

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name FORT PIERRE CHOUTEAU SITE
other names/site number Ft. Pierre (39SI237)

2. Location

street & number 4 miles north of Fort Pierre not for publication
city, town Fort Pierre vicinity
state South Dakota code SD county Stanley code 117 zip code 57532

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
	buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
	Total

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____

Date of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade

DEFENSE - Fortification

DEFENSE - Military Facility

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE - Unoccupied Land

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

NA

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation NA

walls NA

roof NA

other NA

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D National Landmark Criteria: 1, 6

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G ^{NHL} Criteria Exception: 3

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

National Register Areas: Historic

1832-1857

NA

1. Archaeology/Non-Aboriginal

2. Commerce

3. Military

Cultural Affiliation

Euro-American

National Historic Landmark Themes:

X-Westward Expansion B-The Fur Trade

3-John Jacob Astor and the American Fur Company, 1808-1840

X-C-Military-Aboriginal American Contact and Conflict

3-The Northern Plains

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

NA

NA

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

South Dakota Historical Preservation Center

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 33 60/100

UTM References

A	<u>1 4</u>	<u>3 8 92 80</u>	<u>4 91 6 28 0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>1 4</u>	<u>3 8 92 80</u>	<u>4 91 5 88 0</u>

B	<u>1 4</u>	<u>3 8 97 00</u>	<u>49 1 6 28 0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	<u>1 4</u>	<u>3 8 97 0 0</u>	<u>49 1 5 88 0</u>

Quad: Oahe Dam, Scale 1:24000

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Todd Kapler, Archaeologist date December 12, 1990
 organization Historical Preservation Center telephone 605-677-5314
 street & number 3 East Main P.O. Box 417 city or town Vermillion state SD zip code 57069

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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1DESCRIPTION

Fort Pierre Chouteau (hereafter referred to as Ft. Pierre) stood as a symbol of Euro-American/Indian interdependence for nearly twenty-five years. Continually growing in size and influence, the fort evolved into a trading center where material goods from Euro-American and Native cultures were exchanged in ways which significantly affected both societies.

Historic Physical Description

Because Ft. Pierre was in active use for twenty-five years (1832-1857), its physical appearance underwent numerous alterations. Buildings were constantly being enlarged, repaired, and/or torn down. According to the Ft. Pierre journals, construction of the fort began in the autumn of 1831. Pickets from the abandoned Ft. Tecumseh were transferred to Ft. Pierre and used for building logs. More than 1300 logs were used when the pickets were planted during the summer of 1832 (Robinson 1918:159). Most of the logs used for the pickets were cut as far as sixty miles upstream and floated downriver to the construction site. George Catlin's painting of Ft. Pierre, completed in June 1832, shows a picketed enclosed area surrounded by numerous Sioux Indian tepees. Though the Catlin painting contains errors (detailed in section 8), it is the first known depiction of Ft. Pierre.

In the Spring of 1833, Prince Maximilian of Wied, traveling on board the steamboat Yellowstone, gives the first oral account of Ft. Pierre's physical outline. According to Maximilian, the fort was located a quarter-mile from the edge of the Missouri River. The fort formed a large quadrangle surrounded by high pickets. Maximilian estimated the sides of the perimeter at 108 paces; the front and back of the structure is listed at 114 paces. The enclosed inner space is measured at eighty-seven paces in diameter. While obviously impossible to calculate distance using one individual's pace, the figure of nearly 300 feet square as recorded by the military prior to purchasing the fort in 1855 certainly could fall into Maximilian's rough figures.

Maximilian also mentions Mr. Laidlaw's house (the bourgeois) as being a large one-story complex with large rooms, several fireplaces and glass windows. Adjacent to the bourgeois house was a smaller structure for the head clerk. Other clerks, interpreters and engages (over 100 workers) lived in buildings constructed along the wall of the fort (see Maximilian's plan). Opposite the living quarters were the stores where furs and trade goods were stocked (Maximilian 1843:155-156).

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The next sequence of architectural changes are outlined in a series of vague references in the Ft. Pierre journals during the Spring and Summer of 1843. A March 22 entry mentions "A new row of buildings were added" along with "numerous other additions and changes". A June 26 entry notes "Hands employed putting up new building" (Chouteau-Papin Collection, Missouri Historical Society, hereafter referred to as MoHS).

In 1850, Thaddeus Culbertson, an employee of the Upper Missouri Outfit (U.M.O), describes the main building opposite the front gate (see Behman painting) as the mess hall, kitchens and rooms for the traders. To the right of this building is the bourgeois house built of logs with a little portico in front. Along most of the north wall are the stores where furs and trade goods are stocked. Other buildings include the blacksmith and carpenter's shop. Culbertson states with the exception of the main building and the bourgeois house, all the buildings have dirt roofs. None of the structures are built against the stockade walls; these open areas were used to store powder, meat and grain (Culbertson Collection, MoHS).

When the Army purchased Ft. Pierre in 1855 for a sum of \$45,000, the purchase included all the "buildings, pickets, mill [lumber], stables, &c, &c in good repair, order and condition" Merchandise excluded from the purchase price included "the merchandise, household and kitchen furniture, blacksmith's tools, carpenters, wheelwrights and saddlers tools in the shops at the establishment" (Chouteau-Maffitt Collection, MoHS).

After purchasing Ft. Pierre, the Army found the fort required nearly \$20,000 in repairs to meet Army specifications. The Quartermaster Corps made a list of each building and the cost to repair each structure. Using the Quartermasters number keyed site plan (and their comments), the buildings are listed as:

- 1 - Gate
- 2 - Carpenters Shop, 7 1/2 feet high, mud roof, hewed logs
- 3 - Blacksmith, Tin and Saddler Shops, same as carpenters shop
- 4 - Stables, with 20 imperfect stalls
- 5 - Store house, 9 feet story, shingle roof
- 6 - Magazine, made of adobe
- 7 - Old Log House, similar to shops
- 8 - Blockhouse, 2 stories, shingle roof
- 9 - Log House, 1 1/2 story
- 10 - Ice House, with shingle roof
- 11&12 - Kitchens, Log Hut

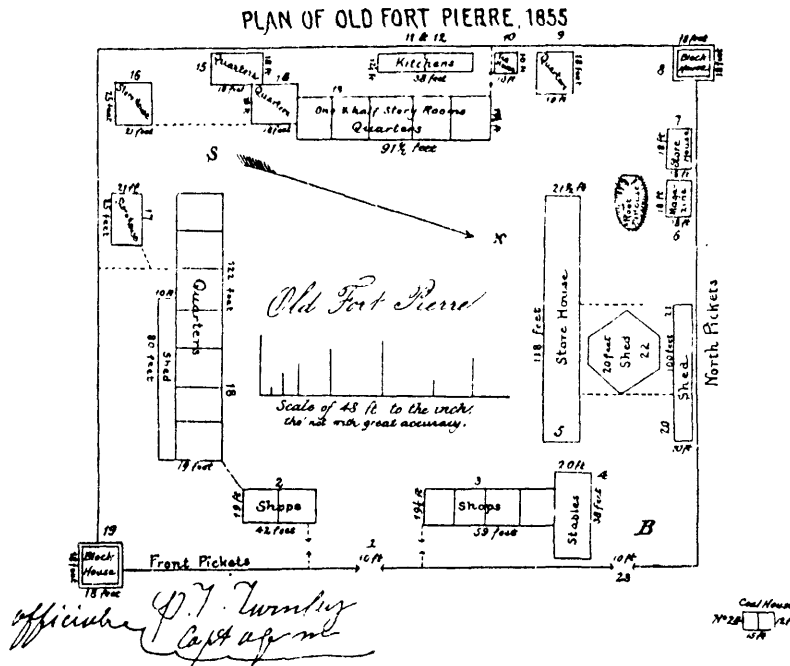
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- 13 - Log House, 5 rooms 1 1/2 story, hewn cottonwood
- 14 - Log House, 1 1/2 story
- 15 - Adobe House, 1 1/2 story, mud roof
- 16 - Log Store House
- 17 - Log Store House
- 18 - Log Huts, 7 feet story, mud roof
- 19 - Blockhouse, 1 1/2 story
- 20&21 - Open Sheds
- 22 - Shed House, with old shingles, conical roof
- 23 - Horse Lot, 10 feet wide and 16 feet high

Army Plan Drawing (number keyed)



Once the Army occupied the site, an undetermined amount of ancillary structures were constructed outside the picketed enclosure. The Alfred Sully (commander of the post) paintings of Ft. Pierre, completed between 1855 and 1857 show several buildings which appear to be sheds and horse stables. In addition, Army records indicate that portable clapboard houses were transported by steamship to Ft. Pierre. These housing units were placed behind the pickets opposite the front gate in the shape of a parallelogram (Meyers 1914:72).

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In short, the buildings and related ancillary structures inside and outside Ft. Pierre's pickets were constantly being changed and adapted to fulfill the needs of the current proprietor at any given time. As such, no single definitive description regarding Ft. Pierre's appearance can be applied. The constantly changing appearance of the fort while in active use is testament to the many functions it served during a nearly twenty-five year existence.

After abandonment by the military in 1857, all usable buildings were transported to Ft. Randall, near present-day Pickstown, South Dakota. Like most abandoned forts in the Upper Missouri region, the remaining timber from the abandoned fort was used to fuel steamships traveling on the Missouri River.

Present Conditions

Presently, Ft. Pierre is entirely a subsurface archaeological site; no extant buildings or surface features remain to delineate the outline of the fort. The site is currently owned by the state of South Dakota. The site is located on a low, flat terrace overlooking the Missouri River to the east; mixed grass covers the entire area. The soil varies from nimbrosilty clay loam to deep deposits of promise clay. Nimbrosilty clay loam is a layered texture ranging from grey silty loam on the surface to a light brownish clay loam stratified with fine sand (National Cooperative Soil Survey 1980:25,32).

The area has been repeatedly flooded, causing deposits of river alluvium to be deposited atop the site area. A stone marker was placed near the center of the compound in 1930 when discernible portions of the stockade trench were still visible on the surface. The site is presently a protected archaeological area; admittance of the public is prohibited.

Archaeological Excavations

There have been two excavations at the site of Ft. Pierre. These excavations took place in two-week increments during the summers of 1980-81. During the 1980 excavation, the objective was to locate distinctive and recognizable portions of the fort. The objective of the 1981 field season was to locate portions of the fort as represented on early maps whereby the perimeter or palisades could be located with some precision. A synopsis of the excavations is given by the project archaeologist:

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Excavations: 1980 and 1981

"In September of 1980, archaeological tests started at the site of Fort Pierre Chouteau, explored the nature of the site itself; specifically, whether the site still existed and, if so, where.

The question of the existence of the site was in doubt because some local residents suggested the site had already been excavated by the WPA in the 1930's. A second concern was the possibility the site had been looted out of existence by treasure hunters, and finally there was a possibility the site had been washed away in the flood of 1952.

No records could be found of any WPA efforts at the site, and the even surface of the site suggested that relic hunters had not extensively damaged any portion of the site. The legendary 1952 flood was a cause for concern, however. But one resident said that fences a mile north of the site were half covered by flood washed sediments. This suggested that archaeological evidence of Fort Pierre Chouteau still remained, but at a deeper level. The general location of the site was known, and marked with a large, carved stone around 1930. A local informant recollected that the stone had been placed ten feet west of the stockade, near the midpoint, and that the palisade line had been visible in the soil until 1952.

Methodology

A line of stakes was set out west of the presumed site on 10 meter intervals oriented to magnetic north, which, in 1980, was 10 degrees east of true north. This north-south line would serve as the basis for a metric grid over the entire site within which our excavations would be measured. The center of one stake near the north end of this line was arbitrarily determined to be the datum point for the site Datum, and given the horizontal coordinates of 0.0 North-South, and 0.0 East-West, at elevation 1443.79 feet above sea level.

The 1980 Field Season

The first three test units were excavated just north of the stone monument (see map). The soil was found to be a very dense clay derivative of the Pierre shale prevalent in the region, difficult to dig when moist, and impenetrable by trowel when dry. This clay was found to alternate with sand in marbled layers of a flood deposit which overlay the western portion of the site to varying depths, 58 centimeters (cm) in

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the middle of three squares about 40 meters east of Datum, and 46 cm in the square 2 meters to the west. By contrast, the historic levels encountered below this clay cap were easily worked by trowel and were of a buff colored, fine sediment flecked with ash and small bits of charcoal. A Mexican coin, an 1834 8 Real, was found in the west square 48 cm below surface. It had been drilled near the margin as if worn as a pendant.

Eight of the squares were contiguous and formed a trench which intercepted several features including one end of a hewn cedar log, flat faced on top and sides, and unmodified on the bottom. A post mold was found aligned with the post and just off the exposed end. The orientation of the log was close to true north and south, and, seemingly, in situ. The interpretation given was that the log was the base section of a wall. Since the end was not notched for stacked log joinery, this interpretation is tentative. Even with piece sur piece building construction, the ends of logs are reduced in width to fit in the groove of the vertical pieces. Exceptions would be expected in openings not requiring joinery, such as doors, or a vernacular modification using vertical posts as retainers. The presence of a post mold at the southeast end of the log fits the interpretation of that space as a doorway. Also, north of the beam end excavators found numerous seed beads, headed sewing pins, a small, stamped crucifix of brass or copper, copper or brass tinkler bells, ear rings, and other items commonly used in trade for furs. At the extreme north end of the trench, just beneath this possible "floor", a matted mass of planed wood shavings was discovered which faded and curled upon exposure to air and sun. Adjacent squares were not excavated to that level to minimize the destruction of this feature. Beneath the wood shavings in that one square was a pre-fort zone containing two sherds of plain pottery.

The ground surface south of the beam sloped slowly to the south and squares in that direction recovered fewer and fewer artifacts and less complex soil compositions until the last two which were very nearly sterile holes in the gumbo clay. The next to last hole did reveal three faint, seemingly small post molds in cracked clay which were recorded, but the dry soil defied further definition. The following year's excavation revealed these to be in line with the palisade.

The two contiguous squares in the depression nearest to the monument gave the first clear example of the excellent preservation of organic materials. Here was found a mass of folded fabric. Though the clay matrix prevented the recovery of more than a few small samples, one of the volunteers, a weaver, identified the fabric as a wool twill. Two

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buttons were found in the fabric which were of gutta percha (post 1851), and two others of backed metal impressed with the six-pointed star of David. The two squares were not excavated to sterile due to time and labor constraints, based on the experience in the unit described next.

This was a single square excavated on the edge of a second depression. Material from the top meter of the square, excavated in 10 cm units, implied a fairly rapid fill, probably during the last quarter of the nineteenth Century. Objects encountered included boots and shoes, most with hard rubber soles in styles seen in mail order catalogs of the 1880's, a steel tire from a wagon wheel, hole-in-top tin cans, a military uniform button, bottles with hand-tooled necks, bricks, mortar and window glass; all from ca. 82 cm to 118 cm below surface. The only two clearly dated artifacts from this level were dimes from 1877 and 1854. Toward the bottom of this level were a decorative, hollow cast white earthenware seated cat figurine (broken), and the sole of a child's moccasin. The rest of the moccasin was missing except for the beadwork which was photographed in place. The leather from the other shoes had not shrunk significantly relative to the rubber soles, so the size of the moccasin and the impression of the foot still upon it was guessed to be that of a child of 3 or 4 years. No pattern was discerned in the beadwork but for the coloring: there were five rows of seed beads; the rows were colored white, white, green, white, and green, from rear to fore.

Beneath these late 19th Century artifacts was a lens of mostly ash and charcoal. Below the ash, ca. 120 cm below surface, were a few small food bones, a long, white cane bead, and a sherd of blue shell-edged pearlware with evidence of a transfer print design. Below this was nearly sterile fill with an occasional brick fragment, cut nail, or fleck of charcoal to indicate that the bottom of the depression lay farther down. This unit, too, had to be closed down without hitting sterile. The feature appears to be a full depth cellar, possibly dating to the fort, but filled much later. Without knowing the location of the palisade or other features at that time, the depressions could not be definitely tied to one of the mapped structures of the fort period.

In summary, the 1980 season proved that the portions of the site examined remained in good condition with excellent preservation of organic material. Yet periodic floods up to and including the 1952 flood have laid deep deposits on western portions of the site, and may have ablated eastern portions of the site. Ablation is difficult to prove, but one indicator is seen in the presence of fort period features and artifacts near the surface in the excavations at grid line 100 east. The units excavated in 1980 did not reveal features that could be

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specifically associated with known buildings or walls shown on maps. Finding such buildings or features became the primary objective for any subsequent work.

The 1981 Field Season

Methodology

In September of 1981, the project resumed with the objective of locating portions of the fort as represented on early maps. The methodology was changed to suit the exploratory nature of the work. Shovels were used for the relatively rapid excavation of narrow trenches to intersect palisades or other wall features. The trenches were excavated in segments, the soil was screened in quarter-inch shaker screens, and the artifacts bagged and labeled by location and depth. Trowels were used once features were encountered, and the crew followed the practices described for the 1980 season.

Results

The area to the southeast of the 1980 work was selected for exploration. An east-west trench was dug along the line of 43 meters south, between 102 meters and 116 meters east, and 60 cm wide to intercept the east palisade line. Instead, the crew revealed two separate lines of deep post ends and post molds, and a linear soil stain possibly representing a third line of salvaged posts. One crew followed the eastern-most picket line to the north and another crew followed the western line both north and south (see map). To the south, the west line of posts intersected a perpendicular line of posts leading to the east, which quickly disappeared under an ash lens. One crew troweled and screened an irregular 2 meter square to define the stratigraphic relation of this line of posts and the large ash lens, Feature 6.

The crew exploring the eastern post line also met with frustration. This line extended north for a few meters then unexpectedly turned more than 100 degrees to east. If the presumption of the predominance of 90 degree angles in construction had been based upon cultural assumptions or patterns from other sites alone, this strange angle might be less of a mystery. But this fort was represented on at least three maps, none of which contained angles other than right angles. The last map was made in 1855, prior to two years of modifications by soldiers. The angular wall may have been part of horse or stock pens, This line was followed for 5 meters before the crew returned to search for the southeast corner, or blockhouse.

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The southern extension eventually intercepted an east-west line of posts but following it did not lead to a corner. The picket line plunged over the bluff and down towards the old river bed. This also was a wall, pen, or barrier not portrayed on any maps or drawings surviving to this time. However, this line of post ends did extend in a straight line to the west and was easily intercepted by two small test pits which verified its length as being consistent with a palisade wall, and gave distant enough points to accurately measure its declination. This line is set 16.5 degrees west (counterclockwise) of alignment with the grid. This makes it perpendicular to the westernmost of the two north-south picket lines rather than the east line. If one accepts the assumptions that the outer walls of the fort were perpendicular, straight, and symmetrical, and 300 feet in length, and that the intersection of the two perpendicular picket lines represents the southeast corner of the old palisade (ignoring for the moment missing features representing the blockhouse), then, using trigonometry, the other three corners are projected to be found near these grid coordinates (metric):

southwest corner: 77.27 South, 20.30 East
northwest corner: 10.40 North, 5.64 West
northeast corner: 36.40 North, 82.00 East

If Lovejoy's 1930 measurements are accurate, the west palisade lies 20 feet, or 6.1 meters, east of those coordinates. The northeast and southeast corners remain the same, while the other grid coordinates become:

southwest corner: 76.21 South, 26.31 East
northwest corner: 11.46 North, 0.37 East

Comments and Conclusions

The two seasons of work disclosed the approximate location of the fort perimeter and the location, if not the exact nature, of some interior features of the fort. Evidence of habitations prior to and following the duration of the trading post was found. Modifications to the perimeter of the post may be attributed to the occupation by the Army prior to the demolition of the fort, possibly for horse, ox, or cattle pens. Changes beyond the filling of cellars may have occurred during the ownership of the Phillips family in the last quarter of the 19th Century, but barbed wire had replaced pickets by then. It is not likely that the "spare" lines of pickets were built after the Army left the sight in 1857.

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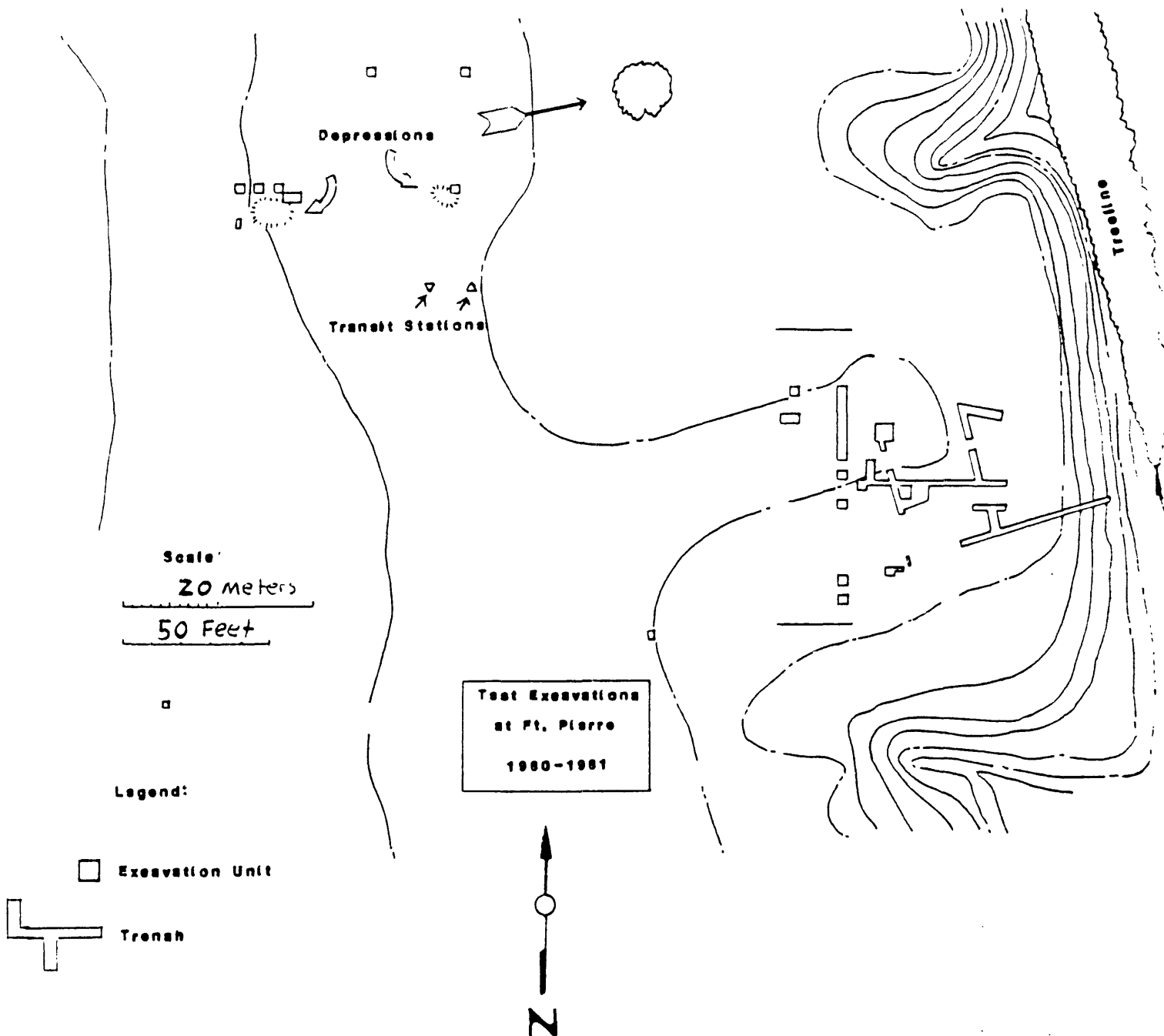
It is not known whether any or all of the depressions represent cellars that existed prior to the Phillips ownership, but the sampling of two of them suggest they were there when he arrived, and the artifacts in the fill point to the Phillips' time of ownership" (Ruple 1990).

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Excavation Plan



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SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

Ft. Pierre may well have been the most significant fur trade/military fort on the western American frontier. Not only was Ft. Pierre the largest (almost 300 feet square) and best equipped trading post in the northern Great Plains, the trading activities at the site exemplified the commercial alliance critical to the success of the fur business.

When viewed as a nationally significant site, developments which transpired at Ft. Pierre are a chronicle of events which played a significant role in the continually expanding American frontier of the 19th century. Built along a heavily used trade route used by aboriginals for thousands of years, Ft. Pierre was judiciously located at the confluence of two major river systems. That location and the physical size contributed to Ft. Pierre's influence spreading for hundreds of miles.

When John Jacob Astor, head of the American Fur Company (A.F.C.), decided to expand operations into the Upper Missouri region during the 1820's, an influx of A.F.C. trading posts sprang up. Ft. Pierre, built in 1832, quickly became the most strategic post in the Western Department of the A.F.C. Located halfway between St. Louis (A.F.C. headquarters), and the A.F.C.'s northern-most posts, Ft. Pierre was the logical place for A.F.C. officials to gather and discuss company business such as trading strategy, prices for the upcoming season, and requests for trade goods.

Because A.F.C. officials encouraged noted adventurers, artists, and scientists to visit and lodge at their Upper Missouri posts, there are numerous accounts and depictions of Ft. Pierre from such noted travelers as George Catlin, Karl Bodmer, and John Audubon. Of particular **national significance** is a passage from Catlin's memoirs while lodging at Ft. Pierre in 1832. Upon reflecting on the Indians inhabiting the region and the enormous herds of buffalo surrounding the fort, and perhaps envisioning their near extinction years later, Catlin became the first person to suggest a **National Park** be established by the government to preserve the diverse animal species which inhabited the Ft. Pierre area:

And what a splendid contemplation too, when one...imagines them [Indians and buffalo] as they might in future be seen (by some great protecting policy of government) persevered in their pristine beauty and

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wildness, in a **magnificent park**, where the world could see for ages to come, the native Indian in his classic attire, galloping his wild horse...amid the fleeting herds of elks and buffaloes. What a beautiful and thrilling specimen for America to preserve and hold up to the view of her refined citizens and the world, in future ages. A **Nation's Park**, containing man and beast in all the wild and freshness of their nature's beauty (Catlin 1913:294-295).

The scale of trade conducted at Ft. Pierre can hardly be overstated. At no point during the history of the fur trade in the United States did the volume of furs traded and shipped to markets reach the level of the Upper Missouri region from 1830-1865; and Ft. Pierre for much of that time was the largest and busiest post in the entire region.

Ft. Pierre serviced primarily the Yankton, Santee, Yanktonnais, and the seven tribes of the Teton Sioux. Undoubtedly, many of the earliest impressions the Native population acquired regarding white civilization were formulated during this period. Indeed, because of its size and enormous volume of trade which occurred at Ft. Pierre, it became the most visible example of white civilization for nearly 1500 miles along the Missouri River. Indians gathered at the fort to hold councils with the white traders to address grievances, build trading alliances and request trade items for the upcoming season. Ft. Pierre became a centralized gathering place where news and ideas were diffused from one culture to another.

When the military entered the northern Great Plains in the 1850s, Ft. Pierre was bought by the Army and became the **first** military fort in the Upper Missouri region. Ft. Pierre, by being the first, was soon the prototype for numerous military outposts in operation during the Indian-Wars period.

Ft. Pierre was directly and indirectly involved in many events integral to the economic and political policies which shaped the western frontier of the United States. If, as historians postulate, the historic period in the Great Plains followed a pattern of initial contact by white traders, followed by intervention by the military, and ultimately settlement by white pioneers, then Ft. Pierre represents a unique microcosm of all those events.

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Ft. Pierre is significant under National Landmark criteria (6): that it has yielded or is likely to yield information by shedding light upon periods of occupation over large areas of the U.S. In addition, it has yielded and may be expected to yield new data effecting theories, concepts and ideas concerning the manifestations of culture contact, early Euro-American commercial enterprises, and early American military exploration on the western frontier.

Ft. Pierre was a focal point, a stationary site from which trade-related resources and culturally based beliefs from two separate but economically linked cultures came together. Criteria exception (3): a site of a building or structures no longer standing but the events associated with it is of transcendent importance in the nations history also applies. Ft. Pierre is a unique site; rarely can an ignitor of such vast cultural and economic diffusion throughout a region be traced to a single locality.

All too often the buffalo robe trade is forgotten in the midst of the "glamorous" mountain men of the Rockies. But, in truth, no region in the history of the American fur trade approached a volume of trade equal to that of the Upper Missouri region between 1830 and 1865.

As a significant component of the fur trade, Ft. Pierre played a major role in the assimilation and eventual pacification of the Native population in the Great Plains region. The traders spread Euro-American influence for perhaps thousands of miles. As the first of the three major fur trading posts (Ft. Pierre, Ft. Clark, Ft. Union) on the Upper Missouri River, in addition to its unique locational position, Ft. Pierre became the field headquarters for the Upper Missouri Outfit (U.M.O.). As a major military center, the fort was the scene of historically important treaty signings, a supply base for military excursions in the northern Great Plains, a troop placement center, and a steamboat landing site.

The significance of Ft. Pierre is best understood when it is viewed within the larger picture of trade in the Upper Missouri region. This nomination includes an overview of the principal trading companies, a listing of significant events in which the fort was directly or indirectly involved, and comparisons in the amount and volume of trade goods dispensed at Ft. Pierre in relation to the other major fur trade posts in the region. These comparisons vividly

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demonstrate the large volume of goods shipped to Ft. Pierre. In addition, many of the key components of the fur trade such as Indian participation, markets for the furs and trade goods, transportation routes and government Indian policy as applied to Ft. Pierre are outlined. When viewed as a **nationally significant** site, Ft. Pierre possessed many of the variables crucial to the development of the American fur trade and U.S. Indian policy of the 19th century.

Introduction

More than any industry, the fur trade was responsible for French, British, and American expansion in the Upper Missouri and Rocky Mountain regions. The development of good trading relationships between Euro-Americans and Indians and the resulting economic interdependence was vital to securing the area for later permanent white settlement. Trading posts were the vanguard of Euro-American penetration of the American western frontier. Through these isolated pockets of white civilization on the western frontier, traders introduced the Indian nations to a new economic system and European trade goods, both of which caused a great deal of cultural modification. Traders and Indians built an alliance based on the exchange of material goods. It flourished because it benefited and was compatible to both societies. Unlike later military incursions into the region, fur traders claimed no land for themselves. Instead, they worked within an existing Indian trading system to obtain furs.

More than a collection and distribution center, Ft. Pierre became the most visible outpost of white civilization along the Missouri River between Sioux City, Iowa, and Fort Union, in present-day North Dakota. Located half-way between Ft. Union and American Fur Company (A.F.C) headquarters in St. Louis, Ft. Pierre was field headquarters for the Western Department of the A.F.C.

When purchased by the Army in 1855, Ft. Pierre became the first military fort in Dakota Territory (then Nebraska Territory). By 1865, the Army had numerous posts throughout the Upper Missouri region, most were similar in design and function to the first, Ft. Pierre.

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Overview of the Fur Trade in the Upper Missouri Region

When the U.S. purchased the Louisiana Territory in 1803, a giant new area filled with fur bearing animals came under American control. One of the primary purposes of the Lewis and Clark expedition was to ascertain the suitability of the Trans-Missouri West for such trade. Lewis and Clark were instructed to make note of Indian attitudes toward trading, types of fur bearing animals encountered, and most importantly, the easiest and most practical water routes across the continent for the purpose of commerce (Wishart 1979:18).

By 1820 the western fur industry developed into two systems, each with separate and distinct strategies. In the Rocky Mountain area, a trapping system based on beaver pelts developed around the Euro-American trapper. He procured the pelts and traded them independently at a rendezvous or fixed trading post. The pelts were then delivered via the Platte Overland Supply Route to respective markets, finally ending up in the eastern United States. In the Upper Missouri region, the fur trade consisted largely upon the bison robe. Indians brought robes to trading posts and exchanged them for manufactured products; no money was used. At this point, the trader's work began. Furs were pressed into packs and prepared for shipment to St. Louis. From there robes were transported to New Orleans, and shipped to the east coast and world markets.

The American Fur Company (A.F.C.) & The Upper Missouri Outfit (U.M.O)

The fur trading area surrounding Ft. Pierre was first commercially utilized by whites in 1822 when the Columbia Fur Company (C.F.C.) received license to trade. Established in 1822 by former members of the Hudson's Bay Company in Canada, the C.F.C. quickly built posts in the Upper Missouri and Upper Mississippi regions. The principal stations of the C.F.C. attest to the far-reaching plans of its members. The main stations were at Lake Traverse near the present-day Minnesota-South Dakota border, Lands End (near Ft. Snelling, present-day St. Paul Minnesota), Prairie du Chien (Wisconsin-Iowa border), and Ft. Tecumseh (near present-day Pierre, South Dakota).

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The Upper Missouri interests of the C.F.C. were bought out by the A.F.C. in 1827. In 1830, the Upper Missouri region of the A.F.C. came under the management of Bernard Pratte and Company (soon to be Pratte, Chouteau and Company). This Upper Missouri division became known as the Upper Missouri Outfit (U.M.O.).

In 1834 a dramatic turn of events took place. A powerful A.F.C. competitor headed by William Sublette, reached agreement with the A.F.C. to abandon its Upper Missouri interests in exchange for the A.F.C.'s abandonment of any potential expansion into the Rocky Mountain trade. Secondly, John Jacob Astor, founder of the A.F.C. decided to retire.

After 1834 Pratte, Chouteau and Company had controlling interest in the U.M.O. and enjoyed continuous growth in the bison robe industry. When Bernard Pratte was elected mayor of St. Louis in 1838, he was forced to sell his interest in the company. Pierre Chouteau Jr., purchased the Pratte interest which consolidated his holdings in the company to 52%. With Chouteau the major stockholder, the company's name changed to **Pierre Chouteau Jr., and Company** (Sunder 1965:5).

By 1830, the A.F.C. had established a complex system of trading posts throughout the northern Great Plains. The company had main posts such as Ft. Union, Ft. Tecumseh (later Ft. Pierre), Ft. Clark - and smaller main posts such as Ft. Berthold, Ft. Laramie, and Ft. McKenzie. At these main posts, trade goods were received from St. Louis and furs were gathered for shipment back to St. Louis. Main posts were the largest and best equipped trading posts on the Upper Missouri. Their construction followed a pattern. They were roughly square in shape, to enclose a maximum amount of area with a minimal amount of labor and materials. These forts were made defensible on all four sides by blockhouses built at diagonally opposite corners of a surrounding stockade. Blockhouses typically extended outside the stockade, affording sentries a clear shot at hostile intruders along two sides of the exterior walls. Often a small cannon was located on the first story of each blockhouse. On the second story were loopholes for rifleman. A third cannon was usually situated in the center of the compound facing the gate. Main posts supported large numbers of workers within the confines of the stockade. For that reason most had large vegetable

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gardens, wood lots, pastures and corrals for horses, blacksmith shops, and other ancillary buildings.

Trade was conducted continuously throughout the year. The robes that brought the most money, however, were from bison killed between November and February. Because of cold weather, these robes were thicker and plusher than those taken during the rest of the year. Robe production by the A.F.C. was 40,000 per year during most of the 1830's. That figure increased to over 90,000 per year by the next decade and reached an average of 100,000 robes annually by 1850 (Sunder 1965:17).

In exchange for robes, the A.F.C. supplied trade goods manufactured in Europe and the eastern United States. They were transported to St. Louis in late winter or early spring, ready for shipment to trading posts for the fall trading season. A.F.C records from the Ft. Pierre inventories indicate the most common trade items were blankets, metal implements, ornamental goods, guns, and powder. The mark-up on these goods traded to Indians could range anywhere from 80 to 2,000 percent, depending on the item, the particular post, and the trader. Mark-ups were deemed necessary to cover the cost of trade and return an investment to the shareholders (Sunder 1965:36). Liquor was legally traded until 1832, when the government outlawed its sale to Indians. After 1832 illegal liquor sales were used more as an incentive to trade than an actual trade item. Legal or not, alcohol remained an integral part of the trading process during the entire fur trade era.

Transportation and communication between the main posts and St. Louis were long, tedious processes. It took more than a month via steamboat to get the furs from Ft. Pierre to St. Louis, another four weeks to New York, and almost two months to transport the furs to European markets. Communication was virtually stopped during the long winter. From the time the Missouri River iced over, until the spring thaw, the only communication link between St. Louis and the Upper Missouri was the so called "winter express". During January two or three men were sent by dog sled from the various main posts and from St. Louis to meet with officials at Ft. Pierre. At this gathering, post traders made requisitions for the upcoming season and A.F.C. officials from St. Louis gave traders market information which determined exchange rates for the next year (Wishart 1979:79).

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The A.F.C.'s monopoly on trade in the Upper Missouri region was unbroken until the late 1860s when the trade drastically declined. Several firms attempted to establish opposition posts in the region. Their success varied; some companies lasted less than a year, others longer. But the end result was always the same - the A.F.C. either overbid the opposition for robes and waited for them to crumble or simply bought them out on the spot. The A.F.C. had the capital to sustain short-term losses for long-term gains.

Indians and the Fur Trade

Because actions of Indian behavior and attitude were recorded by white Euro-Americans, they are actually INTERPRETATIONS by intentionally or unintentionally biased sources such as explorers, scientists, missionaries, and the white traders themselves. A closer examination of pre-contact trade systems should examine the Natives adaptability to this new commercial enterprise (Euro-American fur trade). Archaeological evidence suggests that a vast intertribal trade network existed long before the emergence of white traders.

An interesting phenomenon occurred in the Upper Missouri region between the time the French explorer LaVerendrye visited the Mandan in 1738 and Lewis and Clark traversed the same area in 1804. Horses were traded, stolen and diffused northward from Spanish settlements in the southwest. The Spanish, though forbidden to trade offensive or defensive guns to Natives by an edict first set down by Ferdinand and Isabella in 1501, were however responsible for horses reaching the Upper Missouri region during the protohistoric period (period between prehistoric and historic). When English and French traders spread westward across Canada, they had no horses but traded in guns (Ewers 1968:23-24). This placed the Indians of the Upper Missouri region (and especially around Ft. Pierre) in a unique position to benefit from both new technologies and strengthen their position as a trading center.

It is important to remember when assessing historic trade patterns and attitudes (ie: at Ft. Pierre) that many of the interior tribes were already conditioned to the principals of trade and may have viewed the white/Indian network as merely an extension of their intertribal trade networks. This assertion is supported by the fact

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that Indians rapidly accepted European trade goods and Euro-American trading rules as outlined by the white traders.

It is into this environment that the Euro-American traders entered the Upper Missouri region. Indeed, the white traders located many of their trading centers (including Ft. Pierre) at locations previously used by prehistoric traders.

Although several tribes brought furs to Ft. Pierre, trading was largely with the Sioux. Edwin Denig, a clerk at Ft. Union and an early amateur ethnologist, estimated the Sioux population in 1833 at 2,360 lodges totalling nearly 12,000 people (Ewers 1961:15). Denig divided the Sioux into the seven tribes of the Teton Sioux - Brules, Oglalas, Miniconjous, Two Kettles, Hunkpapas, Se ah sap pas or Blackfeet, and Etas epe cho or Without Bows. Denig estimated these seven tribes in 1833 at 1,630 lodges or approximately 8,150 people. Denig estimated the Yankton Sioux - the Lower Yankton and Esan tees or Santees - had a population of 330 lodges or approximately 1,650 people. The Yanktonais - the T'ete Coupees, Gens des Pin and Gens des Perches - had an estimated population of 400 lodges or 2,000 people (Ewers 1961:14-15).

An examination of trade goods shipped to Ft. Pierre suggests that the Indians became increasingly selective in their wants as trade progressed. Goods shipped became more ornamental and less utilitarian. Some of the change is attributable to the durability of such items as kettles as opposed to the "perishable" goods like blankets and lace. But a closer examination reveals a trend toward ornamental goods as trade progressed. The most common trade items in 1831 were awls, axes, beads, bells, blankets, combs, shirts, kettles, lead, and coat buttons. By the 1850's the preference was blankets, calicos, cotton, blue and scarlet cloth, guns, prepared bullets, lace, sewings, caps, knives, brass kettles, tin cups and crockery (American Fur Company Invoices, MoHS).

Foodstuffs and Agricultural Practices at Upper Missouri Posts

While most posts had gardens (often on river bottoms), Ft. Pierre had a particularly well developed agricultural system. The main horticultural site for Ft. Pierre was Farm Island, which is about three miles long and 3/4 of a mile wide. It is located approximately

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eight miles from the fort. Crops such as corn, potatoes and squash were grown by the traders to supplement their primarily meat-based diet. These post gardens and the exploitation of wild plants represent the earliest Euro-American farming on the Great Plains (Wishart 1973:62).

Markets and Goods

The A.F.C. had its own buyers in New York which handled the distribution of robes and trade goods to European markets. Trade goods worldwide - glassware and beads from Venice, steel products and blankets from England were shipped across the Atlantic Ocean to ports in New Orleans, then shipped to St. Louis via the Mississippi River. From St. Louis the trade goods were transported to the main posts (including Ft. Pierre) by steamships. Robes were then loaded on the boats for the return voyage. This well organized system, which served the needs of the supplier and consumer to the mutual benefit of both societies continued to operate until Euro-American settlers brought about the destruction of the buffalo after 1860.

Decline of Fur Trade

The decline of the fur trade in the Upper Missouri region can be traced to the westwardly expanding American frontier and the repercussions of that movement. Despite causing the slaughter of more than 150,000 bison yearly, the fur trade did not seriously alter the balance of bison herds before 1855 (Wishart 1979:213). Rather, it was the implementation of railroads which gave "sportsmen" easy access to roving herds. These "sportsmen" almost brought the bison to extinction. This is not to say traders did not plant the seed for slaughter. By furnishing Indians with guns and an incentive to produce hides and tongues well above their need for subsistence and inter-tribal trading, the traders were also involved in over harvesting and senseless slaughter of the bison (Wishart 1979:213).

By 1865, the fur trade on the Upper Missouri was all but over. The bison, like America itself, were moving west. The two simply could not coexist with one another. It was the encroachment of white society that proved to be the death of the fur trade. Once the

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most recognizable feature of that society, trading posts were virtually non-existent by the end of the 19th Century. Most were burned after abandonment. Some were dismantled by steamship crews who used the wood to power their vessels as they traveled the Missouri River.

Chouteau Sells Upper Missouri Interests

Although Pierre Chouteau Jr. continued to operate Upper Missouri trading posts into the mid 1860s, the role of such posts was steadily diminishing. By 1864 the fur trade on the Upper Missouri was being severely hampered by both the presence of military in the region and the realization that various land acquisition acts would soon bring large numbers of white settlers into the region. In addition, Pierre Chouteau, Jr., the head of the U.M.O., was under scrutiny for his possible pro-southern sympathies during the Civil War. In light of these circumstances, Chouteau sold his Upper Missouri interests to the firm of Hawley and Hubbell, soon to be the Northwestern Fur Company.

By 1870 the fur trade in the Upper Missouri region bore little or no resemblance to the once mighty buffalo robe trade. Fur company owners used most of their time and effort transporting goods to subtler stores near military posts or to transport goods for the military.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF FT. PIERRE

After purchasing the Columbia Fur Company's Upper Missouri interests in 1827, the Western Department of the American Fur Company (A.F.C) moved its field headquarters to Ft. Tecumseh near the confluence of the Missouri and Bad Rivers. This strategically important location, situated near hunting areas of several bands of Sioux Indians, also afforded easy supply routes to company headquarters in St. Louis. Though judiciously located, Ft. Tecumseh was poorly designed. By 1827 the fort was being undercut and eroding by the annual rise and fall of the Missouri River. Soon sections of the dank, vermin infested fort were being moved further back from the unpredictable Missouri River. During a brief stay at Ft. Tecumseh, Pierre Chouteau Jr. was sufficiently convinced the dilapidated fort was beyond repair and he ordered the building of a

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new post (Ft. Pierre) in a better location three miles upriver (Jackson 1985:22).

By 1830 the A.F.C. was developing their system of trading post hierarchy; it soon became apparent that supply boats were needed to handle increasing amounts of trade goods shipped to main posts.

Voyage of the Yellowstone

One of the most significant nautical achievements of the early 19th century was the voyage of the steamboat Yellowstone. Built by the A.F.C. to navigate the treacherous Upper Missouri River and resupply their upper-river posts, the inaugural voyage involved dedicating a new fort to replace Ft. Tecumseh. That new fort became Ft. Pierre.

On March 26, 1832, the Yellowstone began the voyage that would eventually reach the mouth of the Yellowstone River; thus proving the Upper Missouri River was navigable by steamboat. Among those on board the Yellowstone were Pierre Chouteau Jr. and artist George Catlin. The ship made slow progress, reaching old Ft. Tecumseh on May 31. Following a six-day celebration, the new fort was christened **Fort Pierre** in honor of the U.M.O.'s principal investor. Trade goods for the upcoming season and 1500 gallons of almost pure alcohol were unloaded at the new fort. After the Yellowstone left Ft. Pierre, it proceeded upriver to Ft. Union to unload supplies and pick up 700 packs of robes. When the steamer reached Ft. Pierre on the return voyage, it loaded an additional 600 packs of robes to be delivered to St. Louis.

Though Ft. Pierre was not completely finished until May 1833, it was inaugurated with a great deal of fanfare. Within a short time, Ft. Pierre became the largest post on the Upper Missouri (almost 300 feet square) and rivaled Ft. Union in importance to the U.M.O. Artist George Catlin's painting of Ft. Pierre, completed between May 31 and June 5, 1832, is interesting though not totally accurate. The painting depicts a tree-lined east bank of the Missouri River extending parallel along the eastern wall of the fort. It is doubtful trees of that size remained in the area since workers were forced to travel from twenty to sixty miles upriver to find suitable lumber for the pickets. The Catlin painting also shows the bastions or blockhouses in the wrong diagonal

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corners. While Catlin's work may have been flawed in some respects, the painting does show some of the more than 600 tepees which were in place around the fort.

It is clear from the construction schedule that Catlin's work was conceptual. When the Yellowstone reached Ft. Pierre in June 1832, the fort was not complete. Pickets were not cut and fully planted until August; the front gates were not installed until November (Robinson 1918:167).

Overland Trail Routes

Prior to the early 1830s, several factors made the trade in buffalo robes unfeasible on a massive scale. The high cost of shipping the bulky buffalo robes on keelboats limited the profit from the sale of the robes, and the focus remained on the still profitable beaver pelt. The beginning of steamboat transport in the 1830s caused a considerable reduction in the cost to ship buffalo robes, and this, coupled with the decline of the beaver trade due to fashion changes abroad, made the buffalo robe trade lucrative. Within a few years, buffalo robes were the largest market in the American fur trade.

While water transportation remained the cheapest way to transport robes from the posts to warehouses in St. Louis and eventually to New Orleans and the east coast, the westward expansion of the trade across the Plains often required utilization of land routes. One of the biggest of these overland trail routes was known as the Ft. Pierre to Ft. Laramie trail. This commercial "highway" passed through portions of present-day South Dakota, Nebraska, and Wyoming, connecting fur trade operations at Ft. Pierre and Ft. Laramie on the North Platte River (Hanson 1987:2).

At approximately the same time steamboats were readied in St. Louis for the trip upriver to unload trade goods and load furs for the return voyage, traders at the outposts began loading carts destined for Ft. Pierre. These large, wooden, two-wheeled carriages were known as "Red River" carts, which refers to their use in the Red River trade in present-day Minnesota and North Dakota. Pulled by horse, ox, or two draft animals, each cart carried approximately 800 - 900 pounds. If the returns for the trading season had been good, two or three round trips would be made to Ft. Pierre by as many as 100 carts

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transporting upwards of 25,000 robes and other furs traded at Ft. Laramie (Hanson 1987:7).

This trail was used by traders until 1849, when an increased white presence, precipitated by the California gold rush, forced Chouteau to sell Ft. Laramie to the U.S. Army, which wanted it for a western outpost to protect the westward bound travelers. When the Army purchased Ft. Pierre in 1855, the trail was mapped by engineers and used as a supply route.

Explorers and Scientists

Chouteau's interests extended into the scientific community as well. On his orders, scores of animals native to the Upper Missouri region were captured and transported to his private animal reserve in St. Louis. Scientists from all disciplines were given free transportation on U.M.O steamers and unlimited use of facilities at U.M.O trading posts. Artists such as George Catlin, Karl Bodmer, and scientist John Audubon lodged at Ft. Pierre during their Upper Missouri travels. In 1839 Joseph Nicollet, the renowned French geologist and mathematician of the French Academy of Sciences, traveled on the steamer Antelope and was treated as an honored guest at Ft. Pierre. Nicollet remained for eighteen days, collecting specimens before resuming his travels on the Missouri. Chouteau's interest and cordiality toward the artistic and scientific communities not only served as good public relations for the company, but a wealth of data concerning the variegated flora and fauna in the Upper Missouri region was recorded before the encroachment of white civilization caused the extinction of some species. Since Ft. Pierre was often the temporary residence of several scientists while doing studies, there is a particularly well defined ecological taxonomy of the Ft. Pierre region during the mid-19th century.

Smallpox Epidemic of 1837

One of the many significant events in which Ft. Pierre was directly involved was the horrific smallpox epidemic which swept across the Upper Missouri region during the last half of 1837. This epidemic likely had no equal in American history. The disease, which

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nearly depopulated entire tribes, radically shifted the balance of power and social structure among Indian tribes in the Upper Missouri region.

When Euro-American traders first entered the Upper Missouri area in the 18th century, agricultural/horticultural tribes, including the Hidatsa, Mandan and Arikara, had enjoyed a fairly stable social and physical environment for several centuries. It appears they even had a general level of immunity against diseases prevalent in their environment. Although previous smallpox epidemics had occurred in the native population earlier, the last being 1801-02, a lapse of over thirty years left most of the population susceptible to the disease. When the whites introduced their new economic system, they also unwittingly introduced new diseases to which the native populations had little or no immunity (Trimble 1986:3).

Ft. Pierre figured prominently in one of the worst immunological disasters ever to take place in North America, the smallpox epidemic of 1837. When the steamboat St. Peters left St. Louis and stopped at Ft. Pierre on the annual resupply trip to the upper posts, the head clerk (Jacob Halsey) boarded the ship bound for Ft. Union. Unknowingly in the early non-symptomatic stages of smallpox, Halsey, upon reaching Ft. Union became the infecting agent responsible for the deaths of thousands of Indians around Ft. Union. By the time the disease had run its course in 1838, nearly 20,000 people, or 38% of the Upper Missouri population, had died (Ferch 1984:7). It turned the Missouri Trench into "one great graveyard" (Trimble 1986 citing letter from Pilcher to Clark 2/27/38). The population of the Mandans dropped below the genetic survival threshold (Dollar 1977:15). Alexander Culbertson, a U.M.O employee, estimated that more than half of the Assiniboin tribe died and two-thirds of the Blackfoot tribes perished. Jacob Halsey, who witnessed the ravages at Ft. Union (and the likely infecting agent there) wrote: "Among the Indians it [smallpox] is raging with the greatest destruction imaginable at least 10 out of 12 die with it...The Mandans have all died except 13 young & 19 old men" (Jacob Halsey to Pratte, Chouteau & Co., Nov. 2, 1837, Chouteau-Papin Collection, MoHS).

Indian Agent and U.S. Alcohol Policy

In 1842, Ft. Pierre became the operations base for the U.S. Indian Agent in the Upper Missouri region. From Ft. Pierre, Indian Agent

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Andrew Dripps would travel unannounced to various trading operations enforcing federal trading regulations. The principal concern of Agent Dripps was enforcement of the 1830 statute prohibiting the sale of liquor to Indians.

Because an Indian Agent had authority to revoke trading licenses, it was in Chouteau's best interest to manipulate this agent. By controlling Dripps, Chouteau could safely augment the illicit liquor trade which occurred at U.M.O posts. By offering housing and protection to Dripps at Ft. Pierre, Chouteau safely insulated his operation from prosecution.

Ft. Pierre Expanded

In the spring and summer of 1843, Ft. Pierre was expanded by adding a new row of buildings, and numerous minor additions and changes (Sunder 1965:41). This expansion reflected a growing consolidation within the fort during the 1840s. The facility had become the core of the Upper Missouri trade, receiving trade goods from St. Louis and collecting furs from various outposts for shipment back to St. Louis to meet world-wide demand for bison robes which reached 90,000 robes annually. By 1850 the fur trade had reached its apex; over 100,000 robes were shipped annually to St. Louis.

However, by the early 1850s, the effects of nearly twenty-years of continuous trading began to appear at the fort. Although robe production remained high, the cost of maintaining the facility was cutting into profits. In addition, Chouteau realized the fur trade would quickly be over once the Army began exploring the West and establishing outposts in the Upper Missouri region. Once the Army secured the area for Euro-American settlement in areas now teeming with buffalo, the trade would be destroyed.

The massacre of thirty U.S soldiers by a band of Sioux near Ft. Laramie in August 1854 created an opportunity for Pierre Chouteau to sell Ft. Pierre to the Army as a supply base for punitive operations against the Sioux.

THE MILITARY PHASE

The military played a major role in the Upper Missouri region during the last half of the 19th century. An overview of the

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situation before the military arrived, during its occupation, and what facilitated their departure toward the end of the 19th century is needed to put the Army's role in proper perspective.

Frederick Jackson Turner, in his famous frontier thesis, argued that by 1825 the United States had established a permanent Indian frontier. This frontier was a line of ten military forts stretching from Ft. Snelling in present-day Minnesota to Ft. Jessup in Louisiana. It was thought that no white man could or would settle west of this line. The Indians could roam this land at will (Walker 1978 citing Turner 1893).

With the exception of the Euro-American fur traders, this suggestion of a wild, uninhabitable country out of reach of government control seemed to hold true until the mid 1840s. But the concept of a "permanent frontier" was shattered by settlement in the Northwest, opening of new land ceded from Mexico, and the gold rush in California. Huge tracts of previously held Indian land now awaited exploration and settlement.

The U.S. government faced serious problems in the Upper Missouri region. Although the Natives of this vast, uncharted land had had contact with whites through fur traders, this initial contact was not threatening to them; the traders had exploited the resources of the land, but had not fought to acquire it. The arrival of the military, however, sent quite another signal to the Indian tribes. The military was not interested in furs; they wanted land for military installations. These forts or outposts not only represented the authority of the U.S. government in the region but were an omen of the white settlement that was bound to occur.

Military forts in the Upper Missouri region were placed in areas of hostility or possible hostility. In the Upper Missouri region, the Army often purchased old fur trading posts (such as Ft. Pierre) because they were usually located along strategic travel routes.

The intrusion of the U.S. frontier Regular Army, men who volunteered for service in the West, was the beginning of the establishment of a diversified western economic system. In the East, America was beginning massive industrialization and population growth, while in the West the Army was building roads, carrying out surveys, installing telegraph lines, patrolling lands and escorting travelers.

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These activities made the uncharted land accessible to the westward-bound pioneers (Rickey 1969:352).

Following the Civil War, the West was split into two divisions; the Division of the Missouri and the Division of the Pacific. These were further subdivided into regional districts. General William T. Sherman was put in charge of the Division of the Missouri with Major General Alfred Terry charged with overseeing the Department of Dakota.

The Army on the frontier engaged in numerous skirmishes with the Indians in their efforts to protect white settlers. Some were fierce battles involving hundreds of combatants. More often than not, the Indians implemented quick guerrilla fighting tactics, while the Army continued to use conventional warfare tactics. The Army brought government authority to the west like a slow moving animal; the Indians could buzz the animal, causing inconvenience, but were unable to stop the advance. Over 900 engagements with Indians were recorded between 1865 and 1898.

Military Involvement Around Ft. Pierre

On August 17, 1854, a cow belonging to a group of Mormon immigrants wandered off and was killed by a band of Sioux near Ft. Laramie. When the Mormons complained to Army officials at Ft. Laramie; a group of thirty men were dispatched to apprehend the Indian responsible for killing the cow. As the troopers approached a large group of Oglala Sioux, they demanded the guilty Indian be turned over to military officials. A fight ensued in which the entire unit of soldiers was killed (Robinson 1954:167).

In Spring 1855 the Army outlined its plan for a disciplinary expedition against the Sioux. General William Harney was summoned from leave in France to establish supply depots at Ft. Kearny, Ft. Laramie and a point selected by the War Department near Ft. Pierre. Under orders from the Quartermaster General, the regional quartermaster office in St. Louis was dispatched to ascertain the feasibility of using Ft. Pierre as a military installation and supply depot. The Quartermaster Corps inspected the fort, reporting in March that Ft. Pierre needed over \$20,000 in

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repairs to make it suitable for Army occupation. Pierre Chouteau dismissed the report and personally put pressure on the Quartermaster General to buy Ft. Pierre (Sunder 1965:169). On April 14, 1855, the U.M.O sold Ft. Pierre to the United States Army for the sum of \$45,000.

The Army first attempted to make Chouteau & Co. repair the post, as the contract of sale stipulated all buildings would be in good condition or Chouteau & Co. would repair them. Chouteau, however, argued he was saving the Army money because a rotted fort was still cheaper than building a new military supply depot. The final price the Army paid for Ft. Pierre was \$36,000 (Chouteau Collections, MoHS). By August 1855, almost 700 soldiers were stationed at Ft. Pierre. In late summer, the first portable houses arrived from St. Louis and were erected directly behind the stockade forming a parallelogram. The flimsy, 3/4" clapboard portable houses were intended as Officers' quarters. However, with tarred paper roofs the houses were totally unsuitable for winters in Dakota Territory (Meyers 1914:72).

By late fall it became obvious Ft. Pierre lacked the necessary firewood and forage for horses to sustain almost 900 troops. It was decided six companies of infantry and two companies of cavalry would be put into cantonment or self contained camps for the winter. The troops were ordered six miles above Ft. Pierre to build log houses for themselves along the east bank of the Missouri River (Meyers 1924:75). After a severe winter storm in December 1855, it was apparent the ill-equipped Ft. Pierre could adequately house no more than two companies (120-150 men). As a result, an additional company was ordered to an island below the fort (Farm Island) and three companies were sent into cantonment five miles above Ft. Pierre. These soldiers lived in open tents until the cottonwood log buildings they built for shelter were completed. Finished in mid-December, the camp was officially designated "Cantonment Miller" (Meyers 1914:93).

In the spring of 1856 the Secretary of War ordered a military reservation established around Ft. Pierre which would include all available arable land. General Harney ordered Lt. G.K. Warren of the Topographical Engineers (forerunner of the Corps of Engineers) to perform the survey. Although Warren surveyed over 300 square

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miles, only fourteen square miles were of any value to the Army (Athearn 1965:65).

In March 1856 General Harney gathered over three thousand members of the Hunkpapa, Miniconjou, Brule, Sans Arc, Blackfeet, Yanktonnais, Two Kettles, Yankton and Oglala Sioux at the fort to sign the Treaty of Ft. Pierre. Terms of the treaty stipulated the tribes would deliver to the nearest military post any tribesman guilty of killing whites along with any stolen property in their possession. Indian leaders were told to stay clear of established roads used by the Army. The treaty in turn reinstated annuity distribution which had been held in escrow for disciplinary reasons. Also, those Indians interested in farming would be given plows, seed and draft animals (Athearn 1965:48).

In June 1856 orders were issued to abandon Ft. Pierre and establish Forts Lookout and Randall to the south. In June two infantry companies were ordered to establish Ft. Lookout near present-day Chamberlain, South Dakota. In July two companies of infantry and four companies of Dragoons were dispatched to establish Ft. Randall near modern-day Pickstown, South Dakota. From July 1856 until the final abandonment of Ft. Pierre in May 1857, two companies of infantry, numbering 110 men, garrisoned the fort. On May 16, 1857 the remaining troops at Ft. Pierre boarded the steamship D.H. Morton enroute to Fort Randall.

After abandonment, Charles Galpin was contracted to transport, via steamship, all useable buildings and ordnance to Ft. Randall. Once Galpin left, local Indians moved in and destroyed what remained, smashing windows and plugging fireplaces (Wilson 1902:290).

After Army Abandonment

The Laramie Treaty of 1868 gave the Sioux Nations virtually the entire western half of modern-day South Dakota as a reservation. This reservation included the site of Ft. Pierre. When Congress diminished the size of the reservation and divided Dakota Territory into two states in 1889, homesteaders were allowed to claim much of the reservation land, including the old fort site.

By 1890 a man named James "Scotty" Philip was living on a claim which encompassed the old Ft. Pierre site. Following the

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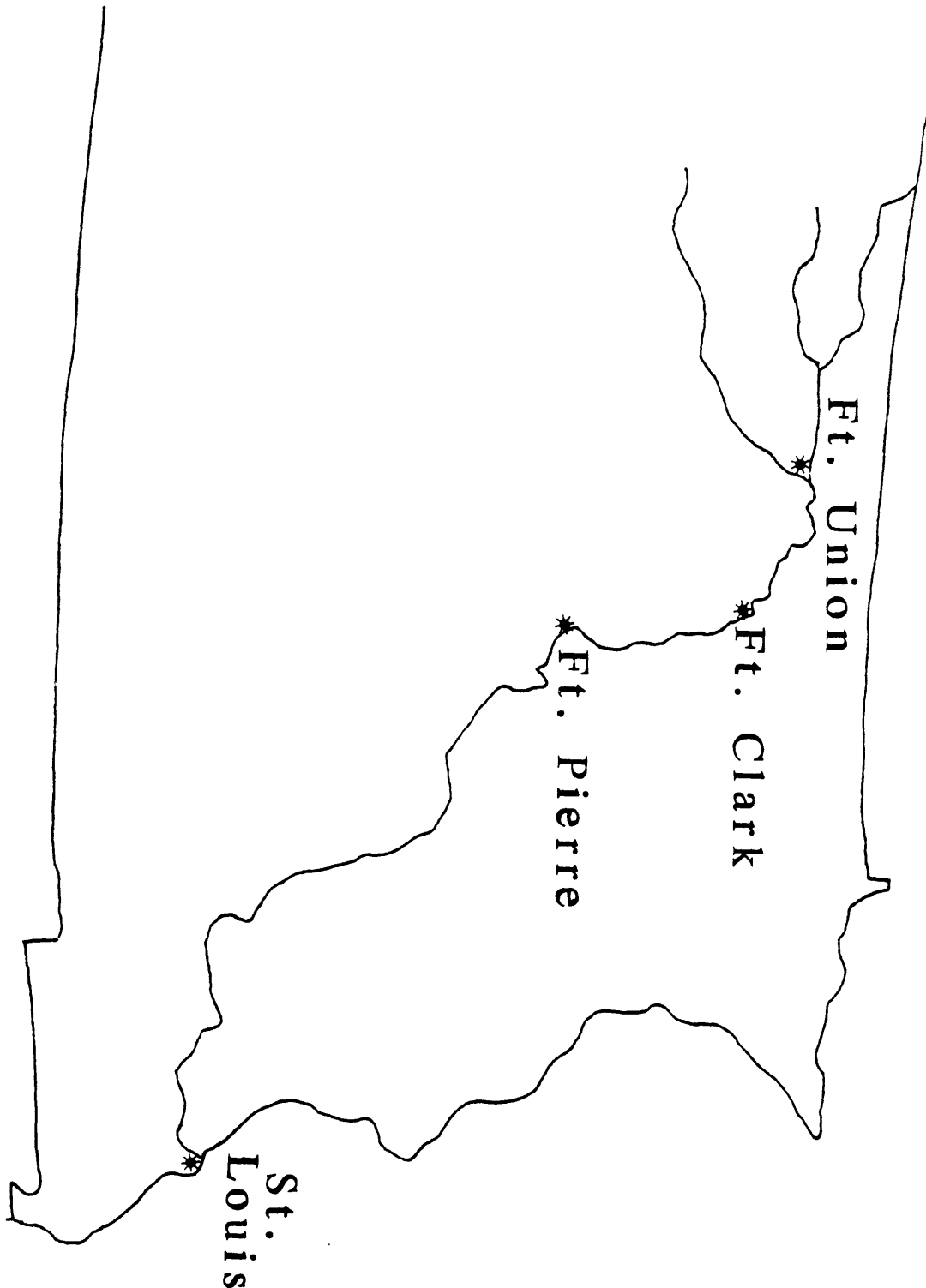
death of Philip in 1911, the site remained in pasture until 1930 when it was deeded to the state of South Dakota. The surrounding tract of land was given to the state in 1970 by Ole Williamson.

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Location of Main Posts



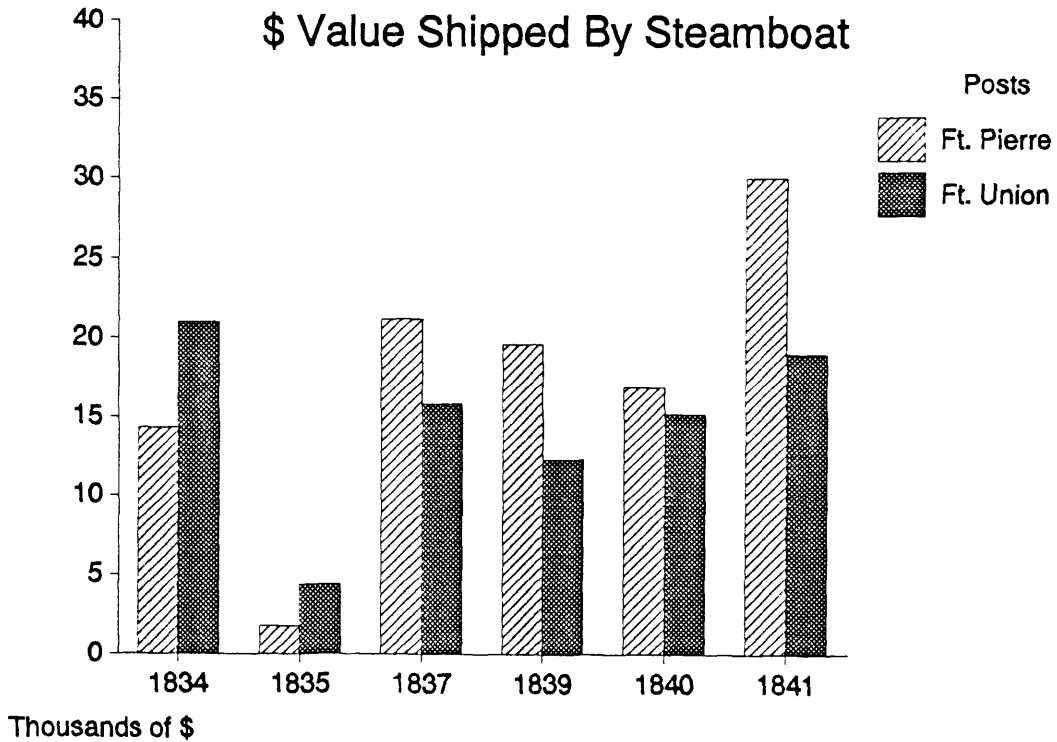
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Value of Trade Goods Shipped
Ft. Pierre vs Ft. Union (currently listed NHL)

Ft. Pierre - Ft. Union Comparisons



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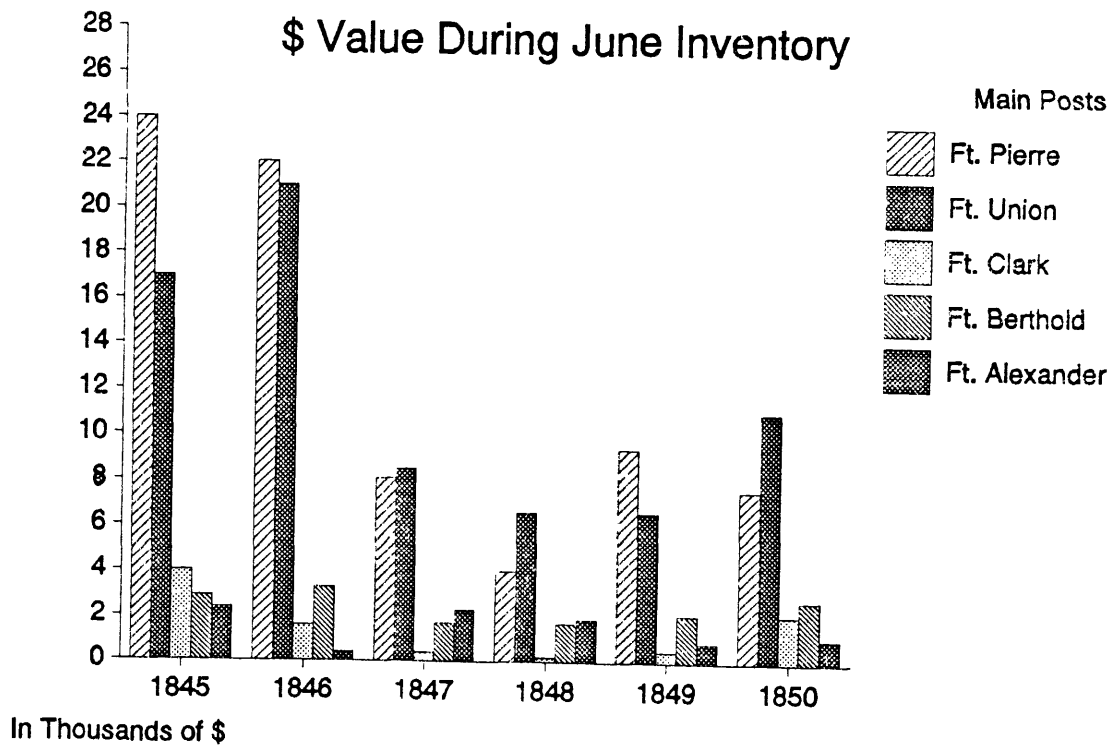
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Value of Trade Goods Shipped
Ft. Pierre vs Other Main Posts

Trade Good Inventory

\$ Value During June Inventory



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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the nominated property are contained within the legal description as recorded at the Stanley County Register of Deeds Office: Government Lot 3. The site is located in the NW 1/4, SW 1/4, Section 16, Township 5 North, Range 31 East (6th Principal Meridian), Stanley County, South Dakota. This area is 33 60/100 acres. The UTM points of the property are : A: 14.389280/4916280 B: 14.389700/4916280 C: 14.389280/4915880 D: 14.389700/4915880.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Ft. Pierre was a large, multifaceted, and constantly evolving trading and military center. The general location of the fort has never been in doubt. However, to ensure that all probable archaeological data concerning the fort will be included, all of the property owned by the state is within the boundary justification. Documentation shows many ancillary buildings such as corrals, small shelters, and stables were directly related to the operations within the fort. These buildings have not all been located archaeologically. Therefore, both the fort and the surrounding area owned by the state are within the site boundaries. All historical paintings of the fort, from Catlin's 1832 print to General Sully's 1856 paintings show hundreds of Indian lodges surrounding the fort. The boundaries are set to include as much of this ethnohistoric archaeological data as possible since the lodges were directly related to the operations within Ft. Pierre.

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Photo Documentation

Figure 1.

Ft. Pierre, 1832
Pierre, Stanley County, South Dakota
George Catlin, 1832
National Gallery of Art

Figure 2.

Plan of Ft. Pierre, 1833
Pierre, Stanley County, South Dakota
Prince Maximilian of Wied, 1833

Figure 3.

Ft. Pierre, 1833
Pierre, Stanley County, South Dakota
Carl Bodmer, 1833
National Archives

Figure 4.

Ft. Pierre, 1855
Pierre, Stanley County, South Dakota
Frederick Behman, 1855
National Archives

Figure 5.

Ft. Pierre, 1856
Pierre, Stanley County, South Dakota
Alfred Sully, 1856
Joselyn Art Museum

Figure 6.

Ft. Pierre, 1856
Pierre, Stanley County, South Dakota
Alfred Sully, 1856
Joselyn Art Museum

Figure 7.

Ft. Pierre, 1857
Pierre, Stanley County, South Dakota
Alfred Sully, 1857
Joselyn Art Museum

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Figure 8.
Ft. Pierre Site, 1988
Pierre, Stanley County, South Dakota
Todd Kapler, Photographer, 1988

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Catlin, 1832

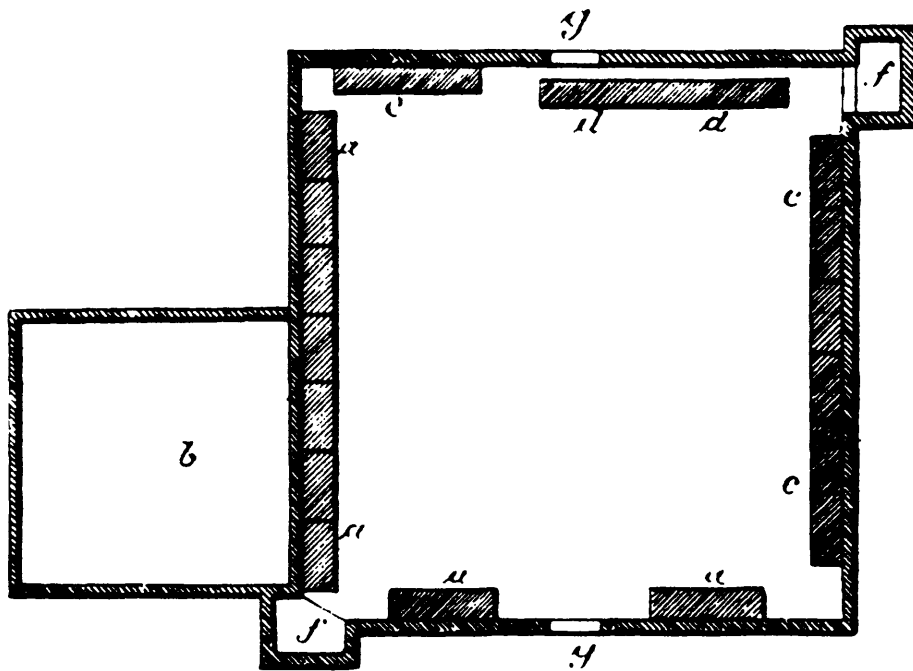


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Fort Pierre Chouteau
Site, South Dakota
Plan of Fort Pierre, 1833
Prince Maximilian of Wied
(South Dakota State
Historical Society)



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Bodmer, 1833

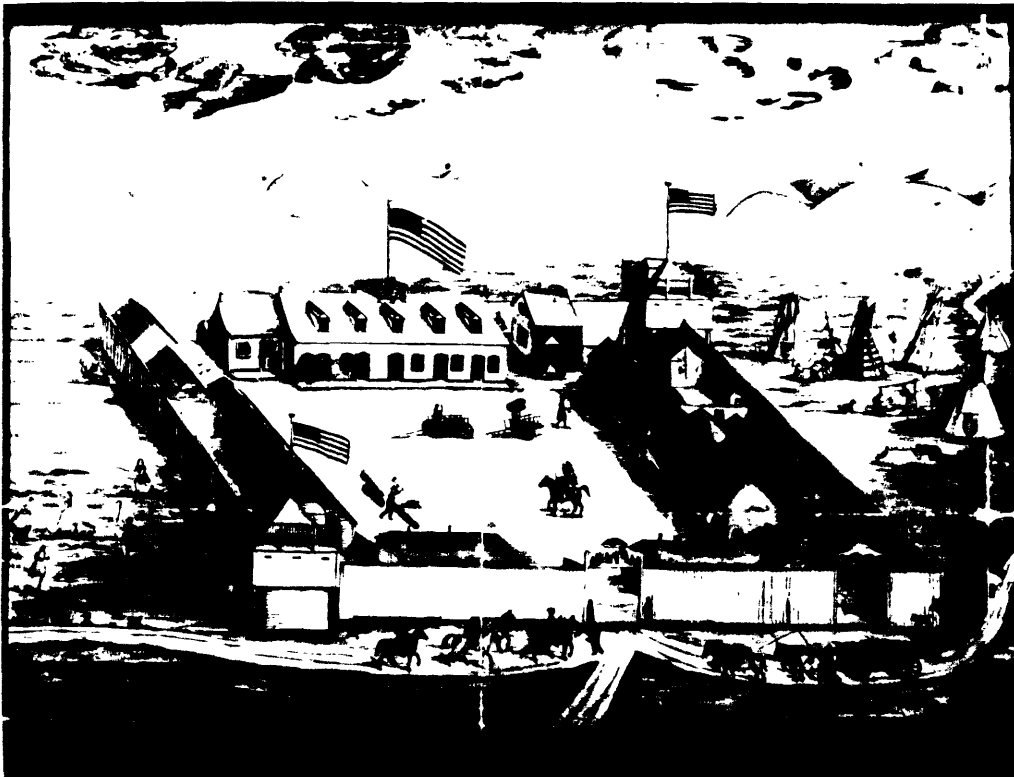


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Behman, 1855



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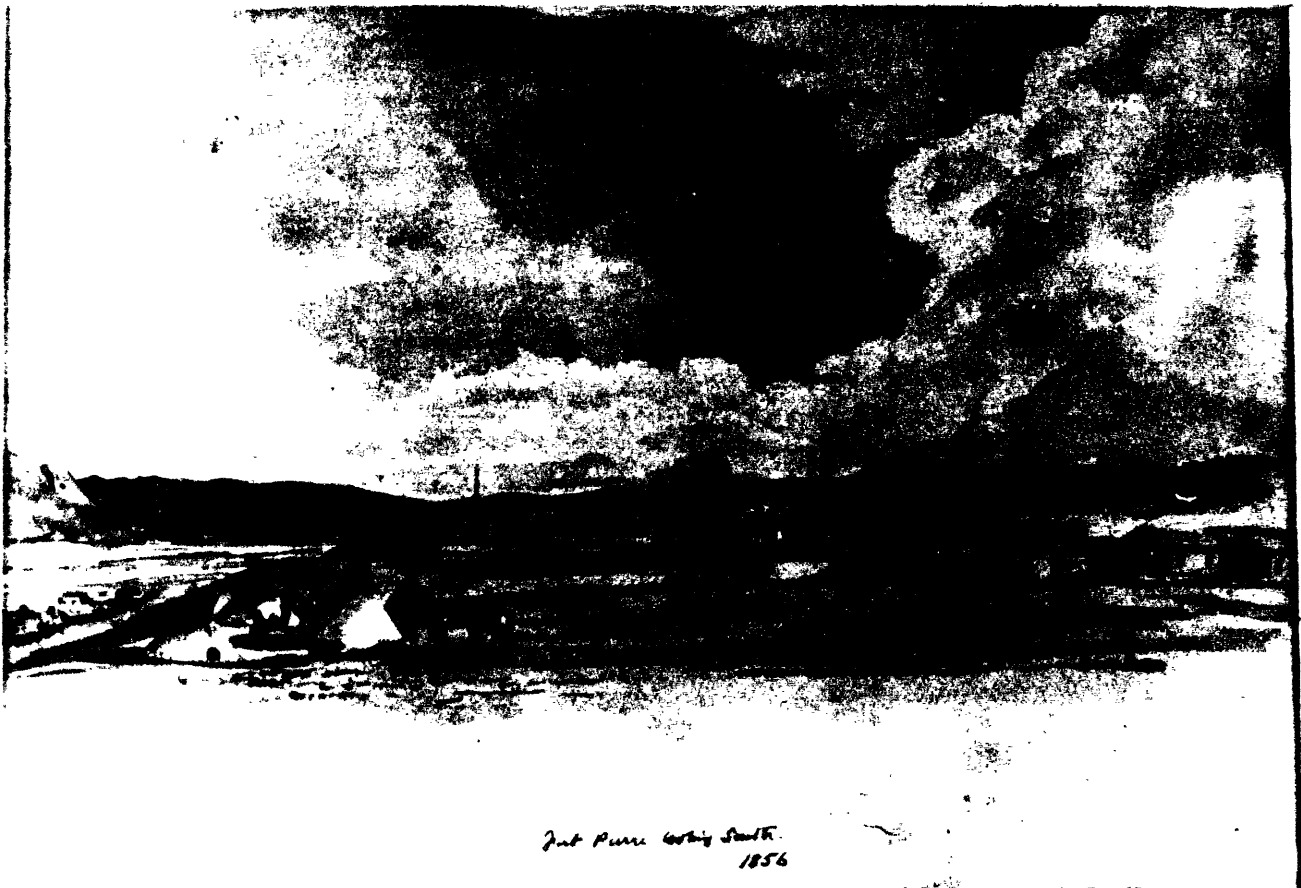


Fort Pierre Chouteau
Site, South Dakota
Fort Pierre, 1856
Alfred Sully
(Joslyn Art Museum)

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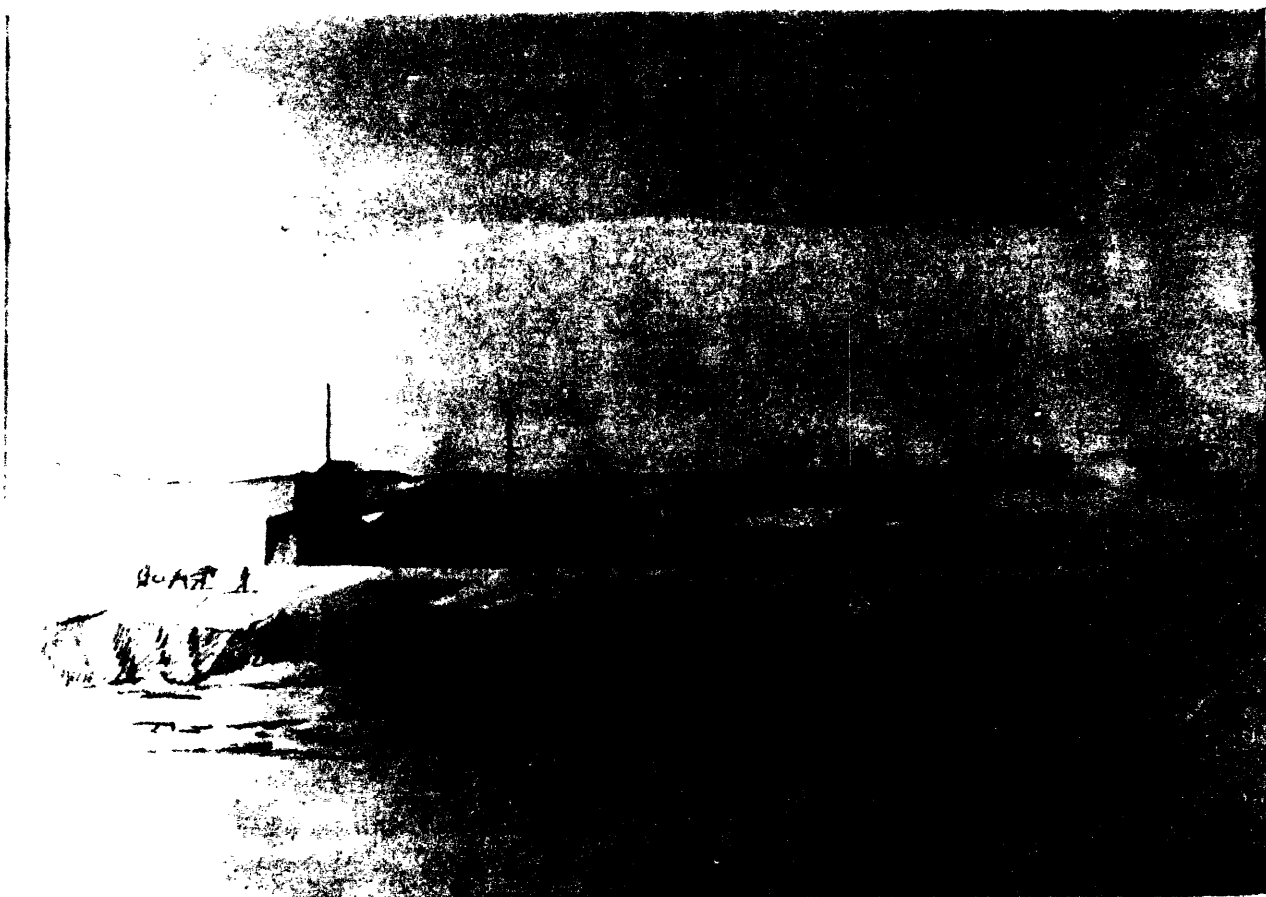


Fort Pierre Chouteau
Site, South Dakota
Fort Pierre, 1856
Alfred Sully
(Joslyn Art Museum)

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Fort Pierre Chouteau
Site, South Dakota
Fort Pierre, 1857
Alfred Sully
(Joslyn Art Museum)

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Kapler, 1988

