone*, a sidewheeler, made its first trip upriver as far as Fort Pierre with Pierre Chouteau on board), river traffic increased greatly, thereby facilitating the shipping of furs and trading goods.

Once-thriving posts along the Upper Missouri River Valley in pre-Dakota Territory included Post Vermillion (or Dickson's Post) established in 1822, two miles below Burbank by the Columbia Fur Company. The post became known as Dickson's Post in 1838 after the American Fur Company took it over and hired William Dickson as factor. Two hundred Mormons from Nauvoo, Illinois, bound for Utah stayed near the post during the winter of 1845-1846, later spending time in the Niobrara, Nebraska area. In 1850, when the post was abandoned, Theophile Bruguier, who was last in charge, set up a trading post at the mouth of the Big Sioux River. Others posts between Sioux City and Handy's Point (site of Fort Randall) included those factored by Zephyr Recontre at Bon Homme Island, Emanuel Disaul at Emanuel Creek, Colin Campbell at Running Water, and George L. Tacket at Chouteau Creek.



A sign locating Post Vermillion (1822), erected in 1966 by Vermillion VFW Clay Post 3062 and South Dakota Highway Commission, stands along Highway 50 near the line separating Yankton and Clay Counties.

Frost, Todd and Company

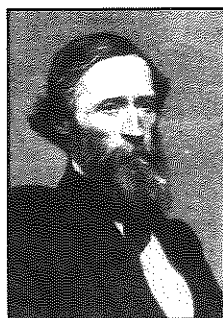
A visionary pair of former military men was instrumental in establishing more than a few trading posts along waterways between the Big Sioux River and Fort Randall. Captain Daniel Marsh Frost graduated from West Point in 1840 and served in the Mexican War. His good friend John Blair Smith Todd also attended West Point, but flunked his senior year. However, aided by influential familial connections in the East and favored with a flamboyant personality, he was able to pursue a military career.

Frost resigned from the Army in 1853 to enter the fur business in Missouri, and there in 1856 organized the firm of Frost, Todd and Company. Todd, who held the rank of Captain and was presently serving under General Harney at Fort Randall, resigned his commission to become post sutler. It was a fortuitous choice which ultimately benefited his and his partner's firm. Frost acquired the contract for disposal of military quarters at the decommissioned Forts Pierre and Lookout, and was able to salvage lumber for the firm's future use in building trading posts.

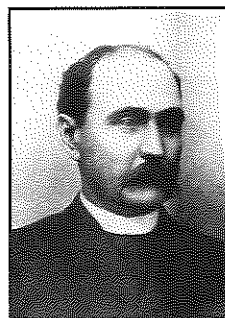
Provisions of the 1858 Treaty of Washington, D.C., known also as the Yankton Treaty of 1858, provided Frost, Todd and Company with opportunities to secure as many as eight federal trading licenses, which not only allowed their agents to legally trade with Indians but provided the company first rights to purchase or be awarded land on which the posts stood. Therefore, the two men chose with care sites they considered suitable for towns.

The several posts Frost and Todd established in Yankton and Clay Counties included trading stores at the mouth of the Vermillion River, along the ferry site at the James River, alongside the Missouri River at Yankton, and at Chief Smutty Bear's campgrounds on lowlands several miles west of Yankton. Salvaged cedar logs were used to build the post at the Yankton site where George D. Fiske, then first and only resident of Yankton, conducted the firm's mercantile business. Two primitive cabins spaced apart but connected by a common roof formed the Yankton store.

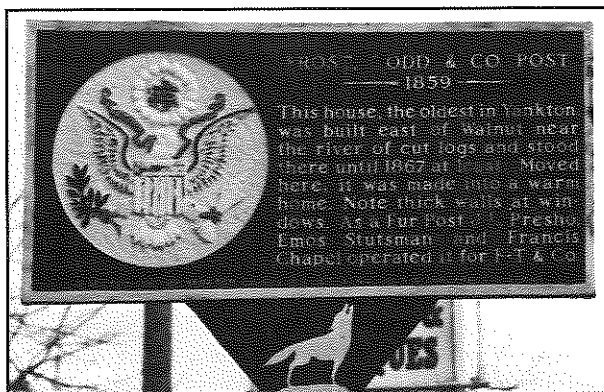
Major Wm. P. Lyman, one-time fellow military man and friend of Frost and Todd, not only built the trading post on Chief Smutty Bear's campgrounds for the firm, but while previously at Fort Randall had built the ferry which would operate at the James River site. He steered the rudimentary structure down to the mouth of the James and then propelled it several



Captain John B.S. Todd, business man, land speculator, and legislator, played a major role in territorial politics.



Daniel M. Frost resigned from the Army in 1853 to enter private business and in 1856 organized Frost, Todd & Company.



Frost, Todd & Company Post originally stood east of Walnut St. in Yankton adjacent to the Missouri River.

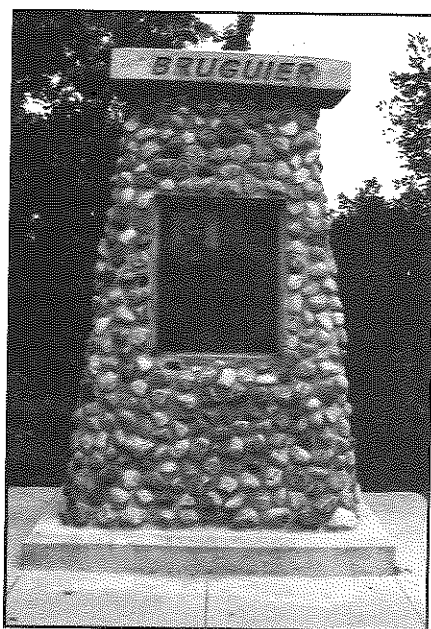
miles north to the location of the Frost and Todd Trading Post adjacent to the Military Trail. The friendship between Todd and Lyman would resurface in 1862 in a politically driven command shakeup and scandal at Fort Randall. More will be said of that later.

Lyman was certainly among the first white settlers in the county. According to *SDHC, vol. X*, p406, he was a half-blood, and his native wife Wenona was the daughter of Chief Struck-By-The-Ree. Their children, Martha, John, and Ella, would attend Yankton Public Schools. Son John also attended the Indian Industrial Boarding School at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where for a number of years Indian youth were sent to be "Americanized" at an abandoned cavalry barracks.

Theophile Bruguier

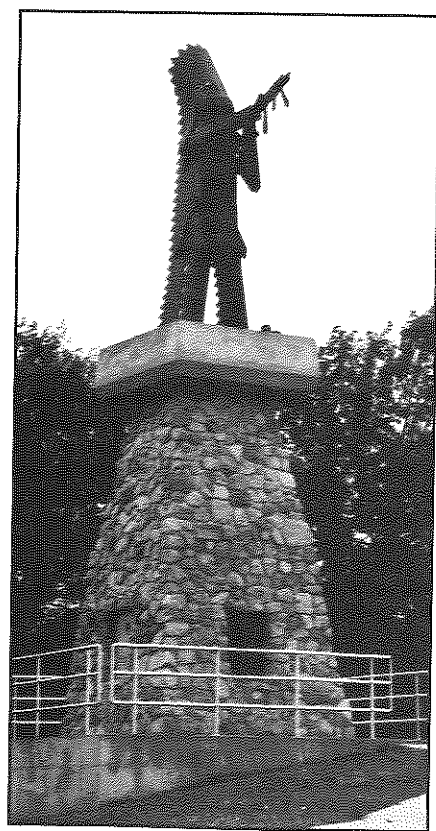
Many French Canadian and English traders formed marriage alliances with native women. They, their wives and half-blood children made up the first families of many river communities. Theophile Bruguier was such a man.

Bruguier was born near Montreal, Canada, on August 31, 1813, and died February 18, 1896. Because his father was half French and his mother and grandmother English, his upbringing reflected both cultures, and his family's comfortable rural background made possible a good education. When the French woman Bruguier planned to marry in Canada died of cholera, he left



Top: A fieldstone monument dedicated to Theophile Bruguier, first white settler in Sioux City, stands in hilly War Eagle Park along Riverside Drive just below the monument to his father-in-law Chief War Eagle. The final paragraph of a lengthy inscription states the following: "Bruguier was very influential in founding Sioux City by encouraging settlement, trade and business. Along with War Eagle he contributed to peaceful relations between the Indians and the white settlers. Bruguier moved to a farm near Salix, Iowa, and died there in 1896. In 1926, his body was reburied near this site. This monument honors his legacy to our city." Erected June 2001 by Sioux City Cosmopolitan Club.

Bottom: An inscription on the stone base of a large stylized metal sculpture honoring Chief War Eagle states "Friend of White Man, 1780-1851." The isolated monument overlooks the Missouri River from a high bluff in War Eagle Park.



for St. Louis. Shortly after, the American Fur Company hired him and sent him upriver where he traded both for them and privately.

Bruguier was physically remarkable. Although only medium height, his build was massive, he was strong and quick of speech. At one time he was said to have escaped from a band of astounded Pawnees near the mouth of the Niobrara River by desperately leaping over his covered wagon loaded with furs and robes, clearing its top and falling into weeds and brush below. With broken ribs and many bruises, he made his way, sometimes on hands and knees, over frozen ground covered with four inches of snow to a trading post on the Dakota side of the Missouri.

During Bruguier's time as employee and later manager of Fort Vermillion, he abandoned European civilization and married daughters of Chief War Eagle, Blazing Cloud and Dawn, in the Indian way. With Americans Bruguier's word was said to be good, he was trusted and respected by Indians but feared as well for his capacity for falsification.

War Eagle, once Santee Sioux but now Yankton, was very tall, straight, and sinewy. He was trusted by whites to bear dispatches between trading posts and military posts and, in 1837, received a medal from President Martin Van Buren. However, when Bruguier left Fort Vermillion for the Big Sioux Point area, the chief, accompanied by his tribe, abandoned his campgrounds and followed his new son-in-law, living with him until old age, as was customary in the Indian way. Although War Eagle was head of the many Sioux Indians who clustered around Bruguier's property, it was evident that Bruguier was in charge. When War Eagle died, he was buried high on a nearby bluff fronting the Missouri River east of the Big Sioux. Some say he may have been buried sitting up with his head at or above the surface. For several years a canopy of poles and brush remained in place over his grave. Two daughters and two grandchildren are buried beside him.

Bruguier chose a location beneath a sheltering bluff on the Iowa side of the Big Sioux River to build a cabin and raise a large family of thirteen children. He had many cattle and acquired much land on which he allowed Indians to live (and butcher his cattle).

In 1855, Bruguier received his first government contract to furnish supplies to the Indians and acquired as well a federal license to trade with them on the Missouri. His first ferry landing was located a short distance above the mouth of the Big Sioux, then located one and one-half miles lower than it would be after floods reshaped its flow. Bruguier later built a ferry and cabin-store some distance above the first, and it is these that are marked on original survey maps.

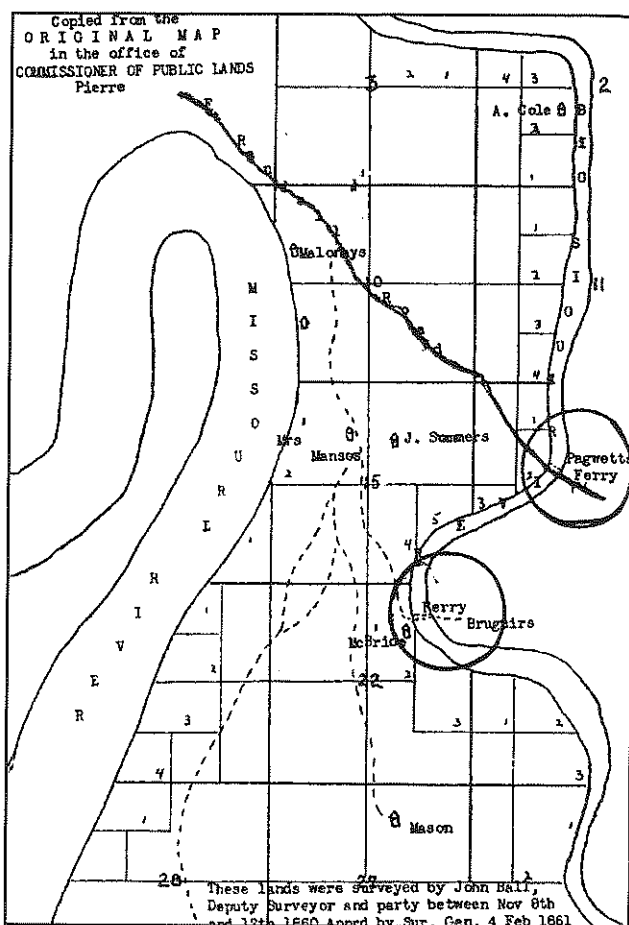
The wily trader conducted a very profitable mercantile and freight business which eventually earned him a fortune. He expended much of it, however, attempting to educate several of his children and also by poor management. Two children died in infancy, several sons died after involvement in various episodes, most involving Indians, others were more or less educated, some well. Under terms of the 1858 Yankton Treaty, Bruguier received \$3,000 for himself and \$3,000 for each child, amounting to about \$39,000. Each child received one-half section, and he himself at one time had 1,000 acres. He kept one section until his death and sold the other parcel(s), which eventually became Riverside Park.

Bruguier's Indian wives died in 1857 and 1859, and three years later he married Victoria Tournot, a cultured French woman, became an exemplary Christian man, and relinquished totally his former Indian life.

Paul Pacquette

Paul Pacquette built his cabin store in 1854 about one mile up-river from Bruguier's second ferry. In 1855, the federal government awarded Pacquette a federal permit, called the Turnley Permit, to build a ferry on the Big Sioux River. The new rope ferry was crucial to the location of the Military Trail, and its owner, after successfully fending off legal ownership problems, operated it up to the time the first bridge was built at the same site.

Pacquette lived near his ferry, had known Bruguier since 1836, and like him had native wives. When in 1858 he chose to discard them and marry Rosille Sanguenette, a French woman, he ferried his former wives across the river and drove them westward to their own people. The jilted women were not so easily disposed of and for some time, it was said, returned to harass the new white Mrs. Pacquette. Pacquette kept a store near the ferry landing, likely his home as well, where he, like other white businessmen, furnished diluted "liquid refreshment" to paying customers who often happened to be Indian. He died in 1888, leaving four minor children.



Locations of Pacquette's Ferry, Bruguier's Ferry and Fort Randall Road are identified on this 1860 map.