

[From "A Family History," a manuscript written in the summer of 1888 by  
(Mrs.) Frances Huggins Pettijohn]

Brothers A.G.H. [Alexander Gilliland Huggins] & Z.W.H. [Zimri W. Huggins] were living on their places [in Brown County, Ohio] & we expected them to stay there. But Dr [Thomas Smith] Williamson had concluded to be a missionary. He had offered himself to the A.B.C.F.M. [American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions] & they sent him up the mississippi to hunt a place to work. He visited the Sac & Foxes didnt like the prospect I dont know why, but he went on to Ft. Snelling, & concluded to go among the Sioux He came home & wrote to bro. A.G.H. that he was going to be a Missionary among the indians & it would be necessary for him to have an assistant He had looked over all his young friends & found none he tho't so well fitted to the work that would be necessary as he was He had been raised on a farm & worked at farming. He had worked at smithing & also in the wagon shop, & in the mill. He understood music & could sing well, which the Dr tho't a very important qualification. He wished brother to prayerfully consider the matter & consult his wife & if they could go to let him know. His wife [Lydia Pettijohn Huggins] was willing pleased & glad to go. It was more than a year before they went. But the time came at last & They went. I believe we all had enough missionary Spirit to be glad to have our friends go as missionaries but it was dreadful hard to part with them. but they went Brother John & Eliza [Huggins] went with them to Ripley. They stopt awhile in Cin. & again in St. Louis, & Galena. When They got to Ft. Snelling [May 16, 1835] they found good folks that took them in your mother [Lydia Pettijohn Huggins] Amos [Williamson Huggins] & you/ <sup>[Jane Huggins, later Mrs. Holtsclaw]</sup> all had the measels in the Fort They concluded to start the mission at Lake Harriet & your father [Alexander G. Huggins] commenced to cut logs



for a house. The Pond brothers [Rev. Samuel W. and Gideon H.] & Mr. [Jedediah D. Stevens] were in that neighborhood. Mr. [Joseph] Renville was down after goods & Mr [H. H.] Sibley managed to get him & Dr [Williamson] together & persuaded them that Dr had better go home with him & teach his folks & they concluded to do it In the mean time they had a meeting in Ft. Snelling. There was much interest among the people & they organized a church & ordaind your father [Alexander G. Huggins] an elder in the church Mr Renville had a kind of flat boat that held a good deal & french men to row & pole it along. They row'd till they came to the rappid's after that they poled.

The missionaries had a wagon with them They ~~must~~ have had it on the boat for the road was just about impasable Years after that Mr [Stephen R.] Riggs tried to go up on land & lost a fine horse in a slough, & had to walk home. & the horse died when they got to Traverse [les Sioux] they got horses I dont remember how, & took their journey over the Prairie to Lacquiparle. They arrived at Mr [Renville's] Renvills the 9th of July 1835 They all lived in one of Mr R's houses till your father got a log house built. Dr's staid in Mr Renvilles house till spring Then they cut logs & built a double house two stories high. One end for a school house. Dr. W. commenced teaching the men & boys in the winter. Mr. R. had a large tent made of buffalo hide for his soldiers & friends to meet in & chat & play games with plum seeds or moccasins. Dr would go there & talk to them & learn language & teach them He would smoothe the ashes by the fire & with a stick make letters in the ashes & have them make them. They learnd fast before spring some of them could write words. The indians had no written language & the missionaries reduced the language to writing.



I suppose I once knew, but I forget how they managed to agree on the way to call the letters & spell the words, but it wasn't long till they were writing & printing lessons on newspapers with copper plates & a brush. Mr Renville had a clerk that understood french & english Dr understood french but couldn't speak it well Mr Renville understood dacota & french. They would get together & translate a portion of scripture I[t] was not long till Dr began to preach to the indians Mr & Mrs Renville professed to believe in Jesus & began teaching his own family & the Indians, Mrs. R. too was in real earnest persuading the women that Jesus was the savior. Her own sister was the first to profess faith in Jesus They named her Sarah - Katharine told me that at first she thot she had been so bad there was no hope for her, but Mrs R. told her Jesus was very merciful & blessed bad folks if they would leave off their bad ways & do right He would bless them Catharine was a member of their Wakan dance, had the bag of their sacred things She told me she felt that what Mrs R. told her was very disireable, To have a friend in Heaven that would care for her all her life, & take her to a good place when she died. She concluded to give up her Wakan thing & join her sisters in law Her husband was brother to Mrs Renville & Sarah. Sarah Lived till she was old & died rejoicing in hope of Heaven Catharine Totidutawin lived 50 years after she was a christian steadfast in the faith She died Sept. 1888. I have heard no particulars but I fell sure she was steadfast till the end I taught her to read after she was 40 years old It took her nearly 2 years to be able to read without spelling.



When she could read right along She was the gladdest woman. She wanted to read all the time said she could scarcely stop to do her house work When she was over 70 years old her eyes failed till she couldn't see with glasses She got her son to write a piece for the Iapioaya She said she had loved to read & had read every thing she saw in the indian language, she couldn't read now but she had 80 hymns she could sing if she couldn't see The Indians loved to sing. I sang with a great deal and I hope to sing with them in the Better Country.

Not long ago I was talking with a man about the Indians He didn't think he could be made believe the indians could go to Heaven. I was astonished He is a prominent member in the church. I talk'd to him till I thot he was ashamed I thot he was a hard case. Some people think we don't need to send missionaries to the Heathen they will be saved without hearing the Gospel Others think they can't become christians & go to Heaven. Neither of which I believe. I think the Heathen are to be turned into Hell with all the nations who forget God. but all who accept the Bible as the word of God - believe in Jesus & try to serve & please Him Shall be saved. I have seen poor ignorant Indians who had lived in total darkness did not know any thing about the God of the Bible had never heard of the Savior. When they heard that God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that who soever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life, began to inquire & study about it and soon seemed fully convinced & as the missionaries thot converted & made real christians. I do think many of the christian Indians endured more for the sake of not doing wrong than I ever knew white people I will write one case. A woman professed to believe & trust in Jesus & was received to the church not long after a man from another vilage came & wanted to swap wives with her husband, and she had to go where there was no school nor meeting we all felt sorry & was afraid she would



go back to indi[an] ways She couldn't read but She took her Bibl & hymn Book with her & when she saw any one that could read or sing she would get them to read & sing to her. The missionaries were very strict Sunday keepers & taught the indians not to travel or do any work on Sunday. The people this woman lived with were going on their hunt in the fall as usual. When Sunday came She said they must rest, but she was the only one that cared. she said she wouldnt go. They went & left her. One said to her You are a fool to hold on to these ways. When you lived near the missionaries it was well enough but now you will never live there again you might as wel give up. She said, I didnt start, nor join the christians for any thing I expected in this world & I havent got to the good World. I didnt hear of her often but She held on & years after one of the christian indians married her & I hope she had peace in her last days.

~~XX~~



Alexander Gilliland Huggins m. Lydia Pettyjohn (1832)  
(1802-1866) (1812-1890)

Amos Williamson  
(1833-1862)

Jane Sloan (m. James Holsclaw  
(1834- ) ( -1864)

Eliza Willson  
(1837- )

Mary Ann Longley m. John Kerlinger  
(1839- )

Alexander Gilliland Huggins (Continued)

Rufus Anderson  
(1846-1862?) \*

Frances Gilliland  
(1848- )

Harriet Cordelia  
(1851- )

Amos Williamson Huggins m. Sophia Josephine Marsh (1856)  
(1833-1862) (1838-1927)

m(2) Isaac W. Hawthorn (1869)

Eletta I (Sophrina  
(1858-1948)

Charles Loyal  
(1861-1949)

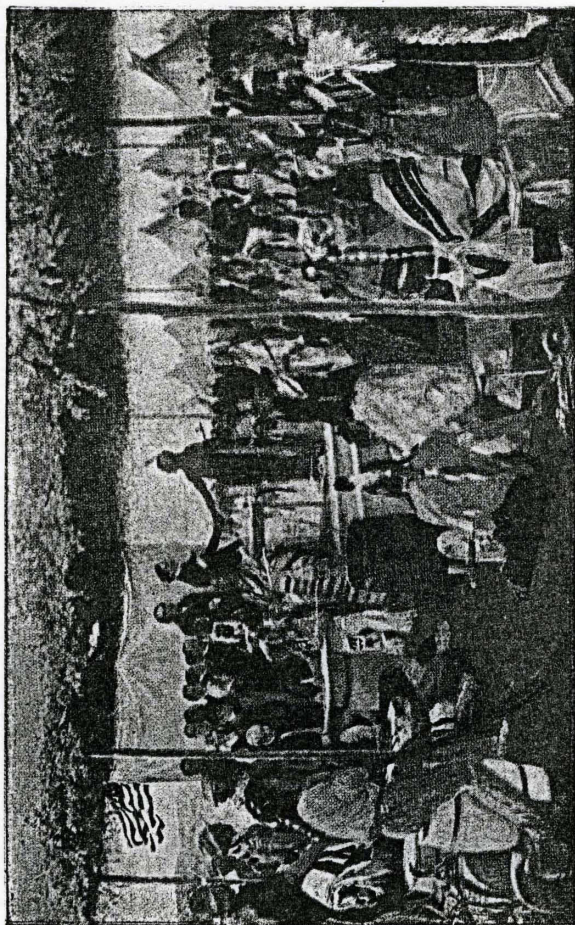
Amos Williamson \*\* m. Mary Abigail Hackley (1891)  
(1863-1935) (1870-1959)

\*\*\*  
Dorothea Harriet m. George L. Harding ( )  
(1894- ) ( )

\* Killed in Sioux War. See:  
Minn. in Civil & Indian Wars, p. 755.  
St. Peter Frontier Guards.  
Only R. Huggins in the Index.  
No other data.

\*\* author of Reminiscence  
\*\*\* donor of Genealogy & Rems.





SIGNING THE TREATY OF TRAVERSE DES SIOUX, JULY 23, 1851.  
From Mural Painting by F. D. Millet, in office of Governor of Minnesota, State Capitol Building, St. Paul. Reproductions by Courtesy of Laurence Millet, The A. W. Elson Art Publication Co., Inc., and Hubbard Milling Co.

# Old Traverse des Sioux

By THOMAS HUGHES

ASSISTED BY BRIGADIER GENERAL W. C. BROWN,  
U. S. A. RETIRED



A HISTORY OF  
EARLY EXPLORATION, TRADING POSTS,  
MISSION STATION, TREATIES, AND  
PIONEER VILLAGE.

*Edited By Edward A. Johnson*



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Riggs further states that "As might be expected, the old man did his begging even gracefully and goodhumoredly. He once desired me to write to Colonel Bruce, who was then Indian agent at Fort Snelling. After the usual compliments, he wished his father would be so kind as to give him a pair of moccasins. Not at the time understanding the boldness of the figure, I suggested that he would say 'a pair of shoes,' as the agent could probably procure them much easier than he could moccasins. I shall always remember the droll expression of the old man's face, when he looked straight at me and said. "Did you think I meant common moccasins. I meant a horse.

"Another good quality which Sleepy Eyes had above most of his compeers was that he could take 'no' for an answer without appearing to be offended."

Sleepy Eyes was much opposed to the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux and finally signed it, simply because his young men insisted on it.

When he affixed his signature, he told the commissioners: "You will take this Treaty paper home and show it to the Great Father, but we want to keep a copy here so that we may look at it and see whether you have changed it. As to paying our debts to our traders, I want to pay them what is right, but I would like to know how much I owe them. If they have charged me ten dollars for a gun, I want them to tell me, and if they have charged me ten dollars for a shirt, I want them to tell me that. I am a poor man and have difficulty in maintaining myself, but these traders wear good coats. The prairie country in which I live has not much wood, I live along with our traders, and they also are poor, but I do not want to provide for them. I think it will be very hard upon us when the year becomes white, and I would like to have some provisions given me for the winter. I would also like to have what is mine laid on one side; then when we have finished this business, I will know how many of my relatives I can have mercy upon."

As Dr. Riggs says further: "For half a century or more, the Swan Lake country, with its ducks and geese, and "many swans" in former days, with its turtles, its fish, its muskrats and wild rice was the home of Sleepy Eyes, and the old man loved the country. At the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux, in 1851, he asked the Commissioners the privilege of living and dying there; and Commissioner Lea told him in public council that it should be as he desired. But promises made even by officers of the Government in such circumstances are of very little account, when the stipulations of the Treaty and the fears or interests of the white race require the red man's removal."

In the spring of 1857, the settlers of the Minnesota Valley were thrown into a paroxysm of fear by the murder of some settlers at Okoboji and Jackson by Inpaduta and his followers, and a company of home guards marched one day to Sleepy Eyes' camp on Swan Lake from Judson, Courtland and Nicollet and demanded that he remove at once to the Reservation. Being a man of peace, the old Chief left the beloved home of his fathers and settled at Sleepy Eye Lake, near where the city of Sleepy Eye now stands. He is said to have died about 1860, when on a hunting expedition in Roberts County, South Dakota. He had a number of daughters, two of whom were successively married to Joseph La

Framboise, the trader, and one to Louis Provencalle. His only son died a number of years before his father, partly as the result of wounds in a war with the Potawatamis.

After the death of the old Chief, a nephew assumed his uncle's name, and was Chief of a part of his band, while the other portion acknowledge Wakayyaska (White Lodge), a son of the old Chief, Blue Spirit, as leader. Both of these Chiefs had their villages near Lake Benton and participated in the massacre of Lake Shetek.

Sleepy Eyes left two granddaughters who became noted in Christian Missionary work among the Dakotas. One was Julia La Framboise, daughter of the trader, Joseph La Framboise, and grand daughter of Sleepy Eyes. When nine years old, her father put her in the family of the Missionary, A. G. Huggins, to be educated. After the father's death, she determined to use her share of his property in securing a good education. After spending two years at Dr. Riggs' Mission School at Hazelwood, she went to the W. F. Seminary at Oxford, Ohio, thence to the school at Painesville, Ohio, and completed her course at Rockford, Ill. She then returned to Minnesota as a teacher, and devoted herself to the work of Christian Education among her own people, until compelled to desist by failing health. She died September 20th, 1871, at the age of 28 years. She was an able and industrious student and finely educated. She was also a very devout and earnest Christian.

Elizabeth Winyan (The Lady) was another granddaughter of the old Chief. She was born at Swan Lake about 1831. Her earliest recollection was of being bound upon a board and hung upon a tree while her mother worked in the corn patch nearby. One day when she was a very little girl, a number of Indians of her village were in the big sugar bush (located where the Episcopal Church and Teachers College buildings now stand in the City of Mankato) making maple sugar. Suddenly there swooped down upon them some men of a hostile tribe, yelling and shooting at everyone. Winyan's father fell and her mother unable to carry both her children, hastily overturned a big iron kettle, used in the sugarmaking, and hid the little girl under it, and fled with the baby brother. All day, all night, and all of the second day, she stayed there. Not until the second night, did the mother dare come back. Even in her old age, Winyan never forgot that terrible experience and how, when her mother lifted the kettle, the moonlight shown on the bloody faces of the outstretched dead, her father among them.

She also remembered how her old grandfather (Sleepy Eyes) would wake her and her brother at day-break and take them with him from Swan Lake down to the banks of the Minnesota River and give them bits of paper and presents to throw into the water as an offering to the Gods as the sun arose, and he would pray devoutly to the Great Mystery with uplifted arms and eyes.

When a young woman, she became one of the early converts to Christianity under the preaching of Drs. T. S. Williamson and S. R. Riggs, and was given the name "Elizabeth" in baptism. She lived at the Mission and learned to sew and do housework like white women. She early learned also to read the Dakota Bible, and once when she went to see her grandfather, Sleepy Eyes, she had a few pages of the Bible hidden



JOSEPH RENVILLE acted as guide for the expedition. PROF. KEATING refers to Traverse as "an old wintering camp of the traders," and he calls the country at the bend of the Minnesota, "The Crescent." He also states that when they left Traverse, that there were only 24 persons in the party. They avoided visiting the mouth of the Blue Earth, because the band of Indians there located harbored ugly feelings toward the whites because of the arrest of two of their number by the Fort Snelling authorities.

In the fall of 1835, GEORGE W. FEATHERSTONHAUGH, an English geologist, accompanied by a young American geologist, 1ST. LIEUT. W. W. MATHER, 7th U. S. Infantry, led another exploring expedition up the Minnesota and published a book giving a report of his discoveries. He provided himself for the journey with a very complete equipment by way of a magnificent birch bark canoe, 35 feet long and wide enough for three men to sit in it abreast, an elegant tent with bedding, cooking utensils and other camping outfit that rather astonished the natives. He is said to have had a very overbearing disposition and made life miserable for LIEUT. MATHER and the voyagers. The report of the country which he and LIEUT. MATHER published, helped to spread the knowledge of and interest in it. Speaking of Traverse des Sioux, FEATHERSTONHAUGH states: "I landed at a prairie and walked to an agent of Mr. Sibley of the name of LEBLANC (Provencale). I found him at home with his Sioux wife and some very nice little children."

In June, 1835, Dr. Thomas S. Williamson and A. G. Huggins and their families arrived at Traverse des Sioux on their way to establish a Mission station among the Indians at Lac Qui Parle. We will let the Doctor tell his own story.

June 22nd, 1835—REV. T. S. WILLIAMSON, wife and child, A. G. HUGGINS, wife and two children, and MISS SARAH POAGE (sister of MRS. WILLIAMSON) started from Ft. Snelling for Lac Qui Parle.

"The women and children and MR. HUGGINS went as far as Traverse des Sioux in a large skiff or row boat of five-ton capacity with some French traders.

"The missionary wagon was stowed into the boat which was very heavily loaded. I, with two horses and two Frenchmen and a number of Indians, started overland from Fort Snelling. Monday night, (June 22) we reached Black Dog's village on the north side of river in sight of the fort. Tuesday night, reached Six's village two or three miles below Shakopee and on the opposite side of the river. The Indians were all away on a hunt. Spent the night in one of their bark huts. Fleas inside and mosquitoes outside made a miserable night for us. The Indians had hoed their corn and it looked thrifty. The land party here crossed the river as there was no trail going farther towards Traverse des Sioux on the North side. Wednesday night, we spent at Wells' shanty opposite Carver. Friday night was spent not far from where St. Lawrence now stands, where next morning we parted from the boat until we reached Traverse. It was a very wet season as it had rained almost every day for a month. Spent Saturday night in the woods between where Belle Plaine and Le Sueur now stand. Did not

travel Sunday and hence I was left alone with an Indian guide. Reached Traverse where PROVENCALE had a trading post, Monday afternoon. There being no boat, I had to wait until an Indian man and woman happened by in a 'dug-out', who took me and my luggage across the river.

"The boat did not arrive until Tuesday evening (June 30). July 1st, we put the wagon together and loaded it and started over the prairie to Lac Qui Parle, which we reached on July 8th, 1835."

WILLIAMSON came on horseback, while HUGGINS, and the two families arrived with the luggage by a flatboat of five-ton capacity. From Traverse, they completed their journey over land by a wagon and cart.

#### TRANSLATION OF JEAN NICOLLET'S NOTES.

In 1838-39, the savant, JEAN N. NICOLLET, under government direction, and accompanied by MR. JOHN C. FREMONT, later to achieve distinction as an explorer, made an exploring trip up the valley of the Minnesota, to make an astronomical survey of the country and to make a map and report of it. So well was the map work done that it has been the basis of our maps ever since. The following is a translation from the French of Nicolle's notes now on file in the Library of Congress so far as they relate to Traverse des Sioux and the Swan Lake country.

"Monday, 18th June, 1838—Leave the Sioux Crossing at 7 minutes after 11. Weather hot and muggy, looking like rain. It did rain this morning. We take the southerly route across in order to pass between the river St. Pierre and the Great Swan Lake of the Sissetons. My eight men each at the head of his heavily loaded cart. LAFRAMBOISE is at the head of the file with his wife and EUGENE in the barouche. I, FREMONT and GEYER, in the wagon of JOSEPH RENVILLE and his wife, we bring up the rear of the train to superintend the march. The flag flies in the center of the file; the son of the Chief of the Sissetons, he of the SLEEPY EYES, is alongside the flag. The heat is prostrating, but it does not prevent the company from dancing, running races, fighting and giving themselves up to battles with their whips on the beautiful greensward that we pass over. The spectacle of the caravan is sometimes picturesque.

"At noon, we cross a wooded hill, 3 miles.

"The *Ceanothus* shows itself abundantly (*Ceanothus-Americanus*). It is the red root of the Sioux; they call it '*Chanhutkansha*'—red root. The root is used to make drinks, for a beverage and for a remedy and the leaf is used as a tea.

"After traversing the forest five miles, the trees become thinner. Ten miles farther, on the left side of our trail is a small lake which is much bigger at the season of high water. Five miles still farther on, that is five miles from the Sioux Crossing, the route turns from S. S. W. to W. S. On the left a second lake appears, much larger than the preceding one; its length is from east to west. Farther along, on the right, and behind a fine border of woods, is seen a long lake stretching S. E. and N. W.; it is called the Lake of the Other Shore. We stop for some time in view of this lake to let the horses breathe. Here we have completed six good miles. About three miles farther, the route runs



grassy hill that prolongs the southwest shore, as far as the S. W. point that ends it—beyond which are found three pretty wooded islands. Since luncheon we have seen only a thin border of woods and a few isolated trees that stretch into the distance.

"At 6 o'clock, we begin crossing the St. Pierre. The water being rather high it was necessary for us to unpack our 10 wagons and reload them on the top only, so that our provisions and goods that cannot stand water will not be damaged. At 9 o'clock the last cart made the crossing. We had considerable trouble, but the precautions saved us from any accident and we had only the inconvenience.

"We did not have supper until 11 o'clock; men and horses were tired out, and nevertheless there was not a murmur, except that caused from the mosquitoes, which we found again here.

"This evening, I commenced to have a guard placed at my camp by two men who watch all night, with one of the officers. I gave \$1.00 a night to the two men. This expense is a great economy, since it prevents my horses from wandering off or being stolen by marauding savages, and it is favorable to our security against the war parties, with which this region is often infested."

#### NOTES OF J. N. NICOLLET ON HIS RETURN TRIP SEPTEMBER, 1839.

"Departed from Lac Qui Parle September 10th, 1839, 2 P. M. Rainy, cold wind. Camped at the lake of the Black Young Oaks, 13 miles from Lac Qui Parle. Continued slowly on our way by reason of rain and cold wind, which cease not to stay with us. JOSEPH LAFRAMBOISE, our guide of last year, who had rejoined us here to spend a few hours, leaves us, and we leave Lake Minnisotta and proceed to Camp Witatonwan in the beautiful neck of the woods which is flooded by the lake and which connects with the high ground of the great wood and with the open wood to the north of the St. Peters River.

"The following day, September 11th, we proceeded to Traverse des Sioux after marching a few miles.

"The hills in rear of the establishment of the American Fur company rise in tiers, forming terraces and a plateau on the summit. It will make a site for a beautiful town. About 2 o'clock took the temperature of a nice spring located two miles from the establishment on the left bank of the St. Peters—50 degrees. Temperature of the air, 71 degrees. There are several other springs in the vicinity, but their location is such that the temperature cannot be taken where the water leaves the ground.

"Depart from 'Crossing' in two canoes 36 feet long, made by our men from cottonwood trees cut on right bank of river. I went from Mendota on down the St. Peters and Mississippi, but FREMONT stayed to proceed with SIBLEY overland and a hunting party of Sioux. We are to meet at Prairie du Chien."

GENERAL J. K. WARREN of the U. S. Topographical Survey called NICOLLET's map made from the data gathered on this trip "The greatest contribution ever made to our western Geography". It proved invaluable to the early settlers of this Northwest.

In 1837, the artist, GEORGE CATLIN, with a companion, arrived at Traverse des Sioux on his way to visit the famous Pipestone quarry. Learning of their destination, the Indians of the vicinity most strenuously objected to any white man putting foot on this sacred spot and demanded that they leave the country at once. For a time, the attitude of the Sissetons of Traverse, Swan Lake and the Blue Earth country was decidedly menacing; but after a long parley, the persistence of MR. CATLIN and his friend prevailed and they were permitted under certain restrictions to proceed. Besides visiting the sacred quarry, CATLIN tarried a few days at Swan Lake and was much enamoured of it and made sketches for a painting of it. Speaking of this trip, which was made on horseback, he says: "*Lac Du Cygne* (Swan Lake) [Catlin's painting of Swan Lake is in the Smithsonian Institution. Ed.] near the coteau is a famous place where myriads of white swans lay their eggs and hatch their young." "Having glutted our curiosity at the fountain of the red pipe, our horses brought us to the base of the coteau and then over the extended plain that lies between that and Traverse des Sioux on the St. Peters with about five days travel."

"In this distance, we passed some of the loveliest prairie country in the world and I made a number of sketches. Lac Du Cygne (Swan Lake) was a peculiar and lovely scene, extending for many miles and filled with a large number of small islands covered with a profusion of rich forest trees."

In the summer of 1837, REV. STEPHEN R. RIGGS and family passed through Traverse on their way to help DR. T. S. WILLIAMSON in the Sioux Mission at Lac Qui Parle and he and the other occupants of this Mission were in the habit thereafter of passing back and forth more or less each year through the "Crossing" for their supplies and visits East regularly.

On July 31st, 1841, GOVERNOR JAMES D. DOTY of Wisconsin negotiated a treaty with the Sioux at an old warehouse, which stood immediately west of the state park at Traverse des Sioux. The intent of this treaty was to acquire a general reservation for a number of Indian tribes which had been left homeless; to create a second Indian territory. Fortunately, the treaty failed of confirmation.

In June, 1843, REV. STEPHEN R. RIGGS started a Mission station for the A. M. A. at Traverse des Sioux. While erecting the first building (a log structure), his brother-in-law, THOMAS L. LONGLEY, was drowned when bathing in the river. In 1844, a chapel and an additional residence (both frame) were added, making a neat group of three white painted buildings in a row, facing the river—the chapel located between the two residences. ROBERT HOPKINS and wife were added to the mission force the same year.

In 1846, REV. RIGGS and family were transferred back to Lac Qui Parle and ALEXANDER G. HUGGINS and family located at the Traverse des Sioux station, which continued its good work of preaching to the Indians and teaching their children until the red men were removed to their agency.





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