

Copy

Box 887 San Diego, Cal
Aug 30, 1926.

My dear Colonel Brown

Your favor of the 23rd is at hand and I learn with pleasure that you intend to preserve in print the history of the early settlement of Nicolle County.

You are especially pointed out for this work being the oldest white person born in the County and having kept in touch with its people all through your distinguished career.

I fear I can be of little assistance owing to my infirmities ^{mental and bodily}. But I will painfully scribble a few fairly legible lines if you find anything in them worthy of conservation you are more than welcome to it. It is a task for me to write and I find it easier with pencil than pen, so you will pardon the pencil.

I am the only person living who was present when the treaty was signed by which the Sioux sold to the U.S. what is now Minnesota. I was only nine years old ^{and the only boy present} as that was 75 years ago I am safe in saying that I am the sole survivor. I was too young to understand the full import of the proceedings but I know it was an occasion of tremendous importance and it made a powerful impression on my memory. I think all the white ^{men} in what is now Nicolle Co were present when the treaty was signed not more than 10 or 12 including Gov Ramsay and Luke Lea who signed in behalf of the U.S. Luke Lea had lost a leg in the Mexican War and used a crutch. I had never seen a one-legged man before and gazed on him with great awe. An artist named Meyer ^(Mayer) of some distinction came with Ramsay and his party and sketched the faces of the principal whites and of the chiefs who signed

the treaty. That was before the day of the Camera.

When I was on duty in Baltimore in 1886 ^{Weyer} then living in Annapolis called on me and invited me to visit him and see a large painting of the signing which he had made and hoped to sell to the Historical Society of Minn. I spent a pleasant day with him & he showed me also his original sketches.

I am not an expert judge of art but some of the faces seemed to me fair portraits and the historic value & interest of the large canvas to a Minnesotan could hardly be exaggerated. ^{Weyer} showed me a letter from Gov Ramsay to whom he had written asking him to recommend an appropriation for purchase of the painting.

Ramsay replied that as he was the most prominent figure in the painting it would seem improper for him to make such a recommendation.

I gave ^{Weyer} a letter saying everything good I could of his picture and recommending its purchase ^{state of Minn. Weyer} had become an old man and did not live long. I think the state bought the painting from his widow and that ^{in a room of} the Historical Society. As a small boy I was very familiar with the faces of Red Iron and Sleepy Eye and I thought their portraits very good. Also that of Gov Ramsay. If I could see you I could tell you some interesting incidents which can hardly be said to have any historical significance, including an amazing escapade of one of Ramsay's party which is not printable.

In Oct 1845 when I was a little more than 3 years old father took mother and myself in a one Ox Cart from Traverse to Lac qui parle ⁽ⁱⁿ⁾ what was known as a Red river Cart made of wood and Buffalo Bull rawhide without a scrap of Metal. We did not see a house or a white man during the journey except the trading post of Joseph Laframboise, father-in-law of Sleepy Eye, a few miles from Ft Ridgely which had not been built.

Father intended to camp at Swan Lake but there were Indians there and they had Whiskey. Whiskey and Indians is a dangerous combination. They were friendly and

Father spoke to them but Mother urged him to drive on as far as possible.

He kept on until it was dark. We had a very small tent.

Next morning father left the tent and at once said O Winona (Mother's Indian Name) look out there. I was wide awake at once jumped up and came to the door and looked out. A ruffed crow and calf were

That is the earliest incident of my childhood [existence] which I distinctly remember. Probably it would be ~~indistinctly~~ remembered if at all if I had not often heard mother speak of that and other incidents of the remarkable journey. It seems that the crow had been badly wounded by Indians. I never saw another ruffed until 40 years later in Montana.

That was the last year (1845) that ruffed appeared in that part of Minnesota.

If you can read what I have painfully scribbled and find anything worthy of preservation don't put in my language and in quotation mark but use your own language.

If I could see you I could say a lot which might ^{because of the} little it might have to do ^{with the early settlement} of Nicollet Co

With highest esteem Yours faithfully
Eli L. Rudgins

Postscriptum Perhaps before I am carried feet foremost to the nearest Cemetery you may visit San Diego?

Box 227 S. D. Cal.
Aug 30, 1926

My dear Colonel Brown.

[1000] Your favor of the 23rd is at hand and that I came with pleasure in point the history of the early settlement of Randall County. You are especially pointed out for this work being the oldest white person born in the county and living right in touch with all the people all through your distinguished career.

I fear I can be of little assistance owing to my infirmities now advanced but I will faithfully scribe a few hardy life-like lines; if you find anything in them worthy of preservation you are more than welcome to it.

It is a task for me to write and I find it easier with pen than pen, so you will pardon the penwork.

I am the only person living who was present when the treaty was signed by which the Sioux sold to the U.S. what is now Minnesota. I was only nine years old at the time. As that was 75 years ago I am sure in saying that I am the sole survivor. I must go on to understand the full import of the proceeding but I know it was an occasion of the most important and it made a powerful impression on my memory. I think all the white men

in what is now New Little, were present when
the Treaty was signed, not more than 10 or 12 inclu-
ding Gov. Ramsey and E. C. Allen who ~~signed~~ signed in
behalf of the U.S. E. C. Allen had lost a leg in the Mex-
ican war and could not write. I have never seen a one leg-
ged man before and gazed on him with great and
astonishment. Myer, of some distinction even with
Ramsey and his party & sketches the faces of the signers
while one of the chiefs who signed the Treaty, that
was before the day of the ^{Cameron} ~~Cameron~~ When I was on duty in
Baltimore in 1886 Myer, then living in Annapolis,
called on me and invited me to visit him and
see a large painting of the signing which he had
secured and tried to sell to the Historical Society of
Md. I spent a pleasant day with him. He
showed me also his original sketches. I am not
an expert judge of art, but some of the faces seemed
to me fair portraits and the historical value and
interest of the large canvas to a historian to come
hardly be exaggerated. Myer showed me a letter
from Gov. Ramsey to whom he had written asking him
to recommend an appropriate person for painting the ^{signing} ~~signing~~
Ramsey replied that as he was the most prominent
figure in the painting it would seem impossible
for him to make such a recommendation.
I gave Myer a letter saying every thing good I could of this

picture and recommending it purchase of the state of
 Minn. Myer had become an old man and did not
 live long. I think the state bought the painting from his
 widow and that hangs in a room of the Wisconsin
 city. As a small boy I was very familiar with the faces
 of Red Tom and Sleepy Eye and I thought their portraits
 very good. Also that of Gov. Ramsey. If I could suggest

I would tell you some interesting incident which can
 hardly be said ^{to} have any historical significance inclu-
 ding an amusing escapade of one of Ramsey's party
 which is not printable. In Oct. 1845 when I was
 a little more than 3 years old father took relatives and
 myself in a one-eyed boat from Traverse to Levee -
 French. What was known as a Red skin canoe made of
 and buffalo hide and built without a scrap of metal.
 We did not see a house or a white man during the
 journey except the trading post of Joseph LaFramboise
 father-in-law ^{which had nothing but} ~~from which we saw~~ ^{from which we saw} Ft. Ridgely
 Father intended to camp at Swan Lake but there were
 Indian there and they had whiskey. Whiskey and Indians
 is a dangerous combination. They were friendly and I asked them to
 them but they urged him to drive us as far as possible.
 He kept on until it was dark. We had a very small tent.
 Next morning father left the tent and at one o'clock
 O'Neiron (another Indian name) look out here. I was
 wide awake at once jumped up and ran to the door
 and looked out. A buffalo cow and calf were

That is the earliest incident of my childhood story
which I distinctly remember. Probably it would be
indefinitely remembered of all of those who were
born within the space of that and other incidents of the re-
markable journey. It seems that the cow had been badly
wounded by Indians. I saw some another buffalo in
its range 40 years later in Montana.
That was the last year (1845) that buffalo appeared in that part
of Montana. If you can read what I have fearfully scribbled
and find anything worthy of preservation, don't put in any
language and in quotation marks, but copy your own
language. If could you I could say a lot in his
most intimate known life it would be the
under the very essence of indefinite.
With the highest respect esteem,

Yours faithfully
E. S. Dwyer

Post scriptum.

Perhaps before I can carry out your promise
to the nearest observatory you may visit San Diego?
Ask _____?

Brig Gen Eli Sandy Huggins
U.S. A. Retired. Born in Ill.
Enlisted in Co F 2^d Minn Infantry ^{Aug 1, 1842}
July 5, 1861. Mustered out in Sept 1865.
Was wounded in action.
Was appointed 2^d Lt 2^d U.S. Arty
Feb 23, 1866. Appointed Col 8th U.S.V.
Inf May 24 1898. Honorably mustered
out of Vol. Service March 6, 1899.
Was awarded the Cong. Medal
of Honor for most distinguished
gallantry in action against Indians
Apr 1, 1880.

Brig Gen U.S. Army Feb 22 1903
Retired " 28 "

Died in San Diego, Cal Oct 22^d, 1929.

Gen Huggins was a son of Alex.
Huggins, Missionary at Harene
des Sioux and before his death
was the last white survivor of
those present at the Treaty

NEW ARMY INSPECTOR-GENERAL

Col. E. L. Huggins Assumes a Vacant Office in Department of the Lakes.

Under orders from the war department, Col. Eli L. Huggins arrived here yesterday and assumed the duties of inspector-general of the department of the lakes. He at once began preparations for a general inspection of the department Saturday.



Col. Huggins came from Fort Sill, O. T., which post he had charge of subsequent to his retirement from the field during the war with Spain, when he was in command of the 8th United States infantry. The department of the lakes has been without an in-

COL. E. L. HUGGINS spector-general since last December, when Lieut.-Col. J. M. J. Sanno, then in charge of the work, was ordered to the Philippines with the 4th regiment. Col. Huggins is a graduate of the artillery school of 1867 at Fortress Monroe. From 1874 to the outbreak of the last war he was an aid on the staff of Maj.-Gen. Nelson A. Miles. He is a native of Illinois and fought his way to distinction from the ranks. In the regular army Col. Huggins ranks as major, but he is a colonel of volunteers.

Gen. Anderson left during the day for a visit to Fort Thomas, Kentucky.

Address before Minn. Historical Society, Jan. 9, 1928.

[By Brig. Gen. W. C. Brown]

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Minn. Historical Society:

I felt indeed both surprised and complimented at receiving the invitation to address your Society on the subject,

"On the Trail of the History of Traverse des Sioux."

I should have been less surprised perhaps if I had been assigned some subject in Military History, for my 41 years of active service (mostly in the Cavalry) has been in assisting in making rather than in recording that part of our history which falls to the lot of the Army.

Let me say at the outset that the Minnesotian best informed on Traverse des Sioux history is Judge Thos. Hughes of Mankato, the results of whose painstaking researches in the files of this Society constitute a monument to the splendid historical work which he has accomplished, and to which he has recently added a valuable contribution in the shape of his illustrated "Indian Chiefs of Southern Minnesota." He is now preparing a "History of the Trading Post, Mission Station and Treaty of Traverse des Sioux."

My interest in that old Trading Post may be understood when I say that, so far as I can ascertain, I was the 2nd white boy born in Nicollet County. That was in 1854 and Traverse des Sioux, (Ojibwa the Sioux called it) was my home until I went to West Point in 1873. My earliest recollections are of seeing Indians about my father's general trading store. In fact in June 1855, when the Winnebagoes were transferred to the Blue Earth Reservations, the whole tribe of 2000 camped at Traverse des Sioux en route south.

My mother has often told me of her narrow escape from being shot by the local Sioux Chief, Red Iron, who ordinarily was a good

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Indian, but on that occasion was drunk.

Indelibly impressed on my memory are the trains of Red River Carts which camped on the prairie just west of our home when they came down from Pembina, also the long caravans of Indians, often a half mile in length, with their pony travois carrying papoose, robes, food and household articles en route to the Crossing.

In the Sioux War of 1862 we were like every one else in that section, refugees until the trouble subsided. I can give positive testimony to the existence of the "Crossing" which gave ~~the~~ place its name of Crossing of the Sioux for it was "The Old Swimmin' Hole" of my youth, and many a time in low water I've waded the river, which there had a hard sand bottom, easy grades on both banks, and at low stages came just up to the arm pits.

The old Minn. River, our chief means of getting freight from St. Paul, was however not always dependable. In flood it was a mile wide & often we could see a half dozen steamboats on it at once, but the river had a habit of falling rapidly in summer and my parents, who came from west of Pittsburg in 1854, down the Ohio, and up the Mississippi, got as far up the Minn. ^{River} as Shakopee, where the boat could go no further and they had to complete their journey to Traverse des Sioux in an ox cart. However in low water freight was frequently brought up the river in flat bottomed *50 to 60' long + 10' to 12' wide with a crew of from 10 to 12 men* barges propelled partly by oars but mainly by men walking on "running boards" on each side of the barge each man with a long "set pole" with the upper end padded to fit the shoulder.

General Eli L. Huggins, who is still living, and whose father was one of the Traverse des Sioux missionaries, has written me an interesting *about July 20* account of the unheralded arrival in June 1850 of the sidewheeler Anthony Wayne, the first steamboat to reach Traverse des Sioux. Some of the mission families were taken on board and given a ride nearly to Mankato.

The exploit of the Anthony Wayne was however eclipsed some ten days later by the Nominee and she in turn by the Yankee, which ascended to near the present site of New Ulm.

The mails to St. Paul were (about 1855) carried by a tri-weekly which passed our door. stage/ ^ Later came the long talked of Minn. Valley R.R., and you can imagine my feelings as a small boy climbing to the roof of the house to see the smoke of the first locomotive come up the valley across the river some two miles away. A few weeks later when the track had been laid as far as St. Peter Station, my small brother and myself were given the amount of fare from St. Peter to Ottawa, we had the thrill of our first ride on a railway train. That which impressed me most was the terrific speed of some 20 miles per hour, and the hitherto unexperienced enjoyment of cushioned seats covered with soft, smooth red, plush, which seemed to me the very acme of luxury.

If one examines the maps of Minnesota Territory of 1840 or ~~there~~ thereabouts it will be found that only about a dozen villages, mostly trading posts are shown, and Traverse des Sioux is one of these. The population was never large, and in 1840 consisted of Provencallé's one family of 10 persons.

The trade route from St. Paul, the metropolis, to southern Minnesota was up the river, and ~~Traverse des Sioux~~ travellers bound west-
from Traverse des Sioux ward usually changed from water transportation to the land across the gentle, undulating and beautiful prairies to the west, dotted by innumerable small lakes, teeming with waterfowl.

The trade from the upper St. Peters R. destined for points on the Miss. R. below St. Paul crossed the river at Traverse des Sioux and then east thru the Big Woods as you will find by consulting the map in Mrs. Morris' very interesting "Old Rail Fence Corners."

As to the first settlers in Traverse des Sioux, Folwell, in

main "Minnesota the North Star State" p.39, tells us that "A Connecticut Yankee, Peter Pond by name, in 1774 established a Trading Post at Traverse des Sioux."

Vol IX Minn Hist Coll pg 8 says Trading Post Est in 1800

I have seen it stated somewhere that Louis Provencalle (or Le Blanc as he was often called) had a trading post there from about 1815 to ^{about} the time of the Treaty of 1851.

Coming now to the visits of distinguished explorers we know that Carver wintered among the Sioux somewhere up the St. Peters R. in the winter of 1766-67.

He was followed by Major S.H. Long, U.S. Topographical Engineers, whose geologist and historian, Keating, tells us in Vol. I, p. 335 that Long arrived at Traverse des Sioux July 14, 1823. They reported the river here fordable for horses. His expedition changed here from travel by canoes to travel by land. He refers to Traverse des Sioux as an old wintering camp of the traders. He remained there several hours being occupied in transporting the baggage of the land party to the left bank of the river. During their stay at this place Major Long found that the combined effect two calamities experienced during the previous twenty-four hours required a change in their mode of traveling.

The party, now only twenty-four, left the Crescent. They had 21 horses (2 disabled) 10 horses used as pack animals. The soldiers all walked and were accompanied by Joseph Renville. About Rivière aux Liards ^{Big} (Cottonwood) they met Wamendtanká (War Eagle) generally known by the name of Black Dog. He had 40 warriors. Keating (~~Long's geologist and historian~~) says: "a boat once floated from Lake Traverse into ^{the} St. Peter's."

The next distinguished visitor was G.W. Featherstonhaugh, U.S. Geologist, who made a trip up St. Peters R. in 1835 and in referring to

Traverse des Sioux says:

"It is an establishment of the American Fur Co. and a noted crossing place of the Sioux Indians in old times."

He, with his party ascended the St. Peters R. to its source, and a good reconnoissance map of it, of which I have a copy, accompanies the report. Among other things he tells us that Redwood R. takes its name from a tree painted red by the savages. Near the Chipewa R. they passed a broad coulee made by an immense herd of buffaloes, 15 or 20 thousand in number which crossed the river there.

Featherstonhaugh did not make a particularly favorable impression, and Folwell informs us that he gave not the slightest acknowledgement to his assistant, 1st Lieut. William W. Mather, 7th U.S. Inf. a graduate of West Point, Class of 1823, for services rendered. and from whose sketch in Cullom's Biographical Register we learn that Mather not only made the map, but he was a distinguished geologist as well.

Just here I might say that historical research workers when they wish to get at facts accurately and concisely stated concerning Officers of the Regular Army, they will do well to consult Cullom for West Point graduates, and Heitman's Historical Register for Army Officers in general.

The following summer (1836) the distinguished western traveller and artist, George Catlin visited Traverse des Sioux coming from St. Anthony en route to Red Pipe Stone Quarry, and again on his return journey northeast. On announcing at Provencalle's Trading Post his destination, the Sioux interposed most violent objections, ^{and} held Catlin and his companion (Mr. Wood) prisoners for part of a day.

In the 900-page illustrated volume issued by the Smithsonian Institution in 1885 entitled "George Catlin Indian Gallery" several



From the collections of the Minnesota Historical Society: Alexander G. Huggins and Family Papers.

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