

THE DIARY OF MARTIN McLEOD¹

In the manuscript division of the Minnesota Historical Society is a small leather-bound notebook by the aid of which the strange tale of a filibustering trip across Minnesota in the autumn of 1836 has come to light. Martin McLeod, the author of the diary, was well known in Minnesota; yet his connection with James Dickson's expedition seems to have been practically unknown until his diary came to the society. Indeed, the expedition itself seems to have been forgotten. Other matters than those centering around Dickson are recorded in the diary's yellowed pages on which the ink has turned to a rust-brown; and for the study of early Minnesota characters and geographic names these entries are of great value. In the main, however, the importance of the book lies in its revelations concerning a trip that had no less than the founding of an empire for its ultimate purpose.

The story of Dickson's filibustering expedition in its entirety is told elsewhere. It is sufficient here to note that a bizarre character appeared in fashionable circles in New York and Washington in the winter of 1835-36, endeavoring, as he then said, to secure recruits to aid the Texans in their struggle for independence. He called himself General James Dickson and told fascinating stories of his life in Mexico and of his service in the Texan army. His striking military dress and a

¹ Edited with introduction and notes by Grace Lee Nute and prepared for the press by Theodore C. Blegen and Bertha L. Heilbron, all of the staff of the Minnesota Historical Society. The delay in the publication of the present number of the BULLETIN makes it possible to include in the notes references to the article by Dr. Nute which, under the title "James Dickson: A Filibuster in Minnesota in 1836," is published in the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 10: 127-140 (September, 1923). In the "Notes and Documents" section of the same magazine (p. 173-181) several "Documents Relating to James Dickson's Expedition," edited by Dr. Nute, are printed as a supplement to the article. See *post*, 5: 116-118, 313. S. J. B.

very nice attention to the amenities of social life secured recognition for him but seem to have brought him few recruits. For the officers of "The Army of the Liberator" he went to Montreal and enlisted a number of young half-breeds, sons, in most instances, of well-known factors in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company. Apparently about the time he crossed the international boundary he also changed the name of his organization to "The Indian Liberating Army" and his purpose to that of establishing an Indian kingdom in California. To different persons he gave somewhat varying accounts of his purpose, but to practically all he intimated that his design was to go by way of the Great Lakes to the Red River colony of the Hudson's Bay Company, to secure there an army of half-breeds, and to ascend the Missouri to a certain point in the Rocky Mountains from which he could make an attack on Santa Fé. With the booty there to be obtained, he proposed to set up an Indian kingdom in California, for which, of course, he should be ruler and his officers statesmen. America has been the land of roseate dreams; but, among all its visions of wealth and power, where is the equal for novelty and adventure of this mad product of Dickson's disordered mind?

On October 1, 1836, Dickson and his "army" set sail from Buffalo. McLeod's diary begins a few days prior to that event and carries on the narrative through shipwreck, arrest, starvation, and freezing, till the tattered remnant of the band straggled into the hospitable shelter of the little colony on the banks of the Red River of the North where the city of Winnipeg now stands. The early portion of the book has been lost — from the beginning until October 9 — but McLeod at one time started to make a copy, and progressed as far as December 15. Since that portion of the copy which may be compared with the original shows great accuracy, it may be assumed that the missing portion was faithfully copied. Both the original and the copy are now in the custody of the Minnesota

Historical Society, where they have been placed by McLeod's daughter, Miss Isabelle McLeod of Minneapolis.

The author of the diary is no less interesting than the events he recounts. From a youth in the quaint city of Montreal, with its almost Old World culture and physiognomy, we watch him make his way to the heart of the continent; across the vast prairies to the outposts of civilization where St. Paul is about to rise; spend the best years of his life as a fur-trader in canoe and log cabin in the solitudes of the Minnesota Valley; marry a woman of the Sioux tribe and develop into the solicitous *pater familias*; play the statesman's rôle in assisting to guide the destiny first of the new territory and then of the new state of Minnesota, being especially influential in founding a liberal educational system and fostering an active immigration policy; and finally, at forty-seven, leave behind him the memory of a forceful personality and a short life full of adventure and romance.²

GRACE LEE NUTE

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ST. PAUL

² Martin McLeod was born in L'Original, near Montreal, August 30, 1813. He was the son of John McLeod and one of a large family of children. In contemporary allusions to the personnel of Dickson's party McLeod's name is never included in the list of half-breed officers. Consequently one may be justified in inferring that he had no Indian blood. Testimony to the mark he made for himself in the developing Northwest is seen in the naming of McLeod County, Minnesota, for him. He was a member of the first three councils of the Minnesota territorial legislature and president of the fourth. His influence was exerted to induce immigration from his native land and for that purpose he wrote many letters to Canadian newspapers describing Minnesota. His untimely death in November, 1860, removed a man of abundant executive ability from the youthful state with the early history of which he had been so intimately connected. Portions of his diary, including the account of the journey from the Red River settlement to Fort Snelling in 1837, are published in John H. Stevens, *Personal Recollections of Minnesota and Its People*, 345-357 (Minneapolis, 1890).

MARTIN MCLEOD'S DIARY, 1836 to 1851

Oh' early dreams of fame or fortune in the bright path of life
 Ye are forever fled, and nought of all your visions fair
 Are left, but sad hopes, and clustering sorrows, rife
 With many cares — The hopeless heritage of which I'm heir.

McL. JANU 1848.³

July 1836.

My native land, good night! — Byron

A thought has struck me: — As I am about to enter on an “adventurous career” *I will keep a journal*. To sail on the *great lakes* and travel on the *boundless plains* of the *far west* has long been my most ardent desire — now my wishes are soon to be gratified. I may never return — to me it matters little — but should I, — perhaps at a calmer and more happy period of life it may afford me some gratification to look over this record of a *Quixotic career* 'n importe the “die is cast” and come what may, “here is a heart for every fate”

This day July 17th 1836. at 10. a.m (after saying farewell to the few friends whom I really love) left the city of Montreal accompanied as far as Lachine by John W——n and William N[ewhous]e⁴ both young friends to whom I wish all manner of happiness. Many a pleasant moment we have had together — all this is now over, and alas, ties still dearer are forever at an end.

Walked across Isle Perrault⁵ in company with a jolly and good natured canadian, a Captⁿ of militia and consequently a

³ The initials and the date suggest that McLeod made the copy of his diary in 1848 and at that time prefaced it by means of this verse with his mature reflections on the early venture narrated in the diary.

⁴ Several letters from William Newhouse among the McLeod Papers indicate that he was one of McLeod's closest friends in Montreal. Unless otherwise stated all manuscript materials referred to in the footnotes to the document herewith printed are in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society. In a few cases references are made to manuscripts acquired by the society later than the date of the present number of the BULLETIN. Initials and abbreviations are often used in the diary for names of persons and of places. Unless the author's meaning is obvious from the context, the names have been filled in by the editor in brackets. In a few cases it has not been possible to ascertain the meaning of the diarist's symbols.

⁵ This is undoubtedly Isle Perrot of the present time.

person of some consequence, and his daughter a pretty brunette. Found the *Capatain* an excellent fellow. On arrival at his house, introduced to his *bonne femme* and an excellent bumper of maderia. Soon afterwards my conveyance came up when I set out for Coteau du Lac where I arrived at 12 o'clock at night very much fatigued.

Monday 18th Miserable inn at Coteau du Lac thought of the "inns and outs of life" Rambled about the village until 2. p.m, when I hired a horse and set out for Lancaster there to await the arrival of the Steamer Neptune with my luggage &c. Rode to Lancaster in two hours, distance 21 miles. Saw but few houses on the way. Country flat & uninteresting, so I rode hard, which I almost always do particularly when alone.

Tuesday 19th Late last night came on board the "Neptune" Surprised, (this morning) to find my friends John M'L[oughlin] and Ch^s M^cB[ea]n on board. ⁶

At 6. o'clock this morning took stage from Cornwall to Dickenson's ⁷ landing. Had no time to call upon some friends in Cornwall. Steamer Dolphin from D's landing to Prescott. Met three acquaintances Wallis of Hamilton and Melville & Lilly of Montreal.

Wednesday 20th From Prescott took Steamer "Great Britain" to Queenston. The Captain an American, a most polite and excellent man. Had a delightful trip through lake Ontario. A number of friends on board. Accomodations capital. Weather pleasant. In fact every thing agreeable. Stopp'd at a number of ports on Lake Ontario. Kingston a very pleasant place, indeed, met two or three friends there, kindly received.

Touched at Oswego a rapidly increasing village the Americans call it a town already: in a year or at most two, it will be a *city* 'par excellence' Such are the Americans and such the results of their speculative propensities — but there must be a stop to all

⁶ John McLoughlin was the half-breed son of Dr. John McLoughlin, the well-known Hudson's Bay Company chief factor at Fort Vancouver in Oregon. Charles McBean was the son of another chief factor, John McBean. See *post*, n. 30.

⁷ The correct spelling of the name of this place is now Dickinson's Landing.

this, false capital will not always do,—then their “go a head” principle may retrograde.

However Oswego is well situated and with all an agreeable place. I learn that Martin Van Buren President of the United States owns much property there.

Remained one day at Toronto, do not like the place. Saw Alx^r Robertson of Inverness (an acquaintance at Montreal). People kind enough apparently, but I think some what pompous. Why? God only knows. What have they to boast of. Their town or city (as I believe it is call'd) is a muddy hole—but then it is the *Capital* of U[pper] C[anada] and they are up to their ears in politics (damn politics) and they have Sir. F[rancis] B[ond] H[ead] (whom by the by I saw á cheval) who is very popular &c &c and all that,⁸ and so you see they are a people of some consequence, and not to be sneezed at,—that is if the d—d stench of their town would allow a person to take his finger from his nasal organ long enough for that pleasant exercise. Jokeing aside I think Toronto is not destined to be the Capital of U. C. many years. Kingston would do better—but

⁸ In 1791 the British Parliament passed the Constitutional Act, which separated Canada into two parts, with the Ottawa River as the dividing line. In general, Upper Canada corresponded to what is now Ontario, and lower Canada to the Province of Quebec. Each division had its own government. Upper Canada, especially Toronto, was full of discontent at this time. Jobbing of land by an official clique, social exclusiveness on the part of the governors, and a general yearning for greater self-government among the people led in 1837 to a rebellion under William Lyon Mackenzie. Lord Durham, sent from England in 1838 to investigate conditions, made his famous report in 1839 which resulted in the union of the two Canadas in 1841. Sir Francis Bond Head was lieutenant governor of Upper Canada from 1835 to 1837. He was a vigorous man, of considerable fame as an explorer in South America and as an author. Incidental to McLeod's remark that he saw Head on horseback, it may be said that the baronet rode straight to hounds up to the age of seventy-five. See Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, *Dictionary of National Biography*, 25:324 (New York and London, 1891). For a picture of Toronto in the troublous times when McLeod made his visit, as well as for a narrative of Head's misrule and removal, see W. Stewart Wallace, *The Family Compact: A Chronicle of the Rebellion in Upper Canada*, 100-113 (*Chronicles of Canada*, vol. 24—Toronto, 1915).

perhaps the Provinces may be united, and then my own favourite Montreal (altho' I have had, heaven knows, little cause to like it) may be the *spot*. All this, and many other changes will take place before I return, if it is my lot, ever to do so.

Friday 22^d Arrived at 9 a.m. at Queenston (Lewiston on the American Side) Had but a short time to run up the "heights" to look at Gen^l Brocks monument, which is a poor affair, and will not last half as long as the memory of the hero who fell there. Thought of his gallant A.D.C. John M'Donell who fell there also; with whose brothers I am acquainted.⁹

Took stage to Niagara, where I arrived in time to have a great deal of difficulty to get dinner. Left three different seats to accommodate ladies. Americans, I judge from their manner of *ousting* a poor hungry devil from his seat without the least acknowledgment (even by a smile) of his politeness. More than 300 persons at the Hotel. (Pavillion I think it is call'd.) M^r Dickson host, and very polite. A native of Ireland. Knew him in Montreal. After my *affair* with the *fair* but unfair ladies M^r D. got places for myself and friends and very kindly sent us in some bottles of his choice wines by way of recompense for our first *embarrasment*.

The Falls. Had but a short time to look at the falls *How grand?!* They have been described a thousand — times, yet there is no language capable of conveying a correct idea of them, and of our feelings on first approaching this sublime wonder of nature. Mine were to leap into the horrid gulf from off the verge of the awful precipice on which I stood. After a few moments this strange (but not unusual) feeling gave place to others more

⁹ Sir Isaac Brock, major general in the British army during the War of 1812, was killed in battle at Queenstown, October 13, 1812. In 1824 a monument was erected on Queenstown Heights, not far from the spot where he fell. A picture and an account of this monument are given by Benson J. Lossing, in *The Pictorial Field-book of the War of 1812*, 406 n. 1 (New York, 1869). The remains of General Brock and of his aid-de-camp, Lieutenant Colonel John M'Donell, were deposited in a vault in the base. This monument, and not the present structure, was the one which McLeod saw in 1837. In 1840 the original monument was so injured by gunpowder, set off by a rebel of 1837, that a new and much more pretentious monument was erected in 1853.

OF THE

LIBERATOR OF THE INDIAN NATIONS.



To all who shall see these presents greeting:

Know Ye, That reposing special trust and confidence in the patriotism, valor, fidelity, and abilities of I have nominated, and do appoint him,

Major in the Liberator's Regiment of Fidelity
 in the service of the **LIBERATOR**: to work as such from the First day of August 1847 eighteen hundred and forty seven - He is therefore carefully and diligently to discharge the duty of obedience by doing and performing all manner of things thereto belonging. And he is to strictly charge and require all Officers and Soldiers under his command, to be obedient to his orders as obedience - And he is to observe and follow such orders and directions from time to time, as he shall receive from me, the **LIBERATOR**, or the General, or other superior Officers set over him, according to the rules and discipline of War. This Commission to continue in force during the pleasure of me the **LIBERATOR**.

GIVEN under my hand at Deloit N.C. the Fourth day of August in the year 1847 one thousand eight hundred and forty seven

BY THE LIBERATOR

[Signature]
 John George Mackenzie Secretary of War.



COMMISSION OF MARTIN MCLEOD AS MAJOR IN THE ARMY OF THE LIBERATOR

[The original of this document is preserved among the McLeod Papers. A fact not to be forgotten while reading McLeod's diary is that Dickson's party was an organized army, at least in the eyes of its leader. A little book, *Articles of War and of the Government of the Army of the Liberator*, and a list of signatures of the officers and privates to these articles, both in the McLeod Papers, show how seriously Dickson viewed the whole enterprise. In the latter paper the following officers are found: major of artillery, five captains of artillery, a captain in the Liberator's regiment of "Life Guards," two first lieutenants of artillery, a third lieutenant in the "Life Guards," two ensigns of artillery, a commissary, and an assistant commissary. Dickson himself was a general, while Mackenzie held the somewhat anomalous position of secretary of war.]

natural, and I became calm and fearless enough to examine all the places visited by travellers and lion hunters.

With my friends M^cL[oughlin] & M^cB[ean] hired an extra stage and set out at 3 p.m. to Waterloo a village opposite Black Rock 3 miles below Buffalo. Arrived at Waterloo at 6. p.m. Met Green¹⁰ at the house of M^r Smith; with him and my fellow travellers walked up to the ruins of fort Erie. Introduced for the first time to G^t D[ickson]¹¹ who, privately, informed me of his plans &c relative to the intended expedition to the north *via* the great lakes and onwards God only knows where; *and where and when it may end.*

D——n appears quite sanguine of success. As yet I know little of the man, but if I may judge from so short an acquaintance, he is some what visionary in his views — n'importe I wish to go north & westward and will embrace the opportunity, but must "look before I leap".

August 1836 Monday. 1st Buffalo — N. Y. Since the 22^d ult^o I have been residing for the most part on the British side at the house of M^r Smith of Waterloo in whose family I have been very kindly treated indeed. Visited this place frequently in company with D[ickson] M^cK[enzie] M^cL[oughlin] M^cB[ean] and H^r H[art]n[e]ll un drole de corps that we picked up at Toronto.¹² H[artnell] is a Doctr. and says he will join us for which purpose he has already prepared a sort of "horse marine"

¹⁰ In a manuscript headed "Signatures to the Articles of War Aug. 20th 1836," in the McLeod Papers, the signature of "William Greene Capt of Artillery. L.A." appears. The last letters stand for "Liberating Army."

¹¹ It is curious that McLeod had not met General Dickson, the leader of the expedition, in Montreal.

¹² John George Mackenzie was the half-breed son of "Emperor" Mackenzie. For details of his relations with the Hudson's Bay Company, see *post*, n. 28 and the references given therein. Hartnell, "an Englishman of good education and address who had been lecturing on & teaching Gymnasticks in the United States and in Canada made a conspicuous figure as the General's Aid de Camp, and afterwards designated himself 'Captain Hargraves of the Lancers.'" See George Simpson to J. H. Pelly, October 31, 1836, in the Canadian Archives, series G, Governor General's Papers, 78, no. 124. Photostatic copies of all material cited from the Canadian Archives are possessed by the Minnesota Historical Society.

uniform in addition to a famous *pair* of moustaches and hessian boots that he brought with him ready made (that is the boots and moustache) when he arrived at Montreal where I first saw him.

H—— however is a good natured sort of fellow, not wanting in courage I think altho' a little vain of his person which is certainly too good looking to be made "food for powder".

Mean time he feels like "Falstaff"

If your father will do me any honor, so;
If not let him kill the next Percy himself,
I look to be either Earl or Duke I assure you.

At 5 p.m this evening left Buffalo on board the Schooner Wave chartered to bring our party to the Sault St Marie from whence we shall proceed through lake Superior either in Birch Canoes or Boats.

Tuesday 2^d Having passed p^t Eppincan in the night had to return there this morning at dawn to take in tow a large boat belonging to D[ickson] besides take in a number of men and D. himself who has been residing at the point for some days past awaiting our arrival from Buffalo where the Schooner was detained while I was making the necessary arrangements for the voyage of our party through the lakes. D's movements at Buffalo being looked upon with suspicion by the Americans I had to take his place where I succeeded but indifferently well. Having got our men on board and taken the boat in tow — endeavoured to weather the point, but failing — obliged to anchor in the bay where we remained all night

Wednesday 3^d Early this morning — boat sent in charge of M^cL[oughlin] to row round the point while we endeavoured to beat out with the Schooner. This was not effected until 3 p.m. Mean time the wind increased to a gale which blew our boat ashore — a wreck.

M^cL——n and his men saved themselves at the expense of a good wetting, but some of our luggage (which was carelessly left in the boat) was lost.

The boat belonging to the Wave swamped twice in getting our *boat* party off to the Schooner. No lives lost fortunately. 11 o'clock at night a tremendous gale — obliged to put back to Ep-

pincan bay for shelter, in doing so our gallant little Schooner struck twice on a reef. The second time with tremendous force. For a moment I thought all was lost, and turn'd round to speak to some of my companions in danger when D[ickson] very coolly said to me, now my dear fellow watch the countenances around us and you will realize those beautiful lines in Byron's Don Juan

Then shrieked the timid, and stood still the brave

Our deck was illuminated with the lightening that preceeded at every moment the tremendous peels of thunder that burst around us and at intervals completely *drown'd* the fearful roaring of the waves. Altogether it was a sublime altho' awful scene. Before day light — got into the shelter of the Bay. Remained on deck all night.

Thursday 4th Sailed early this morning and arrived at Gravelly bay at 2 p.m. Went on shore. Here the Welland Canal joins lake Erie. There are a few houses and some huts occupied by Irish. Left G. B. at 10 this evening. Wind favourable. proceeded across the lake in a S.W. course. had a pleasant run of 60 miles during the night. Passed long point on the Canada shore at day break.

Friday 5th Wind N. steady, but light. Sailing very slowly. Nothing occur'd to day worth noteing.

Remain'd on deck all night talking to D——n.

Saturday 6th Wind unfavourable — all very dull in consequence Pass'd the day reading "Tacitus."

Sunday 7th Wind same as yesterday. The appearance of the Country on the banks of the lake is not favourable for agriculture. Very low & swampy for the most part, so far as I can judge.

Monday 8th Light but fair wind to day, just a week since we left Buffalo. Saw two brigs and a number of Schooners, like ourselves, creeping along very slowly.

Tuesday. 9th Hurrah! Wind in our favour and blowing a gale. Obligated to run under a close reefed fore sail. Waves mountains high. Our little "Wave" behaves gallantly. Saw two steam boats running into bays for shelter. All our party sick (poor devils) but four. Feel very well myself.

Early in the day, pass'd near where the battle of lake Erie was fought. This evening pass'd the islands below Detroit river. To night we shall get out of the lake.

Wednesday 10th At 10 a.m. came to anchor opposite a Canadian farm house 3 miles below Malden, and 20 miles from Detroit. In the evening our Schooner being becalmed — Rambled on shore for a while and then with D[ickson] M^cB[ean] and M^cL[oughlin] took passage in a Steam boat to the town of Detroit where we arrived a short time after dark.

Thursday. 11th Rambled through Detroit. Think it a pleasant place enough. Increasing rapidly, like all the American towns. People inquisitive and rude. Much speculation as to who we are.

In the evening cross'd over to Sandwich, a small village on the British side. Saw a person whom I knew (slightly) in Montreal. Did not introduce myself.

Friday 12th No appearance of our schooner. Remained all day in Sandwich. In the evening went with D[ickson] to an Auberge 4 miles above Sandwich where we remain'd for the night.

Saturday 13. Schooner came up this morning, but wind unfavourable to proceed. Feel unwell for the first time since I left Montreal.

Staid at the Auberge all day. Host a Canadian and a good natured fellow. Introduced me to Margaret B—— a pretty *Can[a]dienne*.

Sunday 14. Still unable to proceed with our Schooner up the river. Went with Green to an island in the river 3 miles long — on the American shore 2 miles above Detroit. Delightful island, only one house on it, inhabited by a Dutch family who very politely treated us to Porter bread & cheese after our long walk. Saw a number of woodcock.

In the evening return'd in a Canoe to Schooner and went ashore with D[ickson] and others. Saw M. B——

Monday 15. By appointment went with M. B. across to Detroit. In the steam ferry boat, met four American ladies (ladies in dress, if not —) who *stared* very inquisitively at myself and companion

Dined in Detroit. Saw some of its curiosities and went to the menagerie saw a variety of large snakes, birds, Monkeys and other beasts besides some beastly spectators "half seas over, chewing tobacco as if for a wager"

Cross'd to the British side, took a Gig and return'd to Schooner after dark. Found all my companions in a *wonderment* at my long stay — adventures &c. &c.

Tuesday 16. Still wind bound. After breakfast went ashore to look at the orchards and gardens of the habitants. Met M. B. by accident.

Wednesday 17. At 11 a.m. got under way with a light breeze, and before dark entered lake Saint Clair

This lake is 30 miles long, and named after the American General St Clair famous for his fight with the Indians by whom he was (if I recollect right) defeated more than once — but certainly in one desperate battle where he lost a great number of his men.¹³ The banks of the lake (so far as I saw) are very low, and the country quite uninteresting. Sailed through the lake during the night with a gentle breeze.

Thursday 18th Wind light and not very favourable managed to get up the Saint Clair river a few miles — banks low — Country not interesting — Saw no well cultivated farms — passed a few log cabins A brig and two or three Schooners in our Company bound to lake Michigan.

Friday 19. Wind S.S.W. under way with a pleasant breeze. Aspect of the country much more pleasing as we proceed upwards. River very winding, which retards us very much, as we have to tack so frequently however we managed to outsail all the other schooners, but were pass'd this evening by the Brig an advantage over us that she owes to her top sails which look beautiful towering high above the trees that border both banks of the river.

Saturday 20. Sailing all day with a light breeze. At twelve o'clock at night overtaken by the S[team] B[oar]

¹³ The lake was not named for General St. Clair, who was disastrously defeated in a campaign against the Indians in northern Ohio in the fall of 1791. A reference to this lake as early as 1686 occurs in an "Account of Detroit Post," in *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, 16: 127.

"Gratiot" ran down upon us, and hailing our Captain *ordered* him to lower sail and repair on board the steamer which he refused to do, meantime the Schooner was kept under way, the S. B. following or rather running parallel to us. After some altercation and loud talking by both parties our main sail was by request of D[ickson] and myself let down, when the S. B. immediately ran close along side and lashed to the Schooner. The Sheriff of Detroit and his posse then stepp'd on board and after blustering with the Captain of the Schooner about the irregularity of papers &c. requested to get the names of all on board. I ask'd what our names had to do with his official business on board — nothing in particular, but he would like to have them. no doubt, to blazon in your d——d scurilous newspapers I replied.

He was an ignorant brute and I longed to kick him. The S. B. being bound to Black river near lake Huron continued upwards with us in tow. Arrived at black river a short time before day.

Sunday 21. It turns out this morning that the Sheriff has a charge against us for some animals said to have been killed near the entrance to Saint Clair river by a party from the Schooner. The sailors deny the charge and so do our men, but it will not do, there is a strong guard on board, and I can easily see the object of the d——d rascals is to make us pay their demand (an imposition) of 150\$. By G——d if the wind was favourable I would with twenty of our best men volunteer to cut out our Schooner and run over to the British side where they would afterwards meet with as hot a reception as some of them are destined to find in h—ll (if there is a hell — *as some doubt*)

As matters look rather serious D[ickso]n has thought it best to give the Sheriff and his loafers his d[ra]ft for \$150. This arrangement was brought about by the interference of General McNeil of Boston who is here on business; with whom D——n is acquainted.¹⁴ We are all much indebted to Gen^l MacNeil for his courtesy and kind assistance in this unpleasant affair.

Three of the party and myself called in the evening upon the officers of "Fort Gratiot" two miles above Black river and near the entrance to lake Huron. These gentlemen received us very

¹⁴ For a brief sketch of the career of Brigadier General John McNeil, Jr., see Nute, in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 10: 176 n. 7.

politely; apologizing for the villainous behaviour of the people of B.R. & expressing their regret that their duty as military men prevented them from giving us their assistance and advice when they heard of our difficulties — from the well known jealousy of the citizens towards the army and its officers. The garrison is commanded at present by Major Hoffman.¹⁵ The other gentlemen whom we had the pleasure of meeting were Cap^{tn} St John, Lieu^t Bumford (son of Co^l Bumford of the Engineers) and Doct. Clarke. I mention their names because I wish to remember them and because it is a real pleasure to meet with not only civility but kindness from strangers, particularly after being treated as we were by the Sheriff and his unwashed followers, and Yahoos of *Black river*, but never mind we may yet “meet at Phillippi.”

Monday 22 At noon left B.R. and cross'd over to the British side to await a wind. Black river is a d——d hole of twenty houses half of them grog dens, but according to its inhabitants it is destined soon to be a city of importance. It may before I revisit it Took a book and went a shore to look at the country — which is pleasing. Met a lady — (a very genteel and well dress'd one, for *an out of the way* country corner) who asked me if I had found a book at the same time looking very closely at the one I carried. I answered by handing her the book, when she blushed very prettily indeed, and said Oh! no Sir, this, this, is not the one, but I lost mine a short time since somewhere within a mile or two from this. Madam may I have the pleasure of accompanying you in search of your lost *treasure*. *granted*. Altogether it was a pleasing incident, and made some amends for my rude treatment on t'other side by the *black* rascals.

Voila mon episode — and days adventures.

Tuesday 23^d Last night we towed our schooner into lake Huron — which employed us nearly the whole night as the

¹⁵ For a description of Fort Gratiot in 1834, as well as a reference to Major William Hoffman of the Second United States Infantry, see Jackson Kemper, “Journal of an Episcopalian Missionary's Tour to Green Bay, 1834,” in *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, 14: 403 (Madison, 1898). Another description of the fort may be found in a “History of Fort Gratiot” reprinted from the *Detroit Free Press* of August 24, 1890, in *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, 18: 667–676 (Lansing, 1892).

current at the entrance from Saint Clair river is very swift and strong. Surf on the lake very high and our boat in getting off from the shore the first time filled — no lives lost, altho' one poor fellow narrowly escaped. Second trip of the boat (in which I was) more fortunate.

At day light the breeze died away. Made only 20 miles through the lake to day. Delighted with the appearance of the lake the water of which is so clear that we can see the fishes distinctly at a great depth. — perhaps 40 to 60 feet.

Wednesday. 24. Wind favourable. Course N.N.W. Sailed 70 miles. Passed the day reading Zenophon's *Cyropoedia* Saw three sail in the distance to the westward, perhaps tomorrow we may pass them as our "Wave" Sails very fast.

Behold the threaten sails,
Born with the invisible and creeping winds,
Draw the huge bottoms through the furrow'd sea
Breasting the lofty surge Shakspeare

Thursday 25. Made a good run last night. It being beautifully clear (as the moon shines till near day) remained on deck till near 1 o.c. this morning at 10 a.m lost our breeze — nearly becalmed. Attempted to read but was prevented by an altercation between two of our party, M^cB[ean] talking and acting very foolishly — besides giving us an unpleasant specimen of puerile fretfulness — common with characters of his *calibre*. If any obstacle or unforeseen event interrupts the current of their desires they immediately vent their spleen in a thousand childish and vain exclamations. This I take to be one of the greatest foibles of too many young men who are obliged to endure privations to which they are not accustomed &c &c. But what can be easier or more natural (if the mind be previously prepared) than to endure with cheerfulness the different changes which the body may be subject to, and the fatigues and privations we all feel we must necessarily undergo.

Friday 26. Wind N.W. cold, hazy, and unpleasant. Slept on deck last night — got wet from the waves dashing over the Schooner. No prospect of getting out of the lake to day. Yet 80 miles from Sault St Marié.

Tuesday 30. We have now been four days among the islands and tacking and retacking in lake George & Mud lake endeavouring to find the ship channel to the Sault (having no pilot) Being so much longer getting onward than we expected — had to *exist* three days on boiled green apples that (by chance) we got from an apple pedlar's schooner that we over hauled anchor'd in mud lake, waiting for a wind. Some of our men (poor devils) sick and sullen. Rather a sour commencement these apples — would prefer them in the shape of cider, and so says D[ickso]n. M^cB[ean] the ill natured looks like a crab. "an' he crosses my path,[" he may find himself in the *situation* of Bob Acres, to whom, I think, he must be nearly related. Saw Drummond's Island with the remains of an old fortification on it — besides a number of other island[s] part of the very numerous group called the Manatoulin isles said to be more than 30 thousand in number.¹⁶ Some of them are very beautiful, covered with fine trees and verdure to the waters edge, others are mere islets or barren rocks large enough for a bird to perch upon.

Near one of the isles we found a huron indian with his squaw. The poor fellow was surprised (as we were out of the ship channel) but not frightened; and gave us some excellent Salmon trout in exchange for a couple of handkerchiefs

Wednesday 31. *Sault Saint Marié* Arrived at this place at 10 a.m and anchored on the British side, opposite the establishment of the Hudson's Bay Company in charge of a M^r Nourse who was civil and polite to us.¹⁷ Took a boat and cross'd over to the American side where there is a village of about twenty houses and a garrison of two Companies commanded by Major Cobb U.S.A.¹⁸ The people of this place surprised to see us look so quiet and harmless, as the story of our affair at Black river has

¹⁶ Manitoulin Island, the chief island in the group, lies a little east of Drummond Island. A description of the fortifications on Drummond Island in the third decade of the century is given in *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, 23: 411-413 (Lansing, 1895).

¹⁷ A copy of William Nourse's letter of September 15, 1836, to John Siveright, describing Dickson and his party, is in the Canadian Archives, series G, Governor General's Papers, 78, no. 124.

¹⁸ The place referred to is Fort Brady. For a description of this fort in 1830 see "M'Call's Journal of a Visit to Wisconsin in 1830," in *Wisconsin*

preceded us in the American Newspapers under the ominous head of "Pirates on the Lakes" with the rascally Editor's additions and embellishments.¹⁹ D[ickson]'s name is the only one mentioned. Thank fortune, fate or whatever it may be, I resisted the impudent Sheriff and did not give my name "to be adorn'd by a newspaper tale", because it would give great anxiety, and cause much pain to my friends, else I would not care a farthing about the whole affair — foolish as it was. But Editors and particularly ignorant American Editors "make mountains out of molehills" "Pirates on the lakes" who ever read so egregious a *caption* to a ridiculous paragraph describing our personal appearance ornamented with huge mustaches &c &c Why did not the d——d fools say a la "Corsair" and the picture would be complete. I shall live (magre all this) to laugh over it "many a time and oft"

By the ghosts of Kidd, Lafitte, Dampier and the Devil who ever drem't that my mother's son was to be a *Pirate* (ha, ha, I must drown the thought in a bumper of old Johnson's aqua vitae.

Thursday 1st September. Went to the Garrison — had a good laugh with the officers about our piratical affair. Some persons actually believed the whole story of the newspapers.

Another paragraph says "A low black looking Schooner with raking masts. Sails fast, and looks suspicious" This is nearer the truth — but who would ever think of a pirate on the lakes. What is to be got paper money at 100 p c^t dis[coun]t; and if there was aught else where is the way to escape. Why the person who talk[s] about it should be set down as a fool, and those who would beli[e]ve, accomodated with rooms in Bedlam if there is such a particular place in this outlandish land where to me, at present, all appears "one wide bedlam"

Historical Collections, 12: 183 (Madison, 1892). Brevet Major Waddy V. Cobbs was an officer of the Second United States Infantry. *Official Army Register*, 1838, p. 21, 33.

¹⁹ In the *Detroit Daily Advertiser* for August 23, 1836, is an account of the arrest of Dickson's party. The heading reads, "Pirates on the Lakes." This is obviously the paper to which McLeod refers, for his quotations here and under date of September 1 are similar to the phrases of this newspaper article. A file of the *Advertiser* is in the possession of the Detroit Public Library.

3^d I begin to feel dull, and wish we were "once more upon the waters" altho' it is neither save [*sic*] nor pleasant (so they say) to navigate lake Superior at this Season. Wrote to a number of my friends for the last time before I enter on the wild regions of the North & West. Many a time will I think of absent friends and ruined hopes by our lonely camp fires.

The intrepid Swiss, who guards a foreign shore,
 Condemned to climb his mountain cliffs no more,
 If chance he hears the song so sweetly wild
 Which oft his infant hours beguiled,
 Melts at the long lost scenes, which round him rise
 And sinks a martyr to repentant sighs.

Pleasures of Memory.

This same habit of quoting and writing scraps of "popery" as my *orange friend* B——n says is a vile one, (I know and feel it) but what else can I do. I promised dear E——²⁰ a *buke* of some kind and in the present dearth of adventures of my own I must e'en put in some of the good things of others, besides it is a sort of pleasure to recur to my memory for passages of favourite poets read in happier days.

Sault St Marie (as I have already s^d) is a small village at the entrance to the grand lake Superior. There is here a Cantonment of two Companies of very awkward American *Soldados* commanded by a Major Cobb a singular veteran who prefers any thing to a clean shirt and any duty but a military one. His 18 feet picket fort is his world and I verily believe his ideas never extend beyond the old saw mill above the fort where he is continually with his men patching, and *fiddleing* &c. &c.²¹

²⁰ "E——" was Elizabeth Magrane, a sister of McLeod's friend, Thomas Magrane of Montreal. In the copy of a letter to William Newhouse, found in McLeod's outfit book as fur-trader for the period 1840-43, the following remarks occur: "I rec^d a letter from Montreal—from T. M—— a long rigmarole, and touching, not very delicately, upon my former penchant for his sister E." The words "his sister" are crossed out in the original. To an earlier letter from Magrane in the McLeod Papers is appended a note by Elizabeth thanking Martin for the account of his travels.

²¹ A description of the old mill race and saw mill belonging to Fort Brady is given by Mrs. Anna Reid Knox, in "Michigan State Rights," in *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, 30: 165 (Lansing, 1906).

There are here at present quite a number of Chippewas with their Wigwams on their return from the island of Mackinaw where they have been to receive their annuities for lands sold in this vicinity and along lake Superior as far westward as Chocolate river, an immense tract but of little value for Agricultural purposes, but there is said to be a vast deal of copper in the regions bordering on the lake, but there appears to be some doubt whether even that can ever be made available or no.²² But at no very distant day there will be very extensive fisheries established at different points on the lake which if successful, (as we have every reason to believe they will be) they will prove a source of considerable wealth to this portion of Michigan.²³

The best fish caught are the "white fish" which are delicious I think I prefer them to even Salmon. A large species of trout is also caught in abundance and a fish very large and exceedingly rich called by its Indian name Sis-Ka-wat which I think is also of the trout kind.²⁴ These are both excellent, and preferable to the "white fish" for salting, but not so delicate when fresh.

²² The document signed by Hawgayosh and fifty-two other Indians at Michilimackinac, July 14, 1836, acceding to the amendments made by the United States Senate to the treaty of March 28, 1836, which ceded a large amount of Indian lands in Michigan, is published in 24 Congress, 2 session, *House Executive Documents*, no. 82, p. 9 (serial 303).

²³ McLeod's statement might lead the reader to believe that fisheries on a fairly extensive scale had not already been established in Lake Superior. As a matter of fact, Ramsay Crooks, on reorganizing the American Fur Company in 1834, had initiated a fisheries policy for that organization which was only second, if indeed not equal, in importance to the fur-trade policy of his business. In the very letter in which Charles W. Borup recounts the visit of Dickson's party to his post at La Pointe the following statement is found: "Our fishing promised fair after you left. They had at Fond du Lac 200 Barrels and in 15 days we got at our place 82 Barrels." See Borup to Crooks, October 22, 1836, in the American Fur Company Papers in the possession of the New York Historical Society. A photostatic copy of this letter is in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society. At the time that McLeod was penning these remarks in the Lake Superior region Crooks was making a survey of the fisheries and the fur trade.

²⁴ "This fish is known only from Lake Superior, where it is common. It was first described from there as *Salmo siscowet* Agassiz." Ulysses O. Cox, *A Preliminary Report on the Fishes of Minnesota*, 47 (Geological and Natural History Survey of Minnesota, *Zoological Series*, no. 3—St. Paul, 1897).

During our stay at the Sault S^t Marie, treated with great kindness by M^r Ermatinger and family. M^r E. is an old indian trader and has given us some very useful information for our guidance in the Indian Country.²⁵ The officers of the Garrison (particularly Lieu^t Burnet) treated us with much civility.²⁶ Old Major Cobb too was polite — shaved himself once during our stay and endeavoured to look amiable notwithstanding his stern military penchant for his 18 foot pickets and his paternal partiality for the old shackeling saw mill.

Indeed we have no reason to complain of any of the people of this hyperborean Corner, unless I except old Squire Johnson who keeps the only inn, charges most unrighteously, and is withall a d——d crab stick of an old fellow.

Here we had a ludicrous specimen of an American Election. Johnson our old crabstick and — a Cooper Candidates. The cooper was a temperance man and turn'd out to his thirsty friends a barrel of beer. Johnson to ensure his return was more liberal and gave out a barrel of firey whiskey so it was *Whiskey versus Beer — Election, about 30* — but it would not do, the coopers friends were the most numerous and after first getting drunk on Johnson's whiskey the[y] carried the cooper nem. con.²⁷ on his *bier* which so enraged our host *Johnsing* that he foamed like an old boar — more, I think, at the loss of his ducats — no, his whiskey — than the election.

Sept, 12. Feel unwell to day, yesterday went across with my friend J. G. M^cK[enzie] to the british side and got completely wet from running too near the Sault with our birch canoe and in the evening went to a small party at M^r E[rmatinger]'s after my return at 11. Sat up the rest of the night with Dubay, and others, to the great annoyance of the grumbling host and his scarce less sour Xantippe of a wife. So between my shower bath

²⁵ Charles Oakes Ermatinger, son of a Swiss merchant of Canada, had settled on the Canadian side of the Sault de Ste. Marie sometime before 1814. Crooks and Robert Stuart to John Jacob Astor, January 24, 1818, in *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, 20: 25.

²⁶ I. R. D. Burnett was a second lieutenant in the Second United States Infantry. *Army Register*, 1838, p. 13.

²⁷ *Nemine contradicente*, that is, unanimously.

with M^cK—— hot bath (inwardly) and other agreeable follies I feel but indifferently well to day; thus it is

Our pleasant vices
Are made the whips to scourge us

but if I can get M. E[rmatinger] to take a walk with me as promised I shall be better on my return. A walk always (well or ill) does me a great benefit — ('tis your only virtuous medicine) but it should be a brisk one of five or six miles at least; none of your gentle snail creeping paces only fit for a dandy, a dame, or a Chelsea pensioner.

After this I shall abjure Sack (as Fallstaf's says) and lead a virtuous life.

Sept^r 14. To day saw off our friend J. G. M^cKenzie who returns to Montreal in consequence of ill health. We all regret the necessity of his return and I much fear he will not recover to join us next spring as proposed. A few months ago the poor fellow was in the bloom of health, now alas he is dying of a sudden attack — pulmonary I think.²⁸

Doctor H[artnell] returns also — as I expected. He is one of those volatile characters who have not stamina to carry through any undertaking. Not long since he was all enthusiasm now he is quite discouraged at the accounts he has received of the dangers we *may* be exposed to, the fatigues we will have to undergo, the food we will have to eat — and *not to eat* &c. I suspect it is more through fears of having to fast occasionally than for any other cause he returns. So far he is true to the character (given) of many of his Countrymen — for he is an Englishman.

Our party has now dwindled down to a very small one, from numbering nearly sixty persons in all when we left Buffalo. Some have deserted, some left on the way sick, others return'd &c &c. With exception of two or three persons we have but little reason to regret these that have fallen off, particularly the Americans. They were d——d impertinent and useless fellows. Our sailors

²⁸ Mackenzie returned to Berthier, near Montreal, to spend the winter with his sister. A letter written by him in the latter part of April of the following year shows him still ill. For further accounts of Mackenzie, who was one of the leading spirits of Dickson's enterprise, see Nute, in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 10: 126, 134 n. 16, 136, 178, 179.

have to return with the Schooner as we cannot get her into lake Superior as we expected, from the information derived at Buffalo. We shall leave here tomorrow to cross the lake (that is to coast it, 540 miles on the south side) in a Mackinaw Boat our party will consist of

Gen ^l J. Dickson	Myself
A. R. McL[eod]	McB[ea]n
Green.	Hays.
Parys.	[Lindsey] ²⁹

McLaughlin. and six men with our guide Gauthier a halfbreed Chippewa his wife and Child and three Chippewas that accompany him to assist in navigating the boat *in all twenty persons.* ³⁰

September 15. To day at 2 p.m left the Sault Saint Marie on board the Mackinaw with a gentle breeze which carried us about ten miles up the lake before dark. We encamped opposite an island (in the lake half a mile from shore) in a very pleasant spot Just before dark while we were pitching our tents an

²⁹ This name has been crossed out in the original.

³⁰ McLeod accounts for Hayes and Parys in his diary, *post*, p. 412-416, and what is known of Dickson's later history is given *post*, n. 86. Something, however, needs to be said of the other members of the party. Alexander R. McLeod, Jr., son of a factor in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, accepted at the end of the journey a position offered by the company and remained in its employ in the Northwest till about 1840. In 1842 he appeared in Minnesota and became a well-known figure, especially noted for his magnificent physique and unusual strength. He died while serving with the Union Army in 1864, at the age of forty-seven. John McLoughlin also accepted a position in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company and remained in the Far Northwest until his murder in 1842. For more detailed accounts of these men see Nute, in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 10: 129 n. 4, 136. William Greene was left behind at La Pointe on account of illness. Borup in his letter of October 22, 1836 (see *ante*, n. 23), states that his boat carried Greene as far as the Sault. Charles McBean went as far as the Red River settlement with the party, but what happened to him later is not known. The half-breed who was guiding the party at this time was a member of the Gauthier family, some account of which is given by Reuben G. Thwaites, in *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, 19: 179 n. 51 (Madison, 1910). Several Gauthiers are listed in a manuscript entitled "Pay Roll, 1843. Chippewa's of the Mississippi & Lake Superior. Cash Annuity 1843."

Indian woman and three very pretty indian girls came down from the hills behind bringing us some huckleberries for which we were grateful besides making them some presents in return, and sending Tobacco to their male friends.

16th This morning three Chippewas made us a visit bringing in return for the Tob^c we sent them yesterday a number of very fine white fish and trout. After a parley and a smoke they left us promising to see us again if the winds should delay us on our voyage.

Sept. 17. Started with a fine breeze. our birch Canoe in tow of the Boat. About 11 a.m. D[ickson] M^cL[eo]^d myself and one man got into the Canoe for the purpose of trying to out-sail the Boat. We were three miles out in the lake at the time, and while we were fixing the Sail of the Canoe &c. the boat continued on and got far a-head of us. Soon afterwards the wind changed, — blowing off shore — and continued to increase. the Boat was now nearly out of sight; and we began to perceive our danger, and regretted having left it. Our Canoe for want of ballast got unmanageable and we were obliged to lower sail and paddle towards the shore which we reached after a long exertion — running our frail Craft through the rolling surf high on the Sandy beach — where we abandoned it — and walked in pursuit of the boat along the sands (which on this part of the lake extend for very many miles) for nearly two hours, when we came up to it lying snugly to in a little harbour. We were well laughed at for our “Canoe adventure”, and deserved it because the guide warned us of our danger besides assuring us that the boat could outsail the Canoe.

Sailed about forty miles to day and encamped at sun down on a gentle slope about ten yards from the beach. Weather mild. Feel unwell.

River Onatonagon 9 Oct 1836. Arrived here at 2 PM this day There is a Fur post here, and having letters to young^r Ermatinger, who has charge of this post we were obliged to put in to deliver them.³¹

³¹ The Ontonagon River in Michigan empties into Lake Superior a little to the west of Keweenaw Point. Apparently the Ermatinger mentioned was

M^r E. with his family absent at La Point. Having forgotten our ink and papers at the Sault S^t Marie I have been unable to make any mem^o of our route through the lake this far but can say enough from memory.

First then, the distance from the Sault to La Point is 450 miles as we had to come, (That is by the coast) we are yet about 60 miles from La Point, consequently have been 24 days coming 390 miles

In this route we met with many dangers. At this season the great lake is continually in a state of agitation, and a Batteau with 21 persons and a quantity of Goods & provisions in it is a no difficult thing to swamp. A misfortune which we luckily escaped, a number of times. In making the traverse (of 21 miles) at long Point we fortunately got a few hours of fair weather, but no sooner had we crossed than there sprang up a breeze which would have *immortalized* us all in a very few moments.³² The Indians wait a number of days for good weather to pass this dangerous traverse, they then paddle their Canoes some distance from the shore and commence singing a hymn to the Great Spirit intreating him to give them fair weather untill they have crossed over, after which men women and children take their paddles and work silently but diligently until they have crossed. Indeed nothing can be more impressive than the simple but sincere manner in which these primitive people worship the great Being. One instance of this I had the happiness to witness in our route thro' the lake. Upon a very calm night while at about 3 miles distant from what we all supposed an uninhabited shore we suddenly heard a number of voices singing. Upon enquiring of our boatman

the son of the trader at the Sault. In the pay roll cited in note 30, the name of James Ermatinger occurs in a list of the members of the La Pointe band.

³² Edmund F. Ely gives a nearly contemporaneous account of crossing this dangerous stretch of water: "Friday Morning, at 2 o'clk struck our tents, rounded the point proceeded down the shore two or three miles & commenced the traverse by the light of the Moon, with a good side wind out of the Bay. . . . after crossing proceeded, wind fair, to Point Ki-wi-na . . . we have been in places today where we must have perished if a sudden storm had risen." Entry for August 9, 1833, in manuscript diary on deposit with the St. Louis County Historical Society, Duluth. A copy of this diary is in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society.

what these voices meant he immediately replied, with an air of great carelessness that it was nothing but some Savages praying and that it was their custom always to solicit the Great Spirit at the top of their voices more frequently however, they retire to some remote part of the wood, and having erected a long pole (with part of the bark peeled off so as to make it resemble a barber's pole) with a small piece of tobacco (as an offering) suspended to it, they there resort to pray. At other times they pray to the Miche Manitou (or evil spirit) entreating him to not harm them

They then say that there is no necessity to pray to the Kegie Manitou (or good spirit) as he never harms them. It is only when they wish to be successful in hunting or killing their enemies that they pray to the good spirit.

Gauthier our boatman who is a metiff³³ and an Indian trader (and who by the bye is a very civil fellow) informs us that no person unacquainted with this lake can form any idea of the dangers & difficulties attendant upon the navigation of it at this late season. It has frequently happened that the traders have been obliged to throw over board all their boat load of goods in order to save their lives. So far we have been lucky altho' we very narrowly escaped swamping two or three different times; but how the rest of our lake voyage may terminate 'tis difficult to say.

The appearance of the land along the whole coast of the lake is not at all favorable for agricultural pursuits. Indeed I am inclined to think that it will never be settled. There are, also, but very few good harbors for ships. I think we found but two, perhaps three, and these were not deep enough for vessels drawing more than ten feet water.

La Point 11 Oct^r 1836. Arrived at this place about 11 o'clock this morning and encamped near the Indian huts about half a mile from the American Fur Co's post. Upon our arrival we received a salute of three guns from the Indians. This place, on the map, is called "Middle Isle" & is very pleasantly sit-

³³ Half-breeds were quite generally known as *métis* or *bois brûlés*. The former word appears in several spellings, including *métif* for the masculine singular.

uated. The principle post of the Am[erican Fur] Co[mpany] is on this Island. They derive great profit from the traffic in Fish which are caught in great numbers by their own people & by the Indians both at "Fond du Lac" and (I believe) among the Islands called the "Twelve Apostles" We were very civilly treated by the Gentleman in charge of the post at our arrival.³⁴

Tuesday 12th Oct^r 1836. This evening wrote to Gen^l M^cK[enzie] and M^r R——e and forwarded them to M^r Schoolcraft of S^t S^t Marie with directions to forward them to Canada.³⁵

Wednesday 13 Oct^r Left La Pointe about 1 P.M. today having procured the Batteau from Gauthier to take us to "Fond du Lac" it being impossible to get Canoes at La Pointe. Made only 7 miles this evening and encamped at the mouth of "Sandy River"

Thursday 14 Oct^r 1836 Wind bound all day. Passed this day reading or rather studying Spanish.³⁶ Our Expedition has

³⁴ La Pointe is on the island now called Madeline Island. A letter in the American Fur Company Papers (see *ante*, n. 23) from Crooks to William Aitken, December 12, 1835, announces the change of the location of the principal post from Mackinac to La Pointe. The reasons given are that the change makes unnecessary old experienced boatmen to carry outfits clear to Mackinac and return and that the fisheries will center at La Pointe. The Reverend Sherman Hall, missionary at La Pointe, gives the following description of that place as he found it in 1831: "This is the name of the trading establishment on Magdalen Island, near the Southern Shore of Lake Superior. It is the headquarters of one of the Departments of the *American Fur Company*. . . . The principle traders connected with the department at Magdalen Island, are Messrs. [Lyman] Warren, [William] Dingley, [Charles W.] Oakes, [Samuel] Ashmun, [John] Holiday & Butterfield. Warren's post is at the Island; the others are from 100 to 200 miles distant. At the Island are about 150 permanent residents, exclusive of children. . . . Gardens can be cultivated and many vegetables raised. There is some [live] stock at La Pointe." The manuscript which contains this statement is among the Hall Papers in the possession of Mr. Ernest W. Butterfield of Concord, New Hampshire, photostatic copies of which are owned by the Minnesota Historical Society.

³⁵ Mackenzie was commissioned "brigadier general" in Dickson's "Army of the Liberator." Henry Rowe Schoolcraft was the United States superintendent of Indian affairs for Michigan, an explorer of the Northwest, and author of several books on the Indians and on his explorations.

³⁶ See *post*, p. 437 and n. 10.

caused much excitement here & our purpose has preceeded us many hundred miles. We have great hopes of success.

15th Oct^r 1836. Left our encampment about 3 P.M to-day. Met M^r Warren of the Am. Fur Co. near the *De Tour* he gave Gen^l D. letters to the different persons in charge of the Fur posts in the interior, requesting them to aid us with guid[e]s, provisions &c to enable us to prosecute our journey to red River.³⁷ The old Gentleman expressed his doubts of our being able to get farther than Leech lake before the small rivers were frozen.

In the morning I went out to hunt and got lost in the thick wood. After rambling about bewildered, for more than five hours, came out to the lake about 3 miles distant from the encampment, and had to force my way thro a very thick underwood. Came to the camp quite fatigued.

16th Oct^r 1836 Left our camp at day break. About 11 o'clock a severe snow storm commenced, and in a short time the wind off the lake increased so violently that it was with great difficulty we could keep the batteau from being driven upon the rocks which line the coast, in this part of the lake for many miles. The fur Co's boat which kept us company narrowly escaped swamping, being very heavily laden. After some difficulty both boats made the mouth of a small river, but which was too shallow to admit them, we then had all to jump into the water, up to our middles to unload the boats and pull them over the sand bar to prevent them from being filled with water.

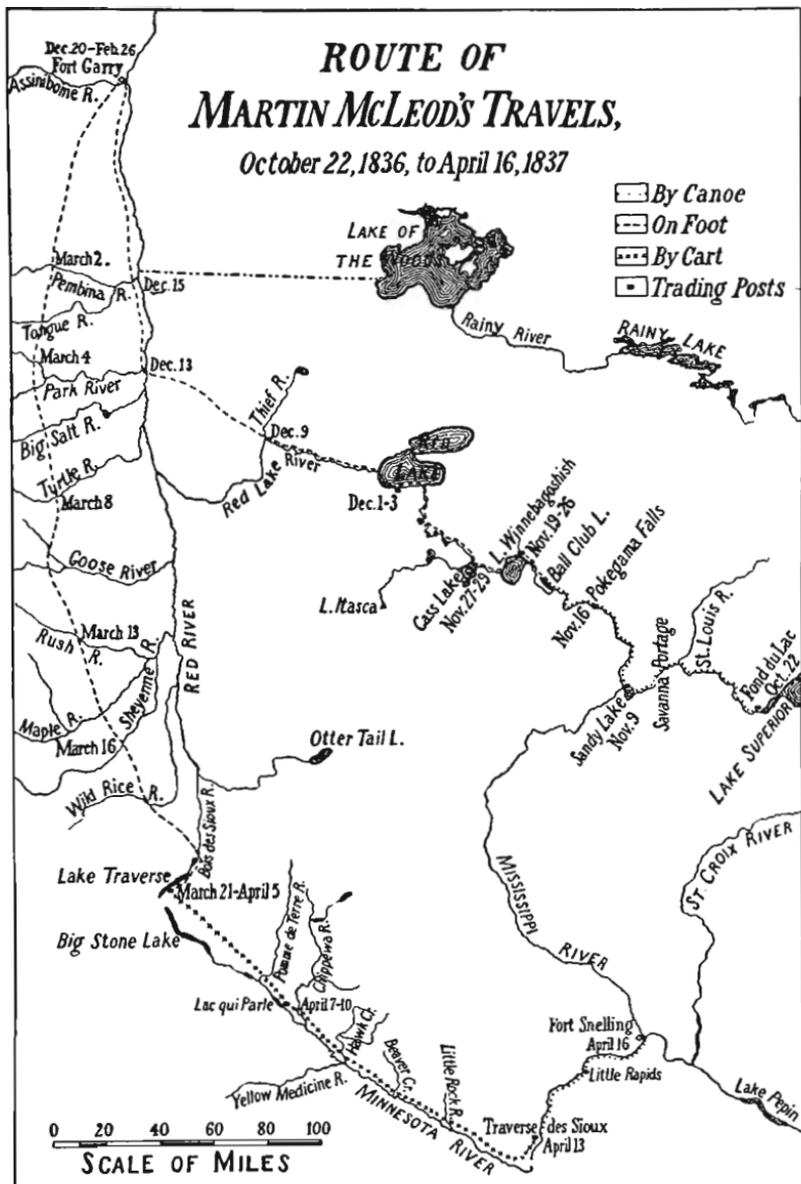
Encamped, cold, and uncomfortable enough.

17th Oct^r 1836 Cold, and unpleasant, wind still blowing violently from off the lake. No probability of leaving encampment today.

³⁷ Lyman Marcus Warren, in charge of the La Pointe station, was a well-known fur-trader in the Northwest. An account of this interesting character is given in the "Memoir of William W. Warren," his son, preceding the latter's "History of the Ojibways, Based upon Traditions and Oral Statements," in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 5: 9-12. A letter from Mrs. Julia A. Spears, daughter of Lyman Warren, dated Detroit, Minnesota, June 26, 1923, and addressed to the Minnesota Historical Society, states that her father came from Brockport, New York. The memoir gives Hartford, Connecticut, as the place of his birth. Both accounts agree, however, that he came to the Lake Superior region in 1818.

ROUTE OF MARTIN MCLEOD'S TRAVELS,

October 22, 1836, to April 16, 1837



21st Oct^r 1836 For the past three days we have been detained at "Bois Brulie" river by a severe storm.⁸⁸ Extremely cold & many of the small streams nearly frozen. Short of provisions & placed on allowances of a biscuit each pr day.*

*[Note.] That is a cake about equal to a biscuit.

22 Oct^r Left Bois Brulie river at day break & arrived at Fond du Lac about 5 in the evening. After resting rowed up the St Luis River reached the AM Fur Co's trading house at eleven o'clock this night

Sunday 23rd Oct^r Visited the trading house of the A.M.F Co Very kindly treated by M^r Scott the gentleman in charge of the post.⁸⁹ Received much useful instruction from him respecting our route to Red River and also furnished (by him) with Canoes & a guide to conduct us to Sandy Lake.

⁸⁸ This is McLeod's spelling of Bois Brule River in Wisconsin.

⁸⁹ Though McLeod indicates that James P. Scott was in charge of the Fond du Lac post, the license for 1836-37 granted to William A. Aitken and now among the Sibley Papers under date of November 19, 1836, gives the following list of clerks for Aitken's department with the post for each, and it will be noted that Scott was scheduled for Sandy Lake: William Davenport, Leech Lake; Ambrose Davenport, Gull Lake; Allan Morrison, "Upper Red Cedar Lake" (Cass Lake); John H. Fairbanks, Red Lake; Charles Chaboillez, Rum River; Peter Crebassa, Fond du Lac; Alfred Aitken, Swan River; John Aitken, Rum River; James P. Scott, Sandy Lake; Jean Baptiste Landrie, Mille Lacs; Augustin Bélanger, Jr., "Lac Winnipic" (Lake Winnebagoish); and George Bonga, "Lac Platte" (Platte Lake). Aitken was in charge of the whole northern part of what is now Minnesota, usually spoken of — following the old Northwest Company usage — as the Fond du Lac Department. Its chief post, however, was no longer at Fond du Lac, but at Sandy Lake. Besides the posts given in the list, there were many others, notably at Vermilion Lake, Pembina, Grand Portage, Otter Tail Lake, and the mouth of the Crow Wing River. Some of these, like the Vermilion Lake post, were permanent; others, like the Otter Tail, were temporary. Aitken, in a letter to Crooks, dated October 12, 1836, in the American Fur Company Papers, mentions the discontinuance of the Otter Tail Lake post. An excellent description and diagram of the Fond du Lac post is given in a letter from Borup to Crooks, January 2, 1836, in the American Fur Company Papers. Photostatic copies of these letters are in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society. Lieutenant James Allen gives a list of the posts in Aitken's charge in 1832 in *Expedition to Northwest Indians*, 31 (23 Congress, 1 session, *House Executive Documents*, no. 323 — serial 257).

In the evening went up with our baggage &c to the rapid at the commencement of the 9 mile portage & returned again to the Co's house.

The appearance of the Country here is very pleasing but (I think) the soil is not favorable for agricultural purposes.

The Indian population in this section of lake Superior do not

[*Note.*] Lake Superior is 490 miles long from E to W.

by the South Coast as we came it is 640 miles long

exceed 40 (that is hunters), and the principle object of the Fur Co in keeping a trading house here is the purchase of Fish (white fish & Trout) from the Indians, and also to afford a medium for sending their outfits to the traders in the interior.

24 Oct^r Commenced making the "Grand Portage" which is about 9 miles long.⁴⁰ Had to climb hills nearly 50 ft high and many of them almost perpendicular

We all had to assist in carrying our luggage &c in loads of 100 lbs each & upwards (in order to hasten through as quick as possible) and had to make four trips each.

Made three miles, and encamped fatigued enough after our *first day's Portaging*

Ely was located as missionary at Fond du Lac at the time the expedition passed. The following entry in his diary is of interest:

Sabbath — 23^d [October] About 1 o'clk this Noon, the Boat, whh left for Lepointe on the 8th arrived. Another Boat from the Sault, St Maries also arrived — chartered by Gen. Jas. Dickson — & manned by his soldiers. The company consist of the Gen. a Polish refugee officer — 5 young men ranking Lieutenants — & 7 soldiers. They are on an expedition against Mexico & it is the present intention, if a sufficient force shall be collected, to make a descent from the passes of the Rocky Mountains upon a Cer[tain] mexican City & destroy it. Gen. D. says, every man *shall die*, as they will not be able to keep the City if their men are spared. The Gen. called on us in the Evening, bringing a letter of Introduction fr[om] Br[other] [Sherman] Hall. Had a long conversation with him, concerning his plans. He keeps nothing back, except the city in view. His plan is to form a Government in California of the scattered Indian tribes of the west — Cherokees, Creeks, & all others who may be disposed to join them.

⁴⁰ Dickson's party now begins the oft-traveled route to the Mississippi by way of the St. Louis River, the East and West Savanna Rivers, and Sandy Lake. This was the usual way of reaching the upper waters of the Mississippi from the Great Lakes. The Grand Portage, which is not to be confused with the better-known portage by that name between Lake Superior and the Pigeon River, was the longest carrying-place in the route.

25 Oct. 1836 Continued our portaging, but found a better road (if road it can be called) than yesterday, and felt much less fatigued.

26 Oct. Again to the double portaging. Met an Indian while at breakfast who informed our guide that the upper part of the St Louis River was frozen which quite discouraged (I mean disappointed) us and discouraged our little metiff guide so much that he said it was useless for us to go on

27 Oct. Arrived at the end of the long Portage and set to work preparing our Canoes for an immediate start *Ice or no ice* we intend having a peep at it our motto at present being "*Push forward*"

Friday 28th Oct 1836 Remained at encampment at the upper end of "Grand Portage", preparing Canoes &c Sent Charlo,⁴¹ our guide to the Fort for more gum for our Canoes

Guide returned in the evening and informed us that it was impossible to proceed.

Half determined to remain till the ice be sufficiently strong to walk upon.

Saturday 29th Oct^r 1836. Started with Canoes in the Rapids got to the end of "Portage de Coteaux" with much difficulty.⁴² Late in the evening I walked with Charlo the guide to the Fort a distance of 15 miles through miserable roads.

Sunday 30th Oct^r Returned from the Fort, alone about 2 P.M. having procured a new guide (the first having refused to obey his master, and come with us) and also a few other necessaries. Our party quite cheered with the prospect of getting on. This day finished getting thro' Portage de Coteaux a distance of 3 miles. New guide arrived in the evening.

⁴¹ This is probably Charles Chaloup, a half-breed of the Lac du Flambeau band of Chippewa, a list of whom is given in the pay roll cited in note 30. Ely mentions him many times in his diaries for 1840, 1841, and 1842, notably under dates of February 11, 1840, and March 30, 1842. Usually he writes the name "Charlo," but at times it appears as "Charles," and under date of January 21, 1842, it seems to be "Charliou."

⁴² The English equivalent for the name of this carrying-place is Knife Portage. See *post*, 5: 33 n. 11.

31st Oct^r Started with our new guide (a smart Chipewewa) and got through about half of the "Grand Rapids" but with great difficulty.⁴³

1st Nov^r 1836 About 3 P.M. got over the Grand Rapids where the Indian left us.

No appearance of Ice in the St Louis All delighted with the prospect of soon getting, at least, as far as Sandy Lake before the ice comes upon us.

Wednesday 2^d Nov. 1836 Came up St Louis R about 40 miles and encamped above the "Glukie Rapids["]"⁴⁴

Nov. 3^d 1836 Entered east Savannah river about 3 P.M. and got near to the entrance of the Prairie where we encamped.

This river is extremely serpentine in some instances we made windings of 6 to 7 miles without getting one mile direct in our route.

Nov. 4th 1836 Early in the day entered the Prarie, and through an error on the map (which by the bye we found very incorrect in many instances) went up the wrong channel which led us into an endless swamp

Found our error when we had lost nearly the whole day

Returned, and proceeded⁴⁵ Saw three immense moose deer but could not get near enough to have a shot at them

⁴³ For the location of the Grand Rapids, see *post*, 5:33 n. 12.

⁴⁴ This name does not appear on contemporary maps of the region but they show rapids just below the mouth of the Cloquet River, and the similarity in the two names when spoken leads one to wonder if McLeod did not mistake "Cloquet" for "Glukie."

⁴⁵ At the junction of the St. Louis and East Savanna rivers the former comes in from the north and the latter from the general direction of Sandy Lake to the south. With a carrying-place between them the East and West Savanna rivers form a good canoe route to Sandy Lake. McLeod designates some branch of the East Savanna as the Prairie River. Contemporary maps show the Prairie as a branch of the West Savanna, and the stream still bears that name. The map which Dickson's party used must have been quite incorrect, indeed, if it showed Prairie River as a branch of the East Savanna River. Schoolcraft notes that the East Savanna River forks twelve miles above its mouth, but fails to state up which branch his party went. Henry R. Schoolcraft, *Narrative Journal of Travels from*

Encamped in a grove of poplars.

No^r 5th 1836 Got to the Savannah Portage which we found so *damnable* that we had to wade in water up to our hips for nearly 3 miles and carry our trunks &c &c to boot.

6th & 7 Nov^r Finished our Portage. In this place our party shot 23 hares in a few hours. This Portage is 8 miles.

8th Nov^r Started in west Savannah river. Came to a small lake which we found frozen and had to break our way through. Made 2 portages 60 & 450 yards & encamped

Wednesday 9th Nov^r 1836 Gen^l D[ickson] and Capt Parys left encampment to proceed to Sandy Lake on foot. About 11 o'clock started in Canoes & found great difficulty in getting through water so shallow.

2 P.M. entered Sandy Lake which is surrounded with lovely scenery, and is itself one of the most delightful lakes I have ever seen. On our arrival at the AM. F. Cos trading house situated on the Mississippi near the upper end of the lake found our friends had arrived before us both those in the second Canoe and the Pedestrians

Met a highland welcome from M^r Morrison the person in charge of the Sandy Lake establishment ⁴⁶

Thursday 10th Nov^r 1836 Making preparations for an immediate start up the Mississippi 300 miles to Lake Winnipeg. Weather still mild hope to succeed in getting there with Canoes. Observed a number of coffins containing bodies placed on poles about 12 feet high Learned that that is frequently the Indian mode of depositing their bodies in this part of the Indian Country.

Detroit Northwest through the Great Chain of American Lakes to the Sources of the Mississippi River in the Year 1820, 220 (Albany, 1821).

⁴⁶ Allan Morrison, younger brother of the William Morrison who claimed to be the first white man to have visited Lake Itasca, the source of the Mississippi River, came to the Northwest about 1820 and became an important fur-trader. In a short manuscript sketch of the fur trade he states that his brother William built the original fort at Sandy Lake. Lieutenant Zebulon M. Pike in his *Expeditions to Headwaters of the Mississippi River*, 1: 139 (Coues edition, New York, 1895) records that this event took place in 1794. The American Fur Company's post, however, was not on the site of the original fort. The relative position of the two posts is shown on Lieutenant Allen's map, which accompanies his *Expedition to Northwest Indians* (serial 257).

Friday 11 Nov^r Left Sandy Lake at 1 P.M. Came up the Mississippi about 10 miles. River very winding. Land apparently good and covered with large timber, mostly elm, but not, in many places, favorable for farmers as the river o'er flows in the spring

Saturday 12th Nov^r 1836 Made about 50 miles. River still very winding. Weather pleasant.

Sunday 13. Came 40 miles. Weather cold.

Monday 14. Still cold, & very unpleasant paddling. Came 30 to 40 miles.

Tuesday 15. Exceedingly cold, with a snow storm. Obligated to encamp early. Fingers half frozen.

Wednesday 16. Passed the rapids and arrived early at the Falls of Peckagama Made the portage & encamped about 5 miles above the Falls.⁴⁷

Thursday 17. All day paddling through immense Praries or fields of grass 7 to 8 ft high. Encamped at P^t du Chane.⁴⁸

Friday 18 Still in the Praries. River frozen in many places. Ice to break. much difficulty in getting through. 3 P.M. came to the mouth of lacross river found it frozen. Made portage to get into lake lacross (1/2 mile)

Crossed the lake after dark & fell in with Indians who guided us to a fishing lodge on the N.W. side of the lake, near which we encamped.

Saturday 19. Started about 9 a.m. Found passage at the upper end of the lake frozen Obligated to break the ice a long distance to get near the shore in doing so broke the Canoe in which I was in. Had all to jump on the ice and haul her up to prevent her from sinking. Made a long Portage* to little lake

*[Note.] about 3 miles

⁴⁷ For a discussion of the various spellings of the name of the Pokegama Falls, just above the present town of Grand Rapids, see Pike, *Expeditions*, 1: 147. Schoolcraft, in his *Narrative Journal*, 241, 242. gives the number of rapids below the falls as nine and the length of the portage around the cataract as 275 yards.

⁴⁸ McLeod's French spelling is not always of the best. Pointe aux Chênes, now called White Oak Point, is described by Ely in his diary for May 30, 1834, thus: "that point itself is a most beautiful spot of Oak & rich soil—there are old Indian Gardens on the Pt. we stopped & built a fire. The Indian name is Memishimishika."

Winnipeg. Left canoes behind us at lac lacross. Arrived late at night at upper Winnipeg where we saw an Indian dance and a variety of feats performed by Indians in a state of nudity. Mem^o smoaked the Calumet and danced for a few moments, at their "finale".⁴⁹

Sunday 20 th	Remained in hut all day. dull & melancholy
Monday 21 st	In hut all day.
Tuesday 22 ^d	do do
Wednesday 23	Making fur Gloves for myself
Thursday 24	Preparing for Journey
Friday 25	Out shooting. No luck
Saturday 26	All the party started on foot, with dogs & traineaux to carry our Trunks. Provisions, blankets, &c &c carried by each individual. <i>Grub for eight days.</i>

Mon^s Belange's residence at upper lake Winnipeg is very pleasantly situated on the west side of the Mississippi. The old man has been in the Indian country fifty years, has a squaw wife two sons & a daughter—and a number of grand children and appears quite happy in his solitude. We were civilly treated during our 6 days stay there.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ The traveler by canoe today could pass through these same bodies of water, but on his map "lac lacross" would be Ball Club Lake, and "upper Winnipeg" would be Lake Winnibagoshish.

⁵⁰ The dog sleds which Dickson's party procured at Monsieur Bélanger's cabin were the customary vehicle for winter travel in the Northwest. The full French name was *traineaux de glace*. "These sleds are made of a single plank turned up at one end like a fiddlehead." Pike, *Expeditions*, I: 141. Anyone who is curious to see one of these relics of early days in Minnesota will find a specimen in the museum of the Minnesota Historical Society. Augustin Bélanger is listed as a *voyageur* of the Northwest Company in the Fond du Lac Department in 1804, in Louis R. Masson, *Les bourgeois de la compagnie du nord-ouest*, I: 410 (Quebec, 1889). Lieutenant Allen states that Bélanger had lived at this post for several years "without once going below." Allen also gives an interesting description of Bélanger's garden, cows, and surroundings, and on his map shows the location of the post. He notes that bearskins comprised the bulk of the packs from this post. *Expedition to Northwest Indians*, 40 (serial 257). On the map which accompanies his narrative Allen shows Bélanger's post on the north shore of the lake, thus disagreeing with McLeod as to its location. The Reverend William T. Boutwell, in his diary for July 9, 1832, also states that the post was on the north shore of the lake. Change

We left upper lake Winnipeg about 10 a.m. crossed the lake on the ice (15 miles) Walking difficult and exceedingly fatiguing as there is no snow as yet upon the ice.

Sunday 27. Started two hours before day, by moonlight. Morning cold, but delightfully clear and pleasant. About sun raise took the ice on the Mississippi inlet to lake Winnipeg followed it about 15 miles, and at 11 a m came to Red cedar lake (or "Cass" lake as it is called in the map) here we waited an hour for some of our party who had not come up.

Crossed Cass lake (3 leagues) found it bad walking on the ice which is as "smooth as the surface of a polished mirror" (as our novelists would say)

At 4 P.M. arrived at the Fur Co's station at Cass lake. All the party much fatigued from the difficulty of walking on the smooth ice. Came 30 miles today.

In the evening dined a la Turque on excellent venison furnished by M^r Aiken* J^r

*[Note.] 25th Jan^y 37. Just heard that M^r Aiken has been shot dead by an Indian.⁵¹

of location for trading posts, however, was not uncommon as may be seen from Boutwell's statement that Bélanger "has been here two years." Boutwell accompanied Schoolcraft in 1832 and later was a missionary at Leech Lake. The original of his diary is lost, but a copy made by J. Fletcher Williams is in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society. Ely in his diary on May 27, 1834, mentions fifteen cows belonging to Monsieur Bélanger and a "very acceptable present of a few pounds of Excellent Butter." A manuscript "List of Persons employed by the American Fur Co at Fond du Lac & dependencies 1834" in the American Fur Company Papers, Miscellaneous, 1:38, a copy of which is in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society, gives the names of Augustin Bellanger, Jr., Joseph Bellanger, Pierre Bellanger, and Paul Bellanger "dit Katoken." Jean Baptiste and François Bellanger, as well as those already given, are listed in the pay roll mentioned in note 30. Probably these are sons and grandsons of the original Bélanger.

⁵¹ For an account of the murder of Alfred Aitken, half-breed son of William A. Aitken, see Warren in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 5:484, 485. The story of the murder as given by a juror for the trial of the Indian differs considerably from that related by Boutwell, who at the time resided at Leech Lake, near the scene of the murder. The latter's story, if correct, exonerates Aitken from the charge that his improper attentions to a beautiful young squaw occasioned the murder. The elder Aitken had

Monday 28th Obligated to rest as a number of the party are unable to proceed from the fatigue of yesterday's march and the bruises which they received from frequent falls upon the ice. Indeed all our men were so "*done up*" that they did not arise yesterday till near dark.

Remained in house all day reading "The author of Cyril Thornton's Annals of the Peninsular Campaigns"

Dont' think much of the work. Not so good as Napier's.

Tuesday 29. Left Cass lake. Had bad walking all day viz on small lakes. Ice very smooth & difficult to stand upon. Came about 30 miles. One of the men gave up early in the day and had to encamp 5 miles behind us with a comrade who remained behind with him.

Wednesday 30th Still on small lake & bad walking. At the entrance of Rice Lake I fell through the Ice and got a severe ducking as it was deep (about 15 ft) Got out without assistance and started as fast as possible for the encampment which had been made by one of our party who had preceeded us but having mistaken the direction, passed the camp 5 miles and was nearly frozen before some of the party (who had followed me) came up, as my hands were so benumbed that I could not light a fire.

Thursday 1st Dec^r About 12 o'clock arrived fatigued enough at Red lake a large lake from 60 to 70 miles long and 15 to 20 wide it empties its waters into Red river which flows into great lake Winnipeg

M^r Fairbanks the person in charge here treated us with much hospitality. He appears to have been many years in the Indian Country as he has six fine children by a native woman. He speaks the Chippewa language very fluently and is otherwise well acquainted with Indian affairs.⁵²

the murderer taken to Prairie du Chien for trial. Strange to relate, the verdict was "not guilty" and the Indian was released. This is said to have been the first criminal case tried under the territorial law of Wisconsin. Boutwell Diary, December 8, 1836; John H. Fonda, "Early Reminiscences of Wisconsin," in *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, 5:271 (Madison, 1868).

⁵² John H. Fairbanks was born in Champlain, New York, in 1802, and came west with Lyman M. and Truman A. Warren in 1818. The record

Friday 2^d Dec^r Feel very fatigued and have a severe pain in one of my ancles, which troubled me slightly before I commenced walking. Poor prospect; as I have yet to walk a march of about 16 days. We find much difficulty in procuring a guide, which we are told is absolutely necessary in going through the immense praries between this and the Brulé settlement on Red river as it frequently happens that those who have been through the Plains, loose themselves (upon a second or third attempt), for some days.

Not having any thing to amuse myself with during this day's rest I, by a wonderful chance, got hold of very old copies of "The lady of the Lake," the 2^d vol of the "Scottish Chiefs["] and the 2^d vol of Thaddeus of Warsaw With these prizes I thought to enjoy myself, but was painfully disappointed as my ancle would not let me rest with comfort.

I then thought to dissipate the pain by exercise and went out shooting. Saw some Pheasants, which are numerous in this Country but exceedingly wild.

Had no luck. So I set this day down not as a day of rest but one of disappointment.

In the evening went to an Indian hut to pass a few moments with their peculiarities

By the by I have hitherto forgotten that these children of nature are great gamblers in their own way, frequently staking their little all — Such as their blanket leggins Pipe Belt Tobacco Tomahawk &c &c

The only game I have seen them play is called the "shoe game" and is their principle and favorite one. Their manner of playing it is this.

They spread a blanket sufficiently wide for 6 or 8 persons to set round it, and then place on it four shoes (or Indian moccasins) along side each other. One of the players then takes four bullets and having [made] a mark upon one [of] them with his

of an interesting interview between Fairbanks and Joseph A. Gilfillan, giving the main points of the old trader's life, is among the manuscripts in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society. It was Fairbanks who established the first post at Cass Lake. According to Mrs. Spears (see *ante*, n. 37) Fairbanks had six sons and two daughters.

teeth he places, three of them under three of the shoes and retains the fourth

One of the party then bets, and uncovers two of the bullets (which is his privilege) Should either of those uncovered be the marked bullet the better has not won but [has lost should neither be the marked one]⁵³ he then strikes one of the two remaining shoes which he knows must hide the proper bullet unless the person who places the balls should have retained the marked one; which very frequently happens. In that case the play goes round to the next and so on till some one has guessed where the marked ball is. He then is proclaimed the winner amid all manner of shouts and singing. Tobacco is the principle stake and is put down by all the party at the commencement and he that first strikes the winning bullet takes up all the stakes.

During the progress of the game some one or two of the party sings. Not unfrequently however they all join chorus, at the top of their voices.

Such is the manner these simple but happy people pass many of the long winter evenings and while standing by, I could not but envy their happiness yet upon reflection, to me, they appear miserable How noble and truly philanthropic the attempt of regenerating these people The[y] are, I feel confident, susceptible of all the refinements of civilized life. Still, perhaps, they would not be so happy —

If ignorance is bliss
'Tis folly to be wise

Sat 3^d Dec^r At 2 P.M. left Red lake and proceeded down the lake in the direction of Indian encampments where all our party, (but four,) who had gone on before us, had been directed to await our coming up: but they having taken the wrong path we missed them, and it growing dark before we could find the Indian lodges, we were three or four hours wandering in the wood till at last we met two Indians who guided us to their lodges where we passed the night, and were hospitably treated, more so perhaps, as the men, masters of the different lodges, about fifteen, were absent, and none left at home but the females,

⁵³ The passage enclosed in brackets has been crossed out in the original.

and a few of the young lads. I say so because the Indians of this place bear a bad name. But as I have ever found it, we were friendly and generously treated by the gentle sex. Here we found our two Indian guides who informed us that our party had encamped near a small stream, which led off the path we had followed, about 6 miles behind

Sunday 4th Dec^r Early this morning our party came up having passed the night in some vacant lodges which they discovered near the path they had followed and mistook for the appointed rendezvous.

Took the Ice on red lake and travelled about 30 miles to day.

Monday 5th Dec^r Weather severly cold, At 8 a m entered upon the red fork of red river,⁵⁴ had travelled but a few miles when one of our party got his face badly frozen. Obligated to stop and light a fire. In the evening came to three Indian lodges where we were treated with a small piece of boiled Bear's meat, and then went on with renewed vigor.

Tuesday 6th Dec^r Weather milder Still on the ice which is so smooth that it is almost impossible to stand upon with any degree of security and so exceedingly difficult to walk upon that some of the men frequently requested to be left behind to die, in preference to suffering continual bruises from frequent falls which the poor fellows could not avoid and which their timidity made more frequent and more severe.

Wednesday 7th Our route yet through the red fork, but to day we made a number of traverses through small praries covered with thick underwood to avoid the windings of the river, which like all rivers in this Country, is very crooked.

Thursday 8th Our route nearly same as yesterday, but obliged to 'camp early, one of our party (M^cL) from weakness, being unable to continue his journey all day.

Friday 9th At 11 a.m. came to Voleuse or Thieving river so called; from a band of Sioux Indians, who were in the habit

⁵⁴ Joseph N. Nicollet's map shows Red Lake River flowing west from Red Lake and adds, "also called Red Fork River." The map accompanies Nicollet's *Report Intended to Illustrate a Map of the Hydrographical Basin of the Upper Mississippi River* (26 Congress, 2 session, *Senate Documents*, no. 237 — serial 380).

of lurking near it for the purpose of stealing from the traders who formerly passed by this route into the great Praries.⁵⁵ If the trading party happened to be small the Indians seldom hesitated to take their lives, for the double purpose of getting their scalps and goods.

We were not, however, under any great apprehension, as at this season all the hunters and Indian braves are confined to their hunting grounds.

After enjoying a short rest we entered upon the Prarie; all the party delighted to get off the ice and pleased with the prospect of a speedy termination to our fatiguing journey.

We had proceeded on the Prarie about 15 miles when we came to a grove of poplars, where we discovered a number of hares. Some of the party being very weak and all of them fatigued we proposed an hour's rest while our sportsmen should go and enjoy themselves among the hares. Our guides laid down their packs, and with evident satisfaction joined the persons who went in search of hares

In the mean time the rest of the party wandered about in various directions. Some in search of water, others on the look out for a good place to encamp as we purposed to have a feast of hares—and each person as he came out of the wood, after hunting, continued his route in the direction the greater number of the party had taken. In this manner we continued our ramble for five miles, till we discovered a favorable spot for encamping. In the evening when all our party had mustered we found our guides missing, but suspected no harm as they had appeared very happy and cheerful all day. But long after dark, when we had fired a number of shots, and the guides not coming up we began to have serious apprehensions that they had deserted; and dispatched a person in search of them, who returned about midnight, with the unpleasant intelligence that he had

⁵⁵ Thief River is a tributary of Red Lake River. A picture of the fur-trade activity in the vicinity of Leech Lake, Red Lake, and the Red River is contained in chapters 4 and 6 of the journal of Alexander Henry in volume 1 of Elliott Coues, ed., *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest* (New York, 1897). These portions of Henry's journal indicate that there was a well-established canoe route between Red Lake and Red River in the heyday of Northwest Company enterprise.

found (unopened) the packs which the guides had carried — their carrying straps taken off, and their bundles provisions &c gone. This was indeed melancholy proof that the young rascals had abandoned us. And for what reason or cause — We all formed a thousand conjectures.

To add to the painful reflection that we were in a wild and unknown country with but a few days allowance of miserable food and at a great distance from any settlement *without guides*, we were all night annoyed by the dismal howling of wolves in every direction round our camp and connected with the cries of this animal we had fears of an attack from the Sioux Indians, as has frequently happened in the very Praries in which we were then encamped. These Indians when they have hostile intentions gather their band together by imitating the cries of a wolf or the screams of the owl, and never attack but at the dawn of day. We had been informed of their habits, and frequently warned to be upon our guard. So that this night — what from loosing our guides — the cries of wolves, or supposed enemies, few of us slept, although all were wearied with fatigue & weakened with long privations.

Saturday 10th Dec^r At day break we were summoned together, and informed by Gen^l D[ickson] that as our guides had deserted and as we had but five days provisions, and had yet to travel near three hundred miles in a strange country of which we had not an accurate map, he left us all to act, each man for himself, to either follow him, as it was his determination to trust to fortune and push forward, or return to Red lake and there wait untill they could procure a guide. I had previously made up my mind to continue my route at every risk, and all the rest with the exception of two preferring to follow Gen^l D., we made immediate preparations to start.

In the meantime McL[oughlin] & McB[ean] the *two* who decided upon returning endeavoured to persuade a number of the men to return with them by pointing out the great dangers they were exposing themselves to — Such as starving, or freezing to death "*casting lots to eat each other*" &c &c

For the first 15 miles we had come in the Prarie we found the marks of an old track which formerly led to Pembina when

there was a post there of the A.M. F. Co. and we had had strong hopes that we would be able to find it in different places, (particularly where the grass was long) sufficiently distinct to indicate the proper route but this morning all our hopes were clouded by the appearance of a snow storm. However we had taken our determination and were not to be easily shaken⁵⁶

We each shouldered his pack, and having bid a melancholy adieu to our friends, who said they had not a hope of seeing us again and promised to inform our friends of our fate should we perish, we entered upon the path and proceeded for a number of miles in great silence not so much as uttering a word to each other.

At length we came to an immense open plain without the appearance of a tree upon it as far as the eye could reach except in a W.N.W course where we could distinguish trees about 25 miles distant.

Here we lost the path completely but having held a consultation we determined to proceed across the plain in the direction of the trees and endeavour if possible to arrive at them before dark as we did not like the idea of sleeping out in the plain without fire to warm us or water to cook our food. Long after dark we came to a ravine in the Prarie which contained some ice but not a drop of water. Here we determined to remain till morning as the trees were still at a great distance, as near as we could distinguish. We found a small clump of underwood and having made a small fire with a few branches, and eaten a handful each, of parched corn with some water (still more grateful)

⁵⁶ Doubtless the American Fur Company traders made use of Red River carts in their summer journeys between Red Lake and Pembina, for the dog sleds, known to have been commonly used on this route in the winter, would hardly have left a well-defined track. Boutwell's diary contains several references to intercourse between Leech Lake and the Red River settlements by American Fur Company traders, notably in the entries for February 7 and 14, March 16, and October 11, 1834. The first entry cited shows that Boutwell had a keen desire to visit the Red River settlements and that he was deeply disappointed when William Aitken's proposed business trip to that quarter in the spring of 1834 was cancelled, for Boutwell had planned to accompany the trader.

melted from the ice we lay down near our little blaze and endeavoured to sleep but the attempt was fruitless.

We passed a most miserable night. The wind blew strong from the N.W. and so cold that we had difficulty to keep ourselves from freezing as we had but one blanket each.

Sunday 11 Dec^r Never was the dawn of day more welcome to *miserables* than this to us. To save time our allowance of rice was boiled in the night but the continual blowing had so filled it with charcoal and ashes that but two or three of the party could stomach a few spoon fulls of it. The rest (myself among the number) travelled all day without eating a morsel or drinking a drop, and the snow that we so much dreaded the day before would now have been more welcome than gold.

Our course to day was W.N.W. We saw a great number of Pheasants but they were so very wild that all our attempts to kill, some of them, failed.

In the evening came to a fine stream of water running through a fine grove of elms. The sight was hailed with delight and here we determined to encamp. A few moments after our arrival an Indian with his gun in his hand and a bullet in his mouth came cautiously creeping up to us. I discovered him and conjecturing his intentions, immediately ran up to him and offered him my hand which he accepted with a feigned smile, at the same time (as near as I could understand) observing that he was glad to find we were Englishmen and friendly to his tribe adding that the bullet which he then held in his hand had been intended for one of us, supposing us enemies when he "first saw one or two" (myself and a nam[e]sake) enter the wood.⁵⁷

This Savage was ["]monarch of all he surveyed" and for some weeks past had lived with his squaw dogs &c upon a bear which he had killed while on his way to some hunting ground at a distance from the Prairie.

We engaged him to conduct us to the point nearest Pembina on red river and having made him a few presents he returned to his squaw.

⁵⁷ By "namesake," McLeod probably refers to Alexander R. McLeod, Jr.

We were now pleased with the hope of getting near enough to the settlements without serious accident, & be able to make our way afterwards without difficulty.

Monday 12th Dec^r Started with new guide course W.N.W. by west Weather pleasant but strong appearances of a snow storm

Doubts as to the honest intentions of the Indian from his having changed the course which we had reason to suppose the correct one. At 1 P.M. encamped on a branch of the stream we left in the morning, as it will take all day to morrow to cross the plain to the next camping place.

Tuesday 13 Dec^r Started at day break. Guide reluctant to accompany us from the appearance of a storm which at this season in a great plain is dangerous to the traveller. After considerable difficulty persuaded him to come; but still doubtful of his honesty from his continually inclining towards the west

At 11 a m discovered trees to the W.N.W & W about thirty miles distant which the Indian said were on the banks of red river and near Pembina to which place he had agreed to guide us.

Late in the evening, after a long and fatiguing journey came to the bank of the river which sight gave us a variety of pleasing feelings

Crossed the river and immediatly changed our course to the North had gone but a few miles when the Indian requested his pay (a blanket) saying that as he had left his squaw alone with but little food he was anxious to return, assuring us that a few hours walk would bring us to Pembina near which we would find on the river bank the old cart track which in three days would lead us to the settlement at the Assiniboin. His story was plausible. We suffered ourselves to be duped and the rascal returned, (no doubt) laughing at our credulity. I however had had my doubts all the time & opposed they [*sic*] payment of the cunning fellow but it was of no avail.

Having gone some miles and perceiving no appearance of the settlements which formerly existed at Pembina ⁵⁸ — and being all

⁵⁸ In 1823, after five years' establishment, the Selkirk settlers at Pembina, suspecting that they were located south of the boundary line, removed farther down the river to the mother colony at the junction of the

much fatigued we encamp'd near what we thought a large stream flowing from the Praries into red river, but upon cutting the ice we discovered to our disappointment, that it was a pool of stagnant mineral water

Hunger obliged us to cook half our remaining p[in]t* each of

*[*Note.*] We had been obliged to leave with the guides wife some of our rice.

rice with the mineral water and either from its effects or that of some bears grease (which I had got from the squaw for a hkf) we were nearly all taken severly ill in the course of the night

Wednesday 14th Dec^r So unwell that it was with difficulty I could walk ten minutes at a time without throwing myself down in the grass. Our route to day from p[oin]t to p^t on red river across the immense plain which extends to the west 15 or 20 days journey

No appearance of Pembina and having got on an old cart track on the Prarie hope that we have left it behind us and far to the right. Made a miserable sort of broth (this evening) of a few handfuls of rice boiled with water, and to add to our

Assiniboine and Red rivers. Another factor leading to removal was the wet and low character of the land at Pembina. See Alexander Ross, *The Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progress, and Present State*, 75 (London, 1856) and J. V. Arnold, *The History of Old Pembina*, 101 (Larimore, North Dakota, 1917). It is unlikely, however, that all the half-breeds and Indians left Pembina. In fact Major Long on his visit in the summer of 1823, after the colonists had departed, mentions "about 300 persons in all," inhabitants of the village, most of whom were of mixed blood, who were away on a buffalo hunt when he arrived. With the addition of "the few that remained," the village could not be called depopulated at that time. See the entries for August 6, 7, and 8 in the manuscript diary in three volumes kept by Major Stephen H. Long on his expedition of 1823. McLeod's references, however, indicate that there was no settlement at Pembina in the fall of 1836. As the years between the entries in Long's journal and those in McLeod's form a very obscure period in the history of the place, it is impossible at present to account for the abandonment of it. In the forties it again became a fur-trading post of some consequence, and the census of 1850 gives it a numerous half-breed population. The Minnesota Historical Society has manuscript schedules of the 1850 census for Minnesota, including the population schedule for the Pembina district.

misery, boiled without salt, it having been left at one of our encampments some days ago by the negligence of the men.

Thursday 15th Started without tasting food Route on the old cart track till 1 P.M. when we lost it

Gen^l D[ickson] having started first continued his course directly West towards a pt of wood about 15 miles off which he took for one of the bends of red river

At the same time myself and three others directed our course towards an opening which we perceived in the wood about ten miles off in a N.W. course.

Upon our arrival at the opening we immediatly discovered that we had taken the right course and awaited the coming up of the men who fortunately for them had not seen Gen^l D. and had followed us. Here we found a river 8 yards wide flowing into red river and immediatly suspected that it was Pembina river where we should have been left two days before by the Indian. It was only 2 P.M. but we thought it best to encamp and await the coming up of Gen^l D in the event of his discovering his error before dark.

Friday 16th This being my third day without food (except upon one occassion a few spoons ful of rice water—) I arose early and went in search of game, but had not proceeded far when I discovered Gen^l D's track upon the snow which had fallen in the night He had not it appears found his error until he had gone about 20 miles off the right course— when he came upon Pembina (as we afterwards learnt), river which he followed down to where it empties into red river There before day break he pass'd within 200 yards of our camp and continued on towards the settlements in the hope of speedily overtaking us or falling in with habitations.

While we were preparing to start we were surprised to see two men with a horse & cart crossing the prarie towards us and immediatly supposed that we were near settlements—but upon their coming up were miserably disappointed to learn that we were yet at Pembina three days journey from our present destination. He could give us no information of two of our party (Gen^l D[ickson] & M^r P[arys]) the latter having continued his journey the day previous, when we encamped) and all the food

he could spare was a small rib of beef about 2 ozs each. This we boiled in a pot of water eagerly eat and then went on our way cursing the rascally Indian who had deceived us having guided us to the nearest point, from his hut, on red river in order to get his blanket. Not caring for us who had left ourselves without food to share it with him in the hope that his knowledge of the Country would speedily guide us to relief.

About 3 P.M. the wind changed while we were in the middle of a Prairie traverse and in a short time it became so severely cold that before we could make to the wood for shelter four of the men were so severely frozen that they could with difficulty reach the camp. All this night we were obliged to sit up and keep on a very large fire to prevent ourselves from being frozen to death.

Nearly all the party were woebegone and looked miserable.

Saturday 17th We had not crawled more than about 10 miles this morning when we discovered 3 men making towards us.

They proved to be M^r P[arys] (one of our party) and two Canadians who had come out in search of us. M^r P. after he left us on the 15th continued on his route all night in the expectation of finding some habitation, and about 3 in the morning met with a person returning from the settlement to his shanty with wood about 25 miles from Pembina. Fortunately this person had with him a cart load of provisions & prevailed upon M^r P. to accompany him to the Shanty. The weather becoming severely cold & we not coming up M^r P. became fearful of our safety knowing that we were without food. This induced him to come in search of us bringing the two Canadians and Provisions which never was more welcome to half famished wretches.

The men devoured so eagerly that in a short time they became sick. In the mean time nothing had been heard or seen of Gen^l D[ickson] since the morning of the 15th and we had serious apprehensions for his safety as when he left us he had not a morsel of food with him nor even a blanket to protect him at night nor any means of lighting a fire. We immediately despatched one of the Canadians and one of our party with food in search of him — and then went to the Shanty where we passed the rest of the day.

Sunday 18th Early this morning we left the shanty — having left there two of the men who were unable to walk any longer. During our journey this day we discovered Gen^l D's foot prints different times and had strong hopes that he had arrived in safety at the settlement about 45 miles off.

This night we suffered much from the cold, being obliged to encamp in a small ravine in the Prarie where we were exposed to a severe N.W. wind which blew violently all night. Nearly all our blankets were more or less burnt and some of the men got their cloths & limbs burned — from being obliged to lie so near the fire. Thus while one side was freezing the other was in danger of being injured by the fire.

Monday 19th Dec^r We did not leave the camp till 11 o'clock being fearful of exposing ourselves on the Prarie — the cold being so intense — but having no provisions we were obliged to start and after wrapping all our blankets round us we again took our weary way. I had on Flannels, a Blanket Cappeau a thick Blanket wrapp'd round me and over all a very thick Pilot cloth Cloak and on my feet 3 p^r Stocking and 2 p^r of Indian Moccasins and yet with all my exertions could scarsly keep myself from being frozen. All the men got their faces feet and hands severly frozen in walking about 15 miles. At length we came in sight of Hay stacks a proof that we were near some settlement and soon after met a Metiff with a horse an[d] train bringing provisions to us. Behind one of the stacks we lighted a fire and eat some dried Buffalo meat. From this person we learned that Gen^l D. had arrived at the settlement the day previous two hours before the persons who had been sent in pursuit of him. He (Gen^l D) had been frozen in a number of places and otherwise suffered much.

Early in the evening came to settlements met Gen^l D. who was happy to find that we had escaped the severity of the weather without loosing any lives. We were not the less so to meet him again alive.

Tuesday 20th Dec^r Came to Red River settlement to the residence of M^r Millian* one of the wealthiest farmers in the

*[Note added in pencil.] Maximillian Gouta

settlements Here we took up our lodging for the present as there is no inn in the Colony

Wednesday 21st In house all day saw but a few of the Inhabitants yet. Can say nothing about them.

Thursday 22^d Very unwell from the effects, no doubt, of eating strong food after being so long living upon what merly kept soul & body together.

Indeed, upon reflection I wonder much how we ever got through our journey.

Upon our departure from Red Lake we each carried a knapsack of cloths & provisions (rice and parched corn) for twelve days — short allowance — which in all weighed about 50 lbs to each person. Upon this most miserable food (the only kind we could get) we had a very long march to make (as we came, about 500 miles) at a very inclement season where sometimes we had to encamp without either wood or water. most of the men were broken down by previous fatigue & privations. In a word our prospect was truly miserable, yet we got through, *and without guides* — to the great astonishment of many of the oldest voyageurs in this place. The whole distance we had travelled on foot from the 26 Nov^r (— as we came) is about 645 miles during that time we lived upon a p^t of boiled rice each pr day and were 4 days without food of any kind except two ozs each of meat and a small Partridge divided between 9 persons.

25 Dec^r (Christmas day) In house all day — unwell — ten thousand reflections — never passed so dull a holy day before. In evening visited my old polish friend M^r P[arys]

Long chat with him about his unhappy country. Thinks he never will see it again unless the tyrant Nicholas should die within a few years and a change takes place in favor of the polish exiles.

M^r P. served under Ramarino and left his country immediatly after the fall of Warsaw — to avoid the fury of the Czar. ⁵⁹

Another year has fled:—

How strange the past; How doubtful the future. This day a year ago I was on my way to visit a dear friend — three thousand

⁵⁹ Warsaw capitulated to czarist troops under Paskevitch, September 8, 1831.

miles distant — and here I am now in a strange Country without a friend* — unknown and unregarded. n'importe I have hope

*[*Note.*]

And what is friendship but a name
A charm that lulls to sleep
A shade that follows wealth and fame
And leaves the wretch to weep

8th Jan^y 1836[1837].

still, for my companion, and there are other days in the womb of time. 31st Dec^r 1836.

Sunday 1 Jan^y 1837. Went to the Roman Catholic church. People poor and ignorant. Priest apparently dull and stupid. All bowing and chaunting — the mere mockery of religion, yet no doubt acceptable to the Deity when offered in sincerity.

2^d Jan^y 1837. This day 1836 was with my dear E — wonder if I am forgotten ⁶⁰

Had hopes then that are forever lost — Gone — Sacrificed for a bauble.

“Thirst in snow covered Countries”

Travellers have not deemed the fact worth mentioning, and therefore, no one who has not suffered can imagine or believe that during winter, man is exposed on the cold and snow covered plains of North America to the most painful of privations, — that even while walking on frozen water, he is agonized by parched & burning lips — and that by snow, eaten under such circumstances, the thirst of the traveller or hunter is proportionally increased.

When out in either of these capacities the agony sustained by them from thirst is often very great — it is truly painful while it lasts and contrary to the sufferer's expectation, he finds that by eating snow, his mouth is more and more inflamed — and his desire for drink fearfully augmented — while a lassitude comes over him which water only can dissipate.

It is to be observed however that it is only on the plains that the experienced hunter or traveller is exposed to such hardships

⁶⁰ See *ante*, n. 20.

That occurs frequently in this Country where the traveller's route is for the most part through wide plains — covered with long rank grass and snow — stretched out in all directions presenting a smooth, white unbroken surface terminating in the horizon

Every one going to any distance at this season, carries as an essential article in his equipment, a small kettle in which he melts snow, and boils water. To allow the water to boil is a necessary part of the process; for if the snow is merely melted the water has a smoked and bitter taste, and a drink of it is far from refreshing.

On the contrary, when the water is allowed to boil, and then cooled by throwing into it plenty of the purest snow, no spring water is more delightful to the taste or more satisfying to the wants of the thirsty traveller". Jan^y 1837.

22 Jan^y 1837.

A home brewed Ball

Having nothing particular to do, yesterday, I strolled down to the settlement — that is the thick settled part — which is made up of all colors and all breeds — Scotch, English, Irish and Canadian half and quarter breeds — with here and there, by way of relief, a canny son of Scotia, or a genuine pat — although years from his dear native isle — still retaining all the peculiarities of his Countrymen and not the least unwelcome among the motley group — a few straggling Canadians who came to the Country years ago to "make their fortunes" and after years of toil, attached themselves to squaws — still hoping to slip off, and return to the land of their fathers, and pass their last days with their friends or perhaps with the still dear object of their youthful affections, when in slipt a jesuitical prying priest who by dint of praying and frightening compelled them to unite in "holy matrimony" with their d——d ugly squaws (rather a bitter pill) and adopt their children — certainly a just retribution, if not altogether a pleasant one — as these amorous aborigines are neither delicate or particular, frequently having many children by different persons. "All is fish that comes into their net" notwithstanding what has been "said and sung" about their romantic love, and undivided attachment — but to the "Ball"

A friend and myself were invited to "make two" at a party which was to be given at the house of a batchelor aspiring to the *enchanted* chain of matrimony. At my entrance I found myself in a room about 18 ft square — the only room in the jolly batchelor's house — surrounded by a congruous assemblage of all the "fashionables" of the place seated on boards placed on sacks of grain and extending all round the room — the fire place excepted.

The discordant squawling of some half doz; of "perpetuations" drew my attention from the more attractive gaze of a group of dark eyed female brules when to my horror I beheld chucked away in a corner a number of self indulging and most indulgent mamas with their hopeful progeny strapped on ornamented boards or Indian cradles, after the manner of the *natives*.

This gave me sufficient evidence that in addition to the two most important persons in the room — the fiders — we should not want accompaniments in the shape of *sounds most natural*

The ball was opened by four juveniles of mixed breed, — certainly not more than six years old. After a few preliminary blushes, and a sufficient display of antics these hopefuls retired amid the plaudits of their admiring parents and friends.

The next on the boards were two pairs of middle aged "magnates"

The two *gentlemen* were from distant and different parts of the old world — one a real "Yorkshire" the other a blessed Corkonian. Their partners were both dark eyed houris of the metiff blood. The happy and excited hibernian set the whole house in a roar of admiration by his wonderful display of the light fantastic toe. I have seen mountebanks in "all their glory" but never before did I behold a man, either in or out of a ball room cut such fantastic capers. Pat was determined (as there were strangers present) to out do all the rest in politeness, that characteristic of his Countrymen, at every turn made a most profound bow and immediatly recovering himself strutted off with evident self satisfaction

The englishman felt he was out done and was modest; the females done their best but were evidently not at home in that department of the "fine arts". Jigs and reels were the order of the night.

All the party appeared to enjoy themselves most outrageously and although there was a great lack of females and female charms these dear obliging creatures neither appeared fatigued nor displeased with themselves.

The master of the *ceremonies* appeared to be the only unhappily situated person in the room. The continual and general thirst made this person's calls to the cellar very frequent; that could only be had access to at intervals — while the *bow string* was relaxed — when down slipp'd our worthy "master" and there he had to remain until the jig or reel was finished, when he was once more admitted to the regions of bliss. Liquors of all kinds in this territory are scarce — some times not to be had. Spirits are occasionally used. Wine only heard of.

The good batchelor failed in procuring either; his ball could not be put off — what was to be done. Why man says he to one of his friends, I have barley and ye ken there is no lack of "hops" All modern refinements, those innovations on conviviality were dispensed with and that night we all got glorious on "home brewed" ale.

Mem^o Wrote to A L M & J G M^cK[enzie] Montreal and forwarded the letters by the H[udson's] B[ay] Co[mpany]'s Express 20 Jan^y 37.

25 Jan^y. 37. Arrived this evening, the two persons who returned from us on the Prarie 10th Dec^r. They went back to Red lake and having procured two Indian guides set out from Red lake about the 11 Jan^y — being 14 days on the route. From them I learnt of the death of M^r Alfred Aiken who resided at Red Cedar lake. He was shot dead by an Indian who lived near his trading post. M^r Aiken was a Metiff, son of M^r Aiken a partner of the American Fur Co. and [a] young man much esteemed for his many good qualities. Among which, to my own knowledge, he possessed those of modesty and unassuming kindness.⁶¹

[Note.] The Indian who killed M^r Aiken has been taken and is now in chains at Fort Snelling awaiting the arrival of the St[eam] B[oa]t when he will be sent to Prarie du Chien for trial
St Peters May 1837.

⁶¹ See *ante*, n. 51.

Buffalo hunting in the West

The 1st season of the Buffalo hunting commences about the 15th June and is continued to the 1st Aug^t. The 2^d season commences in Sept and terminates late in the fall, generally about the 1st Nov^r leaving time sufficient to return home before the cold weather sets in. I allude to the Brules hunting as the Indian's who inhabit the Buffalo country kill these animals at all seasons.

The Brules generally set out with 500 to 600 carts drawn principally by oxen. Their wives and daughters accompany these carts for the purpose of preparing the meat which is done by striping it from the bones and spreading it upon a scaffold of poles elevated from 3 to 4 ft from the ground under which they build a fire of the Buffalo dung. in this manner they continue to dry the meat as fast as it is killed by the hunters. It requires the flesh of twelve of the largest animals thus prepared to load a cart drawn by one ox—and allowing 600 carts to the spring season would make 7,200 of these animals killed in about a month by the Brules alone not including any of the various Indian tribes—such as the Sioux the Mandans, Gros ventres &c all of whom inhabit the Buffalo Country and destroy these animals by thousands and add to this too that in the spring nearly all the animals killed are cows the meat of the male not being good after a certain season. These different causes account for the rapid decrease of the Buffalo within the last few years. I have been informed by a Brule hunter that at the last hunt they had to go a journey of 15 days to the west 6 farther than ever they went before.

In the fall hunt besides the dry'd meat they make Pemmican and also bring home a great quantity of the meat in its natural state.

The Pemmican is made by drying the meat as I before mentioned it is then beaten into small pieces and placed into a sack made of the Buffalo skin—into which is pour'd a quantity of the melted fat of the animal. when it cools, it is pressed into the sack which is sewed up. in this manner it will keep for 3 or 4 years. The sacks are various sizes but the common sizes are from 100 to 150 lbs. The usual number of horsemen attend-

ing these hunts are about 500. however not more than from two to 300 act as hunters and are those who possess the swiftest horses.

The hunters are exceedingly expert notwithstanding which many accidents occur I have seen many of them with broken legs broken arms & disabled hands this latter accident frequently occurs from their manner of loading their guns They never use wadding. The powder is carelessly thrown—in more or less quantities—the ball is then tumbled in upon it and off goes the shot.

This is done to save time, and it is almost incredible what a number of shots one person will discharge in riding the distance of 3 to 4 miles the horse at the top of his speed.

A gentleman who has lived many years in the Buffalo Country says that upon the least Calculation four to five hundred thousand of these animals are killed yearly on this side the Missouri

*Red River Colony*⁶²

Assiniboin belief in futurity

The Assiniboins believe, that in another life, to obtain enduring happiness, they have to climb a very high and steep mountain, the ascent of which is so difficult and dangerous that it requires many attempts, perseverance, and great fortitude to gain the summit, but once there a delightful and boundless plain is spread before them covered with eternal verdure and countless herds of Buffalo and the other animals which they delight to hunt; and that they will find all their friends who left this life before them enjoying an uninterrupted course of happiness, dwelling in beautiful skin tents which ever appear new.

Those who have done ill in this life and have been successful enough to gain the summit of the hill—are there met by the dwellers of the happy plain, and those who knew them in this life, who bear witness against them. They are then immediately thrown down the steep and should their necks not be broken never again attempt an ascent.

⁶² Two blank pages which follow this heading in the original diary indicate that McLeod intended to describe the colony.

Those who have done good in this life are welcomed with unusual joy and immediately admitted to all the privileges of their never ending hunting and happiness.

“ This is equal to the happy valley in Rasselas

Sunday 26 Feby 1837. Left La Fourch Red River Colony Territory of Hudson’s Bay this evening and came 3 miles up the settlement to prepare for an early start to morrow to St Peters 750 miles from this — on foot.⁶³

Monday 27 Started at day break. Cold with a sharp head wind. About 10 a m a severe snow storm commenced obliged to take shelter in the house of a M^r Micklejohn. Came about 9 miles. 5 p’m cleared off prospects of a fine day preparing snow shoes &c for Journey.

Tuesday 28th Started at day break bad walking — snow deep — crossed the long traverse and waited till dogs came up. At 3. p’m had to encamp. Dogs too fatigued to proceed. Dogs never travel well the first day.

March 1, 1837, (Wednesday) Left encampment at sunrise found it exceedingly cold sleeping out after having been in a house for two months. Came 40 miles to day. arrived at a shanty where we found 14 persons (Men, women, & children) without food. They had been living for 7 days on an occasional hare and pheasant. The hunter’s life is ever a precarious one. We relieved them with Pemmican from our stock for the journey, which will in all probability be the cause of our fasting some days before we reach lake Travers the first trading post from this — distant more than 400 miles.

March 2^d (Thursday) Left shanty early — morning pleasant struck off into the plain at the head of Swamp river,⁶⁴ from thence made a long traverse to a point on Pembina river fifteen miles from the head of [it? — *manuscript torn*] where we encamped, having c[o]me more than 40 miles to day. This is my third day on snow shoes and I feel excessively fatigued.

⁶³ The main part of the Red River settlement was located at the forks (*la fourche*) where the Assiniboine River joins the Red River.

⁶⁴ This stream is called Swampy, or Petopek, river and is described as “ a mere brook ” in William H. Keating, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Source of St. Peter’s River*, 2:80 (Philadelphia, 1824).

3^d March (Friday) Had a cold & stormy night unable to leave camp before 9 o'clock Wind ahead till 12 o'clock when it changed to the North & brought with it a snow storm which caught us on the prairie many miles from shelter. 3 p.m. came to a small wood on a bend of Tongue river one of our party, M^r P[arys] not having come up we encamped. M^r P. has no snow shoes, he persisted in not bringing any with him which may yet lead to unhappy consequences as he is unable to keep up with us in the plains, and should we be separated by a storm he will inevitably perish Indeed the poor fellow this very day, said that "he would perish in this journey". Feel miserably fatigued, and my feet are severely blistered with the strings of the Snow shoes. At every steep the blood from my toes oozes through my Moccasins.

We came through a beautiful prairie to day inclosed on three sides by woods which can be distinctly seen from the middle of the Prairie

On the N by the wood on Pembina river—W by Pembina Mountain S. by the trees bordering Tongue river forming almost a complete circle of at least 100 miles.

4 March (Friday) Saturday⁶⁵ Came a long distance today, snow deep and very heavy which clogs the snow shoes & makes them exceedingly fatiguing to carry. Encamped on a branch of Park river. Find Major Long's Map of this Country very incorrect⁶⁶

5 March 1837. (Sunday) Encamped at 2 p.m on a bend of the 2^d branch of Park river near the Coteau des Prairies—having come about 15 miles only.⁶⁷ Snowing fast which obliged us to encamp.

⁶⁵ In the original manuscript the correction is added in pencil.

⁶⁶ Keating in his *Narrative*, 2:39, states that Park River is "of the same size as Big Salt river, and is formed by the union of several insignificant streams." Major Stephen H. Long's map, appended to volume I of Keating's work, shows Tongue River as a stream joining Pembina River from the south.

⁶⁷ Nearly all books of early travel in the vicinity of Red River give careful descriptions of the Coteau des Prairies. This remarkable height of land is the watershed from which start streams flowing into the Red River, the Missouri, and the Mississippi.

All the rivers in this Country are very crooked, and the timber growing upon their banks is in every instance (that I have seen) in proportion to the size of the stream.

6th March. (Monday) Bad walking. Snow deep. Encamped at 2. p.m on Saline river one of our party being too fatigued to proceed

Came about 18 miles through an immense burnt prairie.

The farther Southward we come the more snow we find

Banks of the Saline very high with timber (Elm & Oak) growing down their sides to the edge of the stream which is 5 yards wide

Near the mouth of this river there is a salt factory which must prove profitable as salt is worth 16/ Sterling P[e]r Bus[hel] at R[ed] R[iver] settlement 250 miles hence.⁶⁸ The water here is perfectly fresh and palatable, it is from a small lake about 20 miles from this downwards that the Saline flows

7th March (Friday) Tuesday⁶⁹ Last night excessively cold. Today unable to leave camp. So stormy that it is impossible to see the distance of 10 yd^s on the plain, and the distance to the next wood or place of encampment is more than 30 miles — which would endanger our lives should we attempt to cross the plain in a storm. Such, is one of the many disadvantages encountered by the traveller in this gloomy region at this inclement season.

8 March 1837. (Wednesday) Wind North & piercing cold on the prairie. Crossed the great plain and arrived at Turtle river at 3 p.m where we encamped. Came 30 miles.

9 March (Thursday) In camp. Wind N.W. impossible to travel on prairie without endangering our lives.

10 March. (Friday) Excessively cold and stormy till noon. Came a long distance to day

Encamped long after sun down on a branch of Goose river. Feel very fatigued — my feet cut and swollen from the continual use of the snow shoes which however I now begin to like and

⁶⁸ Keating mentions several salt springs along the Red River and its tributaries. He states that the Pembina settlers were in the habit of procuring salt on the Saline rivers. *Narrative*, 2: 39, 63.

⁶⁹ In the original manuscript the correction is added in pencil.

prefer keeping them on where there is but little snow & where they might be dispensed with. I also find (sore as my feet are) that I can travel a greater distance in a day with, than without them. Such is custom!!!

11 March. (Saturday) Unable [to make] the "grande traverse" (50 miles) to Shienne river the day being misty and the land marks which guide the traveller on the plain not visible ⁷⁰

Came a short distance & encamped on the lower tributary of *Goose river*

12th March (Sunday) Started at day break. route principally over immense hills not a tree or shrub visible. Saw 13 Buffaloe — one shot at by the guide but not killed though severely wounded. ⁷¹ Mr P[arys] unable to keep up with us, afraid to loose him as the drift filled up our tracks which obliged us to wait frequently for him, consequently we were unable to get across the plain to a place of encampment

Obliged to take up our place of rest for the night in a pond among a few rushes the only shelter for miles round in this dreary & monotonous region. During the past months in moments of extreme suffering I have seen and felt the interposition of a ruling and merciful providence

This evening while we were all suffering the severest torments for want of water, and without hope of getting any for many hours, the guide espied at a distance the carcasses of 2

⁷⁰ McLeod follows closely the spelling of geographic names as given on Long's map. The present spelling of the name of this stream is Sheyenne River.

⁷¹ The guide who accompanied the party was the famous Pierre Bottineau. See *post*, p. 418, and Nute, in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 10: 135 n. 19. Mr. William Bottineau of Plummer, a son of Pierre, has told the writer much of the story of this expedition as he heard it from his father. His version of Dickson's motives is that the "general," having been robbed and abused in other ways by the Mexicans, desired to have revenge. When he reached the Red River settlement the Hudson's Bay Company refused to honor his drafts, being unwilling to lose its best hunters. Thus Dickson was stranded without money or equipment and had to abandon his enterprise. Mr. Bottineau also adds graphic touches to the story of this journey to Fort Snelling; for example, he tells how his father had to use the butt of his gun on McLeod to keep the latter from freezing to death.

Buffaloes recently killed. being a hunter himself curiosity led him to the spot when lo! to his great delight and our relief he found a few small pieces of wood brought there by hunters some days previous, by which means we were enabled to melt a kettle of snow.

13 March (Monday) Passed a more comfortable night than we had expected. Morning miserable—having to creep out from under our Buffalo skins, tie on our snow shoes, and take to the plain to warm ourselves. No fire! no water! no breakfast! I took a small p^s of frozen Pemmican, and eat it with a handful of snow—at the same time walking as fast as possible to warm myself. Soon after we started, a violent storm came on. Guide said we were lost, and would all perish—advised him to take a direct course, as near as possible and for that purpose to keep before the wind. At 3 p.m having walked since day break more than 30 miles we perceived through the drift a clump of trees where we arrived soon after happy to escape passing a second night on the plain where it is more than probable we should have been all frozen to death.

The guide says we did not come much out of our route and that we are on a branch of the Shienne river called *the river of Rushes*

14 March 1837. (Tuesday) Last night so cold could not get a moment's sleep. To day in camp. Guide unable to go on with sore eyes.

15 March (Wednesday) Last [night] as cold as the former. Day pleasant. In camp. Guide still unable to "see his way."

16 March (Thursday) Came through two praries and encamped on Shienne river.

17 March (Friday)!!! This morning when we left the camp the weather was very mild and pleasant. Guide discovered tracks of a deer and went in pursuit of it, mean time M^r H[ayes] M^r P[arys] and myself directed our course across the plain towards a p^t of wood on Rice river; suddenly (about 11 o'clock) a storm from the North came on that no pen can describe We made towards the wood as fast as possible it was distant about 3 miles I was foremost, the dogs following close to me, M^r H. not far distant, M^r P. 2 miles behind. In a few moments nothing was perceptible, and it was with difficulty I could keep myself

from suffocating—however I hastened on and in a short time caught a glimpse of the wood through a drifting cloud of snow. I was then not more than 300 yd^s from it (as near as I can possible judge) at that instant I also saw M^r H. who had come up within 30 yd^s of me and called out that I was going the wrong course exclaiming “Keep more to the right.” I replied “no, no—follow me quick[”] I perceived him to stoop, probably to arrange the strings of his snow shoes—an instant afterwards an immense cloud of drifting snow hid him from my view and I *saw him no more*. I cannot describe what my feelings then were—what must they have been in a few seconds afterwards when I found myself at the bottom of a ravine more than 20 ft deep from which I had to use the greatest exertion to save myself from being suffocated by the snow which was drifting down upon me. Upon gaining the edge of the ravine (which I effected with the greatest difficulty having my snow shoes still on, as my hands were too cold to untie the strings of them which were frozen) I found the poor faithful dogs with their traineau buried in a snow bank.

Having dug them out my next effort was to gain the wood which I knew was on the opposite side of the ravine about 20 yd^s over yet I could not distinguish a tree so close & thick was the snow drifting. An hours exertion with the dogs & traineau through the deep snow in the ravine brought me into the edge of the wood which I found was composed of only a few scattered trees which would afford but a miserable shelter. I tried to make a fire—my matches were all wet—my hands were too cold to strik[e] a spark with the flint & steel. What can be done—“I must not perish” said I to myself I then thought of my companions—alas! poor fellows there can be no hope for you as I have all the blankets Buffalo robes, provisions &c (The dogs having followed me in the storm)

Having dug a hole in a *snow bank* I made a sort of shelter with my cloak and a blanket—and rolled myself in a blanket and a large buffalo robe I was then completely wet through for a shower of sleet had accompanied the storm. in a few moments it began to freeze. I was then so cold that I feared much that I should perish during the night. The night came, the storm continued unabated my situation was truly miserable Com-

panions & guide in all probability perished — Myself in great danger of freezing also — and in a strange Country some hundred miles from any settlement or trading post

I cannot say what I felt although my usual feelings would raise to my relief frequently, and I would say to myself — “What is passed cant be helped” [“]better luck next time” [“]take it cooly” which I was evidently doing with a veengeance

The greater part of the night was past listening to the roaring of the storm and the dismal howling of the wolves, together with the *pleasant* occupation of rubbing my feet to keep them from freezing.

18 March (Saturday) Never was light more welcome to a mortal. At dawn I crept from my hole and soon after heard cries. Fired two shots. soon after guide came up. he had escaped by making a fire and being a native and a *half blood* his knowledge of the Country and its dangers, saved him. M^r P was found with both legs and feet frozen. all search for M^r H proved ineffectual.

Remained all day near the scene of our disaster in the hope that some trace of M^r H. might be found.

19 March (Sunday) Started early with poor P on the dog traineau having left all our luggage behind. at 2 p.m found dogs unable to proceed with P. and him suffering too much to bear the pain occasioned by moving about. With the help of guide made a hut to leave M^r P in where he will remain for 5 or 6 days until I can send horses for him from Lake Travers 60 miles from this. Left with P all our blankets and robes except a blanket each (guide & myself) also plenty of wood cut and ice near his lodge to make water of. Out of Provisions obliged to kill one of our dogs.

Dogs meat excellent eating.

20 March (Monday) Morning stormy — accompanied with snow unable to leave camp till 2 p.m when guide & myself started Came a long distance and encamped in the “Bois de Sioux”⁷² Feel very weak and unwell.

21 March. Left the “Bois de Sioux” at sun raise and ar-

⁷² Ordinarily this term is used to designate the river flowing from Lake Traverse to the Red River, but McLeod, like Keating in his *Narrative*, 2: 13, applies the name to the timber fringing the stream.

rived at dark at the trading house at lake Travers having travelled 45 miles to day—with a severe pain in my right side and knee

22^d March (Wednesday) at trading house—feel unwell.

23^d March (Thursday) Sent the guide with another person and 2 horses and a cart for M^r P. and my *Trunk &c.* with instructions to the men to search for the body of M^r H in order that it may be decently interred at the trading house

1st April (Saturday) For the past 9 days have remained at the trading house where I am well treated by M^r Brown the gentleman in charge for *the American Fur Co* ⁷³

Saw the game of la cross played very frequently both by the squaws and Indians. it is a very interesting game when well contested and the female players are most astonishingly expert.

2^d April 1837. (Sunday.) This morning the two men returned. poor Parys is no more. They found him in his hut dead. He had taken off the greater part of his clothes, no doubt, in the delirium of a fever caused by the excruciating pain of his frozen feet.

In the hut was found nearly all the wood we left him, his food, and a kettle of water partially frozen. Every thing indicated that he died the 2^d or 3^d day after our departure from him.

No trace of the body of M^r H was found. The poor fellow has long ere this become food for the savage animals that prowl these boundless wilds.

Thus has miserably perished a young and amiable man at the age of 20 in the full vigor of youth—*full of high hopes & expectations* ⁷⁴

⁷³ Joseph R. Brown, one of the best-known fur-traders in Minnesota, was in charge of the American Fur Company's post on the east shore of Lake Traverse near its southern end. This was the chief post of the Columbia Fur Company before its absorption by the American Fur Company in 1827. A picture of the fort as it looked in 1824 forms the frontispiece for the second volume of Keating's *Narrative*.

⁷⁴ In a communication from McLeod to Henry H. Sibley, dated May 14, 1850, and printed in the *Saint Paul Pioneer Press* for February 18, 1894, a further account of this trip from the Red River settlement is given. In the main it adds little to the diary, being based thereon, but it does give the intended destination of Parys and Hayes. McLeod says that they were

3^d April (Monday) This day poor P. was consigned to his last abode — the silent & solitary tomb. It is a source of consolation to me amid my troubles, that I have been enabled to perform this last duty to a friend with all due respect. Would that I could say the same of M^r Hayes. I have however left directions with all the Indians near this post to search for his bones and inter them. They are about to depart on their spring hunts and will in all probability find his remains. *I can do no more*

5 Apl. (Wednesday) Left Lac Travers at 10 o'clock

Came 20 miles through a hilly prairie.

Encamped at 3 p'm

6 Apl (Thursday) Came 40 miles today. Encamped at Pomme de Terre river.

7 April 1837. (Friday) Cold & stormy, had some difficulty in getting across Pomme de Terre river. Made the horses swim, got our baggage and the cart across on some pieces of jammed ice. Arrived at lac qui parle at 2 p.m. Well received by M^r Reinville who has a trading post for the Indians here ⁷⁵

8 April (Saturday) As the weather appeared unsettled prevailed on by M^r R to remain with him till monday.

Today visited a M^r Williamson a missionary sent into this country two years ago by the American board of Foreign Mis-

bound for England. This version differs from that of Dickson for the latter wrote that Hayes wished to enter the Texan army. *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 10: 180, 181.

⁷⁵ Joseph Renville — variously spelled Reinville, Rainville, et cetera — was one of the most picturesque characters in Minnesota history. He was born near the site of St. Paul about the year 1779. His father was a French-Canadian trader and his mother a native woman. He was educated in Canada and then returned to his people. In the War of 1812 he aided Colonel Robert Dickson in his operations against the Americans. He was one of the founders of the Columbia Fur Company and when that company was absorbed by the American Fur Company Renville established himself at Lac qui Parle, where he remained till his death in 1846. He was interpreter for Pike in 1805 and 1806 and for Long in 1823. A letter from Alexander G. Huggins written from the mission house at Lac qui Parle on January 18, 1838, describes Renville's services in translating the Bible into Sioux: "Dr. W[illiamson] reads a verse in the french then Mr R. speaks it in Sioux and the Dr. Mr Riggs & Mr Pond all write it down then the Dr reads another verse."

sions, for the conversion of the Dakota Indians of this place
M^r W's family resides with him. he has also two assistants*

*[*Note.*] A young lady, his wife's sister — and a young
man — who attempted to *convert* me ⁷⁶

in his arduous undertaking. M^r W. can now speak a good deal
of the Dakota language and I believe has made some translations
from the bible.

9th April Sunday Went to hear M^r W preach — he also read
a chapter from the Testament in Dakota and a young man pres-
ent, another in french. A number of the psalms of David were
sung in Dakota by half breeds and Indians. The audience con-
sisted of half breeds, Indians, Canadians, and a few Whites.

10 April (Monday) Left Lac qui parle at 9 o'clock Came
30 miles. Encamped at 5 p'm at river L'eau de vie ⁷⁷

11 April (Tuesday) Came 35 miles, Encamped at 6 p.m
near the S^t Peters river. Crossed today, Castor & Petite roche
rivers. ⁷⁸ Saw a great number of flocks of wild geese and swans.

12 April (Wednesday) Came 30 miles Encamped at 6
p.m. in a small grove of oaks.

13 April 1837. (Thursday) Came 30 miles. Arrived at 3
p.m at the Monté de Sioux at the trading house of M^r Proven-
çalle. ⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Miss Sarah Poage, later the wife of Gideon H. Pond, accompanied
Dr. Thomas Smith Williamson and his wife to his mission post at Lac
qui Parle in 1835. The young man who attempted to convert McLeod
was Pond. For further remarks about this attempt, see McLeod's entry
for April 22, 1837, and *post*, n. 83.

⁷⁷ Hawk Creek, which joins the Minnesota River almost opposite the
mouth of the Yellow Medicine River, was called *Chataba*, "that hatches
sparrow-hawks," by the Indians, and *L'eau de vie* by the *voyageurs*.
Another French name for the same stream was *Epervier*, meaning
"sparrow-hawk." Keating, *Narrative*, 1: 355, 356.

⁷⁸ "Little Rock River" is a direct translation of the French designation,
Petite Roche. "Beaver Creek" is a translation from the French word,
Castor.

⁷⁹ Louis Provençalle kept a trading post at Traverse des Sioux for many
years. Among the Taliaferro Papers are lists of Indian goods and traders
for 1825, which show that he was there in that year. "Monté de Sioux"
is a variation of the place name. It is used in the headings of some of
Louis Provençalle's letters. Sibley Papers, August 10, 1840.

14 Apl. (Friday) Embarked at sun raise in a Canoe with Indians & squaws who are going down to where the St Peters joins the Mississippi at Fort Snelling.

Have for company 10 Indians and squaws in three Canoes. These people have in one of their Canoes the bodies of two of their deceased relatives which they intend carrying to a lake near the Mississippi more than 100 miles from this

In many instances these people bring the bodies of their friends much farther when it is the wish of the dying person to be deposited in a particular place.

At 3 p.m obliged to encamp in consequence of rain coming on— here I found the benifit of a good skin lodge which was put up by the females in a short time, and we all got under it round a snug fire cooked our victuals, and felt exceedingly comfortable.

15th Apl. (Saturday) Morning rainy, did not leave encampment till 11 o'clock. 3 p.m passed petite rapid, and arrived at the trading house of M^r Ferribow where we stopped a few moments.⁸⁰

16th Apl (Sunday) 3. p.m. at long last have arrived at Fort Snelling St Peters, having escaped a variety of dangers, and endured great fatigue and privations in the Sioux Country.

[3^d May Today the guide P Buottineau who came from the Colony of Red river, with me, left this place to return. gave him my letters dated 20 Apl. for M^r Christie & M^r Logan]⁸¹

Mem^o

To day (20 Apl. 37) wrote to Alex^r Christie Esq^r Hon. Hudson's Bay C^o giving him the particulars of my unfortunate and melancholy journey from Red River Wrote also, to M^r

⁸⁰ Jean Baptiste Faribault's trading post was at the Little Rapids of the Minnesota River. Like so many of the early traders, he was born in Canada. As early as 1796 he was in the fur-trade business in the Northwest, and about 1806 he settled at Mendota. He was a man of much influence among Indians and half-breeds, to whom he endeavored to teach the rudiments of agriculture. Faribault County is named in his honor. William W. Folwell, *A History of Minnesota*, 1: 437-445 (St. Paul, 1921).

⁸¹ The passage enclosed in brackets is crossed out in the original.

Logan & M^r Millian of Red River. (3^d May sent them by P Bortineau the guide) ⁸²

22^d Apl, Wrote to J[oseph] R. B[rown] Lake Travers — requesting him to inform me of the result of the Indians search for the remains of my unfortunate friend M^r Hayes.

Wrote to M^r Reinville Lac qui Parle

Wrote to a M^r G[ideon] H. P[on]d a missionary assistant at "Lac qui Parle["] in reply to a curious letter from him placed in my hands on the day of my departure from that place.

This letter alluded to the death of my companions, in the prairie, and in the hypocritical cant of the day the writer calls upon me to remember *God's mercies* &c. &c. &c. ⁸³

1837. I am the most unfortunate of beings. For the past months nothing but accident has attended my steps. Yesterday (4 May) while out shooting with a friend (Lieut. M^cClure U.S.A) my gun accidentally went off, and lodged the contents (a charge of buck shot,) in the right shoulder of poor M^cClure, who immediatly fell. ⁸⁴ I was not more than 3 yards from him at the time and thought that he was shot dead. The agony of that moment I cannot describe. an instant afterwards I took him up in my arms, and my eye caught the wounded shoulder — when I was rejoiced to find that it did not appear dangerous. We had to walk nearly 3 miles to reach the fort. The wound

⁸² The reply of Alexander Christie, chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company at the Red River settlement, is among the McLeod Papers under date of October 16, 1837. For another reference to Millian, see *ante*, p. 400.

⁸³ McLeod Papers, April 10, 1837. As McLeod states, the letter calls on him to see an evidence of God's mercies in his fortunate escape from recent dangers. Evidently McLeod felt that the death of two friends and his own privations were not exactly to be termed "mercies," for he has indorsed the letter on the back, "Kept as a curiosity."

⁸⁴ Lieutenant James McClure was graduated from West Point in 1833 and came to Fort Snelling shortly thereafter. According to his half-breed daughter, Nancy, he loaned money to McLeod. As McClure was transferred to a post in Florida in the fall of 1837 and died the following spring, McLeod paid his debt by giving clothing and contributing in other ways to the support of the little Nancy. "The Story of Nancy McClure," in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 6: 439, 441.

upon examination, did not appear bad the greater part of the shot having passed over the shoulder, only grazing it.

The D^r says there is no danger of the arm which is great consolation to me though the innocent cause of the poor young gentleman's sufferings.

Saint Peters May 29. /37 Saw Frenier a half breed Sioux from Lake Travers who informed me that the band of Indians who hunted this spring, not far from the scene of our disaster on the 17 March, had been unsuccessful in their search for the remains of M^r Hayes.⁸⁵ There cannot now be any hope of his remains being ever heard of — at least by me as I shall leave this place in a few days hence.

Saint Peters June 17. Returned from Saint Louis Mo this day having performed the journey from this place to Saint Louis and back again 1800 miles in fifteen days including two days that I remained at S^t Louis one day at Galena and one day at prairie du Chien.

On both sides of the Mississippi from prairie du Chien downward to Saint Louis are villages almost innumerable — dignified by the speculators who first planned and laid them out by the high sounding titles of Cities and Towns. In no part of the world is less taste shown in naming their Towns than in the valley of Mississipi. For instance between this and S^t Louis, we have a "Tully" — a "Hannibal" — a "Carthage" a post "Byron" a "Marion City" and a hundred other far fetched names very inappropriate to the localities of the "Cities" of the West.

Then, among the host of S^t Boats that I saw there was a "Monarch" a "Sultan["] a "Sultana" — names not at all in character with Republican feelings — besides a Rienzi a Rolla. These will do. I cannot but remark that Bulwer's Rienzi has just appeared in the west and for lack of names they took Rienzi. doubtless the next boat built by the same man will be called The "Tribune". But "What's in a name"

⁸⁵Antoine D. Frenier, or Frenière, or Fresniere, is perhaps the half-breed to whom reference is made. See Stephen R. Riggs in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 3:41 n. Many half-breeds of the name of Frenier lived in the Minnesota River and Lake Traverse regions, however, and one cannot be sure which member of the family is meant in this case.

Wrote at St Louis to J[ames] D[ickson] and W[illiam] N[ewhouse] June 9th ⁸⁶

Wrote to W C[am] in Aug^t.

10th Oct. Rec^d a letter from W^m Newhouse W^m Cam & Tho^s Magrane of Montreal, and one from J M^cL[eod] of l'original ⁸⁷

30 Sept wrote to J Walton — 10 Oct to W^m Newhouse T Magrane & J M^cL[eod].

July 1 Mon 1838. Went to Saint Louis 2^d trip and returned in company with B[enjamin] F. B[aker] valet [?] ⁸⁸

Mem. Went to Saint Louis in Winter of 1839. Left St Peters 3^d Jan^y. Return'd in April following.

⁸⁶ This appears to be McLeod's last reference to Dickson. Since the publication of the writer's article on Dickson in the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* more light has been shed on Dickson and his fate by the discovery of the Ely Diaries and Papers. For Ely's contemporary record of a talk with the "general" at Fond du Lac, see *ante*, n. 39. Years later Ely wrote to Edward D. Neill from Santa Rosa, California, giving the entry in his diary which relates to the expedition and adding:

Our conversation brought out the following points — that Dixon (and also the Pole) had been engaged in the Texan Army . . . That the idea of being called to fill some important position in the Affairs of the World, had possessed him — that the star of fate was guiding him (unauthorized by U.S.) in this bold stroke (a purely filibustering Expedition.). He proceeded to Montreal, where he recruited his small force of young men who would constitute the officers in the army he expected to raise. With a very meagre supply of arms, and small resources, they started for the Red River Colony, calculating to recruit (a force of) Half Breeds — hunt their way across the buffalo plains — & thus (suddenly) and from an unexpected direction, to fall on the doomed city (whh I concluded to be Santa Fee), and from its pillage, to find himself abundantly supplied with gold for future wants. . . . I afterwards learned through M^r Aitkins . . . That Dixon wandered off among the Indian tribes.

No date is to be found on this draft of the letter, which is among the Ely Papers, but a reference to July 1, 1873, places it later than that time. Mr. William Bottineau says that his father spoke of Dickson as an Englishman.

⁸⁷ J. McLeod probably was Martin's father.

⁸⁸ Shortly after his arrival at Fort Snelling, McLeod entered the employ of Benjamin F. Baker, a prominent fur-trader. A license to trade at Traverse des Sioux was granted on October 5, 1842, to Joseph Montrieul, who was authorized to take Martin McLeod and Baptiste Yea with him. The letter of the law granting licenses only to American citizens was thus adhered to. Sibley Papers.

M[ary] E. O[ritley] 3^d Dec^r 1838.⁸⁹

— — — left 3^d Jan^r. 1839.

ret^d in April /39 rem^d till 1st July — ret^d in Oct. — till —
22^d July Say /15 July /1840

Went to Saint Louis (4th trip) on the 22^d July. Return^d to
St P. 2^d Sept. 1840.

15 July!! Went to Lake Superior in July 1839. Remain'd
at La Pointe all the summer & Autumn. Return^d in Oct about
the 12th

“B[enjamin] F. B[aker]” died at St Louis on the 2^d Nov.
1839. of *Consumption*

A[ngus] M. A[nderson] died at the same place very suddenly
after a short illness in June 1840.⁹⁰

Nov. 1840. “Began at Traverse de Sioux St Peters river”

There is no life more dull & monotonous than that pass'd by the
'Indian traders' during the winter season. Altho' I have now
been since June 1837 connected one way or other with the fur
trade in this Country — I have not yet passed a *winter*; at what
is call'd the wintering ground or *winter post*. This is my first
trial of that kind, & I have taken into my head to keep a daily
journal of “events” (save the mark!) as a Memento for future
observation.

Nov. 1840. Started from St Peters in a Birch Canoe with
three men on the 24th Oct. last — distance from this place by
water 150 miles — 10 days getting here — had much difficulty
— The season being far advanc'd — Weather cold for the first
four days. Afterwards very fine — part of the Indian Summer
— Water very low.

Reached this place on the 2^d Nov. from that time until the
15th busy getting up our winter Cabin &c. Weather unusually
mild & delightful.

Took possession of our Cabin on the 13th Quarters com-
fortable enough, much more so than is usual in such cases.

So here I am “situated” on the S.E. bank of the St Peters
in a Cabin 15 by 20 with one man; an Interpreter & his squaw
b——h of a wife & 2 d——d noisy, rude children — besides the

⁸⁹ See *post*, p. 432, n. 3.

⁹⁰ Anderson was a well-known fur-trader of the time.

annoyance of "hosts" of the Salvages (as Dufold Dalgetty says) and so I must remain until the last of April—a pleasant prospect God wot; n'importe, I have a few books, a dog & a gun.—some patience—and so, and so I suppose I must be resign'd.

Nov. 20. Byron is my favourite of all the English poets. Altho I have read them all—that is all of the "immortals" there is not one, not even Shakespeare to whom I can recur, over, & over again so frequently as Byron.

I have been reading his letters &c for the past few days & who can read them without regretting that he did not leave some prose work worthy of his fame.

Read "Parasina" The ["]Giaour" The "Corsair" The 'Bride of Abydos' for the one hundredth time at least.

To day 20 Nov. first snow fell. Weather mild—but every appearance of plenty of snow and winter—fast approaching.

"There was a severe storm (with snow) early in Oct. last when I was up the St Croix river 200 miles N. E. from this.

Nov. 21. In house all day. Snowing. Read the book of Esther, and looked into Lockharts' Life of "Walter Scott["] a most excellent and delightful work. Read it when it first came out, but find it *new again*.

Four days ago rec^d Newspapers from my friend F[ranklin] S[teele] and a letter.⁹¹ All very welcome.

Sunday 22^d Remained in house all day. Read Byron, and a few chapters in the Bible. There is no book that I have read so often as I did the Bible in my early days but for the past six or seven years have scarcely opened the *Book* and with shame I confess that at this present time I have neither bible nor Testament of my own, but as there is one belonging to my man in the house I feel that it will give me great pleasure to read it frequently, as besides the early associations it brings to my recollection—the historical part is highly instructive and interesting.

⁹¹ Franklin Steele, a prominent Minnesota pioneer who became sutler at Fort Snelling in 1838, was also much interested in the development of water power at the Falls of St. Anthony. Steele County, Minnesota, is named for him. For a brief biographical sketch of Steele, see Daniel Stanchfield, "History of Pioneer Lumbering on the Upper Mississippi and Its Tributaries" in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 9: 354-356.

Monday 23^d Reading Lockhart's life of Sir Walter Scott. Strolled in the woods. Saw two Indians in the evening one of whom gave us some Venison.

Tuesday 24th Intended to visit old Le. B[anc] who is unwell,⁹² but feel some what so myself. Want of exercise for the past week. Sedentary habits would soon kill me. Must fast, 'Tis a "sovereign remedy" in my case. Read 1st Vol. of the — "Monastery".

Wednesday 25th Weather dull and cloudy appearance of snow. Reading concluded 2^d vol *Monastery*

Thursday 26. Weather mild. *In Cabin* all day. R^d "Abbott"

Friday 27th Delightful day. Crossed the river to visit old Le B. Sat up until past 1 o.c. this morning (28th) reading the "Pilot."

Saturday 28th Concluded the "Pilot" — as a whole it is an interesting and stirring tale, but some of the characters are made to act very unnatural parts. Burroughcliffe and Manuel act exceedingly silly in more than one of the scenes.

Dillon is a luke warm sort of a rascal — and none of the other characters are more than common people of every day life (with exception of long Tom Coffin who is the only original) made to perform feats worthy of the "Arabian nights"

The Pilot is of course *Paul Jones* whose proper name was John Paul.

Sunday 29th Weather cold, in house all day. Read Bible, and looked into "Locke on the human understanding ["]

Monday 30th Exceedingly cold. Wind from the west Reading "Oliver Twist" for the 2^d time.

Last night finished reading "The Gentleman in Black" alais the Devil a strange thing in 1 vol, — Who is the author

By the bye rather a *queer* work to read on a Sunday So some folks would say that I wot of, so it is — "There is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous"

From grave to gay
From lively to severe

⁹² This refers to Provençalle, who was known by the traders and Indians as Le Blanc. See *ante*, n. 79.

December 1840.

Tuesday 1st Hail December — with thy gloomy, severe and frosty looks. This day 4 years ago, and precisely such weather, I was en route to red lake where I arrived early in the day fatigued and hungry enough — how time flies. "Tempus fugit" a School boy's phrase — Alas! too soon forgot by us all. "Redde" Byron's letters.

Wednesday 2^d

Thursday 3. *Read Lalla Rookh*

Friday 4. Weather cold and gloomy. Feel so myself. Read, "Marino Faliero"

Saturday 5th

Sunday 6. Pleasant & mild.

Monday 7. Went to an Indian encampment of 7 lodges near Prairie la flech 8 miles distant and ret^d at 3 p.m.⁹³

Weather mild. Snowing in the evening.

8th Tuesday

Wednesday 9. Went to Le B[lanc]'s Read — Byron viz Deform'd Transform'd & Werner.

Thursday 10. Fine weather. Read Locke on the understanding

Friday — 11. Still pleasant and warm weather for the season — Unusually so.

Saturday 12th Read "Don Juan" News from St Peters last night Very fine day. Snow all melting away. last night went to Le B[lanc]'s.

Sunday 13 Went to Le B's with D[avid] F[aribault]⁹⁴

Monday 14. Unwell. News from St P's

⁹³ Nicollet's map, accompanying his *Report* (serial 380), shows the Prairie la Flèche River, which appears to be the stream now known as Spring Creek in Le Sueur County. In an undated manuscript letter to the editor of a newspaper, presumably the *Minnesota Chronicle*, McLeod describes the prairie as follows: "Over an immense forest of many miles in extent the eye ranges and embraces with distinctness the distant outline of the beautiful Prairie Lafleche 30 miles in circumference surrounded with timber." McLeod Papers.

⁹⁴ David Faribault, son of Jean Baptiste Faribault, was a fur-trader. He married Nancy McClure, half-breed daughter of the young officer whom McLeod shot accidentally at Fort Snelling. See *ante*, n. 84.

- Tuesday 15th Read Childe Harold's Pilgrimage
 Wednesday 16. Cold & blowing great change in the weather since yesterday.
 Thursday 17. Very cold. Read Byron & took a *walk*.
 Friday 18. *Cold. Cold* In search of a horse stolen by an Indian found him hid in some high grass 3 miles from house. Read "Curiosities of literature"
 Sat 19 Went to Le B[lanc]'s x x x
 Sunday 20. Read Bible & c x x
 Monday 21. }
 Tuesday 22. } x x x x x x x
 Wednesday 23 }
 Thursday 24. Sent J[oseph] B[ourcier] to St Peters this morning.⁹⁵ Went to Le B's
 Friday 25. Christmas — and a dull one.
 Saturday 26.
 Sunday 27. Monday 28. Tuesday 29 Wednesday 30.
 Nearly the whole month of Dec^r unusually mild and pleasant for this climate

January 1841	Remarks &c. &c.
1. Friday. Cold & Blowing	} In house for the most part reading, the only past time I have at present.
2. Sat. Intensely cold.	
3. Sundy. Cold but pleasant	
4 Monday Mild & clear	
5. Tuesday. Pleasant	
6. Wednesday Pleasant. Went to see Indian dance.	} In house reading &c &c.
7. Thursday Mild & Cloudy.	
8. Friday Cloudy with app ^r	
of snow	
9 Sat. Cloudy and warm	
10 Sundy. Mild. Started for Lac qui Parle on horse back, at 11 a.m.	

⁹⁵ One cannot be certain to whom these initials refer, but as Joseph Bourcier is known to have been sent by Sibley from St. Peter's to Traverse des Sioux in June, 1840, in July, 1841, and again in October of the same year, it seems probable that McLeod employed him on return trips to St. Peter's. American Fur Company ledger for St. Peter's, 1840-43, vol. 2, p. 60, in Sibley Papers.

11 Monday. Severly cold. Reached La. Fr^s [Laframboise's] at Petite Roche. half frozen.⁹⁶

12 Tuesday. Cold increasing Remaned all day at La. Fr^s

13 Wednesday. Colder still. Lynx encampment, travelled 20 ms.

14 Thursday. Colder and colder Bottom Encamp^t.

15 Friday do do Rushes Encamp^t Snow storm

16 Saturday do do Encamp^t on a hill

17 Sunday Cold. Cold. Cold. 28° below zero. Reach^d Lac qui P.

We arrived at lac qui P. at 3 p m having travelled from day light in the open plains on horse back. Dr W[illiamson] of the mission inform'd us that it was the coldest weather they had exp^d for 6 yr^s and all the people were surprised at our escape, Between running and riding we managed to do so, and that was all.

January 1841	Remarks
18 Monday	At Lac qui Parle Took up our lodgings in an Indian lodge prepared for us by the Indians who have been expecting us for some time Very kindly rec ^d by the people of the mission and M ^r R[enville?] Indians, civil, but very troublesome with their <i>feasts</i> and dances. Asked to partake of their <i>feasts</i> . which is not always agreeable as <i>dog meat</i> is the <i>favourite dish</i> . Went to hear M ^r R[iggs] preach in Sioux. ⁹⁷ Indians very orderly indeed,
19 Tuesday	
20 Wednesday	
21 Thursday	
22 Friday.	
23 Saturday.	
24 Sunday.	

⁹⁶ Joseph Laframboise, who was located at Little Rock River at this time, was one of the large group of picturesque, well-educated, half-breed traders whose figures lend so much color to early Minnesota history. A vivid impression of his innate courtesy and polish can be obtained from the account of the few days spent at his cabin at the base of the Coteau des Prairies in George Catlin's *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians*, 2: 176 (London, 1842).

⁹⁷ A sketch of the life of Stephen R. Riggs, a missionary to the Sioux, is given in Folwell, *Minnesota*, 1: 200.

25 Monday Blowing from S.W. but not cold, started and encamped at Chippaw[a] river

26 Tuesday. Pleasant. Crossed a plain of 30 miles & encamp^t at eau de vie.

27. Wednesday. No snow on the pla[i]ns obliged to take the St P[eter's] river near Rushes Encamp^d.

28. Thursday. Travelling on the St P. river Encamp^d near Bottom encamp^t

29. Friday do do "

near Lynx Encamt.

30 Saturday Reached Laframboise's at Petite roche. Pleasant day.

31 Sunday. Started at P. R early on h[orse] b[ack] and reached T[raverse] de[s] S[ioux] 50 miles

On our journey to lac qui P[arle] we suffered severely — all the party 9 persons were more or less frozen. D[avid] F[aribault] and myself were obliged to dismount from our horses every mile or two to run and thereby keep up a circulation, and although we had Buffalo robes wrapped round us still we could not keep our bodies warm. As for *my* hands it was with great exertion I saved them. On our faces we had *Buffalo robe masks*, and yet got our noses ears and cheeks frozen.

Alman[ac] Feby. 1841

1	Mond ^y .	<i>Very unwell — mild</i>	
2	Tuesday.	Pleasant weather	
3	Wed ^y .	do do	
4	Thursd ^y .	do	D[uncan] C[ampbell] w[en] ^t to St P[eter'] ^s ⁹⁸
5	Friday	Cold. <i>moon eclipsed</i>	
6	Saturd ^y	Clear and cold.	
7	Sunday	very cold. <i>wind S.W.</i>	
8	Mondy.	Started for St P[eter's] on h[orse]	} 80 mis
	b[ack]		
9	Tuesday	Reach ^d St P ^s at 3 p.m	

⁹⁸ Duncan Campbell, brother of Scott Campbell, United States interpreter at St. Peter's for many years, came to what is now Minnesota in 1834 as one of Henry H. Sibley's assistants. Later he worked under McLeod for several years.

- 10 Wedy. at St P^s *very cold*
- 11 Thurdy Left St P. at 11. a.m
- 12 Friday very cold. Encamped at *Batture aux F[ievres]*⁹⁹
- 13 Saturday reach^d T[raverse] de[s] S[ioux] at 4 p.m.
- 14 Sunday Snowing and blowing.
- 15 Mondy In house. *cold*
- 16 Tuesday Fine weather
17. Wed^y. Warm and pleasant
- 18 Thursday D[uncan] C[ampbell] *ret^d*
19. Fridy
20. Sat. } warm weather Snow all gone & looks
21. Sundy. } like spring Delightful weather *Some*
- 22 Mond^y. } *Ducks Killed.*
- 23 Tuesday.
- 24 Wednesd^y. *Change, cold*
- 25 Thursday. Blowing from S.W.
- 26 Friday Cold
- 27 Saturday Snow in the night
- 28 Sund^y. Snow'd during the night

To the kindness of my friend Mon^s J[oseph] L[afraimboise] I am indebted for the complete history of England in 9 vols. which is quite a feast in this dull spot and will enable me to pass the rest of my time here until 1st May pleasantly and rationally. [February has been for the most a very pleasant month]¹ .

March 1841.

- Mondy. 1. Blowing from S.W but not cold.
- Tuesday 2. Clear and pleasant
- Wednesday 3. Warm and delightful
- Thursday 4. Mild & pleasant
- Friday 5. do do
- Saturday 6. Cloudy & warm
- Sunday 7. Very warm & pleasant.

⁹⁹ This stream is shown entering the Minnesota River from the south just above the Little Rapids on the map which accompanies Nicollet's *Report* (serial 380). Keating, in his *Narrative*, 1: 334, says it was called Fever Sandbar by the white men. Its present name is Sand Creek.

¹ This sentence has been crossed out in the original.

- Monday 8. Fine —
 Tuesday 9. Very pleasant & warm
 Wednesday 10. Cloudy. but *mild*
 Thursday 11. D[uncan] C[ampbell] left warm
 Friday 12. Very warm
 Satd^y 13. Cloud^y
 Sunday 14. do do (Snowed)
 Mond^y 15. Fine. Snow all gone J[oseph] B[ourcier]²
 to J[?] L[aframboise ?]
 Tuesday 16. Pleasant
 Wedn^y. 17, Wind from *H. on fire* Ducks & Geese
 Thursday 18. Wind very strong
 Friday 19. Wind from West
 Sat. 20. Wind W. slightly *cold*
 Sund^y. 21. Slight Rain
 Mond^y. 22. Cold & Blowing
 Tuesday 23. Fine & pleasant
 Wednesd^y 24. Warm & pleasant
 Thursd^y 25. Cloudy.
 Friday 26. Clear & warm
 Saty. 27. Cloudy.
 Sund^y. 28 Raining
 Mon^dy. 29. Cold — 8 inches snow
 Tuesd^y 30. Fine & warm
 Wednesd^y. 31. Slightly cold but pleasant.

With exception of the last 5 days, March has been the most delightful weather I have seen at this season for the past 4 years.

During the whole month until the 28th there was no snow to be seen. At present there is five inches on the ground, but it will not remain for 2 days

April 1841.

- Thursday. 1. Pleasant
 Friday 2. Pleasant & warm
 Sat^dy 3. Blowing strongly from S. D[uncan] C[ampbell]
 left

² See *ante*, n. 95.

- Sund^y. 4. Fine & warm
 Mond^y 5. Cold & blowing
 Tuesd^y 6. Snowed about 3 inches
 Wednes^dy. 7. Clear & pleasant
 Thursd^y 8. Cloudy.
 Frid^y. 9. Cloudy but warm
 Saty. 10 do do
 Sund^y. 11. Snowing slightly. D[uncan] C[ampbell] left
 Mond^y 12. Cloud^y but mild. D[avid] F[aribault] left.
 Tuesd^y. 13. Cold & unpleasant (Canoe arrived
 Wedn^sd^y. 14. Clear & warm 2
 Thursd^y 15. Pleasant PP
 Friday 16. Cloudy (Millions of pigeons)
 Saturday 17. Very warm 3
 Sunday 18. Warm & pleasant
 Monday 19. do do
 Tuesday 20. " "
 Wednesday 21. " "
 Thurd^y. 22. " "
 Friday 23. Cloudy & unpleasant
 Saturd^y 24. Cold—blowing from North
 Sunday 25. Raining & disagreeable
 Monday 26. Cold. Snowed 1/2 in in the night
 Tuesday 27. " D[avid] F[aribault] left.
 Wednesday 28. Cloudy. Rained in the night
 Thursday 29. Drizzling snow & rain
 Friday 30. Very warm & pleasant

The first few days of Apl very pleasant but after the 4th until 13th very disagreeable cold. Changeable, blowing snowing &c.

From the 15th weather warm & pleasant. but a few days of slight rain & water unusually low in the St P[eter's] river.

Last days of April changeable Cold & very disagreeable.
Sic transit &c

May 1841.

- Saturday 1. Clear but cold, blowing f^m North
 Sunday. 2. Wind cold, but clear & pleasant
 Mond^y. 3. Cloudy. app^r of rain

- Tuesday 4. *Slight rain in morning Rained all day*
 Wednesday 5. *Cloudy & unpleasant*
 Thursday 6. *Clear & warm*
 Friday 7. *Warm D[uncan] C[ampbell] 27*
 Saturday 8. *Warm & pleasant 28*
 Sunday 9. *Very warm Rain & Thunder in the evening*
 Monday 10. *Windy & unpleasant 30*
 Tuesday 11. *Warm D. C. ret^d*
 Wednesday 12. *do at T[raverse] d[es] S[ioux]*
 Thursday 13. *do left*
 Friday 14. *En route*
 Saturday 15. *at St Peters*
 Sunday 16.
 Monday 17.
 Tuesday 18.

[*Memoranda found on several pages at the back of the diary*]

Natus³

Walter Scott McLeod born at St Peters Iowa Friday 16.
 April 1841. at 10. a.m.

Baptised Sunday 16th May following by the Rev^d M^r Gaultier
 Roman Catholic Priest

³ McLeod does not refer specifically to his wife at any place in his diary. In view of references in other places, mentioned hereafter in this note, it seems a safe guess that the initials, M. E. O., under date of December 3, 1838 (see *ante*, p. 422), refer to his wife. Possibly the date is that of his marriage. A search through manuscript baptismal records, now in the Roman Catholic Cathedral residence, St. Paul, has brought to light the following data relating to his wife and two of his children:

M'Clode Felix Walter Scott

no. 53

L'an de N. S. 1841 et le 16 Mai, je soussigné prête desservant la paroisse St Pierre certifie avoir baptisé félix Walter Scott fils de Martin McClode et de Marie Quinona garçon agé d'un mois a été parrain L. Galtier et marraine Marguérite Quing en foi de ce j'ai signe.

L. Galtier Ptre

Marie Elizabeth McLeod

[no.] 197

L'an de J. C. 1845 et le 10 Juillet je soussigné déclare avoir conféré le St baptême selon le rite de l'église catholique à Marie Elizabeth Macleod

John G McL. Born at St Peters — 19th June 1843 — died 30 July following

Mary E. McL. born at 10 o'clock in the morning Monday 15 July 1844, at B[ig] S[tone] L[ake]

Baptisted [*sic*] by Rev^d M^r Ravoux.

Janet McL Born at Lac qui Parle Friday 14 Jan^y, 1848 at 6 A.M.

Isabella Born at Oak Grove Saturday 22 May 1851.

N[atun]⁴ 30 August 1813 — City of M[ontrea]l*

*[*Note*] Lochiel, Longuiel & &

L'Original Decr 1829 — left for

VK Hunkerbury [?].

P^t N. [*Portneuf*] year of 1832 & pt of 33.

Started for M^l March 1833.

Left M^l June 17. 1836

née le 19 Juin 1844 du mariage de M^r Macleod (commerçant parmi les Sioux) et de Marie Aclet. parrain M^r J. Rubinet marra[i]ne M^{me} Louise Queen née Phenly

A Ravoux

For those who rely implicitly on family Bibles and baptismal records for biographical data, it is disconcerting to find Mary's birthday given as June 19 in the record of baptism and as July 15 in McLeod's diary. It is impossible to state who made the error, but, obviously, the birthdays of John and Mary, as to the day of the month, were confused in one of the entries.

In lists of beneficiaries under the treaty of Traverse des Sioux, 1851, appear the entries, "Mrs. Mary Ortley McLeod and four children, twelve hundred and fifty dollars"; "Geo. F. Ortley, (Lac-qui-parle,) two hundred and fifty dollars"; and "Martin McLeod, trustee for M. E. Ortley, children, and others." From this evidence it would seem more than likely that Mrs. McLeod was a half-breed daughter of George F. Ortley of Lac qui Parle, her husband's trading post for many years, and that her maiden name was Mary E. Ortley. Similarity in pronunciation may account for Father Ravoux's spelling in the baptismal record. McLeod's testimony in the same document gives considerable biographical data regarding himself and the manner in which he carried on trade with the Indians. "Report of the Commissioners Appointed . . . to Investigate the Official Conduct of Alexander H. Ramsey . . . with the Testimony taken in the Case," in 33 Congress, 1 session, *Senate Executive Documents*, no. 61, p. 11, 12, 18, 226-235 (serial 699).

⁴ The entries now become autobiographical.

Year of 1836 & pt 37 en route for 11 ms in the Northwest.

Ap^l 16, 1837 reach^d St Peters

went to St Louis in May & ret^d.

At St Peters 37 & 38. went to St Louis in Jan^y /38 & summer of 1839.

Winter of 1839 on St Croix

Jan^y Feby March & Apl 1838 travelling in Missouri, Illinois, Iowa & Wisconsin.

T[raverse] d[es] S[ioux] 1840-41, 42-43 — 3 winters ⁵

The summers passed at St Peters.

July 1843 Started for B[ig] S[tone] L[ake]

Winter of 1843-4 at B. S. L and Summer of 1844.

1844-5 also at B. S. L. Summer of 1845 St Peters ret^d in Sept. 1845. [184]6 until June at B. S. L.

Winter of 1846-7 Commenced trading post at Lac qui Parle. Summer following in part at Mendota.

1847, 8, 9, 50 Lac qui P & Mendota. Sept and Oct 1849—60 days at St Paul attending Legislature.

Winter 1849 & 50. Family at Oak Grove

1850, & 1851. Trading at Lac qui P.

Passed winter at St Paul myself — 30 days attending Legislature.

Summer of 1851, at Mendota, Oak Grove, Traverse des Sioux & Lac qui Parle.

10th Dec^r 1828. Went to W C[am] rem^d 2 y^{rs}

1831, at L. O[riginal] with K P H

1832 at N, for J. N. M

From 1st March /33 to 17 July — (Montreal) left Montreal 17 July 1836

Natus 30 Aug^t 1813.

Left M[ontreal] 17 July 1836. Reached R[ed] R[iver] S[ettlement] 24 Dec^r 1836. Left R. R. S. 29 Feby. 1837.

⁵ Six ledgers kept by Martin McLeod in his business as fur-trader have been preserved with his other papers. They cover the period 1840 to 1855 and are, in general, the accounts at the Traverse des Sioux, Lac qui Parle, and Big Stone Lake posts. In one of them are also included copies of a few personal letters by McLeod, bits of poetry, and articles written by him about the Indian country.

Reached St Peters 16 April 1837. B[enjamin] F. B[aker] from June 1837 until June 1839. 2 yrs In July 1839 went to Lake Superior. Ret^d in Oct. Winter of 1839 & 40 at Saint Croix. Summer following at Saint Louis and Saint Peters.

Winter of 1840-41, at T[raverse] de[s] Sioux Saint Peters river.

Mem^o July 1836.

Bradbury		£	
Jo ^s Boulanget	about		15.
J ^{no} Orr	do		5
Tho ^s Mussen	do		3.
Jo ^s McKay (G) [?]	do		2.
Wright — (S)	do	1 or	2
L. Privat	do		1.5
P. Swords	do		1.5
Tait (Livery Stable)	about		1.5
Sharp	do	do	.10
			<hr/>
		£	31.5
W. C[am]who has in charge			
a Deed of Property			10
Armour & Ramsay			3.10
J. P. Ashton <i>Estate</i>			4.10
J Walton			4.
			<hr/>
			53.5

Please pay to the order of Martin McLeod Seventy three dollars for value rec^d & charge the am^t to my a/c

Traverse des Sioux May 1841

[D. Farribault] ⁶

Dft on Col. McComb	\$100	Texas ⁷
do on St Louis	140	
	<hr/>	
	240	

These dr[a]fts, were not paid

⁶ This name is crossed out in the original.

⁷ The text of this draft, which is signed by Dickson and addressed "To Col. Macomb Texian Army," is published in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 10: 181.

5 Shirts
 3 prs Stockings
 2 pr Gloves
 2 Hkfs

 15 p[ie]ce[s] ⁸

16 July
 31 Au^t
 30 Sept
 31 Oct
 30 Nov
 31
 31
 28
 31

 259
 11

 270

Spanish Grammar
 Spanish Dictionary
 Manly Exercises
 Gazetteer
 Dressing Case
 Carpet Bag M^r M^cLaughlin

Left 29th July 1836 — at W^m Smith's Esq^r Waterloo, Bertie, U[pper] C[anada] a Trunk containing — Clothes \$100 Private Papers — Memo^s &c.

Left in charge of M^r Faribanks Red lake 3^d Dec^r 1836 — a leather travelling Trunk Containing —

a s[u]p[er] Fine Frock Coat	2 p ^r Pants (Fine)
a Dbl Bbl Rifle	A Riding Belt
a p ^r Brass Pistols & Flask	2 books
2 Port Folios	a lot of Powder and shot
1 Dressing Case	Percussions
a quantity of linen	A gold Seal
Socks, Gloves &c	&c &c &c
2 Fine vests,	value \$120 ⁹

⁸ This list is crossed out in the original.

⁹ The word "Received" is written across this list in the diary.

<i>Spanish</i>	English
Como se llamo este lugar?	How do they call this place?
este Ciudad	This City?
este Rio	This River?
esti Montānos	These mountains?
Quantos liguas hay de aqui al aldia lo mais proximo?	How many leagues are there to the nearest village?
Una ligua, Una ligua y media	One league, One league & a half
dos liguas, Tres liguas, quat- ro liguas, Cinco liguas,	Two leagues Three leagues, four leagues 5 leagues 6
Seis liguas Siete liguas,	leagues 7 leagues 8—9
Ocho liguas, Nueve liguas, diez liguas.	— 10 —
Hay mucha gente alla?	Are there many inhabitants there?
Hay algunos Soldados alla?	Are there some Soldiers there?
Si Senor. Yes Sir, Quantos hay?	How many are there.
Hay maize alla?	Is there corn there?
Hay trigo? Hay polvere?	Is there wheat? Is there Pow- der?
Hay muchos blancos alla?	Are there many whites there?
Son todos Indios del pais?	Are they all Indians of the Country?
Que dicen la gente de nos- otros?	What say the people of us?
A donde puidemos hallar ca- ballos	Where can we find horses?
mulos	with mules, trigo, with wheat.
Maiz	with maize, Carne, with beef.
No Sè Senor. I do not know	Quien Sabe. God knows, or,
Sir.	who knows.
Vayas vos[?] con dios. God	Buena dias. Good day. Buenos
be with you. Amigo, Friend	Noches, Good night ¹⁰

¹⁰ This entire passage has been crossed out in the original. The character of the exercise tends to corroborate Dickson's statement that his purpose was to take Santa Fé. By so much it weakens the theory held by some officials of the Hudson's Bay Company that his object was to injure the Red River settlement. All the words and expressions would have a very practical use were McLeod to arrive in the environs of Santa

The life of man.

How vain our hopes, how futile our aspirations. What is the life of man! 'Tis but the shadow of an existence, yet in that shadow of a shade how much is comprised. How few there are who can look back to the bright days of their youth—the sunshine of life—and feel that their dreams of renown & splendor or the more virtuous desire of domestic happiness approach realization. All life is ideal, and our very existence is but a dream.

But a few brief years have passed since I entered the portals of manhood yet I have tasted frequently of the bitter fruit of this transient pilgrimage. I have been tossed, like a weed, upon the waves of doubt & uncertainty and have seen the friends of my youth wrecked on the shores of disappointment. I have seen promises—the most solemn—broken; friendships the warmest—buried in the cold grave of oblivion or forgetfulness and ties “dearer than these, than all” forever crushed, and have felt the misery that follows them, and yet I am, but upon, the verge of “life's beginning”

Nov^r 11th 1836.

Still must I on; for I am as a weed,
Flung from the rock, on ocean's foam to sail
Where'er the surge may sweep, the tempest's breath prevail.

How sweet is memory, and yet, how bitter are many of our recollections. How apt the above quotation to my present unsettled and uncertain career, yet, singular to say 'tis the remembrance of a happy moment, long since past, that brought this stanza, to my memory. The last time, (and perhaps, forever the last) that I read “Childe Harold” was sitting by the side of E—. These thoughts are childish, yet flow they must They are the only green spots in the desert of my existence.

25. Nov^r 1836.¹¹

Fé. This may be the exercise which helped pass away the time when the party was wind-bound at Sandy River. See *ante*, p. 377.

¹¹ Like the preceding party, this was written just before McLeod left the comparative hominess of a trading post—on November 11 the Sandy Lake house and on November 25 the Lake Winnibagoshish—and his despondent mood in each instance may have been caused by the anticipation of impending loneliness. See *ante*, p. 385 and 386.

'Twas as a lovely dream of our young sleep,
Before our thoughts had wither'd and grown pale
A dream of star light and of waters deep,
And the far music of the Nightingale,

'Twas as a dream — whose fine and tremulous joys
Have being but in slumber, — which a breath,
A touch of rude reality destroys, —
For life too tender — too intense for death

Oh! who hath felt the moonlight of the mind,
Oh! who hath felt the silence of the soul;
When like the hushed wave in the moveless wind
Still in their depths, the tides of feeling roll



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