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Topic: Lac qui Parle Mission.

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MINN. FREE
PRESS OF
ST. PETER
JUNE 9, 1858

"In the summer of 1841 a church was built a Lac qui Parle of unburnt brick. The first church bell ever used in Minnesota was purchased in 1842, and paid for, with avails of moccasins, which were furnished by the female members of the church at Lac qui Parle. The bell was persecuted and shot at by the heathen part of the village, but it did good service for many years, calling the children to school on week days, and the older people to meeting on the Sabbath. But it was cracked by ringing it one morning when the thermometer was thirty degrees below zero."

1841

1842

MINN. FREE
PRESS OF
ST. PETER
JUNE 30, 1858

"Mrs. Mary Renville was the first full blood Dakota who was received into the mission church formed at Lac qui Parle."

1858

M.H. 3-93

"On Aug. 1, 1849, the first election in Minn. territory was held to choose a delegate to Congress, and there were fourteen voters at Lac qui Parle."

1849

MONTEVIDEO
DAILY AMERICAN
JUNE 9, 1923

"The Lac qui Parle ^{mission} was one of the oldest mission stations among the Dakotas. A Presbyterian church of seven members was organized there by T. S. Williamson early in 1836, which in 1848 had increased to upwards of fifty members."

1836

1848

MONTEVIDEO
DAILY AMERICAN
JUNE 12, 1923

"On the 15th of September 1836, a Presbyterian church was organized at Lac qui Parle by T. S. Williamson, and Joseph Renville, a mixed blood of great influence, became a communicant. In the summer of 1841, Rev. Mr. Williamson and Rev. S. R. Riggs, Presbyterian missionaries at Lac qui Parle, built a church of unburnt brick that stood for thirteen years. It contained the first bell ever used in Minnesota. Now it is not generally known that this church stood across the Minnesota River in Chippewa county. Rev. Williamson and Riggs built this church at a point known for many years as Bushman's ferry. The outlines of the church can be partly seen at the present time. The cellar over which stood Rev. Williamson's house is still to be seen and I will here say that a large cottonwood tree has grown from its center."

1836

1841

article written by
M. E. Chamberlin

CONT'D.
MONTEVIDEO
DAILY AMERICAN
JUNE 12, 1923

article written by
M. C. Chamberlain.

A large stone used as a door step weighing about two thousand pounds remained on the spot for many years. When the son of Mr. Williamson came to visit the scenes of his childhood a few years ago, he had this stone shipped to his home in the sunny south. The first white couple married west of the Mississippi river was a Lac qui Parle. Hideon H. Pond was married to Sarah Poage, sister of the wife of Rev. T. S. Williamson. The marriage ceremony was performed by Rev. S. R. Riggs. The first wool manufactured in Minnesota was at Lac qui Parle. The wife of A. S. Huggins taught the Sioux girls to card wool and flock, and in the fall of 1838 to knit socks. The next year Mr. Huggins put up a loom and two Sioux women and two girls each made enough cloth to make themselves dresses. The first blacksmith forge in the state for working iron was put up at Lac qui Parle. 1838

"BY THE GREAT
WALL" PAGES
14-15-16

By
Isabelle
Riggs
Williamson

about 1840 "the expanding needs of the family as well as of the missionary life made a change imperative. Two new mission houses were built on the high bluffs of the Minnesota River. To the west was the ever beautiful lake, and on either hand the wonderful stretch of rolling prairie, of hill, and deep ravine, and river. The floors were carpetless and the furnishings plain, or that sometimes snow sifted in on the stairway and at the window ledges. Here was a great room where the Indians sat on one side; here was Stephen Riggs' desk, and on the medicine shelves were rows of bottles of salts and rhubarb and jalap. a big saddle-bag stove was in the center, and by the west window was Mrs. Riggs in her rocking chair. On the 3rd of March 1854--a pitiless storm was blowing out of the northwest with flurries of snow, when a call came for the boys in school to carry water. The Riggs house was on fire. In a few short hours only smoking cellar remained. The old adobe church at the foot of the hill offered shelter to the Riggs family. 1854

clapboarded another. It was a comfortable house, and one in which much preaching and teaching were done; moreover, when, in after-years, our better framed house was burned to the ground, this adobe church still stood for us to take refuge in. There we were living when Secretary S. B. Treat visited us in 1854, and in one corner of that, we fenced off with bed-quilts a little place for him to sleep. In this adobe house we first made trial of an instrument in song worship. Miss Lucy Spooner, afterward Mrs. Drake, took in her melodeon. But the Dakota voices fell so much below the instrument that she gave it up in despair. By all these things we remember the old adobe church at Lac qui Parle." 1854

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"The last two sabbaths we have assembled in our new chapel. Only one half is completed, though husband (Riggs) and Mr. Pettijohn have been very diligent and successful. You can scarcely imagine what a task building is in a land where there is such a scarcity of materials and men. During the summer great exertions were made to prepare lumber, and two men were employed about two months in sawing it with a whip-saw. The woods were searched and researched for two or three miles for suitable timber, and the result was about 3,200 feet - which is not enough - at an expense of \$150."

page 72.

"Not a solitary shrub, tree or flower rears its head near our (Riggs) dwelling, excepting those of nature's planting at no great distance on the opposite side of the St. Peter's, and a copse of plums in a dell on the left, and of scrub oak on the right. Back of us is the river hill which shelters us from the furious wind of the high prairie beyond.

Until last season we have had no enclosure, and now we have but a poor defense against the depredations of beasts, and still more lawless and savage men."

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"By and by came along the Third of March, 1854. 1854
The spring had opened early, the ground was bare of snow, and everything was dry. Our cellars had been in the habit of freezing, and to protect our potatoes and other vegetables we had been in the habit of stuffing hay under the floor all around, in the fall. This hay had not been removed, and was very dry. The cellar was dark, and a lighted candle was needed by those who went down for any purpose. The mother was preparing for the family dinner, and so had sent down the little boys Thomas and Henry in their seventh and fifth years respectfully, to bring her up potatoes. Through carelessness, and without thought, perhaps, they held the lighted candle too near the dried hay. It took fire immediately, and in a few seconds of time so filled the cellar with smoke, that the boys with some difficulty made their escape."

"There was no supply of water nearer than the river and spring run, down quite a hill. But every boy and girl were soon carrying water. The difficulty was to reach the fire with the water. The floor was flooded and a hole was cut through, but the fire had taken such a hold of the whole interior, that our little pails full of water were laughed at by the flames. The effort was now made to save something from the burning house. Some articles were carried into the other house which stood near by. But that also took fire, and both houses were soon consumed, with almost all they had contained. A few books were saved

and the chief part of Miss Spooner's wardrobe and bedding, her room being on the corner away from where the fire commenced. Before noon the fire-fight had done his work, and our mission houses were a mass of coals and ashes. Very little had been saved. The potatoes in the cellars were much burned and cooked, but underneath, a portion of them were found to be in a good state of preservation.

"The adobe church, that stood partly under the hill, was the only building that escaped. Thither we removed what few things we had saved"

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"Dr. Williamson's party embarked on the Fur Company's Mackinaw boat on the 22nd of June (1835); reached Traverse des Sioux on the 30th, where they took wagons and arrived at Lac qui Parle on the 9th of July. There on the north side of the Minnesota River and in sight of the 'Lake that speaks,' they established themselves as teachers of the religion of Jesus."

1835

THE WATSON
VOICE.

MAY 13, 1937

Dr. Williamson and Huggins, with Benville's valuable assistance built the first mission building, a one room log house, which could not have taken them very long, for we find that in the last part of the month of July 1835, Miss Sarah Poage, a sister of Mrs. Williamson taught the first English school ever taught in the Minnesota Valley, and possibly in Minnesota, to some Dakota men, some half breed girls, and some small boys, in that first building on the Lac qui Parle Indian mission site.

1835

"When Dr. Williamson reached Lac qui Parle the first time the Indian Village had a population of no more than four hundred persons"....

MAY 20, 1937.

----- Dr. Williamson had by 1837 improved his house so that it was now for practical purposes a two story building. On the ground floor were two rooms, Dr. Williamson's living room, and a much bigger room, with a larger

1837

page 139

fireplace, that was used for general assembly and school room where church services were also held.

On the second floor were three rooms, the largest one was occupied by Rev. Riggs and family for five years.

The adobe brick church was built in 1840; and it was the first church or school building erected in the Minnesota Valley. It was used for a school house and church and on it hung the first church bell that ever rang and tolled in the State of Minnesota. It had a good shingled roof and the walls were plastered inside with lime. It was ceiled up with boards and had a folding partition. Its demansion was twenty-four by thirty-six feet.

"In 1842 the Riggs family was transferred to work at the mission a 'Traverse des Sioux' 1842

"In 1846, the year that Joseph Remville died, Dr. T. S. Williamson was called to Fort Snelling to a mission and when he went there the Riggs family was called back from Traverse des Sioux to take care of the Lac qui Parle Mission. 1846

"James Pettijohn, then recently married accompanied the Riggs family on their return to Lac qui Parle and it was then that the Riggs and Pettijohn buildings located side by side on the top of the hill on the Lac qui Parle Indian Mission site were built."

"In 1837 a small grinding mill run by horse-power was operated by which corn and wheat were cracked for flour and that year Dr. Williamson reported five acres planted to corn, potatoes, flax, wheat and turnips. Huggins did two weeks of plowing in 1839 and some fifty acres were put under cultivation; most of it was planted to corn. 1837

Only a little distance west of the Riggs building site, right on the top of the steep east side of the ravine was the saw pit, a hand power saw mill, where all the lumber, not logs, used in building the mission buildings, was sawed.

JULY 1, 1937

THE WATSON
VOICE
JULY 1, 1937

"Here was sawed also all the lumber, floated in a raft down the Minnesota river, used in constructing the Hazelwood Mission buildings.

A whip saw is what we recognize as a cross-cut saw. Such saws are all from four to seven feet long, and were much used in pioneer days.

An excavation or pit was dug in the ground. A platform was built over the pit. Logs were hauled by yokes of oxen to the saw pit. A log was rolled onto the platform and sawed, guiding his end of the saw and also the dimensions of the board, plank, shingle or square timber, being sawed out of a log. A second man stood under the platform in the pit and tugged and shored on his end of the saw as if he liked it.

There were thirty-two hundred feet of whip-sawed lumber used in building the adobe church and that was only in constructing the floor and roof. The church walls were of bricks fashioned out of native clay by Indian women and baked in the sun. Piles of those bricks were made and baked in the wooded ravines.

"The main entrance of the church was on the southeast end.

"Dr. Williamson found a large flat stone, probably limestone, and determined to have it for his hearth stone. It took several ox teams and men to haul it into position. After which the house was built around it."

"As \$400 was all that was allotted to start the mission, as much food as possible was to be grown and raised. Dr. Williamson planted wheat, harvested it with a sickle, thrashed it with a flail. He made a grist mill and ground flour. The flour was what we call Graham and made very good bread when sifted. The virgin soil was very rich and all kinds of vegetables grew well."

Reminiscences
of Mary
Huggins
Herlinger.
P. 84
CHAPTER 10

Reminiscences

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P. 88

CONT'D

"Dr. Williamson gave the Indians garden seeds, and the industrious ones soon had vegetables aplenty."

P: 95

P:

"I well remember a small log house called the loom house. It was no doubt the first house built on the mission ground."

P: 96.

..... "Mr. Renville was quite old, when I remember him. Some one carried a large chair and set it beside the pulpit stand. Father (HUGGINS) had another chair near and led the singing."

"When I was able to sit in a chair a small one was carried for me. The Indians sat on long benches."

P: 97

"When there were many scholars the church was also the school room."

"But much of the year men women and children were taught in the homes. One or two or three just as they happened to come in."

~~"Mrs. Williamson had a little boy in October 1835 born in the log cabin with dirt floor. In 1837 March 7th Eliza Wilson Huggins was born and 1839 Sept. 18th I came on the scene."~~

P: 141

"In the year 1849 when Mary Huggins returned to Lac qui Parle everything was changed. The log houses were gone, also the adobe church. A little higher up the hill two neat frame houses stood, and near where the old church was, a frame building now stood with a bell suspended above it."

P: 142.

... "I could not find the location of the old house and brother Amos showed it to me. I stood sadly and gazed at the hole in the ground, he told me was the old cellar. It was all grown up with nettles, It seemed longer since I had lived there, than 20 years des now, and I was just three years."

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CONT'D.

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"Why did not the Mission have a well? They went some distance to the spring." Now that they had moved up on the hill it was quite a hardship to bring water up the steep hill. The hill was so steep that steps were made in it in two places. One place having six steps, the other three. The canyon was dark, as both sides were over hung with trees, the path was narrow. at the spring a barrel had been sunk.

THE WESTERN
GUARD OF
MADISON, MINN.
4/15/32

"The hearth stone of the Lac qui Parle mission, a stone about four feet wide, eight feet long, and eight inches thick:---Is now located at Indian Mission School at Santee, Nebraska. To which it was shipped by Rev. Alfred L. Riggs, son of Stephen R. Riggs.-----

-----The hearthstone of the mission house at Lac qui Parle had a piece broken off of it for a door step. The larger part of the stone is here at Santee.-----

-----The marker at Lac qui Parle is near the site of the old chapel, and the mission house was right across the road from there.---Alfred Riggs---in the fall of 1880---was able to locate the site of the log house---On top of the hill two cottonwoods grow out of the old cellar." 1880

Dr. Williamson
in a letter to
Hudson W. Pond.
Feb. 24, 1840

POND'S
PAPERS.✓

"The devil is very industrious about here this winter. The boys have been on every occasion carving carving obscene figures on the benches and with coals marking them on the walls. yesterday forenoon in time of meeting Wayamni's son with others like him killed our white heifer.".... 1840 ✓

"The Wicked one does not confine his operations to the Dakotas. I think he has assailed me more during the past winter than ever before. I have not for 20 years been so much tempted to anger + fretfulness. I am assailed by passions which I have long since thought subdued till I am ready to feel discouraged. Sometimes tempted to think I ought to leave here." 1840 ✓

67
53

✓
Letter of
T. S. WILLIAMSON
TO SAMUEL
POND [?] I
SEPT. 23, 1840
POND'S
PAPERS.

"Our clock seems to be nearly worn out if you should be sending to your friends in Connecticut for any thing and could get one of Eli Remzi [?] clocks to fit my case I would be glad to pay you the worth of it for it. The case weights & face of mine are I suppose as good as they ever were. The face measures $11\frac{1}{2}$ by $12\frac{1}{2}$ inches & it is just $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches between the pillars which support the face.

DEC. 27, 1841

.... "We have been disappointed in getting nails to finish our meeting house we have the floor laid & more than half the ceiling done Dr. W I believe has written to you to buy five pounds of sixpenny nails & send up by the french men if they will bring them Mr. Denville has said he would speak to the men to fetch up ten pounds but as five pounds will be enough to finish our ceiling I think you had better not ask them to bring more than five or six pounds."

A
P. 796

"The little old stove which you used to have in your room is the one we have in the meeting house & it seems to keep it quite as warm as it ought to be any weather we have had yet."

"We have fixed our mill to go by bands instead of ropes & we have enlarged the walk & we drive round the other way from what we used to do & it goes much better than it did so we grind more at a time than we used to and do not have to grind so often. We have done no grinding for something like two months It is easier to grind two bushels now than it was to grind one when the mill run with ropes.

Letter of
A. H. Nuggins
to L. W.
Pond.
Mar. 31, 1844.
POND'S
PAPERS

.... "The water is high here now it comes up into the walk of the mill a little & it covers some half an acre of our field yesterday we were hauling a little hay The water was about belly deep to the horses over a great part of the meadow we left a stack & a half in the water."

" I (HUGGINS) hope to commence ploughing in a few days for wheat & peas. We have but one ox & Coulin is going to take him down to Traverse & old Kate is as lazy as old Roan used to be. Still I hope I shall get along pretty well ploughing. The ground I had in Barley last year I sowed in Rye last fall it looks green now but the River is still rising & one foot more will bring it over it. Most likely it will be killed. Some days ago I thought our cattle were reduce^d to four. But after a few days absence Tapy and one yearling came home & the little Queen had a calf so we^{re} still have seven. And we have 3 hens & one crower."

A. HUGGINS
TO S.W.
POND
JAN. 3, 1845

POND'S
PAPERS.

JONAS PETTICORN
TO S.W.
POND.
MAY 16, 1846

POND'S
PAPERS.

" We have got our church weather boarded on three squares. the south end is plastered & white washed."

1845

" Owing to one backset and another we are not advanced as far with our work as is desirable. We got our wheat, oats, and barley in, in very good time. We have our corn, and part of our potatoes to plant yet. We made an addition to the farm, of something near an acre. Our pasture fence is still unclosed, but I think we have nearly rail and poles enough cut to enclose it."

1846

T.S. WILLIAMSON
TO S.W. POND
JULY 21, 1846

POND'S
PAPERS

" About a month ago on Sabbath. Tunivaniteton came here on the sabbath slightly intoxicated and with a stick set himself to breaking the meeting house windows. After he had broken 28 panes I stopped him by shoving him over a time or two and taking his stick. This was what I suppose he wanted me to do and so he went and got his gun and shot two calves..."

1846

JONAS PETTIJOHN
TO S.W. POND
Nov. 26, 1847

... "We are making preparations, and calculations for new houses. Mr. Riggs says they have enough boards to enclose our houses; they are now making shingles. I mean Riggs and Dresser by they. We are going to build separate houses, each one of us have drawn a plot for a house to suit ourselves. I have not got ours exactly as I want it, but perhaps it is as near perfect as I shall be able to get it."

Nov. 30,
1847

"Yesterday the Indians were out and killed 6 buffalo. Today they are feasting, singing etc."

DEC. 8
1847

... "Buffalo are plenty not far off. Last Saturday Mr. Riggs and I were out to where the Indians had just killed some 12 or 15. We went hoping to get some, but we were too late in getting there."

RIGGS TO
S.W. POND
DEC. 10, 1847

... "Between two and three weeks since, one of our cows, which was standing tied in the stable yard, was found in the morning with an arrow in her side. It had gone in about nine inches and the iron remained. We have not been able to learn who did it. The cow is living and for aught we can see is likely to do well -- that is to recover. Mr. Pettijohn was milking her -- and has been robbed of the milk in consequence."

"There are plenty of buffalo now within ten miles of this place. While the Indians remained here they went out twice and killed the first time six and the next 14 or 15 buffalo."

PETTISOHN TO
 G.H. POND
 JAN. 11, 1848
 POND'S
 PAPERS

"... I wrote a short letter to your brother but it had
 been written and sealed up several days before leaving here
 after it was sealed our (PETTISOHN'S) babe was taken sick, and in
 less than 3 days his sickness terminated in death. We suppose
 his complaint was inflammation of the bowels or stomach.
 Thus you learn that our dear babe is gone. He is gone, but
 we feel confident that he is not lost. He is taken from us,
 but we believe he is far, very far better taken care of, than
 we could possibly have taken care of him."....

"We are making preparations for building next summer.
 I am now engaged in the timber for our frames. Our saw-
 ing is the heaviest part of the job, or at least we dread it
 more than any other. We have so many things to dis-
 courage us in our labors as missionaries, and so few
 to encourage us, that I feel sometimes almost ready
 to give up in deep all hope of doing any good, but such
 feelings should not be cherished by any of us."....

RIGGS TO
 G.H. POND
 FEB. 25, 1848
 POND'S
 PAPERS

.... "I thank you for your kind offer of trying to
 procure a ham for us. On further reflection I suppose
 it will be out of the question for us to get a man to come
 up here before Mr. Libley's boat comes up in the spring.
 Before that time I hope, if we are prospered, our frames
 will be up. If we could then get an inside house
 carpenter we should like it. Perhaps you will have
 an opportunity of inquiring if a Mr. Hall, who was
 up at Lafromboise a few years ago, would come up
 for, say \$1.50 per day. We should hardly like to
 pay his time more than one way. He is about St. Paul's,
 or was last summer, and wished to come up with
 me Leod last fall -- is said to be a pretty good
 carpenter."

RIGGS TO
 G.H. POND
 APR. 3, 1848

"I do not know whether you and your family
 value them or not but I will take the liberty of
 sending you down a few dried buffalo tongues."

RIGGS TO
G.H. POND
APR. 8, 1848
POND'S
PAPERS

"A week ago Tunwanduta Marpiya wicapta's son was shot by Chippewas, they say. But it was done on the other side of the St. Peters and they had only shot in their guns. Some other circumstances make it seem to me not very probable that they were Chippewas. He says there were two of them and he shot one. He is in a fair way to recover if a man can get well with 40 pieces of lead in him."

PETTIJOHN
TO S.W. POND
SEPT. 1, 1848
POND'S
PAPERS

"... This day we have moved into our new house. It is small, but we hope to find it more comfortable than the log cabins were.

"Our wheat crop was not very good. Our potatoes will probably amount to 700 or 800 bushels."

PETTIJOHN
TO S.W. POND
MAR. 10, 1849.
POND'S
PAPERS.

"... The Indians have not troubled us very much, till quite lately. Some evil disposed ones have been trying to kill some of our cattle. Last Sabbath some one shot an arrow into our old white cow, but did not kill her, and last night they tried their hands again; they shot two arrows into her, last and one into a yearling calf. The calf is not dangerously wounded, being shot through the back of the neck. The cow we think will probably die. We will feel the loss of the cow at this time a good deal."....

"I have not done much this winter but cut and haul wood, feed, &c. I have however made a few rails and hauled our old ones from around our old field up on the prairie where we broke last summer, and calculate to plant this spring. We have about 7 acres. I think it will be a beautiful field."

"Mr. Adams, and I are trying to saw some boards but as we are neither of ^{hus} sawyers, we make it go rather slowly."

"We need a good deal lumber yet to complete our houses + Mr. Adams wants some to put some partitions in the back room of the church to make a dwelling house of it."

Mar 19

RIGGS TO
S.W. POND
JULY 16, 1849
POND'S
PAPERS.

Since the founding of the church the number to this date received into the church was 54. The number of children baptized was 100.

"We send down Bird with the Polls, a very important business you know. Fourteen votes were given in this Precinct. They must be very valuable for they will cost more than \$2 each."

"Last Sabbath the Indians killed a cow for us..."

PETTITJOHN
TO S.W. POND
JULY 28-31
and AUG. 2
1849

POND'S
PAPERS.

"We just finished our wheat yesterday. Have only 101 doz. If we don't have rain soon, we can't expect to have more than a half crop of potatoes. Have been making some hay, have got up 9 or 10 tons. Our houses are yet unfinished, and probably will be for a year yet. I am sure ours will be."

"I have been talking about digging a well, but have not got at it yet, and perhaps will not before winter."

"Our Election cam^[e] off yesterday in a very orderly & respectable manner. The vote here was almost a uniform one. It was as follows.

N. H. Sibley for Congress	14
M. McLeod for Council	13
G. H. Pond for Representative	13
Alises Bailey	12
Jonas Pettijohn	1

PETTITJOHN
TO S.W. POND
NOV. 13, 1849

"We have such fine weather that it looks as tho we were in a country where there is no winter. This evening at sunset the thermometer was up to 62. We have been sawing some of late, to get lumber to finish off our houses when we can."

M.H. 16:137

he built a stable:---In Dec. 1836, the missionaries built a second log cabin, thirty feet long, twenty feet wide, and a story and a half high. The lower floor was divided into two rooms and a good shingle roof covered the whole; this did not, however, prevent the snow from drifting through the cracks in the upper walls.---In 1841 work was begun on the brick church, which was constructed with the help of two young Sioux.

1836

1841

M.H. 21:434

435

"During the past summer (1940) the site of the old Lac qui Parle Mission, now included in the Chippewa-Lac qui Parle State Park on the upper Minnesota River near Montevideo and Watson, was the scene of a successful archaeological investigation. Among the sites excavated were those of the mission chapel and of the houses of two missionaries, Stephen R. Riggs and Alexander Huggins. Unfortunately the stones used in the foundation and cellar walls of Riggs' house were removed many years ago; nevertheless by careful digging the cellar area was determined. The location of the log cabin occupied by Huggins, a lay helper and farmer connected with the mission, proved easier to outline, and many material remains were found on the site. Little or no evidence was found of the site of the house of Dr. Thomas S. Williamson, who established the mission in 1835. Workers were led to believe that the site was obliterated when a road was built over it more than half a century ago. The site of the chapel was accurately determined, and it is hoped in time that this building will be reconstructed and used as a museum. There, among other things, can be displayed the objects unearthed during the past season. Included are such items as a leather heel with the cobbler's pegs showing through, a beaver spear, a clay marble, a corved

1940

1940

bone handle of an awl, bone pendants, a penny dated 1833, bits of slate pencils, a piece of a slate on which appears the word 'Wapanton', and quantities of china, crockery, and glass fragments. The excavations at Lac qui Parle were conducted by the Minnesota division of state parks, under the sponsorship of the Chippewa County Historical Society, with labor supplied by a local WPA agency. The results of the work on this site provide new information about a frontier Presbyterian mission to the Minnesota Sioux and indicate that the restoration of some of the buildings will be worthwhile.

Richard R. Sackett."

REPORT OF THE
CHIPPEWA MISSION
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
INVESTIGATION
BY THE
MINN. HIST.
RECORDS
SURVEY

" From published documentary sources and the archaeological investigation at the Sioux mission station, it is now possible to determine the construction of the various buildings. The mission chapel was constructed of unburnt brick (adobe) on a limestone and boulder foundation 36' 6" x 25', held together with native clay. A year after its erection it became necessary to plaster it with lime on the inside and cover it with clapboard on the outside, for the Minnesota winters and rainy seasons were hard on a type of construction better suited to the climate of the southwest. The building was roofed with ash shingles manufactured by hand under great difficulties."

The site of the Lac qui Parle Mission is about nine miles northwest of Montevideo and only a short distance from the village of Watson, is on the east bank of the Minnesota River near the junction with the Lac qui Parle River.

In July 1835 the Sioux mission station at

1940

1835

Lac Qui Parle was founded by Thomas Smith Williamson and Alexander Huggins. Its establishment was supported by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions as one of several stations that constituted the Dakota mission. The missionaries were invited to settle in the Lac Qui Parle area by Joseph Denville, a trader of mixed French and Indian descent.

Within a year after the arrival of Williamson at Lac Qui Parle a church was organized with six native members. In 1837 the congregation consisted of seven Dakotas, besides half-breeds and whites. Within five years Williamson had enrolled forty nine persons with Alexander S. Huggins and Joseph Denville as ruling elders. In June 1837, Stephen R. Riggs and his wife, Mary, natives of New England, joined the mission workers. Both had been trained as missionaries.

During the entire life of the station at Lac Qui Parle the members occupied very modest quarters. Soon after the arrival of the missionaries at the stockade a large log house was built consisting of five rooms. It furnished a home for the three mission families of Thomas S. Williamson, Stephen R. Riggs, and Gideon H. Pond. One room was both church and school. In the fall of 1835 Huggins built, with the help of Williamson, a simple log cabin situated about three-quarters of a mile from the stockade and about 50 feet to the right of where the chapel was to be erected six years later.

"In December, 1836, the missionaries built a second log cabin, thirty feet long, twenty feet wide, and a story and a half high. The lower floor was divided into two rooms and a good shingle roof covered the whole. This did not, however, prevent the snow from drifting through the cracks in the upper walls. The room under the roof was the home of Riggs and his wife for some years after their arrival. 1836

The schoolroom in Williamson's log house became too crowded for his religious gatherings, so the missionaries were determined to build a church for the settlement. The Dakota women volunteered to aid and did so by cutting out the place in the sidehill where the new chapel was to stand. Building materials were not abundant nor easily obtained, so at the suggestion of Hugging it was decided to construct it of adobe brick. The bricks were made, dried in the sun, and laid into walls. Boards were sawed with a whipsaw and the shingles cut from ash trees. The heavy Minnesota rains washed the sides of the chapel, and it became necessary to plaster the inside walls and clapboard the outside. It had a comfortable interior, and one in which much teaching and preaching was done. Moreover, in after years when the frame house of the Riggs family burned to the ground, this adobe building provided a refuge for them.

These people are to be admired for their willingness to continue working under the difficulties which presented themselves at every turn. "You can scarcely imagine what a task building is in a land where building materials and men are such a scarcity. During the summer, great exertions were made to prepare lumber, and two men were employed about two months in sawing it with a whipsaw. The woods were searched and researched for two or more miles for suitable timber and the result was about 300 feet which was not enough at the expense of \$150.00".

The hearthstone from the fireplace in this mission building is preserved at the Indian mission school at Santee, Nebraska. The stone was taken to Santee in 1880 by Alfred F. Riggs, a son of Stephen R. Riggs. 1880

During the occupancy of the mission station, Jonas Pettijohn helped with the agricultural and mechanical tasks for short periods. Riggs in 1842, 1842 with the assistance of the other mission workers, erected two dwellings, one for his own family and as he afterwards wrote, "one for Mr. Jonas Pettijohn's family -- comfortable except that the snow would drift in through the ash shingles. Some of the older children can perhaps remember times when there was more snow inside than outside. We were upon the hill, not under it where Dr. Williamson and Mr. Huggins had built a dozen years before, and consequently the winter winds were fiercer, though we all thought the summers were pleasanter." The buildings

were plain and snug and consisted of a sitting room, kitchen, and two bedrooms, with just enough attic space for an additional two rooms if needed.

Riggs and his wife secured a bell for the adobe chapel. Mrs. Riggs wrote to her mother in 1846: 1846
"You will, I think, feel gratified to know that there are some things pleasant and encouraging here, notwithstanding the discouragements. The sound of the church going bell is heard here --- the bell which we purchased with the avails of moccasins donated by the church members."

The mission was described by a traveler who visited it in the summer of 1837 as follows: 1837
"Both the Fort and Dr. Williamson's premises are situated under the hills; so that, being overtopped by them, both places are quite invisible from the main road. Both establishments are situated on the east side of the River of St. Peter's. The Indians, among whom the Doctor carries on his missionary operations, have their village and farms on the opposite side. The scenery presented to view from these places is rather indifferent. As little more than high hills on one side and lofty timber on the other can be seen, offers but limited space for the exercise of the optical organs. This residence here being scarcely yet twelve months, their progress in agriculture is but little. They have, however, opened a small farm which seems to thrive well."

Williamson and Huggins labored at this mission for more than ten years before Williamson moved to Kaposia and Huggins to Traverse des Sioux. Gideon H. Pond lived here in 1836 to 1836

1839. Riggs and his young bride joined the mission in 1837, and, save for a period of three years spent at Traverse des Sioux, remained there until the station was abandoned in 1854. Jonas Pettijohn and John W. Kirker helped with the agricultural and mechanical tasks for short periods; Robert Hopkins and his wife were missionaries there in 1843-44; Fanny Huggins and Mary Spooner served as teachers after the marriage of Sarah Poage to Hideon H. Pond; Moses W. Adams assisted Riggs from 1848 to 1853.

after the signing of the Sioux treaties of 1851, which included provisions for an Indian educational program, letters went East from Lac Qui Parle asking for plans for boarding school buildings and suggesting that teachers be sent as soon as the buildings were completed. Plans to remodel the mission station to fit the terms of the treaties of 1851 were never realized. Almost three years passed and the government continued to neglect the educational provisions of the treaty. The American Board finally decided to wait no longer and was about to put the plans at Lac qui Parle in operation when, on March 3, 1854, Riggs' house caught fire and was totally destroyed. after some consideration, it was decided to abandon the station and remove the workers to a point near Yellow Medicine, where in the fall of the same year, the Hazelwood, or New Hope mission, was established.

The mission area consists of six distinct sites, 1. The adobe chapel. 2. The Williamson house. 3. The Huggins house. 4. The Riggs house. 5. The Pettijohn house. 6. The burial place of seven or eight Christian Indians. The existence of these sites had been confirmed by cursory inspection, and upon undertaking the present investigation it was decided to start with the site of the chapel.

THE ADOBE CHAPEL SITE.

The chapel was the largest and most important of the five buildings. This site was pointed out to us by local residents to whom it has long been familiar. Although we found it covered with growing timber and heavy underbrush it was evident that the chapel yard had originally been cut into the side of the hill, or knoll, which many years ago was divided by a road leading to Bushman's bridge across the Minnesota River.

The first two days of the investigation were spent in cutting the timber and brush which consisted of oak, elm, sumac, wild plum, and great quantities of wild grape vines.

On the third day, when the first twenty-foot strip had been cleared and work had been started on the second, the cutting was halted to investigate an unusual formation of three boulders in the embankment of the road. On first examination there appeared a possibility that the boulders could have fallen into the position in which we found them, but closer examination showed that this was not probable.

To satisfy ourselves we started excavations. The top stone, when fully exposed, proved to be a boulder weighing about 200 pounds, while the

two supporting stones were smaller.

Adjoining the larger boulder at the same level we uncovered a section of limestone held together with a dry masonry consisting of the hard clay typical of the area. This discovery proved to us that we had located a portion of the chapel foundation. We then excavated along the line of the foundation in a northeast direction to a point 17 feet 9 inches distant, where all evidence of it disappeared. Mistaking this for the end of the original wall and possibly a corner, we returned to the point of discovery, and commenced trenching in a northwest direction. Here we unearthed the foundation of the southwest wall. A depression in this foundation, indicating a door entrance, showed us that this was the front of the old building. Continued operations uncovered the other two walls. The northwest wall measured 36 feet 6 inches. Because the opposite wall, as already stated, measured only 17 feet 9 inches, it is assumed that shortly after the chapel was abandoned, Henry Bushman, the ferryman, utilized the stone of the missing portion in building the fireplace and chimney for his own cabin, some hundred feet away.

Before we began our excavations, the entire chapel site was overlaid with a deposit of from 8 to 23 inches of rich black topsoil from decayed vegetation and from the washing of the side-hill during rainy seasons and spring thaws. The northeast wall lay under the heaviest of the deposit, and although protected more than the opposite wall it was in poor condition.

after clearing the deposits from the top of

the foundation wall, it was necessary to excavate four feet of earth outside the outer wall and to remove the entire center section within the foundation to the bottom of the foundation level or base. By this time the building was completely outlined, with features of its construction clearly discernible.

It was while removing the center fill that most of the material finds were brought to light. The small amount of such material found at the site is explained by the fact that it was a place of worship and was not occupied as living quarters until March 1854 when the Riggs house was destroyed by fire. This occupancy was for a short time only, as the mission was abandoned the same year. 1854

From contemporary accounts of the mission station, we had learned of many items to look for while excavating, and the absence of certain things we had hoped to find was disappointing. For example, when Williamson built his log house, he took a fancy to a large flat limestone which had been found in the vicinity. Before any portions of it was broken off it weighed well over a ton. It was about eight feet square, filling a full quarter of the family room and supporting the cook stove. What interested us was that when the house was torn down a fragment of this stone was taken for the doorstep of the chapel building. Since it was not found at the completion of the work, we assumed that it had been carried away at a later date to be used in the foundation of some nearby farm buildings.

The material excavated from the site of the

Mission chapel is as follows. 1 leather heel, - 1 knife (wooden handle - 5 pieces), - 1 beaver spear, - 1 trunk handle, - 1 metal bar (unidentified), - 1 file (fragment), - 1 door latch, - 1 trunk strap (fragment), - 1 gun breech, - 1 tea spout (fragment), - 1 stove poker, - 1 push rod (fragment), - 3 pieces of wood flooring - 1 clay marble - 39 china fragments, - 97 glass fragments, - 39 nails, - 6 crockery fragments, - 44 pieces of tinware, - 9 dish fragments, - 1 bottle top.

THE RIGGS AND PETTIJOHN HOUSE SITES.

Next in importance among the sites where those of the houses of Stephen R. Riggs and Jonas Pettijohn, which had been built not far apart at the top of the hill overlooking the mission chapel. It was a beautiful location with a view of the whole valley.

This site, as were the others, was marked by crude wooden signs, telling a story of the persons who had years before occupied the dwellings. The markers had been erected in 1935 at the time of the mission centennial by the patrolman in charge of the park.

No indications of any sort were visible to help us determine a point of beginning, but as the top of the hill was flat and did not cover too great an area it was decided to begin at the western edge and proceed east across the site, knowing we would encounter the Riggs foundation first. From preliminary research it was known that the Riggs cabin contained a cellar while the Pettijohn home did not. This was our clue in identifying the finds as they came to light. A series of trenches were set running west to east, north to south and diagonally.

1935

across the area. These were excavated to a depth of 3 feet without success.

3 A
.P796

✓ Diaries + Letters of Hideon H. Pond.

(M.H. 18:94)

✓ The Watson Voice Apr. 22 - July 1, 1937

* SB482
.M6M62
1932

✓ Minn. Dept. of Conservation.
Minn. State Parks + Monuments.

* CD3317
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No. 12

✓ Minn. Hist. Records Survey Project.
Inventory of county archives of Minn.
Chippewa county No. 12

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✓ Ponds, Hideon H. } Letters + Papers — 6 Boxes 9 Vol.
Samuel W. }

A_H891

✓ Huggins, Alexander H. Papers — 18 Items

A
.M165

✓ Riggs, Stephen R. Papers — 2 Boxes 9 Vol.

CE 83.86
.M47

✓ Riggs, Stephen R. — 19 Nos.

B 16
.M56 e

✓ Riggs, Stephen R. Correspondence — 12 Boxes
Historical Society correspondence

A
.R569
Box 1-2

✓ Riggs, Stephen R. Papers — 2 Boxes 1 Vol.
most see letters were in French.

A
.W732

✓ Riggs, Stephen R. Papers — 1 Box 1 Vol.

FCT
.R569

✓ Riggs, Stephen R. — 10 VOLS.

* E99
.D1P78P

✓ Two Volunteer Missionaries among the Dakotas,
G.H. Pond.

* F606
.S84

✓ Personal Recollections — J.H. Stevens

{ "H. Pond" J.H. Williamson
Could not find anything on him.

A
.P796

✓ Letter of Alexander Huggins of Jan. 18, 1838, from the mission house describes Renwick's services in translating the bible into Sioux. (M.H. 4:416)

M.H.S.
3:188-91

✓ ~~Thomas S. Williamson's "Nepelukneedoota" The first male Dakota convert to Christianity. (M.H. 4:143)~~

*F606
.F69

✓ A sketch of Steven R. Riggs a missionary to the Sioux by W. W. Folsell. (M.H. 4:427)

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.H69
mus.

✓ ~~"Sketch of Mission Indians" by Frederick W. Hodge. page 27 (M.H. 4:143)~~

M.H.
1:321

✓ Letter from Stephen R. Riggs to S. S. Babcock on Nov. 19, 1850. (M.H. 1:327)

BV 3415
.W6

✓ "By the Great Wall" by Isabella Riggs Williams. (M.H. 1:396)

*E99
.D1R5

✓ "Mary + I" or "Forty years with the Sioux" by Stephen Riggs (M.H. 2:483)

Newspaper

✓ "Dakota Portraits" by Stephen Riggs in the Minnesota Free Press of St. Peter, Jan. 27 - July 14, 1858. (M.H. 2:481)

*E99
.D1W7b

✓ "John P. Williamson, a Brother of the Sioux" by Winifred W. Barton.

✓ Letters of Jonas Pettijohn. (M.H. 3:85)

✓ Papers of Rev. Moses N. Adams (M.H. 3:522)

✓ "History of Lac qui Parle + Chippewa Counties by M. C. Chamberlain in Montevideo Daily American June 4 - June 25, 1923 (M.H. 5:243)

- ✓ A sketch of Joseph Menzies by Edward D. Neill.
- * F612
.C46M9 ✓ History of Chippewa & Lac qui Parle counties by T. R. Mayer
& O. H. Dale 2 vols.
- ✓ Photostats of 6th U. S. Census in 1840 for LqP. (M.H. 7:83)
- In a speech at Fort Ridgely, Aug. 22, 1924 J. F. Jacobson
spoke on "The Old Lac qui Parle Mission".
Brown County Journal.
- ✓ McLeod's Diary Vol. 4: 351-439 By George McLeod
- ✓ The Watson Voice Apr. 22, 1937 John J. Ogen.
- * F606
.M663r.
C.2 ✓ "Indian Missions in Minnesota" by Miss Nute in
Minnesota Alumni Weekly.
Jan 9 - May 28, 1932
- Minn
Medicine
* R11
.M6 ✓ Letters of Dr. J. S. Williamson telling of his work
at LqP. mission in 1845-1846.
- ✓ "The LqP. Mission Hearth Stone" in the Apr. 15, 1932
Western Guard of Madison.
- * F607
.B85re ✓ "Red River Trail" by Miss Ethel C. Brill.
(M.H. 11:101)
- FE 99
.D1K4 ✓ Reminiscences of Mrs. Mary Huggins Kerlinger
(M.H. 11:94)
- * F612
.C49W3
.09 ✓ "Early History of LqP." pamphlet Watson Community
Pioneer by J. J. Ogen.
(M.H. 13)
- * F601.5
.M66
C. ref ✓ Essay on LqP. Mission by Dr. Hates.
(M.H. 17:61)

Diary of Peter Hamrick July 8, 1937.

A
-G241

"Outline of a Plan for Civilizing the Dakotas" Stephen Rapp.

nothing
at all.

^{nothing very interesting}
"1st of July at L.P. Mission" is in the Montevideo American
of June 30, 1939 (M.H. #20)

newspaper
room

Dawson Sentinel of Jan. 20, 1939. (M.H. #20)

*R11
.M6

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OCT. & NOV. ISSUES OF MINNESOTA MEDICINE by Dr. Arthur L. Hamilton

V:23
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Article on Page 259, Vol 2.
History of Minn. (Folwell, author.)

*F612
.C48H5

Report of the Chippewa Mission Archeological
Investigation
(Minn. Hist. Records Survey)

Some Early Mission Bells. M.H. 28 - 375

Pictures

Picture of Mary and Stephen Riggs. Frontispiece of book
"Mary and I" by Stephen R. Riggs.

Picture of Rev. Samuel Hopkins in Pond's Papers. * A p796
Box #6.

Pictures of S. W. Pond, L. H. Pond, Stephen R. Riggs, and
Theodore S. Williamson are on page 50. in the book.
"Personal Recollections of Minnesota and its People" by
J. H. Stevens.

Picture of John P. Williamson on frontispiece of the book,
"John P. Williamson A Brother to the Slave" by
Winifred Barton.

Picture of J. S. Williamson in Minn. History Bulletin.
16:137

Picture of S. R. Riggs in Minn. History Bulletin 16:137

Pictures of the Chapel site on pages 21-25 "Report of the
Chippewa Mission Archaeological Investigation" by the
Historical Records Survey.

Diagram of the Chapel site. on page 23 in the above book.

Maps, charts.

A map of Lac qui Parle is found on page 46 of the book "J. P. Williamson a Brother of the Sioux", by Winifred Barton.

A map of Lac qui Parle mission is to be found on page 8 of the book "Report of the Chippewa mission archaeological investigation". By the Minn. Hist. Records Survey.
