

really visited any waterfalls in the region. Mr. Burpee believes that the cataract that was reported to Pond was a waterfall about twenty feet in height near Fort Vermilion on Peace River. The Falls of St. Anthony appear on the map. Pond had seen these, and though they were nearly as high as those on the Peace River, he did not exaggerate their size in his report of them. Moreover, though the map seems to show that Pond claimed to have reached the falls, because of the expression, "So far Pond," beside them, yet the reference to the falls is that they were "said" to be the largest in the world. Probably the words, "by the Indians," should be inserted after "said."

Just as the *Gentleman's Magazine* of March, 1790, was going to press, Mackenzie's report of his travels must have been reaching England to prove that Pond had been misinformed and that the only river running out of Slave Lake was the stream that is now known as Mackenzie River. This the discoverer himself called "River Disappointment," because he had been disillusioned as to Pond's theory that it would prove the long-sought Northwest Passage, a highway to China for the lucrative furs of the Northwest Company in the newly opened Athabaska country. Pond thus missed fame in his lifetime, but he should not be denied recognition of the fact that it was he who thought out and planned what Mackenzie accomplished.

G. L. N.

#### THE AMERICAN FUR COMPANY'S POST AT THE GREAT OASIS

Though fire destroyed the American Fur Company's post at the Great Oasis a century ago, and the debris has been exposed to the elements for the past hundred years, there remains today sufficient evidence to mark the exact site of the trading post. The post, which was in charge of Joseph Laframboise, was abandoned by the company in the fall of 1837 and was burned by Indians in 1838.

It was not situated in the woods that properly form the Oasis, or Bear lakes timber, as it is now locally known, but close by to the east, overlooking Tibbetts Lake. Between the sandy beach of the lake and the stockade that surrounded the post ran the old Indian trail that is today marked by a public highway. Since all the lakes that once surrounded that beautiful wooded isthmus, the Great Oasis, are now drained, the visitor to the site of the post can only imagine the beauty of the setting.

The post at the Great Oasis stood in the northeast quarter of section ten, Lowville Township, Murray County, near the south boundary of the quarter, and midway between the east and west lines. There, on soil that has been cultivated for forty years, the writer found in October, 1932, the little that remains of the most southwesterly fur-trading post in Minnesota. Pieces of dark yellow clay, hard as cement, that were used to close the chinks between the logs, there are in abundance. Fire-scorched stones and pieces of catlinite from the pipestone quarries strew the ground. Careful scrutiny reveals an occasional lump of soft hair plaster, bits of fire-clouded glass, and even fragments of charred wood. Large stones that might have been used in building the foundation and fireplace, if such were used, would have been removed years ago when the land was first cultivated.

Trade goods and furs were transported between this post and Mendota overland and by canoes. Traders used a tiny stream, not shown on maps published by the Minnesota Geological Survey, and dry during dry seasons, which connected Tibbetts Lake with the headwaters of the Des Moines River. With the exception of one portage, that between the Des Moines and a fork of the Watonwan River, the canoe route to Mendota was uninterrupted.

The land on which the trading post was built was taken up by John and Bartlett Low in 1866 and has since been in the possession of the Low family. John Low, a teamster

with the Crow Creek agency relief expedition in 1863, observed the beauty of the Oasis when passing in a wagon train. Later he returned with his brother, Bartlett, to take possession of the land. When the brothers settled there, some of the logs that formed the stockade about the fur post were still standing.

R. J. FORREST

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

MINNESOTA STORIES IN THE "FIRESIDE  
HENTY SERIES"

An interesting problem arose recently when Mr. G. Hubert Smith of Minneapolis presented the Minnesota Historical Society with an anonymous collection of stories about Minnesota Indians entitled *Forest and Frontiers, or, Adventures among the Indians*. The title was not listed in the society's catalogue, but the stories looked familiar. Had this collection of stories been published also under a different title? Who was the author? The title page gives no clue to the origin of the tales, and the preface is merely signed "The Author. St. Paul, Minn., 1884." Although the words "profusely illustrated" appear on the title-page and a list of eight illustrations follows the table of contents, there is but one included—the frontispiece. Obviously the book is a reprint of some other work. The cover reveals that it was published as one of the *Fireside Henty Series*.

As the writer looked over the table of contents, she felt confident that she had read these same tales in some other book in the society's library. "Mis-se-jar-ga; or, the Angel Guide." "Minnetooka; an Indian Legend." "Wenona; Maiden Rock." "An-pe-tu-sa-pa; Legend of St. Anthony Falls." Surely she had seen these stories before. "Old Bets"! There could be no doubt about that one. She recalled that Thomas M. Newson in his *Pen Pictures of Saint Paul*, published in 1886, told a story about this old



Copyright of **Minnesota History** is the property of the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, or email articles, however, for individual use.

To request permission for educational or commercial use, [contact us](#).