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THE "FREE ROAD": INDIGENOUS TRAVEL AND RIGHTS OF PASSAGE ON THE MISSOURI RIVER

by

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A.B., English, Harvard College, 2004
M.A., History, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Well before Lewis and Clark, Native Americans traveled on the Missouri River, crossing it to visit friends and family members, shipping supplies downriver, and conducting visitors toward their villages. Their mobility on the upper Missouri River, an imposing and dangerous continental divide, granted them the power to define rights of passage across the midcontinent. Following the collapse of New Cahokia, Arikara and Mandan settlers pressed up the river valley and established expansive transportation and communication networks that stretched across the Missouri watershed. By 1650 their villages were influential centers of Native North America and places where river crossings held not only economic costs but also political and religious meanings. A century later, equestrianism had revolutionized indigenous travel in the Plains and transformed how Native peoples retrieved power from the Missouri corridor. Cottonwood became an essential fuel source, and fording sites in the river

valley gained strategic importance. In the late eighteenth century, the Lakota people asserted their new control of the Great Plains by freely crossing the Missouri. Even as equestrianism was accelerating indigenous networks in the Missouri watershed, Spanish and American officials were inviting Native leaders to make long trips downriver to St. Louis—voyages that tested indigenous protocols of border crossing. The expansion of the American fur trade in the 1820s threatened indigenous mobility networks on the upper Missouri River and led to the introduction of epidemics, including the devastating smallpox epidemic of 1837. By the 1870s, reservations lined the Missouri, and American officials hoped it would serve as a place of confinement. Yet Native Americans continued to travel on the river, defining their own rights of passage along it.

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Introduction

By November 1833, the German traveler Prince Maximilian of Wied had journeyed up the Missouri River and was camped at Fort Clark, a fur trade post next to the Mandan and Hidatsa villages on the Knife River. He reported that month in his journal that he met a Native American woman who was preparing to travel the other direction. She was married to a mixed blood trader named Pierre Ortubise, who was wintering far downriver with a band of Yanktonai Sioux. She loaded three bullboats with baggage, tied the boats together, and set out on a journey that according to Maximilian would take two and half days.[1]

Images of Native American warriors on horseback dominate films and popular narratives about Plains Indian history. Equestrianism transformed Native societies in the Plains and contributed to the power of one Native society that famously contested American expansion: the Lakota Sioux. Within the past fifteen years, equestrianism has also received substantial attention in academic scholarship on indigenous and environmental history in the Great Plains. Historians Dan Flores, Elliott West, and Pekka Hämäläinen have revealed how societies such as the Comanches, Cheyennes, Crows, and Lakotas built and fed massive horse herds and have discussed the corresponding impact of equestrianism on the Plains environment. Their works demonstrate how these societies converted the power of the vast grasslands into fuel for mobility and transportation across the Plains.[2]

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[1] Entry for 16 November 1833, in Stephen S. Witte and Marsha V. Gallagher, eds., *The North American Journals of Prince Maximilian of Wied, vol. 3: September 1833–August 1834* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), 63.

[2] Elliott West, *The Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush to Colorado* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998); Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Pekka Hämäläinen, "The Politics of Grass: European Expansion, Ecological Change, and Indigenous Power in the Southwest Borderlands," *William and Mary Quarterly* 67, no. 2 (April 2010): 173-208; Richard White, "The Winning of the West: The Expansion of the Western Sioux in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,"

Yet Maximilian's account of a Native woman preparing to travel alone on the river for probably close to fifty miles suggests that Plains Indians were achieving mobility and power in other ways. My dissertation examines how Native Americans transformed the Missouri River into a corridor of indigenous mobility and power. I argue that the Missouri River was much more than a road for American traders and explorers: it was a vast corridor of indigenous travel that bridged Native North America. Indigenous traffic moved along the river and into the river valley along "roads" and pathways within the largest watershed in North America. Native travelers enlisted the river current to transport supplies and visit neighbors downriver. In the winter, when the river froze over, it became a long thoroughfare across snowbound Plains. During the fall harvests, people from across the continent converged at the villages of the Mandans and Arikaras, who ferried visitors back and forth across the often formidable channel.

The upper Missouri River was the center of indigenous trade and exchange in North America. And yet historians know very little about the logistics of indigenous travel in the Missouri Valley—how they built and used boats, where they forded the river—or how Native peoples understood and regulated this travel. Scholars have recognized the importance of the upper Missouri River in transcontinental trade and have described the content and scope of trade at the Arikara and Mandan villages. But they have not closely examined how Native Americans traveled within the Missouri valley and along the river itself. I consider the different ways in which Native Americans achieved mobility on the Missouri River as well as how they perceived and assigned river travel. This work helps explain how Mandans, Arikaras, and Lakotas connected transcontinental communication networks, became

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Journal of American History 65, no. 2 (1978): 319-43; Dan Flores, *The Natural West: Environmental History in the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003).

continental middlemen and brokers, and accrued economic and territorial power in the process. It identifies new agents of power in Native North America: navigators of the river, principally Arikara and Mandan women, who controlled travel across a continental divide.

By recovering local, regional, and transcontinental indigenous mobility networks on the Missouri River, my project revises previous narratives that have portrayed Euro-American travelers and explorers as the possessors of mobility and, by contrast, indigenous peoples as passive, immobile subjects of colonialism. Previous works frequently define the Missouri River as a road of westward expansion and conquest. The river was undoubtedly essential to American commercial and military expansion in the West. Ignoring how Indians themselves were traveling on the Missouri, however, perpetuates a colonial imaginary: that rivers were primarily places where Europeans and Americans explored the land, established sovereignty, and conquered Native peoples. As historian Peter H. Wood has recently suggested, however, Native Americans forged an expansive transportational network in interior waterways stretching along the Mississippi River and up its major tributaries, including the Missouri.[3]

Even accounts of Mandan and Arikara trade relations on the upper Missouri River leave readers thinking that the villagers did not travel on the river itself. The image that emerges is one of stasis: Arikaras and Mandans grew crops, and people traveled long distances to reach them during trade fairs. This perception grows even stronger in accounts of Mandan and Arikara history in the early nineteenth century, following the smallpox epidemic of 1781 and the Lakota conquest of the Missouri Valley. The overriding image is one of imprisonment: the Lakotas trapped the Arikaras and Mandans in their villages, preventing

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[3] For a brief summary of this proposal, see Peter H. Wood, "Have We Missed the Boat? Dugout Canoes in the Mississippi Valley," American Indian Studies Seminar Series, 26 February 2014, Newberry Library, Chicago, www.newberry.org/02262014-have-we-missed-boat.

them from venturing out into the Plains to hunt bison or even cross the river to gather berries and firewood.[4]

The Arikaras and Mandans had certainly ceded mobility on the Missouri River by the early nineteenth century. In the seventeenth century, they were using bullboats and, if Baron de Lahontan is to be believed, even dugout canoes to travel long distances within their more expansive territories along the river. By 1804 the Mandans were confined to a small number of villages, and it was too dangerous for them to travel a long ways on the river itself. Yet the Mandans and Arikaras still retained mobility on the Missouri, building bullboats to haul firewood and bison meat. And they continued to welcome visitors from the opposite side of the Missouri: Assiniboines, Crees, and Yanktonais carrying goods from Hudson's Bay and the Great Lakes; and British and French Canadian traders who had marched overland from posts in Canada. Even in a comparatively weakened position, Arikaras and Mandans continued to exercise mobility on the river, thereby connecting not only local networks of communication—between families, moieties, and villages—but also more extensive networks that crossed the continent.

For the Arikaras and Mandans, the Missouri River offered unique resources in the northern Plains. But their travel on the river itself was not necessarily inevitable. It was a dangerous and difficult river to navigate, stretching to widths of four or five miles during the flood season. Its channel was constantly shifting from one side of the flood plain to the other, making it hard to gain familiarity with its hazards and best pathways. Submerged snags and sandbars filled the river channel. People who fell into the river could be carried under by hidden currents and eddies and encounter hidden drop-offs in the channel. Swimming against the strong current quickly led to fatigue. The trapper James Clyman, who accompanied

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[4] See, for example, White, "The Winning of the West,'" 319-43, 334.

William Ashley's expedition upriver in 1823, experienced the violence and danger of the river channel when he dove into the water to escape an Arikara attack. Although he was a "tolerable strong swimer [*sic*]," the current was so strong that it carried him past his company's skiffs. Rising to the surface to breath, he struggled to free himself from his rifle, belt, pistols and ball pouch, and buckskin hunting shirt, which held an "immence [*sic*] weight of water." Another trapper finally rescued Clyman from the water by pulling him onto a skiff.[5]

Arikara, Mandan, and Lakota traditions identified the Missouri River as a place of substantial danger. They record that a giant snake or water monster inhabited the river, and travelers frequently made offerings to the snake to ensure safe crossings. By developing expertise as swimmers and navigators, however, Mandans and Arikaras minimized the risks of the river crossing. The French Canadian trader Pierre-Antoine Tabeau deemed the Arikaras as "perhaps, the best swimmers in the world." Hidatsa women conducted bullboats across the river by swimming alongside them.[6] Travelers frequently noted the expertise with which Arikara and Mandan women guided bullboats across the dangerous waters of the river.

Arikaras and Mandans cultivated this expertise because they had things to gain by traveling along and across the river. The river made it easier for individual people to haul supplies. Bullboats could hold hundreds of pounds, and women could fill them with timber or bison meat and guide a few bullboats downriver, seizing the power of the river current to move quickly through the Plains. By navigating the Missouri, they could collect resources on both sides of the river instead of just one side. Finally, they could communicate with other

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[5] James Clyman, *American Frontiersman, 1792-1881: The Adventures of a Trapper and Covered Wagon Emigrant as told in his Reminiscences and Diaries*, ed. Charles L. Camp (San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1928), 16, 17 (quote).

[6] Annie Heloise Abel, ed., *Tabeau's Narrative of Loisel's Expedition to the Upper Missouri*, trans. Rose Abel Wright (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1939), 173.

people: families and neighbors who lived in villages downriver or on the opposite bank, enemies who lived even farther downriver, and allies and trade partners who appeared on the opposite bank. By navigating the river, Arikaras and Mandans transformed a substantial barrier and obstacle to movement into a communication channel and center of North American indigenous trade, a position that the Arikara people promoted by becoming one of the earliest (and perhaps the first) purveyors of the calumet ceremony. They encouraged travel into the river valley and across the river by transforming it into a "calumet ground."

By tracing the long arc of Native travel and mobility on the Missouri River between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, my dissertation identifies the persistence of Native travel and communication networks in the American period. Yet it also addresses the violence and destruction of European and American colonialism. The transformation of the river itself into a disease corridor and subsequent demographic collapse of Native populations are the central facts of Indian-white relations in the Missouri Valley. Traders began reaching the upper Missouri River only after epidemics had ravaged the populations of villages in the lower Missouri Valley. They made it farther than they ever had before on the river because they were passing empty and depopulated villages. Steamboats carried disease upriver not only in 1837 but also in 1848, 1851, and 1856. Disease epidemics destroyed the Native corridor, leaving less than one hundred Mandan survivors, and transformed the river into a road for American fur traders, miners, and soldiers.

American expansion not only carried diseases into Arikara and Mandan villages but also challenged how Native Americans navigated the Missouri River. American officials attempted to colonize indigenous practices of mobility by redefining the river as a road. Traveling a "road" meant different things to Plains Indian leaders: it implied the diplomatic

work of establishing peace with enemies and gaining safe passage across territorial borders. Because it crossed so many different territorial borders, the Missouri River was a dangerous and difficult road to travel for long distances. Yet Spanish and American officials, especially Lewis and Clark, promised Native leaders that they could travel safely on the river, and they encouraged them to venture downriver to St. Louis. For some Native leaders, the ability to travel freely through enemy territories and their greater mobility on the river granted them power and more influence in their own communities. Many others, however, never returned home to their villages. Following trips downriver by Arikara and Mandan leaders in 1805 and 1806, respectively, few if any Mandan, Arikara, or Hidatsa leaders agreed to venture downriver to St. Louis. Instead, they navigated the river in ways that suited their political and economic interests.

Despite American efforts to rewrite indigenous mobility in the Missouri Valley, Native peoples continued navigating the river for their own purposes in the 1860s and 1870s. But the fur trade gradually eroded their ability to travel independently on the river. By destroying the equipment and fuel of mobility in the Missouri Valley, particularly bison and cottonwood, the fur trade created more of a dependence on American boats to move across the river, and it gradually attached market prices to mobility. This dependence helped American officials transform the Missouri River into a place of confinement and imprisonment. By the 1880s, eight different reservations stretched along the upper Missouri River. By establishing national and territorial borders across the Missouri watershed, American officials attempted to sever older connections and traffic from the river's tributaries extending down from Canada and across Iowa and Minnesota. Instead of sitting at the

crossroads of Native North America, the river marked the northern limit of the United States and became a tributary to American capitals.

But Native Americans continued to leave reservations and cross the river. In many cases, they traveled across the river out of desperation, to relieve starvation and famine. Others used the river to escape state and federal authorities, leaving behind reservations when they ventured downriver. Still others used the river as a barrier between themselves and Indian agents. Despite its enlistment as a reservation border, Native communities never fully ceded their own rights of passage or mobility on the Missouri River.

Imagining and Narrating Sovereignty on the Missouri River

Long before Europeans had actually explored the Missouri, they identified the river as the key to continental expansion in North America. French explorers and travel writers such as Le Page du Pratz and Dumont de Montigny portrayed the Missouri River as a pathway to Asia and road to commercial wealth and mineral riches. Their memoirs as well as the maps by the main eighteenth-century cartographer of the North American West, the crown geographer Guillaume Delisle, circulated in Europe and appeared in English translation. The Missouri River defined the northwestern limits of "Louisiana," a territory claimed first by Louis XV in 1717. Never fully delineated by French officials, the territory of Louisiana nevertheless became a bargaining piece in imperial negotiations. France transferred Louisiana and, by extension, the Missouri River to Spain after the Seven Years' War in 1763. In 1800 Spain sold Louisiana back to France and Napoleon, who sold it three years later to Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson sent Meriwether Lewis and William Clark up the Missouri River to explore a water route to the Pacific and establish American commercial prospects in the

North American West. The Lewis and Clark Expedition fixed the Missouri River in later narratives about American expansion and national identity. Newspapers across the country reported their progress upriver and safe return to St. Louis. In addition to Lewis and Clark, later travelers sought to profit by publishing accounts of journeys up the Missouri River. They included the lawyer Henry Marie Brackenridge and English naturalist John Bradbury, who ventured upriver in 1810; the artist George Catlin, who traveled upriver on the steamboat *Yellow Stone* in 1832; and the artist John James Audubon, who ascended the river in 1843. These travelers used the Missouri River to perform masculinity and American identity in the North American West.[7]

The first American historians to address exploration and the fur trade on the Missouri River continued to identify it as a stage for American expansion. Early histories of the Missouri Valley minimized the contributions and power of Indians, particularly Hiram Martin Chittenden's *The American Fur Trade of the Far West* and Joseph Mills Hanson's *The Conquest of the Missouri: The Story of the Life and Exploits of Captain Grant Marsh*. In his massive two-volume study of the fur trade, Chittenden identified the Missouri River as a channel of American civilization. According to his Turnerian model, fur traders on the Missouri were "pathfinders" who paved the way for American settlement in the West and

[7] For the Missouri River's fixture in the French imperial imagination, see Paul W. Mapp, *The Elusive West and the Contest for Empire, 1713-1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press and Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, 2013). For its role in Jefferson's plans, see James P. Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 3-4; Anthony F.C. Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians: The Tragic Fate of the First Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 242-43. For early travel accounts of the Missouri River, see Antoine Simon Le Page du Pratz, *Histoire de la Louisiane*, 2 vols. (Paris: de Bure, Delaguette, and Lambert, 1758); Dumont de Montigny, *Mémoires Historiques sur La Louisiane* (Paris: Bauche, 1753); John Bradbury, *Travels in the Interior of American in the Years 1809, 1810, and 1811* (London: Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, 1817); Henry Marie Brackenridge, *Views of Louisiana; Together with a Journal of a Voyage up the Missouri River, in 1811* (Pittsburgh, PA: Cramer, Spear, and Eichbaum, 1814); George Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians*, 2 vols. (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1844); Maria R. Audubon, *Audubon and His Journals*, vol. 2, ed. Elliott Coues, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1897).

introduced Native peoples to "civilization."[8] In a slightly later work, *Early Steamboat Navigation on the Missouri*, Chittenden used the journals of a French Canadian pilot named Joseph La Barge to describe the daily operation of steamboats on the river. Hanson followed this biographical approach in *The Conquest of the Missouri*, making Chittenden's Turnerian language even more explicit in the process. He was chronicling the recent disappearance of the frontier: "rivers of the continent have marked the line of warfare and the boundary. . . . It was but yesterday that the last strongholds of barbarism along the Rio Grande del Norte . . . and the Missouri . . . still stood locked and defiant against the besieging hosts of civilization. Today they are fallen, never to rise again."[9] Both historians attributed a life history and personality to the river: it was stubborn and needed to be defeated. The scarred steamboat captains—La Barge and Marsh—had emerged victorious from their battles with the river and thereby helped pave the way for American expansion. In their hierarchies of transportation technologies, the steamboat superseded Indian water crafts and helped Americans fully conquer the river. The only account of indigenous travel on the Missouri River, Edwin Tappan Adney and Howard I. Chapelle's *Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of North America*, perpetuates this hierarchy by describing the "primitive" design of the bullboat.[10]

In the mid twentieth century, Abraham Nasatir, who studied under Herbert Eugene Bolton at UC Berkeley, substituted European diplomats and explorers for steamboat captains as the real "pathfinders" in the West. In *Before Lewis and Clark*, he surveyed French and Spanish history in the Missouri Valley and published full translations of Spanish documents

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[8] Hiram Martin Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West*, 2 vols. (New Yorker: Frances P. Harper, 1902), xxv–xxvi.
[9] Joseph Mills Hanson, *Conquest of the Missouri: The Story of the Life and Exploits of Captain Grant Marsh* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1909), 3.
[10] Edwin Tappan Adney and Howard I. Chapelle, *Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of North America*, U.S. National Museum Bulletin 230 (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1964), 219.

from after 1785. His other works, like *Borderland in Retreat*, describe the regime changes in the upper Mississippi Valley and the competition between European empires. Nasatir co-authored one book that focused on Native history—*Imperial Osages*—but otherwise he was more interested in uncovering a European past in the American West. His works privileged the European history on the Missouri even though Indian peoples vastly outnumbered whites in the region. Other historians have since examined in more detail the French settlements near the Missouri-Mississippi confluence: Kaskaskia, Cahokia, Fort de Chartres, and especially St. Louis.[11]

Following Nasatir, scholars have demonstrated the extent to which French Canadians and European officials depended on Native relationships to conduct trade and maintain imperial footholds in North America. They place trade within a larger set of Indian political and cultural priorities. Scholars such as Richard White, Sylvia Van Kirk, and Jennifer Brown laid the groundwork for this approach by considering the social and political significance of Indian participation in the fur trade. In *The Middle Ground*, White challenges Arthur Ray's "formalist" theorization of the fur trade in which Indians follow seemingly universal economic laws to make "rational" decisions. Ray's analysis of how environmental and geographical factors shaped the middlemen roles of the Assiniboines and Crees in the Canadian fur trade still influences work on Indians in the northern Plains.[12] White argues, however, that trade between Algonquian peoples and the French in the Great Lakes region had important political and social meanings that sometimes superseded the economic

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[11] See, for example, Carl Ekberg, *French Roots in the Illinois Country* (Urbana-Champagne: University of Illinois Press, 1998); Cécile Vidal, "Africains et Européens au Pays des Illinois durant la période francaise," *French Colonial History* 3 (2003): 51-68; Patricia Cleary, *The World, the Flesh, and the Devil: A History of Colonial St. Louis* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011).

[12] See Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*. For a discussion of Ray's sizable contribution to fur trade literature, see Theodore Binnema, *Common and Contested Ground: A Human and Environmental History of the Northwestern Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 8.

interests that Ray focuses on. Even when it did not benefit them directly, the French used trade to uphold the "middle ground" of the *pays d'en haut*, where mediation formed the basis of a French-Algonquian alliance against the Iroquois. White's work, along with pioneering studies by Van Kirk and Brown on native women and métis communities in the Canadian fur trade, inform the one book-length study on the French-Indian fur trade in the lower Missouri Valley: Tanis Thorne's *The Many Hands of My Relations*. Thorne demonstrates how marriages between French traders and Osage, Kansa, Otoe, and Omaha women led to the emergence of a "'middle ground'" on the lower Missouri River.[13] Kinship relations governed the Missouri fur trade, and native women as well as their métis children became crucial intermediaries between French and Indian communities on the river.

Within the last twenty years, historians have shown how Indian peoples dictated the terms of encounter on the borderlands of European empire. They met Europeans on what Richard White calls a "middle ground" in the eighteenth-century *pays d'en haut*, but elsewhere they held a more substantial power. Kathleen Duval identifies the lower Arkansas River valley as a "native," not "middle," ground in which the Osages and Quapaws maintained economic and military autonomy into the early nineteenth century. Pekka Hämäläinen adopts the language of European political power to describe how the Comanches influenced the territorial limits of both Mexico and the United States from their "empire" on the southern Plains. And Juliana Barr, in *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman*, states that the Texas borderlands were not a middle ground of accommodation, but a place of Caddo,

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[13] Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 95; Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980); Jennifer S.H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1980); Tanis Thorne, *The Many Hands of My Relations: French and Indians on the Lower Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1995), 67.

Wichita, and Comanche "dominance." Barr re-centers colonial histories of the Southwest by showing how the kinship relations at the core of Native America guided diplomatic and economic relations at the periphery of Spanish empire.[14] Scholars such as Ned Blackhawk, Barr, and Hämäläinen combat prejudicial views of nonsedentary peoples by illustrating how nomadic, kinship-based societies pursued and achieved territorial expansion, defended their borders, and made treaties that advanced their political interests.[15] On the native grounds of the Missouri Valley and other western places, European and American outsiders had to conform to the rules and expectations of indigenous nations—even if they did not always want to acknowledge the political boundaries of these societies.

Recently, scholars have expanded the ways in which historians have defined Native power by examining territorial power and mobility in seascapes and coastal areas. In his study of Wabanaki maritime power, historian Matthew Bahar advises scholars to move beyond "fixations with the *terra firma*" of Native American history and shift Native history from the "continental interior" to waterscapes and coastlines. Historian Joshua Reid pursues a similar goal in his study of Makah power and territoriality in the "marine space" of the Pacific Northwest.[16]

Despite their different geographical orientations, these works of indigenous history on the coasts and the interior share attributes: a dedication to recovering Native histories in the

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[14] See Kathleen Duval, *The Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire*; and Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

[15] For a discussion of indigenous sovereignty and its definitions, see Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empire in the Early North American West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 276-79.

[16] See Matthew R. Bahar, "People of the Dawn, People of the Door: Indian Pirates and the Violent Theft of an Atlantic World," *Journal of American History* 101, no. 2 (2014): 401-26; Joshua L. Reid, *The Sea is My Country: The Maritime World of the Makah* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015 [forthcoming]); Andrew Lipman, "Murder on the Saltwater Frontier: The Death of John Oldham," *Early American Studies* 9, no. 2 (May 2011): 268-294.

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, before American expansion; an interest in the manifestations of indigenous power and how it impeded European colonialism; and a focus on single cultural entities and nations. They also seek to define territorial sovereignty in indigenous terms, as a product of mobility as well as fixed settlements. As Juliana Barr argues, seasonal movement by Native groups did not represent "deterritorialization but rather territorial extension." Settlements, hunting camps, cairns and other landscape markers, and oral histories—and oceanic navigation by Makahs and Wabanakis—communicated the wide spatial claims of Plains Indians.[17] They signified "lines … between Indian polities"—borders that "more often than not took precedence" over lines on European maps.[18]

Instead of studying a single group of people, this dissertation examines the connections between a set of Indian societies to understand a single communication network: the upper Missouri valley.[19] Networks and hubs of communication existed throughout Native North America. Yet the upper Missouri River was a particularly significant node in continental communication networks by virtue of its centrality. It was the meeting place for native communication networks stretching between Mexico and Canada. It was also the closest point within the Atlantic drainage basin to the Pacific and Arctic drainage basins—a place where Mandans and Arikaras could access goods and people traveling from Hudson's Bay and the Pacific Ocean.

Historians and archaeologists have detailed indigenous trade on the upper Missouri River—to the point that Pekka Hämäläinen, in an essay published over fifteen years ago in the *Western Historical Quarterly*, called for historians to consider other places of trade and

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[17] Juliana Barr, "Geographies of Power: Mapping Indian Borders in the 'Borderlands' of the Early Southwest," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (January 2011), 17, 19 (quote), 27.
[18] Barr, "Geographies of Power," 43.
[19] See, for example, Angela Pulley Hudson, *Creek Paths and Federal Roads: Indians, Settlers, and Slaves and the Making of the American South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

exchange in the Great Plains. Hämäläinen noted that historians had thought of Plains Indian trade mostly in terms of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara villages on the upper Missouri River, a trajectory that he traced to an influential essay by ethnohistorian John Ewers from 1954. Hämäläinen convincingly argues that historians had neglected Indian trade in the southern Plains—something that he has powerfully remedied in the WHQ essay and later work on the Comanche Indians.[20]

Ewers's definition of the northern Plains trade system inspired other scholars to study the Indian trade on the upper Missouri River, notably archaeologist W. Raymond Wood, who mapped ancient trade networks linking the upper Missouri River, the Pacific Coast, and the Great Lakes.[21] More recently, historian Elizabeth A. Fenn has illustrated the centrality of the Mandan villages in Native North America. The Mandans recognized their villages as the center of Native North America—the literal "heart of the world," as they called their homeland on the Heart River in present-day North Dakota.[22] Although my work addresses Mandan trade connections, it considers the broader landscape of Native mobility in the Missouri Valley, including not only the Mandans but also the Arikaras, Lakotas, Omahas, and nations in the lower Missouri Valley.

Defining Mobility and Power on the Missouri River

Mandan traditions about their earliest history refer to a boat "that was holy" because it could carry twelve people and move "by its own power." Arikaras drew pictographs on bullboat

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[20] Pekka Hämäläinen, "The Western Comanche Trade Center: Rethinking the Plains Indian Trade System," *Western Historical Quarterly* 29 (Winter 1998): 485-513.
[21] See W. Raymond Wood, "Plains Trade in Prehistoric and Protohistoric Intertribal Relations," in *Anthropology on the Great Plains*, ed. W Raymond Wood and Margot Liberty (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 98-109.
[22] Elizabeth A. Fenn, *Encounters at the Heart of the World: A History of the Mandan People* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2014).

and canoe paddles that illustrated their exploits in battle, including crosses, indicating the capture of horses and the act of counting coup on an enemy. Mandans regarded the keelboat of the Lewis and Clark Expedition as "great medison [*sic*]." Their mobility on the river depleted individual power—it demanded work and energy. According to these accounts, however, boats also granted power to their owners: the ability to move independently, surprise enemies, and combat the tyranny of distance in the Great Plains.[23]

My account of Native travel and mobility in the Missouri valley is necessarily a history of indigenous power in the river valley. Travel across the river consumed individual power and energy, but it was also a measure of individual and tribal power. The ability to travel safely and quickly on the Missouri River was a unique kind of power in the Great Plains, where seemingly insurmountable distances intimidated many later travelers. By focusing on river travel, I hope to expand how historians have previously defined indigenous power in the central and northern Great Plains. I argue that power rested not only in political leaders and warriors but also in women who performed what Juliana Barr calls a "diplomacy of gender" on the Missouri River, helping visitors cross the Missouri River and its territorial borders. Women acquired power within their communities by controlling the manufacture and ownership of bullboats and becoming the best navigators of the river.[24]

As a category of analysis, "power" had various economic, ecological, political, and spiritual manifestations on the Missouri River. Most basically, the river itself contained

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[23] Alfred W. Bowers, *Mandan Social and Ceremonial Organization* (Reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 156, 360-61; Witte and Gallagher, *North American Journals*, 3:176. They called the boat the I'dEHE, or "to go with." For Arikara paddles, see Garrick Mallery, *Picture-Writing of the American Indians* (New York: Dover, 1972), 1:441-42; and Doane Robinson, *A History of the Dakota or Sioux Indians*, South Dakota Historical Collections 2 (Aberdeen: South Dakota State Historical Society, 1904), 29. For Mandan perceptions of the expedition keelboat, see entry for 28 October 1804 in Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Definitive Journals of Lewis and Clark, Vol. 3: Up the Missouri to Fort Mandan* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 208 [hereafter DJLC 3].

[24] Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 2 ("diplomacy").

kinetic energy that did work: moving and transferring resources, such as soil, across space. The Missouri River did work across enormous distances. Before dam construction, the river was 2,500 miles long. After dams, the length fell to 2,341 miles. It carried trees, drowned bison, and other resources from one end of the Great Plains to the other. Native peoples who were positioned near the river could intercept these resources and harness the river's energy.

This project is indebted to Richard White's *Organic Machine*, which provides a compelling model for linking environmental and human histories in river watersheds: the transfer, exchange, and expenditure of energy. Travelers on the Columbia, White notes, had to expend energy to "counter the river's work." Indians had the requisite "knowledge and art" to navigate the river and know "which paths through the river were the most efficient and least demanding of human energy."[25] The same was true on the Missouri River, where inexperience frequently led travelers down the wrong paths, away from the main river channel and into dead-ends, snags, and sandbars.

The Missouri River's work delivered two particularly crucial resources to Native Americans in the Great Plains: soil and cottonwood. Annual floods consumed huge amounts of soil—travelers sometimes had to relocate camps in the middle of the night to escape rising flood waters—and re-deposited nutrient-rich soil along the insides of river bends. Compared to the soil in the surrounding Plains, the soil in the Missouri floodplain was rich and could yield large amounts of corn and other crops. This corn fed families and formed the basis for Arikara and Mandan trade with neighbors. Cottonwood, which needs light and space to grow, flourished in the Missouri valley, which it could colonize new riverbanks and places with fresh soil. It provided firewood, building materials, and food for horses during the winter.

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[25] Richard White, *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River* (New York: Macmillan, 1995), 6 ("counter"), 8 ("knowledge"); *The Missouri River Ecosystem: Exploring the Prospects for Recovery* (National Academies Press, 2002), 11.

After horses spread across the Plains, the Missouri Valley became the single largest refueling station for equestrianism in the Great Plains.

Plains Indians accrued economic wealth and power in the Great Plains by converting the river's energy into trade goods (corn and horses) that drew people to their villages for trade. But they also converted the river's energy into territorial and political power. They used the strong current of the river to establish and regulate territorial borders. When white traders and European agents started ascending the river with merchandise, even relatively small nations such as the Otoes and Omahas could accrue power in the river corridor by regulating traffic, demanding tolls, and intercepting boat cargoes. Native nations continued collecting tolls on the river in the steamboat period of the mid nineteenth century. They used the power of the river current to control passage through their territories.

For Indian polities, mobility measured their territorial control of the river: they could travel freely in places where others could not. Nowhere was this more true than the Big Bend of the Missouri River. The Big Bend sits between present-day Buffalo County and Lyman County, South Dakota. Although federal damming in the twentieth century has altered the course of the river, early travelers on the Missouri River almost always noted the Big Bend and left descriptions of its winding course. The loop was thirty to forty miles long, but only a mile or two of land separated its beginning and end. Travelers on boats and especially steamboats frequently disembarked and walked across the narrow strip of land separating both ends of the Big Bend, where they waited hours for the boats to appear. For travelers, the Big Bend epitomized the navigational challenges of the Missouri River.[26]

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[26] For descriptions of the Big Bend, see Abraham P. Nasatir, *Before Lewis and Clark: Documents Illustrating the History of the Missouri* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 275 [hereafter BLC]; Brackenridge, *Views of Louisiana*, 98.

The first explorers to venture up the Missouri River in the 1790s identified the Big Bend as the home of the "Sioux of the Grand Detour."[27] Following the smallpox epidemic of 1781, Oglala and Brulé Lakotas had taken control of the Big Bend and surrounding areas of the river. For them, the Big Bend was a different kind of landmark. According to Lewis and Clark, the section of river just below the Big Bend was the "great pass of the Sioux." Before that, it was an Arikara fording site. The ford sat directly between the catlinite pipe quarry in present-day Minnesota and the Black Hills of South Dakota. Heading west, this pathway passed through the Missouri Coteau, a stretch of flat highland, across the river, and up the White River valley.

By controlling this ancient fording site, the Lakotas could move more easily between the east and west sides of the Missouri and transport goods and people between distinct regions of the continent. Their free movement on the river was a measure of their newfound territorial control. It was also a place where they regularly blockaded the river. When the Canadian trader and Spanish emissary Jean-Baptiste Trudeau ascended the river, he encountered a group of Lakotas at the Big Bend who forced him pay a sizable toll in an attempt to buy free passage and then, failing that, flee downriver. A year later another expedition leader, the Welshman John Evans, confronted the same predicament and hurried downriver.[28] Along a stretch of the river that traders struggled to navigate, the Lakotas moved easily and regulated movement by outsiders.

By blockading the river, the Lakotas not only captured trade goods and weapons but also reaffirmed its indigenous uses as a corridor of communication, mobility, and exchange. Although Europeans and Americans interpreted their frequent blockades as acts of "piracy,"

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[27] BLC, 107, 494.
[28] BLC, 275, 494.

the Lakotas were using blockades, and the river itself, to communicate a different message to European and American officials: the river was an indigenous, not American, territory.

1. They "Hollered" Across: The Power of Mobility on the Missouri River

When the French trader Pierre-Charles Le Sueur ascended the Mississippi River in 1700, he differentiated Native American societies from one another based on the kinds of boats they used. He noticed that the canoes of the eastern Sioux were much smaller than Algonquian canoes and more difficult to pilot, but they could enter streams and marshlands. In the confluence region of the Mississippi Valley, people used large pirogues instead of smaller birchbark canoes. Some Illinois Indians told him that they called those "who are closest to the mouth" of the Missouri "the boat people (Emessourit)." The "river of the Missouris," Le Sueur concluded, meant the river "of the Pirogues." Others seemingly did not use boats at all: the "Sioux of the West" who hunted "in the prairies between the Upper Mississippi and the R. des Missouris . . . had no use for boats."[1]

Le Sueur was one of a few French explorers to express interest in how Native peoples traveled on waterways.[2] Their commentary about Native American boats relayed larger assumptions about the political relations of different Indian tribes. For Le Sueur, boats signified how these groups interacted with neighbors: the Sioux used small canoes because they facilitated escape and warfare on streams and marshes, while the large boats of the

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[1] Pierre Le Sueur, "Suite du Missisipi depuis les Tamarois," 1700, f. 76, Delisle Papers, 2JJ, Service Hydrographique, Archives de la Marine, microfilm copy at Bibliothèque et archives nationales du Québec, Ville de Québec [hereafter SH, BANQ-Québec]; Mildred Mott Wedel, "Le Sueur and the Dakota Sioux," in *Aspects of Upper Great Lakes Anthropology: Papers in Honor of Lloyd A. Wilford*, ed. Elden Johnson, Minnesota Prehistoric Archaeology Series No. 11, (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1974), 170.

[2] In 1670 Jacques Marquette noted that "six or seven days below the Ilois [Illinois] is another great river (Missouri), on which are prodigious nations, who use wooden canoes." Marquette to François Mercier, 1670, in John G. Shea, *Discovery and Exploration of the Mississippi Valley*, Historical Collections of Louisiana 4 (Clinton Hall, NY: Redfield, 1852), lvi. Parenthetical in original. The Baron de Lahontan depicted how the Iroquois and other eastern nations used and portaged small canoes in his account of his voyages. See Baron de Lahontan, *New Voyages to North-America* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1905), 1:80 (facing page). Another early French traveler, Jean Beaurain, found it curious that "not one" of the nations on the western Plains "makes pirogues, not having up to now any knowledge of them." Qtd. in Gilbert C. Dinn and Abraham P. Nasatir, *The Imperial Osage: Spanish-Indian Diplomacy in the Mississippi Valley* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 35.

Missourias suggested that they communicated and traded more readily with neighbors. By fixing the name of the Missouri River after the "people of the pirogues," Le Sueur identified it as a place where Indians were already conducting long-distance trade and travel and where French voyageurs could do the same.

The Missouria Indians controlled the old growth cottonwood, sycamore, and walnut forests of the lower Missouri River, and they used dugout canoes to participate directly in an ancient waterway network in the confluence region of the Mississippi Valley, an area that French officials and missionaries called the Illinois country, after the dominant Indian power in the region.[3] Farther up the Missouri River, however, Kanzas and Otoes were using bullboats, a Plains innovation in places with fewer large trees and many bison. The first French explorer to document the use of bullboats on the Missouri River was Etienne Véniard, sieur de Bourgmont. In the fall of 1724, after returning from an expedition across the Plains to present-day western Kansas, he enlisted "canaux de peaux" (skin canoes) to descend the Missouri River to Fort d'Orléans, a post he had established in present-day Carroll County, Missouri. His Missouria companions guided the boats downriver.[4]

For the people who used them on a daily basis, bullboats were more than just tools: they were also objects of power. They granted mobility to their owners and allowed them to travel rapidly across the intimidating distances of the Great Plains. Although Le Sueur and other French explorers marked the limits of indigenous waterway travel along the Mississippi

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[3] Archaeologists have recovered ancient dugout canoes from the tributaries of the Ohio River Valley, the probable homeland of the Dhegiha-speaking Osages, Kansas, and Omahas. James A. Clifton, "From Bark Canoes to Pony Herds: The Lake Michigan Transportation Revolution, 1750-1775," paper presented at Chicago's Maritime Heritage Conference, 2 March 1984, 4-5, 7; Michael Dickey, *The People of the River's Mouth: In Search of the Missouria Indians* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011), 5.

[4] See "Relation du voyage de Mr. De Bourgmont chevalier de l'order militaire de Ste. Loüis Commandant de la Riviere du Missoury et sur le chant de celle des akansas. Du Missoury au Padoucas," in Bourgmont File, Chicago History Museum Library and Research Center, Chicago, Illinois. For English translation (as "bullboats"), see Frank Norall, *Bourgmont, Explorer of the Missouri, 1698-1725* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), 160.

River, Arikaras, Mandans, and Hidatsas on the upper Missouri River also established water-bound transportation networks in the middle of the Plains, traveling between villages and conducting supplies downriver. Their navigation depleted individual power and posed risks. By controlling travel on and across the Missouri River, however, they retrieved territorial power from the river itself and regulated the movement of people and goods across the midcontinent.

Well before Europeans and Americans began navigating the Missouri River, Native Americans were using the river and its resources to achieve mobility and power in the vast Great Plains. One of their early destinations was New Cahokia. Around AD 1050, thousands of people converged on the Missouri-Mississippi confluence and began building a new city on top of older village sites. The surrounding area provided resources that would support a large population, particularly rich bottomland soil. By AD 1150, New Cahokia had emerged as the center of political and religious life in the midcontinent. It was a crossroads in indigeous North America, a place where travelers down the Missouri, Illinois, and Ohio Rivers could converge. Visitors witnessed places of religious and political power: the Grand Plaza and central pyramid, the largest of their kind north of Mexico. Mississippian people, goods, and ideas also traveled the other direction, reaching distant Caddoan-speaking settlers in present-day Oklahoma and settlements in the Missouri Valley.[5]

It is not improbable that the people who built New Cahokia, like the fur traders who constructed St. Louis, viewed the Missouri River itself as an important road across the Great Plains. New Cahokia was only a few miles below the mouth of the Missouri River, a position that facilitated travel and communication with people who lived along the Missouri.

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[5] For a synopsis of archaeological literature about the origins of New Cahokia as well as its links to Plains Caddoans, see Timothy Pauketat, *Cahokia: Ancient America's Great City on the Mississippi* (New York: Penguin, 2009), 1–30.

Archaeological evidence shows that Mississippians maintained close contact with settlements around present-day Kansas City, nearly three hundred miles upriver. During the flood season, when the velocity of the river current increased, the Missouri villagers could make the 300-mile trip from the Kansas City settlements to New Cahokia in only a few days. When French Canadians first reached the Illinois country, Missouria Indians were regularly making similar voyages downriver.[6]

Mississippian ideas and artistic styles traveled even farther up the Missouri River to present-day Iowa and the homes of Mandan ancestors. In the early nineteenth century, American fur traders could travel from present-day North Dakota to St. Louis—1400 miles—in two weeks during the flood season. Return trips would take much more time. Indigenous traders probably used the Missouri River to transport bulk commodities, particularly bison robes and meat, and returned along overland trails with items that were easier to carry in small quantities, such as shells. According to one reconstruction of trade expeditions from the Plains to Cahokia, Mandan ancestors could have delivered thousands of pounds of bison meat downriver to Cahokia and returned to their villages within a month of travel carrying shells, pottery, and symbols of religious and political authority: thunderbird effigies and long-nose god masks.[7]

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[6] For connections to settlements around present-day Kansas City, see Patricia O'Brien, "Steed-Kisker: The Western Periphery of the Mississippian Tradition," *Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology* 18, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 61–96, 69; and Michael John O'Brien and W. Raymond Wood, *The Prehistory of Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998), 274–76.

[7] For the archaeological record of Mill Creek (ancestral Mandan) villagers and trade with the people in the Stirling phase of Cahokia, see Joseph A. Tiffany, "Modeling Mill Creek-Mississippian Interaction," in *New Perspectives on Cahokia: Views from the Periphery*, ed. James B. Stoltman, Monographs in World Archaeology 2 (Madison, Wisconsin: Prehistory Press, 1991), 338–41, 340–42; Joseph A. Tiffany, "Mississippian Connections with Mill Creek and Cambria," *Plains Anthropologist* 48 no. 184 (2003): 21–24, 26, 29; Timothy R. Pauketat and Thomas Emerson, *Cahokia: Domination and Ideology in the Mississippian World* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 5–8, 20–21; and E. A. Little, "Inland Waterways in the Northeast," *Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology* 12 (1987): 55–76, 66.

Beginning around AD 1250, Cahokia began to decline, and a hundred years later the Missouri-Mississippi confluence was becoming a depopulated zone. Decades of settlement had depleted nutrients in the soil around the city and timber supplies in the river valley. As archaeologist Timothy Pauketat notes, indigenous oral traditions are strangely silent about Cahokia, raising the possibility that it was a place people wanted to forget. More likely, the people who would have remembered Cahokia were victims of the European epidemics that swept the continent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[8]

The collapse of Cahokia generated massive migrations and relocations across the Midwest. Two groups of Siouan migrants—the Chiwere Siouans (Missourias, Otoes, and Ioways) and the Dhehigan Siouans (Osages, Kanzas, and Omahas) pushed across the Mississippi River. The Otoes, Ioways, and Omahas moved toward Mandan territories in Iowa and South Dakota, while the Missourias, Osages, and Kanzas established a string of villages along the lower Missouri River.[9] A third group of people—the Caddoan-speaking Pawnees and Arikaras—also approached Mandan territories. During the height of New Cahokia in the 1100s, they had lived in small settlements along the Platte River and its tributaries in present-day Nebraska. In the 1200s, they began moving up the Missouri River.[10]

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[8] Biloine Whiting Young and Melvin L. Fowler, *Cahokia: The Great Native American Metropolis* (Urbana-Champagne: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 310–15; Pauketat, *Cahokia*, 120-21.
[9] James Owen Dorsey, "Migrations of Siouan Tribes," *American Naturalist* 20, no. 3 (March 1886): 215, 218; Alice C. Fletcher and Francis La Flesche, *The Omaha Tribe*, vol. 1 (Reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), 1:36–41; and (for compilation and analysis of traditions); Thomas D. Thiessen, "Traditional and Historical Summary," *Plains Anthropologist* 49 no. 192 (November 2004): 366–67. See also Garrick A. Bailey and Gloria A. Young, "Kansa," *Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 13: Plains*, ed. Raymond J. DeMallie (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 2001), 1:462 [hereafter HNAI 13]. The lexicon of the Osages suggests that they once lived in the Ohio Valley: they kept names for many plants that live only to the northeast of Missouri. See Burns, *A History of the Osage People*, 22. For Dhehigan links to Cahokia, which was abandoned by AD 1400, see Pauketat and Emerson, *Cahokia*, 21, 26.
[10] For the Arikara migration north, see Terry L. Steinacher and Gayle F. Carlson, "The Central Plains Tradition," in *Archaeology of the Great Plains*, ed. W. Raymond Wood (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 235-68, 237-38, 253-58; Waldo R. Wedel, "Plains Village Tradition, Central," HNAI 13, 1:178–79; Donna C. Roper, "Spatial Dynamics and Historical Process in the Central Plains Tradition," *Plains Anthropologist* 40, no. 153 (August 1995): 208–16, 218; Douglas B. Bamforth and Curtis Nepstad-Thornberry,

Following the collapse of Cahokia, the center of gravity in Native America shifted from the confluence region of the Mississippi Valley to the upper Missouri Valley, a crossroads of a different sort. Trails from across the continent converged at the upper Missouri River. Perhaps the busiest intersection was the Big Bend of the Missouri River in present-day South Dakota. The bend sat directly between Portage, Wisconsin, the catlinite pipe quarry in Minnesota, the Black Hills, and the future site of the Shoshone rendezvous in Wyoming, and it was a place that had attracted settlers for thousands of years. The area contains the largest collection of burial mounds north of Kansas and Missouri. About ninety mounds, over four thousand years old, run along the east-side terrace from the Big Bend to Crow Creek.[11]

According to Mandan traditions, they first reached the Missouri River at the Big Bend, and archaeologists have recovered evidence that they built settlements there in the twelfth century, during the height of Cahokia's power.[12] According to a late nineteenth-

"The Shifting Social Landscape of the Fifteenth-century Middle Missouri Region," in *Plains Village Archaeology: Bison-hunting Farmers in the Central and Northern Plains*, ed. Stanley A. Ahler and Marvin Kay (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2007), 141-44; and Mark D. Mitchell, "Conflict and Cooperation," in *Plains Village Archaeology*, 159–60. Archaeologists have debated the origins and development of the Central Plains Tradition, its connection to Cahokia, and its relationship to the Pawnee and Arikara people. See, for example, Steinacher and Carlson, "The Central Plains Tradition," 259; Craig M. Johnson, "The Coalescent Tradition," in *Archaeology on the Great Plains*, 309, 328; and John R. Bozell and John Ludwickson, *Archeology of the Patterson Site: Native American Life in the Lower Platte Valley, 1000–1300* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society and Nebraska Department of Roads, 1999), 144. Yet a wider body of evidence would suggest that the Central Plains villagers were Caddoan-speaking peoples, particularly Pawnee and Arikara oral traditions. See Russell Thornton, "Who Owns Our Past? The Repatriation of Native American Human Remains and Cultural Objects," in *Studying Native America: Problems and Prospects*, ed. Russell Thornton (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 407.

[11] For burial mounds, see Robert W. Neuman, "Projectile Points from Preceramic Occupations near Fort Thompson, South Dakota: A Preliminary Report," *Plains Anthropologist* 9, no. 25 (August 1964): 173–89, 174.

[12] Stephen S. Witte and Marsha V. Gallagher, ed., *The North American Journals of Prince Maximilian of Wied, Volume 3: September 1833–August 1834* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press and Joslyn Art Museum, 2012), 178; Elizabeth A. Fenn, *Encounters at the Heart of the World: A History of the Mandan People* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2014), 5–6; Alfred W. Bowers, *Mandan Social and Ceremonial Organization* (Reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 156–62. For Initial Middle Missouri (ancestral Mandan) settlements at this area, which date to the twelfth century, see Douglas B. Bamforth and Curtis Nepstad-Thornberry, "Reconsidering the Occupational History of the Crow Creek Site," *Plains Anthropologist* 52, no. 202 (May 2007): 157–58.

century account, their future neighbors the Hidatsas called the area "a ma mak i mákada," or "Lands Crossing One Another"—a probable description of the Big Bend crossroads. Centuries later, after they had moved north to the Knife River, Mandans identified the Big Bend as the winter home of eagles, waterfowl, and other large birds, and effectively the end of the Missouri River. In the 1300s, Mandans left the region to pursue new opportunities even closer to heart of the continent, and Arikara settlers began building villages in the Big Bend region to take advantage of its central location astride transcontinental trade routes.[13]

As a central North American crossroads, the Big Bend of the Missouri presented opportunities but also dangers. In the mid 1400s, a large war party launched a massive strike on the Arikaras living at the village known as Crow Creek, on the east side of the Missouri. They killed and mutilated 486 people, some of whom had survived earlier scalpings and beatings, and spared only female captives. The attack illustrates the violence of border making and territorial expansion following the collapse of Cahokia. Archaeologists have speculated that it was the work of Souian migrants or even rival Arikara and Pawnee bands. According to their traditions, the Big Bend region was also the place where Pawnees and Arikaras separated, and anthropologists date the divergence of their two languages to the period of the Crow Creek massacre.[14]

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[13] For the Hidatsa term for the Big Bend, see Washington Matthews, *Ethnography and Philology of the Hidatsa Indians* (Washington DC: Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories, GPO, 1877), 210. For the Big Bend in Mandan ceremonies, see Bowers, *Mandan Society and Ceremonial Organization*, 252–53, 253n48.

[14] For Crow Creek, see Patrick Willey, *Prehistoric Warfare on the Great Plains: Skeletal Analysis of the Crow Creek Massacre Victims* (New York: Garland, 1990), 176–78; and Douglas B. Bamforth and Curtis Nepstad-Thornberry, "Reconsidering the Occupational History of the Crow Creek Site," *Plains Anthropologist* 52, no. 202 (May 2007): 157 (resources and fording site), 169, 170 ("locality"). See also Richard A. Krause, "Kinship, Tradition and Settlement Pattern: An Archaeology of Prehistoric Middle Missouri Community Life," in *Making Places in the Prehistoric World: Themes in Settlement Archaeology*, ed. Joanna Bruck and Melissa Goodman (Oxford: Routledge, 1999), 139-41; and Craig M. Johnson, *A Chronology of Middle Missouri Village Sites* (Washington DC: Smithsonian, 2007), 178–81.

Although the collapse of New Cahokia generated violence and destruction, Mississippian ideas continued contributing to Native life in the Great Plains. Archaeologist Timothy Pauketat has documented some of the enduring connections between Arikaras and Mandans and the Cahokians, including the chunkey game, a Cahokian invention that remained popular in Mandan villages in the 1800s. They preserved religious ideas from New Cahokia. And they continued to grow maize. As they moved up the Missouri River, Mandans and Arikaras gradually modified corn so it could prosper in the shorter growing seasons of northern latitudes. This long process of genetic modification allowed them to expand the northern frontier of corn production in the midcontinent. By the end of the 1500s, Mandan and Arikara populations fed on corn, bison, and other resources had grown to at least ten thousand people each. Their new settlements on the upper Missouri River were in some ways the natural successors to New Cahokia and the literal centers of economic, political, and religious power in Native North America.

Arikaras and Mandans accomplished this transition by developing corn varieties for the northern Plains and by converting the energy of the Missouri River into territorial power. Arikara, Mandan, and Hidatsa traditions identify the Missouri River as a source of power. Arikara traditions record a journey from the south to the Republican River in Nebraska, and then to the tswaarúxti', or Holy Water, a name shared by their Pawnee relatives.[15] The Missouri, which follows the southern limits of continental glaciation, transmits huge amounts of soil and water across substantial distances—about 2600 miles from the Bitterroot

[15] Stephen S. Witte and Marsha V. Gallagher, eds., *The North American Journals of Prince Maximilian of Wied, Volume 2: April–September 1833* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 477. For the Skiri Pawnee term, see Douglas R. Parks and Lula Nora Pratt, *A Dictionary of Skiri Pawnee* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 215.

Mountains to present-day St. Louis.[16] Every year, during floods in April and June, it eats away enormous quantities of soil from the surrounding valley and redistributes this soil downriver. Eastern migrants such as the Osages, Omahas, and Lakotas called the Missouri the "Turbid" or "Muddy Water" because of its high soil content.[17] The large number of trees filling the river channel provide additional evidence of the river's flood cycle. Witnessing the river at the height of the flood season, in June 1673, the Jesuit missionary Jacques Marquette wrote, "I have seen nothing more dreadful. An accumulation of large and entire trees, branches, and floating islands, was issuing from The mouth of The river pekistanouï, with such impetuosity that we could not without great danger risk passing through it. So great was the agitation that the water was very muddy, and could not become clear." European navigators almost always noted the entangled trees, or "embarras," in the river channel.[18] While Marquette emphasized the destruction and violence of the Missouri, ecologists describe the Missouri's flood cycle as an essential "flood pulse" that brings new life every year to the Great Plains. Floods deposited nutrient-rich soil on newly formed banks, where pioneer species such as cottonwood and willows could prosper. The ever-shifting channel of

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[16] Donald E. Trimble, "The Geologic Story of the Great Plains," Geological Survey Bulletin 1493 (Washington: GPO, 1980), accessed online at library.ndsu.edu/exhibits/text/greatplains/text.html; "Missouri River Corridor Geologic Mapping," Geosciences and Environmental Change Science Center, United States Geological Survey, U.S. Department of the Interior, gec.cr.usgs.gov/projects/platte/Missouri.html; David L. Galat et al., "Missouri River Basin," in *Rivers of North America*, ed. Arthur C. Benke and Colbert E. Cushing (Burlington MA: Elsevier Academic Press, 2005), 431–32.

[17] Witte and Gallagher, *Norh American Journals*, 3:477, 504.

[18] Jacques Marquette, "Journal incomplet, addressé au R. P. Claude Dablon," in Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, vol. 59 (Cleveland OH: Burrows Brothers, 1899), 139 (quote), 140–41. For early accounts of "embarras" and obsructions in the Missouri River channel, see Minet, "Voyage Made from Canada Inland Going Southward during the Year 1682," in Robert S. Weddle, Mary Christine Morkovsky, and Patricia Galloway, *La Salle, The Mississippi, and the Gulf* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), 22, 43; Pierre Charles Deliette, "Memoire concernant le pays Illinois," 20 October 1721, in Valdec Memoirs, Newberry Library, Chicago; Claude-Charles Dutisné extract and Dutisné to Bienville, 22 November 1719, in Pierre Margry, *Découvertes et Etablissements des Français dans l'ouest et dans le sud de l'Amérique septentrionale*, vol. 6 (Paris: D. Jouaust, 1876), 309-11; Miró to Rengel, 12 December 1785, A. P. Nasatir, ed., *Before Lewis and Clark: Documents Illustrating the History of the Missouri, 1785–1804* (Reprint, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 121 [hereafter BLC]; and Trudeau's Description of the Upper Missouri, 1796, BLC, 377.

the Missouri River also created a diverse set of habitats where different species could live. They created a shifting mosaic of "multiple side channels, oxbow lakes, islands, sand bars and dunes, and backwater habitats" within the river valley.[19]

By building villages within the river valley, Arikaras and Mandans could intercept the considerable number of resources moving through the river corridor—not only the "Rich and fertile Soil" and water, but also drowned bison and logs floating downriver.[20] They located villages in places that allowed them escape the worst effects of floods and still capture resources moving downriver. They usually built their villages on high bluffs or terraces along

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[19] For flooding and ecosystem renewal, see David L. Galat and Robin Lipkin, *Characterizing the Natural Flow Regime of the Missouri River Using Historical Variability in Hydrology* (Columbia: Missouri Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, 1999), 3, 5, 47, 49, 50, 52; W. Carter Johnson, "Dams and Riparian Forests: Case Study from the Upper Missouri River," *Rivers: Studies in the Science, Environmental Policy, and Law of Instream Flow* 3 (1992): 231, 237; W. Carter Johnson, "Response of Riparian Vegetation to Streamflow Regulation and Land Use in the Great Plains," *Great Plains Research* 9 (Fall 1999): 358, 360, 362. *The Missouri River Ecosystem: Exploring the Prospects for Recovery* (2002), 56–57, 62 ("multiple"), accessed online at www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=10277&page=65. For bison seeking shelter in the Missouri Valley, see 8 December 1804, DJLC 3:255; Andrew Dawson to Eben Dawson, 5 January 1854, Lesley Wischmann, ed., *This Far-Off Wild Land: The Upper Missouri Letters of Andrew Dawson* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013), 264; and David J. Wishart, *The Fur Trade of the American West, 1807-1840: A Geographical Synthesis* (Reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 34. For young cottonwood groves on the length of the river, see Henry M. Brackenridge, "Journal of a Voyage, Up the River Missouri," in Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846*, vol. 6 (Cleveland, OH: Arthur H. Clark, 1904), 53, 67, 70, 76, 79, 84, 108; and Paul Wilhem, Duke of Würtemburg, *Travels in North America, 1822–1824*, trans. W. Robert Nitske, ed. Savoie Lottinville (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), 213. According to Brackenridge, the trees around the Omaha village were "small cotton-wood trees, whose slender and delicate growth have a much more beautiful appearance than the huge giants on the lower part of the river." John Peabody Harrington's Mandan informant, Sylvester, told him that "there is nothing that grows up faster than the Red Willow, that grow up quickly along the Missouri River." "Traditions" notes, 1950/1951, John Peabody Harrington Collection, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, www.collections.si.edu. For willow growth, see entry for 20 August 1806, in *The Definitive Journals of Lewis and Clark, vol. 8: Over the Rockies to St. Louis*, ed. Gary E. Moulton (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 310 [hereafter DJLC 8]; Missouri River Ecosystem, 62. Johnson, "Dams and Riparian Forests," 237; and Donald J. Lehmer, *Introduction to Middle Missouri Archeology* (Washington DC: National Park Service, 1971), 55.

[20] "Captain Mackay's Journal," BLC 494 ("rich"). For soil quality, see Brackenridge, "Journal of an Expedition," 79 (near Platte River), 139-40 (at Mandan and Hidatsa villages), 147 (at the Cheyenne River on return trip); Edwin Thompson Denig, *Five Indian Tribes of the Upper Missouri*, ed. John C. Ewers (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), 49; Fletcher and La Flesche, *Omaha Tribe*, 1:312. For bison retrieval, see Annie Heloise Abel, ed., *Tabeau's Narrative of Loisel's Expedition to the Upper Missouri* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1939), 74; entries for 28 March 1805 and 29 March 1805, in DJLC 3:321, 322. For collection of driftwood, see for example Thomas D. Thiessen, "A New Transcription of Alexander Henry's Account of a Visit to the Mandan and Hidatsa Indians in 1806" (Lincoln, NE: Midwest Archeological Center, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1980), 93–94.

the river; the inside of river bends, where the river deposited sediment instead of eroding it; and below confluences, where the river was less likely to flood surrounding cropland.[21]

Twentieth-century accounts offer a glimpse of the planting and harvest schedule, which were closely aligned with the annual energy pulse of the flood season. When the ice in the river broke, the Mandans began clearing fields and planting sunflower seeds around the sides of gardens. In early May, they planted corn in the rich bottomland soil of the river's flood plain. According to one estimate, Mandans in the nineteenth century planted between a third of an acre and a full acre for each person in their village. After planting, in June or July, many of the Plains villagers left their villages and ventured west onto the Plains to hunt bison. They returned to the river valley by mid-August, so they could harvest green corn and before ripe corn and tobacco in late September and early October. Underground caches held extra corn, squash, and beans during the winter.[22]

In order to maximize their collection of resources from the river corridor, Arikaras and Mandans built multiple villages on each side of the river. By the mid 1500s, they had established settlements and territorial borders that would persist into the late eighteenth century. Mandan traditions record a slow journey up the Missouri River from the Big Bend to the Cannonball River, and finally to the Heart River. Built in the early 1500s, two settlements at the Heart River—Double Ditch, on the east bank of the Missouri, and On-a-Slant Village,

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[21] For seventeenth-century village locations in the Missouri Valley, see Lehmer, *Middle Missouri Archeology*, 55; Johnson, *Chronology of Middle Missouri Plains Village Sites*, 213–14.

[22] See George F. Will and George E. Hyde, *Corn among the Indians of the Upper Missouri* (St. Louis MO: Harvey Miner Co., 1917), 77–79, 115–24, 133-34; Fletcher and La Flesche, *The Omaha Tribe*, 1:269-71; Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 65-66; Waldo R. Wedel and George C. Frison, "Environment and Subsistence," HNAI 13, 1: 57-60; Donald J. Lehmer, "Plains Village Tradition: Postcontact," HNAI 13, 1: 247–48. For the size of Mandan fields, see W. Raymond Wood, William J. Hunt Jr., and Randy H. Williams, *Fort Clark and Its Indian Neighbors* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011), 71. For Omaha crops, see John Bradbury, "Travels in the Interior of America," in Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846*, vol. 5 (Cleveland OH: Arthur H. Clark, 1904), 90. For garden locations and exposure to floods, see Gilbert Livingstone Wilson, ed. *Agriculture of the Hidatsa Indians: An Interpretation*, Studies in the Social Sciences 9 (Minneapolis: Bulletin of the University of Minnesota, 1917), 9, 27n2; Abel, *Tabeau's Narrative*, 70n30; Denig, *Five Indian Tribes of the Upper Missouri*, 44, 45.

on the west bank—were centers of Mandan life until the smallpox epidemic of 1781. They also built villages north at the mouth of the Knife River next to a Hidatsa-speaking group, the Awatixas.[23]

Arikara traditions also describe a slow expansion up the Missouri River. Perhaps because conditions were slightly drier in present-day South Dakota, they built settlements on a much longer stretch of the river. By the early 1500s, they were living in villages along 250 miles of the river valley, from the White River confluence to the mouth of the Grand River. In the 1530s or 1540s they built an unfortified village in the middle of this territory, between the Bad and Cheyenne Rivers. Known as the Sully site, it would become the largest Arikara settlement in South Dakota and was probably the home of villages that combined after disease, raids, and changing environmental conditions in the Little Ice Age had combined to reduce their populations. Arikara bands would occupy the Sully site until the early 1700s.[24]

Sometime in the 1500s, another group of migrants would join the Arikaras and Mandans on the upper Missouri River: the Hidatsas-proper and Awaxawis, whose relatives the Awatixas were already living at the Knife River. The two groups of Hidatsa speakers had formerly lived in the Devil's Lake area. The Hidatsas-proper built the village known as Big Hidatsa on the north side of the Knife River, across from the Awatixa Hidatsa village known

[23] For the Mandan migration upriver, see Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 14-22; Stanley A. Ahler, "Plains Village Cultural Taonomy for the Upper Knife-Heart Region," in *The Phase I Archeological Research Program for the Knife River Indian Villages National historic Site, Part IV: Interpretation of the Archeological Record*, ed. Thomas D. Thiessen (Lincoln: Midwest Archeological Center, National Park Service, 1993), 101–2.
[24] Mark D. Mitchell, *Crafting History in the Northern Plains: A Political Economy of the Heart River Region, 1400–1750* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2013), 16, 95; Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 23–24, 33–34; Johnson, *Middle Missouri Plains Village Sites*, 185, 188.

as Lower Hidatsa. The Awaxawis built villages farther to the south, in the Painted Woods region.[25]

Although Hidatsas have their own accounts of this migration to the Missouri Valley, Mandan traditions emphasize the Hidatsas' unfamiliarity with the Missouri River. According to a Mandan man named Mark Mahto, who provided information about Mandan history to anthropologists in the 1950s, the Mandan people first saw the Hidatsas-proper when they appeared on the other side of the Missouri around the mouth of the Knife River. The Hidatsas apparently had no word for the Missouri River, nor did they have any bullboats—the coracles that Mandans made out of bison skins and willow trees. The Hidatsas called across the river for help crossing it. "If the Hid[atsas] had known how to cross," Mahto stated, "they [would] not have hollered. The way they acted proves that they are not river inhabitants." The Mandans thereafter called this new group the Minnetarees, meaning "to cross the water."[26]

This oral history provides a glimpse of the Mandans' newfound territorial power on the upper Missouri River. Positioned along a continental divide, they could regulate the travel of people across the Plains. It also suggests that the retrieved power from the river not only by collecting resources but also by using the river to achieve mobility. Most accounts of Mandan and Arikara travel on the Missouri River date to the period after they had acquired horses, and the extent and modes of their travel on the river in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are not totally known. If the Canadian explorer Baron de Lahontan did in fact reach their villages in the 1680s, then the Arikaras and Mandans were building and employing

[25] Alfred W. Bowers, *Hidatsa Social and Ceremonial Organization* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 15-23; Johnson, *Middle Missouri Plains Village Sites*, 139, 191; Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 21–22; Frank Henderson Stewart, "Hidatsa," HNAI 13, 1: 329.

[26] "Traditions of Hollering across the Mo. River," Mark Mahto (Mandan) and Carl Sylvester (Mandan-Hidatsa and Hidatsa speaker), 1950/1951, Harrington Collection, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, www.collections.si.edu. An earlier account of the Hidatsa-Mandan encounter appears in Matthews, *Ethnography and Philology of the Hidatsa Indians*, 34.

dugout canoes on the Missouri. Before epidemics decimated their populations, they might have been able to devote the time necessary to acquire and manufacture dugout canoes.[27] As archaeologist Mark Mitchell notes, Mandan specialists worked in all aspects of material culture. According to one of two different Mandan creation stories, the Mandan people emerged from an area near the mouth of the Mississippi River, and they built and used large boats. Their first leader was a man named Good Furred Robe whose "first accomplishment" was to build a canoe "that understood what he told it." His boat "was holy" because it could carry twelve people and move "by its own power." Dropping rabbit hides and meadowlark breasts to sooth troubled waters, the Mandans used Good Furred Robe's boat to cross a large lake and trade for shells from a leader named Maniga, who commanded a large and powerful nation. But trips in the "boat that was holy" eventually ended. The boat itself sailed "down the river to the white people . . . and has never been seen since."[28]

Mandans, Arikaras, and other northern Plains groups regarded boats like Good Furred Robe's canoe as objects of power: they granted their owners the power to move in ways that others could not. Whether or not they were using dugout canoes, by the mid-eighteenth century Arikaras and Mandans were navigating the river and achieving power in bullboats—in Mandan, the *mína:ki*$^{\prime I}$ (sun/moon), and in the Arikara language, the *nakú·h* (round boat). Alexander Henry, who visited the Mandan and Hidatsa villages in the summer of 1806,

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[27] It is perhaps more likely that Lahontan visited Omaha, Otoe, Ioway, or even Cheyenne settlements west of the Mississippi. His arrival at a lake at the end of the Long River would suggest northern Iowa or Minnesota. For recent appraisals of Lahontan's voyage, see Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 42–44, 350n23; W. Rayond Wood, "A Review of Past Criticism and the Baron Lahontan's Mapping of His Long River," November 2006, 64th Annual Plains Anthropology Conference, Topeka, KS, paper draft accessed online at www.academica.edu. Lahontan's unpublished map of the Mississippi River, which he provided to Spanish officials during a residency in Spain in 1699, suggests that he drew from Otoe informants to illustrate the Platte River and Pawnee/Apache territories, and it casts additional doubt on the veracity of his narrative account. See "Mappa del río Missisipi. Dedicada al Exceleo Señor Duque de lovenazo, por su servidor don Armando de Arce, Barón de Lahontan, 1699," Mapas y Planos, Archivo General de Indias, accessed online at pares.mcu.es.

[28] They called the boat the I'dEHE, or "to go with." See Witte and Gallagher, *North American Journals*, 3:175–76; Bowers, *Mandan Social and Ceremonial Organization*, 156, 360–61; Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 4–5.

shortly before Lewis and Clark returned to the Missouri River, reported that the Mandans constructed the circular boats out of materials that were readily available in the river valley: fresh bison skins; strips of rawhide; and red willows, a pioneer tree species that grew on newly exposed sandbars and riverbanks.[29] They were not only less costly to build than dugout canoes but also much more portable. In 1950, when he visited the Fort Berthold Reservation, the anthropologist Harrington paid a Mandan elder named Crows Heart to build him a bullboat. According to Harrington, Mandan builders attached the outer skin (with hair left on) of a fresh skin to the bottom of the frame. The tail of the skin indicated the back of the boat.[30]

Like Canadian and American fur traders, Arikaras and Mandans used the Missouri River to maximize carrying capacity and transportational efficiency. Bullboats were typically four-feet wide and two feet deep, but they could carry heavy loads. In 1806 Alexander Henry expressed surprise at the "great weight that one of those slender vessels would carry." When he crossed the river with the Mandan leader Šehékšot (White Coyote) in 1806, the bullboat held himself, another trader, and two hundred pounds of baggage. He speculated that "our Canoe or Dish could have supported at least 100 lbs more."[31]

Although American explorers defined the Missouri as a site of masculine mobility and power, the upper Missouri was a place where indigenous women achieved mobility.

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[29] Thiessen, "A New Transcription of Alexander Henry's Account," 78. When they encountered buffalo herds, they used the skins of the animals to make bullboats, sometimes dozens at a time. See Brackenridge, "Journal of an Expedition," 115. For an account of a Hidatsa war party constructing forty bullboats, see "The Burning of the Earth," in Martha W. Beckwith, *Mandan-Hidatsa Myths and Ceremonies* (New York: American Folk-Lore Society, 1937), 83-84. For use of bullboats by the Missourias, see "Journal of the Voyage," in Norall, *Bourgmont*, 161; by the Pawnees, see 21 July 1804, JLC 2:403.

[30] "New Materials on the Coracle of the Mandan Indians" (unpublished typescript) and "Bullboat" notes, John Peabody Harrington Papers, Smithsonian Institute, www.collections.si.edu.

[31] Thiessen, "A New Transcription of Alexander Henry," 78 (quotations). Writing in the 1850s, the fur trader Edwin said a single woman could carry a bullboat "on the run." Denig, *Five Indian Tribes of the Upper Missouri*, 52.

Existing accounts again date from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but women were primarily responsible for shipping supplies on the river. Even in single bullboats, they could conduct hundreds of pounds of bison meat, corn, and timber downriver. American travelers frequently witnessed Arikara and Mandan women transporting loads of timber and bison meat downriver. During the flood season, when the speed of the river current increased, they could transport supplies even more quickly across the Plains. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when Arikara and Mandan populations were substantially larger, the number of these shipments on the river was probably even higher.[32]

The average distance of travel was also most likely longer. Americans documented Arikara and Mandan transportation networks after the smallpox epidemic of 1781, which destroyed the landscape of territorial power in the upper Missouri Valley. Before 1781, Mandans and especially Arikaras controlled much longer sections of the Missouri River. In addition to shipping supplies downriver, they likely used the river to visit villages downriver. Mandans living at the Knife River could travel relatively quickly for twenty-five miles downriver to reach villages on the southern frontier of Mandan territory. Arikaras could travel for even longer distances on the river. Nearly 250 miles separated the villages at the northern end of Arikara settlement at the Grand River from the settlements at the Big Bend and White River. Only the villages at the Grand River, which were closest to the Heart River villages of the Mandans, were fortified. The other villages were dispersed and unfortified, suggesting that the Arikaras had consolidated their hold on the Missouri River in South Dakota and could move freely along the river. Like American military officials who

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[32] For the increase in current velocity during floods and corresponding speed of river navigation, see O'Brien, "Steed-Kisker," 69.

established posts along the river, Arikaras used the Missouri to connect and unite distant parts of their territory.

Although they were traveling within their territories, Arikaras and Mandans who visited neighboring villages were still crossing political borders. Mandan navigators who traveled downriver or even across the river approached the villages of foreign divisions. In the 1500s and 1600s, four Mandan divisions—the Nuitadi, Istope, MananarE, and Awigaxa—lived in communities on the west bank. A fifth division—the Ruptare—lived in settlements on the east bank of the Missouri: Double Ditch Village and Larson Village. About twenty miles downriver, on the west bank, Nuitadi Mandans built On-a-Slant village and three other settlements. Traffic moved down and across the Missouri River between the villages: archaeologists have recovered evidence that these separate villages traded with one another. Before the epidemic of 1781, Arikaras were divided into ten to twelve different bands and villages that controlled different sections of the river valley and even spoke different dialects of the Arikara language. Travelers from the Grand River villages who moved downriver to the Big Bend entered a different region of Arikara territory.[33]

River navigation held not only economic costs and benefits but also political and religious meanings. Following the smallpox epidemic of 1781, Arikaras used the river to communicate with ancestors and maintain contact with ancient village sites. In the spring, to ensure good harvests and prosperity, they dedicated ceremonies to Mother Corn, who had instructed them how to grow corn. Before the Mother Corn ceremonies, they conducted a ceremony to the Holy Cedar Tree, a symbol of longevity that had stood outside their holy lodge and witnessed events and ceremonies of the previous year. In order to affirm their connection to the past, they tied children's worn moccasins to the Holy Cedar Tree before a

[33] Mitchell, *Crafting History on the Northern Plains*, 16, 95; Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 23–24, 33–34.

priest place it in the river channel, where it floated downstream to inform their ancestors that they protected traditions and welcomed future generations. The Holy Grandmother Cedar passed more recent Arikara village sites and then more ancient villages farther downriver, "carrying to each of them the message of the Arikara people that their tribe still lives, and they still perform the ancient rites and faithfully celebrate the festivals as did their people in the ancient times."[34] At the conclusion of the Mother Corn ceremonies, the main officiant took a stalk of corn representing Mother Corn, dressed her in a piece of calico, and sang a farewell song in an "archaic" form of Arikara before Mother Corn began a journey down the Holy Water to her ancient homeland in the south. By traveling downriver, Mother Corn would tell the ancients that the Arikaras remained faithful to traditional ceremonies and teachings.[35] For the Arikara people, travel downriver was a journey into the past, and the river channel itself delivered messages from present generations to their ancestors.

Although travel downriver granted power to navigators, river crossings demanded time and energy. Like other difficult activities, Mandan river crossings depleted individual *xo'pini*, or power, which could be subsequently restored through fasting, generosity, and ceremonies.[36] Travel on the river was dangerous. Snags and debris filled the river channel, and people who fell into the channel could be quickly swept under. During floods, the river outgrew its banks to widths of five or six miles, making ferriage even more time-consuming and laborious. In the 1730s, a group of Mandans told a French explorer that below the Heart

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[34] See Melvin R. Gilmore, "Arikara Agriculture," Gilmore Papers, American Indian Studies Research Institute, Indiana University, accessed online at www.indiana.edu/~aisri/projects/gilmore.html ("carrying") [hereafter Gilmore Papers, AISRI].
[35] Melvin R. Gilmore, "Information on the Divine Gift of Corn to the Arikara," 1925, p. 28–29, Gilmore Papers, AISRI; Star's "Origin of the Arikara," in George A. Dorsey, *Traditions of the Arikara* (Washington DC: Carnegie Institution, 1904), 22–23.
[36] Bowers, *Mandan Social and Ceremonial Organization*, 335; and Fenn, *Encounters at the Heart of the World*, 105–6.

River, the Missouri "is so wide that from one side one cannot see land on the other."[37] Navigators encountered the "thalweg" (the deepest part of the river, where the flow moved more quickly), slower-moving and shallower channels, whirlpools, and chutes.[38] White travelers repeatedly testified to the difficulty of the river crossing. After he had crossed the Missouri, Canadian trader Alexander Henry wrote that a "stranger would scarcely dare to venture his life in them to cross such a deep and rapid streem [*sic*]." In 1832 the American Fur Company evacuated Fort Tecumseh, at the mouth of the Bad River, because the "'river was wide . . . and crossing difficult,' and "'three and four days at a time the high winds, low waters and quicksands closed all communication with the other bank.'"[39]

In order to assure safe crossings, Mandans and Hidatsas dedicated ceremonies to the water gods: snakes, turtles, otters, and other spirits that inhabited the Missouri River and its tributaries. The seven water gods, like their adversaries the sky gods, had the power to create thunder and lightning. The division of powers above and below had connections to Mississippian gods. The early leader of the Mandans, Good Furred Robe, kept a robe that depicted the Missouri River as a "huge snake" that centered the Mandan world, a representation that captures the potential deadliness and sinuosity of the river itself. Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara traditions offer similar accounts of the chief water god, a figure named Grandfather Snake. According to the Mandan tradition of the Old Woman Who Never Dies, which informed one of two different Mandan corn ceremonies and determined the contents of sacred bundles, two men who had visited a woman on an island in the ocean encountered a snake blocking their path on the journey home. One of the men ate it and turned into a snake

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[37] G. Hubert Smith, *The Explorations of the La Vérendryes in the Northern Plains, 1738-43*, ed. W. Raymond Wood (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 57 ("cannot see").
[38] *The Missouri River Ecosystem: Exploring the Prospects for Recovery* (2002), 56–57, 62, accessed online at www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=10277&page=65.
[39] See Thiessen, "A New Transcription of Alexander Henry," 78 ("streem"); Wishart, *Fur Trade*, 56 ("closed").

himself. He told his traveling companion to place him in the Missouri River, and announced that his people should throw four corn balls into the water and pray to him whenever they crossed the river.[40]

Toward the end of the summer Okipa ceremony, which recounts the earliest history of the Mandan people, the person selected to impersonate Lone Man threw knives from the ceremony into the Missouri River as an offering to the Grandfather Snake. Invoking the story of the Old Woman Who Never Dies, participants in the Okipa also placed corn balls in the river.[41] When they approached the river itself, travelers made offerings to Grandfather Snake to ensure safe crossings. The person who related the story of the Old Woman Who Never Dies to the anthropologist Alfred Bowers, the wife of Good Bear, testified that she had "often" thrown corn balls into the water and that people made offerings when crossing the river "so that the snake would protect them."[42] In the early 1830s, Hidatsa war parties made offerings to the large snake living in the Missouri by attaching bison robes to poles that they planted in the water.[43]

Arikaras also made offerings to a "water monster" or snake in the Missouri River. In the early and late twentieth century, Arikara elders related stories about a man who had become a snake that inhabited the Missouri River. The man announced, "'Whenever you set out on the warpath, they must say, 'Brother, let us cross safely! Let no one drown!' I will heed your words." Travelers thereafter made offerings of corn and dried meat to the snake to ensure they would cross the river safely. The snake, which asked to face west, could bring

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[40] Bowers, *Mandan Social and Ceremonial Organization*, 150.
[41] Bowers, *Mandan Social and Ceremonial Organization*, 150.
[42] Witte and Gallagher, *North American Journals*, 3:223-24; Bowers, *Mandan Social and Ceremonial Organization*, 184, 187, 197–98, 199 (quote), 341. For Mandan stories about snakes in the Missouri, see Witte and Gallagher, *North American Journals*, 3:194.
[43] For Hidatsa offerings to the Missouri River, see Witte and Gallagher, *North American Journals*, 3:223–24; Beckwith, *Mandan-Hidatsa Myths and Ceremonies*, 83.

good fortune to supplicants. Arikara women may have been especially responsible for ceremonies dedicated to the Grandfather Snake. One of the two known Arikara women's societies is the "River Snake" or "Creek" society, whose dances mimicked the movement of a snake. Not much is known about its membership or purpose, but its name suggests a connection to water spirits and possibly to river navigation.[44]

Inherited by sons from their fathers, the Grandfather Snake bundles—and the corresponding Missouri River bundles in Hidatsa communities—granted Mandan and Hidatsa owners the right to conduct ceremonies to Grandfather Snake and the other water gods. The bundle owners also possessed the rights and knowledge to construct bullboats. "Bullboat-making rites" passed from one generation to the next along with the bundle. When someone wanted to build a bullboat, they had to pay the Grandfather Snake or Missouri River bundle owner for the right to build one, and the resulting exchange was made in the form of a song. The bundle owner performed a sacred song "belonging to the bullboat" that promised safe passage on the river. The listener repeated the song and prayed to Grandfather Snake when building his or her own bullboat.[45] In one of the few known accounts of Arikara bullboat construction, a French Canadian trader who lived in the Arikara villages in 1795,

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[44] For early twentieth-century Arikara accounts of offerings to the snake for safe crossings, see Dorsey, *Traditions of the Arikara*, 72, 78-80. For late twentieth-century accounts, see Douglas R. Parks, ed., *Traditional Narratives of the Arikara Indians: Stories of Alfred Morsette*, vol. 3 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 250-53; and Douglas R. Parks, *Traditional Narratives of the Arikara Indians: Stories of Other Narrators: English Translations*, vol. 4 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 620-22, 623 (quote), 712-13. For the River Snake society, see Robert H. Lowie, "Societies of the Arikara Indians," *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History* 11, no. 8 (1915): 645–78, 676; and Douglas R. Parks, "Arikara," in HNAI 13, pt. 1: 377–78. A water monster in the Missouri River, the "Wonderful River," was one of the chief gods of Skiri Pawnee doctors. The serpent conducted a man to an animal lodge underneath the river where different animals imparted secrets. Skiri Pawnee doctors visited animal lodges on the Missouri River. See James R. Murie, *Ceremonies of the Pawnee, pt. 1: The Skiri*, ed. Douglas R. Parks, Smithsonian Contributions to Anthropology 27 (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1981), 39; James R. Murie, *Ceremonies of the Pawnee, pt. 2: The South Bands*, ed. Douglas R. Parks, Smithsonian Contributions to Anthropology 27 (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1981), 228, 266-68 (identified as a "Skiri story"), 290.

[45] Bowers, *Hidatsa Social and Ceremonial Organization*, 358, 371, 372 ("belonging").

Jean-Baptiste Trudeau, reported that women made bullboats. These women learned and perhaps purchased rights to build bullboats in their own communities.[46]

With the endorsement of Grandfather Snake, Mandans, Hidatsas, and Arikaras crossed and navigated the river. In addition to making offerings for safe crossings, they developed navigational expertise and knowledge of the river channel at a young age. Because they could not fight the current directly, bullboats often landed a short distance downstream when parties were crossing the river. Henry remarked that Mandan travelers, in order to land where they needed to, would first carry their boats upriver "upon their heads or slung upon their Backs" to a departure point. Women typically paddled by kneeling at the front of the boats and using a reshaped piece of cottonwood driftwood as a paddle (known in Mandan as a *íwaxa.ka*), which was about 3.5 feet long and had a ten-inch blade. As it proceeded across and down the channel, the pliable bullboat could swirl around obstructions and eddies. Later accounts document how Hidatsas navigated choppy water in high winds: navigators would hold on to the gunwales of neighboring boats, creating flotillas that could proceed through wind gusts.[47]

The navigational expertise of Arikara, Mandan, and Hidatsa women impressed American travelers. Approaching an Arikara village in 1804, William Clark saw three Arikara women guiding bullboats full of meat through "waves . . . as high as I ever Saw them in the Missouri." The American boat pilot Thomas James, who traveled upriver in 1809, saw

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[46] For bullboat construction by Arikara women, see Fernand Grenier and Nilma Saint-Gelais, eds., *Jean-Baptiste Trudeau sur le haut Missouri (1794-1796)* (Québec: Septentrion, 2006), 129. Trudeau called the boats "boucauts de peaux de boeufs."

[47] Thiessen, "A New Transcription of Alexander Henry," 78 (quotations); "New Materials on the Coracle of the Mandan Indians" (unpublished typescript) and "Bullboat" notes, Harrington Collection, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian. For a detailed account of a Hidatsa hunting party's trip downriver in the late 1860s, which includes diagrams of bullboat flotillas, see Gilbert L. Wilson, *The Horse and the Dog in Hidatsa Culture*, Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History 15, pt. 2 (New York: American Museum Press, 1924), 295–97.

Mandan women who "rowed themselves across the turbulent river, one moment lost from view between the waves, and the next, riding over them like corks." Writing in the 1850s, the fur trader Edwin Denig observed flotillas of "fifty, sixty, or a hundred canoes [bullboats] . . . , all loaded, manned or womaned by a single paddler, plying their way even in high wind down the rapid and dangerous current of the Missouri."[48]

By cultivating this expertise over time, these women accrued individual power: the ability to move quickly and safely along a dangerous river. Collectively, these navigators contributed to Arikara and Mandan territorial power and helped them establish and maintain transportation and communication networks in the river valley. Arikara, Mandan, and Hidatsa couriers also enlisted the river as a road during winters, when it froze over. The frozen Missouri was a long corridor through snowbound and impassable prairies. After running messages between Fort Pierre and Fort Union in the winter of 1847-48, the Scots trader Andrew Dawson described the Missouri as a "mile wide in many places, and running on an average 6 miles an hour being entirely frozen over for 1000s of miles to the thickness of 4 feet." Traders used sleighs on the river to travel between posts during the winter. Arikara, Mandan, and Hidatsa travelers moved in the shelter of the river valley to maintain local and regional communication networks during cold winters on the northern Plains[49]

In addition to traveling along the river itself, Arikaras, Mandans, and Hidatsas were also using the river watershed to achieve mobility and travel across the Plains. They

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[48] For Clark, see entries for early October 1804, DJLC 3:146–47, 149, 155 ("waves"). For Henry, see Thiessen, "A New Transcription of Alexander Henry's Account," 80 ("stranger"). For James, see Thomas James, *Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans*, ed. Walter B. Douglas (Saint Louis: Missouri Historical Society, 1916), 30. For Denig, see Denig, *Five Indian Tribes of the Upper Missouri*, 52.

[49] Andrew Dawson to Grace Scott Dawson, 28 May 1848, *Far-Off Wild Land*, 185-86. For use of sleighs, see John C. Luttig, *Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri, 18121813*, ed. Sylvia M. Drumm (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society, 1920), 104; 12 December 1804, DJLC 3:256. For Lewis and Clark's "hydraulic geometry" and measurement of "bankfull width," see John A. Moody, Robert H. Meade, David R. Jones, *Lewis and Clark's Observations and Measurements of Geomorphology and Hydrology, and Changes with Time* (Reston, VA: U.S. Geological Survey, 2003), 75.

identified and controlled the best pathways across the watershed—drainage divides and trails that minimized the work of travel. By the early 1600s, Arikaras controlled the major pathways across the western Plains: the drainage divides between the White, Bad, Cheyenne, Moreau, and Grand Rivers to the west; and Crow, Medicine Knoll, and Swan Creeks to the east. In the mid-sixteenth century, Arikaras established a settlement known as Swan Creek just below the mouth of the Moreau River, a Lakota fording site. The Sully village sat directly across from the Bad River/Cheyenne River drainage divide, a pathway to the Black Hills. Arikara villages at the Big Bend sat at the head of the White River/Bad River drainage divide, which provided a direct east-west route to the Black Hills. Traders and hunters could also travel northeast up Medicine Knoll Creek to reach a long north-south corridor along the James River watershed.[50]

Mandans also controlled trails leading out from the river corridor through the greater watershed. They made pilgrimages to religious sites on distant sections of tributaries: Medicine Rock, along the Cannonball River in present-day Grant County, North Dakota; Eagle Nose Butte in Morton County, North Dakota; and, even farther west, Buffalo Home Butte along the Little Missouri River. Located along the drainage divide between the Little Missouri and the headwaters of the Heart and Knife Rivers—a pathway south into present-day Wyoming—Buffalo Home Butte was a place where Mandans could find blue clay to use as paint. Other sites were east and north of the river, including Dog Den Butte was north of the Missouri River. Mandans also communicated their territorial control of the Missouri watershed through eagle-trapping. Before they abandoned the Heart River country, they claimed eagle-trapping rights in the "rough lands" west up the Cannonball, Heart, and Knife Rivers to the Little Missouri, and across this river to the Powder River country. Their eagle-

[50] Johnson, *Middle Missouri Plains Village Sites*, 186–93.

trapping ceremonies describe the drainage "divide" between the Cannonball and Grand Rivers. According to Crows Heart, the primary informant of the anthropologist Alfred Bowers, the Mandans had even trapped eagles on the north side of the Black Hills. Eagle-trapping parties visited a few hills and buttes east of the Missouri River.[51]

By positioning themselves along the river, the Mandans could access sacred sites and hunting grounds across the Plains and collect a diverse set of resources. In Scattercorn's account of Mandan origins, the Missouri River itself was a continental divide that formed out of a giant ocean when the First Creator and Lone Man created different types of land on either side of it. The First Creator filled the first woman's side of the river—the west—with ravines, springs, and game, while Lone Man made the east side flat and filled it with timber and lakes. The bowl and stem of the calumet pipe represented both sides of the river. If the pipe ever became whole, "there would have been no Missouri River."[52]

In order to collect resources from even more distant points on either side of the river, Mandans as well as Arikaras cultivated trade relations with surrounding Indian nations. Archaeologist Mark Mitchell describes the sixteenth-century Mandan trading network at the Heart River as a "reorientation" from Mississippian trade to multidirectional trade: shells from the Pacific gradually replaced those from the Gulf Coast, and lithic material started arriving more frequently from the west than downriver. While Mandan ancestors had made

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[51] Mitchell, *Crafting History in the Northern Plains*, 69, 78. For eagle-trapping sites outside the river valley, see Bowers, *Mandan Social and Ceremonial Organization*, 208, 210-13. For Medicine Rock, see entry for 21 February 1805, in DJLC 3:299; Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 205–6; and Wendi Field Murray, "Feathers, Fasting, and the Eagle Complex," *Plains Anthropologist* 56, no. 218 (spring 2011), 143–53, 147. For Buffalo Home Butte and other landmarks, see Bowers, *Mandan Social and Ceremonial Organization*, 125, 171–72, 253; Bowers, *Hidatsa Social and Ceremonial Organization*, 12; Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 117–20; and Linnea Sundstrom, "Sacred Islands: An Exploration of Religion and Landscape in the Northern Great Plains," in *Islands on the Plains: Ecological, Social and Ritual Use of Landscapes*, ed. Marcel Kronfeld and Alan J. Osborn (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2003), 282–83, 287.

[52] Bowers, *Mandan Social and Ceremonial Organization*, 30, 113, 353; W. Raymond Wood and Lee Irwin, "Mandan," HNAI 13, 1:359.

pilgrimages to Cahokian polities in the Mississippi Valley, by the late sixteenth century, people were traveling long distances to reach them, not the other way around. The Mandans called their new home at the mouth of the Heart River the "heart of the world"—the literal North American crossroads, only about a hundred miles from the geographical center of North America.[53]

People delivered resources from all over the Plains to trade for the corn of the Arikaras and Mandans, who profited by reselling goods as middlemen. Different Indian nations delivered bison products, Dentalium shells from the Pacific Coast, and obsidian. Trade routes reached the Missouri from the site of the Shoshone rendezvous in present-day southwest Wyoming, the Southwest, and the Canadian Plains.[54] By the early eighteenth century, the Assiniboines traveled hundreds of miles from Lake of the Woods and Lake Winnipeg to visit the Mandans and trade for corn during the fall harvest—visits that French missionaries noted as early as 1736.[55] In 1738, when La Vérendrye visited the Mandan villages with the Assiniboines, he received a gift of corn and tobacco from the Mandans and reported that it was the their "custom . . . to provide food freely for all who visited them, selling only the corn taken away."[56]

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[53] For the Mandan shift away from Mississippian trade, see Mitchell, *Crafting History in the Northern Plains*, 86–88; and Mitchell, "Conflict and Cooperation in the Northern Middle Missouri," in *Plains Village Archaeology*, 166–67. The Mandan villages sat roughly at the "economic limit" of travel to and from the confluence region—that is, at the point where it was no longer economically feasible to carry commodities downstream to the Illinois region for trade. See Little, "Inland Waterways in the Northeast," 66. For the "heart of the world," see Fenn, *Encounters at the Heart of the World*.
[54] W. Raymond Wood, "Plains Trade in Prehistoric and Protohistoric Intertribal Relations," in *Anthropology on the Great Plains*, ed. W. Raymond Wood and Margot Liberty (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 99–100; John C. Ewers, "The Indian Trade of the Upper Missouri before Lewis and Clark: An Interpretation," *Missouri Historical Society Bulletin* 10, no. 4 (1954): 430–31; Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 18; and Theodore Binnema, *Common and Contested Ground: A Human and Environmental History of the Northwestern Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 60.
[55] Will and Hyde, *Corn among the Indians of the Upper Missouri*, 175–76.
[56] See Lehmer, "Plains Village Tradition: Postcontact," 249–50; and Smith, *Explorations of the La Vérendryes*, 52.

Like New Cahokia, however, the Mandan and Arikara villages on the upper Missouri River emerged not only as economic centers but also as influential centers of political and religious thought in Native North America. The upper Missouri Valley was the probable birthplace of the calumet ceremony, a political mechanism that established fictive kinship relations between trade partners and foreign parties. Native traditions identify Caddoan-speaking peoples as the progenitors of the calumet ceremony. Although it possibly originated in Wichita communities, around AD 1300 Pawnees and Arikaras living along the Missouri in present-day northeast Nebraska began crafting a distinctive pipe out of catlinite, a red stone that can only be found at a quarry in present-day southwest Minnesota. Emerging out of the ashes of the Cahokian world, the calumet ceremony spread west to Apachean peoples on the western Plains and east to Oneota peoples in the Upper Mississippi Valley.[57]

By the 1500s, the Arikaras had left Nebraska and the Souian migrants—Omahas, Ioways, and Otoes—were controlling the distribution of catlinite from Blood Run, a massive 1200-acre settlement in present-day northwest Iowa that sat in-between the quarry and the Missouri River. Omaha traditions record Blood Run as an important gathering place for the Cheyennes and Arikaras, who traded obsidian for catlinite and Dutch runtee shells, which the Omahas received through a Huron-Odawa-Ioway trade network. The Otoes and Ioways also traded at Blood Run and may have traded catlinite to their Missouria relatives living at the

[57] Donald J. Blakeslee, "The Origin and Spread of the Calumet Ceremony," *American Antiquity* 46, no. 4 (fall 1981): 759–68, 763–64; J. T. Penman and J. N. Gundersen, "Pipestone Artifacts from Upper Mississippi Valley Sites," *Plains Anthropologist* 44, no. 167 (February 1999): 47-57, 52, 55; and Thomas E. Emerson and Randall E. Hughes, "De-Mything the Cahokia Catlinite Trade," *Plains Anthropologist* 46, no. 176 (May 2001): 157. According to Omaha traditions, the Arikaras introduced them to the catlinite pipe ceremony. See Eric Buffalohead, "Dhegihan History: A Personal Journey," *Plains Anthropologist* 49, no. 192 (November 2004): 327–43, 333.

Utz site in present-day Carroll County, Missouri, where archaeologists have uncovered the stone.[58]

Anthropologists recorded a detailed description of the Omaha calumet ceremony, which they called the Wa-wa*n*. The visiting party, which initiated the Wa-wa*n*, packed gifts and bundled the objects necessary for completion of the ceremony, including two pipes and tobacco, in a wildcat skin. The presence of this bundle signaled that the party was traveling for purposes of peace, not war. It secured their safe passage to the foreign village; if they saw a Wa-wa*n* party ahead, war parties would make a wide detour to avoid them. A runner, called by the Omahas the "Ni-ni-a-thi*n*," went ahead to the host's camp circle with four others to propose the Wa-wa*n* ceremony.

During the four-day-long ceremony, the hosts exchanged trade goods for items brought by the "father," including the wildcat-skin bundle and pipes. The return journey of the Wa-wa*n* party could be dangerous because they no longer carried the pipes. As opposed to war parties, which donned white paint and white headbands for camouflage in prairie grass in the late summer and winter, trade parties did not try to move secretly through enemy

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[58] Dale R. Henning, "The Archeology and History of Ioway/Oto Exchange Patterns," *Journal of the Iowa Archeological Society* 50, no. 1 (2003): 199–221, 213; Dale R. Henning and Thomas D. Thiessen, "Dhegihan and Chiwere Siouans in the Plains: Summary and Conclusions," *Plains Anthropologist* 49, no. 192 (November 2004): 591–601, 595–96, 598–600; Robert T. Bray, "The Utz Site: An Oneota Village in Central Missouri," *Missouri Archaeologist* 52 (December 1991), 133–35; and Fletcher and La Flesche, *Omaha Tribe*, 1:76–78. For the Cheyennes in the seventeenth century, see Joseph Jablow, *The Cheyenne in Plains Indian Trade Relations, 1795–1840* (Reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 3. For the Otoe and Ioway role in the catlinite trade, see Colin M. Betts, "Oneota Mound Construction: An Early Revitalization Movement," *Plains Anthropologist* 55, no. 214 (2010): 103; Louis André, 10 April 1676, in Reuben Gold Thwaites, *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, vol. 60 (Cleveland: Burrows Brothers, 1899), 202; and Pierre Le Sueur, "Suite du Missisipi depuis les Tamarois," 1700, p. 76, Claude Delisle Papers, 2JJ, SH, BANQ-Québec. For the presence of catlinite in the Utz Site on the Missouri River, see O'Brien and Wood, *Prehistory of Missouri*, 352–53. The Omahas and Poncas, who pushed the farthest north, later recognized their new homes near the Missouri River as a one-time Arikara territory.

territory. The Wa-wa*n* bundle granted them greater mobility in what might otherwise be enemy lands.[59]

By the late 1600s, the calumet ceremony was facilitating down-the-line trade along most of the Missouri River. The Mandans had adopted the calumet ceremony from the Arikaras, and everyone else in the river corridor practiced calumet diplomacy, including peoples far downriver.[60] Accompanied by women and children to signal peaceful intentions, Missouria and Little Osage leaders carried the red catlinite pipes to the Illinois villages in order to trade for food and French trade goods. According to a French officer who served in the Illinois Country in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Pierre-Charles Deliettes, these two nations waited until they were five or six miles outside the Illinois villages to send ahead their "best known people to announce their arrival, how many they are, and to whom they come to sing the calumet." They sang the calumet for four nights to a person they recognized as a "chief," or father. During their songs, they shook the calumet pipe, made of red pipestone "that is found in the direction of the Sioux" and covered with feathers painted yellow, red, and black.[61]

Through down-the-line trade, the Missouri connected disparate parts of the Native world. In spite of temporary hostilities, everyone traded with neighbors in the river valley.

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[59] Alice Fletcher, "The Wawan, or Pipe Dance of the Omahas," in *Reports of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology*, vol. 3 (Cambridge MA: Board of Trustees of Harvard University, 1887), 308, 311, 331–32; Tanis Thorne, *The Many Hands of My Relations: French and Indians on the Lower Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri, 1996), 44.

[60] Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 37. When the Kanzas met Bourgmont in 1724, they welcomed him with "large calumets that signified peace" and referred to themselves as his "children" and him as a "father." See Norall, *Bourgmont*, 126–27. For an extended description of the calumet ceremony in Arikara villages, see the full journal of Jean-Baptiste Trudeau in Grenier and Saint-Gelais, *Jean-Baptiste Trudeau*, 139–42.

[61] Theodore Calvin Pease and Raymond C. Werner, *The French Foundations, 1680–1693*, Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library 23 (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1934), 389–90, 391 (quote). For the presence of women and the elderly in Missouria and Osage trade parties, see Jacques Gravier, 15 February 1694, in Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, vol. 64 (Cleveland: Barrow Brothers, 1900), 159, 168–69 (quote). For the identification of the Osages as the Little Osages, see Burns, *History of the Osage People*, 10.

There was regular movement between Mandan and Arikara communities as a result of trade and probably intermarriage. The two peoples exchanged pottery, and Arikara-style homes appeared in Mandan communities.[62] Arikaras, in turn, traded with the Omahas, who traded with the Otoes and Ioways, who maintained close contact with their Chiwere-speaking relatives, the Missourias. By the late seventeenth century, the Osages and Missourias were making annual trips downriver to the Mississippi Valley to trade with Illinois peoples, who controlled the mouth of the river.[63] Trade goods like flint from the Knife River and red catlinite from the Pipestone Quarry in present-day southwest Minnesota traveled along the length of the river valley.[64] Instead of having to travel the length of the river themselves, Indians could receive exotic goods from their closest neighbors. The longest river in the continent, the Missouri channeled economic and political power across Native America.

The calumet ceremony also facilitated trade across the Missouri watershed, into present-day Iowa and Minnesota. Ioways and the Sioux used the calumet ceremony to transmit and acquire resources. In 1676, a Jesuit reported that the Ioways lived in a large village but were poor, "for their greatest Wealth consists of ox-hides and Red Calumets." The Sioux also probably crossed present-day Minnesota to visit the Arikara settlements on the

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[62] Mitchell, *Crafting History in the Northern Plains*, 86–88; and Mitchell, "Conflict and Cooperation in the Northern Middle Missouri," 166–67.

[63] Deliette, "Memoire par concernant le pays Illinois," p. 353–55, Valdec Memoires, Newberry Library. Antoine-Denis Raudot explained that war never persisted long between the Illinois and the Missourias or Osages because the Missouri nations needed trade goods. See Raudot qtd. in Brett Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slaveries in New France* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 169.

[64] Archaeologists recovered both materials from the Utz Site, the Missouria settlement in present-day Saline County, Missouri. See Henning and Thiessen, "Summary and Conclusions," 598; O'Brien and Wood, *Prehistory of Missouri*, 353.

Missouri River. In the late 1600s, they informed a French military official that the "Panys" (Arikaras) had received the calumet ceremony as a gift from the sun.[65]

The calumet ceremony established the Arikaras in present-day South Dakota as the ultimate continental middlemen and brokers and as influential political thinkers. Paradoxically, a measure of their power and authority in the late 1600s and early 1700s was the frequency with which they contributed captives to emerging French Canadian markets. Sitting directly across the prairies from the Great Lakes, the Arikara villages were targets of Sioux, Ioway, and Illinois raids. The name "Arikara" is itself possibly an Illinois Algonquian term adopted by French Canadian traders in the Illinois country.[66] Scholars have rightly emphasized that many of the "Panis" slaves in Canada were not Pawnees or Arikaras at all. Yet the adoption of "Panis" as an identifier for Indian slaves from the West (the other common term—"Padouca"—identified Apaches and, by the late eighteenth century, Comanches) acknowledges the economic and political weight of the Pawnees and especially the Arikaras.[67]

By the 1670s, Illinois were regularly raiding the Osages and Kanzas, and they also traveled even farther up the Missouri River.[68] In 1684, after suffering a raid by the Iroquois, the Illinois survivors "went upstream" on the Missouri River, where their "allies," the Missourias, lived, to "go to war with the Pana to take their women and children to replace those taken from them by the Iroquois." They defeated the Pawnees and brought back captured women and children downriver. The Pawnees were "not warlike" and easily

[65] Louis André, 10 April 1676, *Jesuit Relations* 60:202; and Pierre Le Sueur, "Suite du Missisipi depuis les Tamarois," 1700, p. 76, Delisle Papers, 2JJ, SH, BANQ-Québec. For the Arikaras and the calumet ceremony, see account of Nicolas Perrot in Emma H. Blair, *Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley and Region of the Great Lakes*, 2 vols. (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark, 1911-12), 1:186.
[66] See "aricara-" in Jacques Gravier, Dictionary of the Algonquian Illinois Language, 1700, Watkinson Library, Hartford, CT, accessed online at archive.org. The exact meaning of the Illinois term is unclear.
[67] Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance*, 163; White, *Roots of Dependency*, 152.
[68] See Perrot's account in Blair, *Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley*, 2:74, 108–9.

"surprised."[69] The Illinois continued raiding the Kanzas and Pawnees for at least the next twenty or thirty years.[70] In 1701 the Seminarian missionary Louis-Marc Bergier noted that the Kanzas were "greatly diminished" after losing in a few months nearly one hundred people to slave raids, and the "war is not finished."[71] In 1710, Antoine-Denis Raudot wrote that the Illinois traveled up the Missouri River to "carry off entire villages."[72] Farther upriver, Ioways also waged war on the Arikaras.[73]

By the 1690s, French Canadian traders were also trying to profit from the Arikara settlements. They first started reaching the mouth of the Missouri River in the late seventeenth century, and they identified the river as the natural extension of well-traveled eastern waterway networks. After Samuel de Champlain founded Québec in 1608 and Montreal in 1642 to serve as collection depots in the fur trade, the Hurons and then the Odawas traveled in large flotillas of one hundred canoes or more down the St. Lawrence and Ottawa Rivers to deliver furs to French merchants, who shipped them overseas to hat manufacturers in France. In order to transport furs, Champlain advocated the use of Indian canoes because they granted traders speed and portability for portaging. Although they had initially prioritized ease of construction, speed, and portability over carrying capacity, the Hurons began building larger canoes to accommodate heavier loads of beaver pelts. Following the Dutch-supported Iroquois attack of 1649, the Odawas replaced the Hurons as

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[69] See Minet, "Voyage Made from Canada Inland Going Southward during the Year 1682," in Weddle, Morkovsky and Galloway, *La Salle, the Mississippi, and the Gulf*, 35, 38, 40 (quote), 63.

[70] Deliette, "Memoire par concernant le pays Illinois," 20 October 1721 [c. 1700–1710], p. 353–55, Valdec Memoires, Newberry Library. For an English translation, see Pease and Werner, *French Foundations, 1680–1693*. For earlier dating of Deliette memoire, see Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance*, 167n51.

[71] Bergier to Tremblay, 3 July 1703, Lettres R no. 62, La correspondance précieuse, Fonds Séminaire de Québec, Centre de référence l'Amérique française, Musée de l'Amérique francophone, Ville de Québec, Canada [hereafter CRAF]. Another missionary, Jean François Buisson de Saint-Cosme, reported that the Illinois were at war with the Kazsas on the Missouri. Saint-Cosme to Laval, March 1700, Lettres R no. 29, La correspondance précieuse, Fonds Séminaire de Québec, CRAF.

[72] Qtd. in Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance*, 168.

[73] Delise's notes from interview with Le Sueur, 1702, f. 96, Delisle Papers, 2JJ, SH, BANQ-Québec.

the primary middlemen in the fur trade and delivered furs from western peoples who were "'not expert at managing canoes.'"[74]

In the late seventeenth century, when the threat of the Iroquois made it too dangerous for the Odawas and other middlemen to deliver furs to Québec and Montreal, Frenchmen started going out to transport beaver pelts themselves. By the 1660s, a growing number of young men from Montreal pursued economic as well as social opportunity in the western Great Lakes fur trade. Trading without official licenses, or *congés*, the *coureurs de bois* lived in Indian communities and often married Indian women. Their legal counterparts, *engagés*, worked under contract and provided the official labor force for merchants in Québec and Montreal.[75]

Recognizing the Illinois as gatekeepers to the Missouri corridor, French traders as well as missionaries established communities in the confluence region by the end of the seventeenth century. The Bishop of Québec granted letters patent to the Jesuits in 1690 to establish a mission near La Salle's Fort St. Louis in the Illinois Country. Eight years later, he awarded the Mississippi Valley and neighboring nations to the Séminaire de Québec, a branch of the Societé de missions étrangeres. In 1698 three missionaries from the Séminaire de Québec and the Societé de missions étrangeres arrived in the Illinois Country after crossing the Great Lakes and descending the Illinois River: François de Montigny, Antoine Davion, and Jean François Buisson de Saint-Cosme. Louis-Marc Bergier replaced Montigny in 1699.[76] The two orders jockeyed for influence in the region, and the Seminarians assumed

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[74] Susan Sleeper-Smith, Introduction to *Rethinking the Fur Trade: Cultures of Exchange in an Atlantic World* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), xxv–xxvii, xxviii (quote); Edwin Tappan Adney and Howard I. Chapelle, *Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of North America*, U.S. National Museum Bulletin 230 (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1964), 10.
[75] Sleeper-Smith, *Rethinking the Fur Trade*, xxix–xxx.
[76] Marcel Giraud, *A History of French Louisiana, vol. 1: The Reign of Louis XIV, 1698–1715* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974), 54–55.

rights to the Missouri Country. They established the Tamaroas mission among the Cahokia Indians, closer to the mouth of the Missouri River, while the Jesuits stationed themselves at Kaskaskia. Their missions formed the nucleus of the first two French settlements on the upper Mississippi River, just below the mouth of the Missouri River: Cahokia and Kaskaskia.[77]

By the spring of 1701, thirty or forty coureurs de bois, including some officers who had deserted their posts, and a small group of Jesuit and Seminarian missionaries were living in the Illinois Country at the new settlements of Cahokia and Kaskaskia.[78] For the local missionaries and traders, the reportedly large settlements of Pawnees and Arikaras on and above Platte River quickly emerged as a potential source of furs and converts.[79] These Caddoan-speaking peoples had evidently escaped the worst ravages of the epidemics that struck the Illinois Country and pays d'en haut in 1675 and 1701 and decimated the population of the Missourias.[80] In reports to his superiors in Québec, the Seminarian missionary Louis-Marc Bergier advocated missionary work among the Skiri Pawnees on the Platte River and

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[77] Giraud, *History of French Louisiana*, 1:26–27, 33–34, 45, 49.

[78] Bergier to Abbé Tiberge, 15 April 1701, Lettres R no. 45, La correspondance précieuse, Séminaire de Québec, CRAF.

[79] A Skiri Pawnee ("Panimaha") slave also reported that his people lived in a "fort" and went out on hunts; and that they were at war with the "Blacks"—a possible reference to the Wichitas or Osages, who wore black paint when they attacked enemies. See Bergier to Jean-Baptiste de La Croix de Chevrière de Saint-Vallier, 13 March 1702, Lettres R, no. 50, La correspondance précieuse, Fonds Séminaire de Québec, CRAF. For the identity of the "Blacks," see Burns, *History of the Osage People*, 34. For Bergier's map of the Pawnee and Arikara settlements, see Louis-Marc Bergier, Map of the Missouri River [1699-1707], Polygraphie 9, no. 43, Les missions, Fonds Séminaire de Québec, CRAF. A less detailed map from the same period identifies Indian settlements on the right bank of the river: three villages of the Osages, then three villages of the Kanzas, two villages of the "Panimaa," and finally three villages of the "Panibougea." "Plan de la rivière du Mississippi et du Missouri," [1705], Polygraphie 9, no. 41, Les missions, Fonds Séminaire de Québec, CRAF.

[80] For estimated times for the abandonment of the Utz Site, see Robert T. Bray, "European Trade Goods from the Utz Site and the Search for Fort Orleans," *Missouri Archaeologist* 39 (December 1978): 1–75, 6, 12. For the 1675 and 1701 epidemics in the Great Lakes, see R. David Edmunds and Joseph L. Peyser, *The Fox Wars: The Mesquakie Challenge to New France* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 6, 15–16.

the Kanzas because the Missourias and Osages "have recently been diminished by sickness,"[81] and the Missourias were "nearly reduced to nothing."[82]

Because water carriage was the cheapest method of conducting bulk transportation, French colonial officials, traders, and missionaries defined the Missouri River as the principal road and commercial thoroughfare to the Kansas, Arikaras, and other nations beyond the Missourias and Osages. In 1700 Henri Tonty, who accompanied La Salle during his expedition down the Mississippi, estimated that it would take twenty-one days of navigation to reach the 500 cabanes of the "Panimas" and an unknown amount of time from them to the "Paniboucha"—the Arikaras, who were the "most numerous" nation on the Missouri.[83]

But the powerful Illinois peoples controlled access to the Missouri corridor, and with their allies and trade partners the Missourias and Osages, they regulated and ultimately circumscribed French mobility on the river. Like traders across eastern North America, the first Canadian traders in the Missouri Country married into Illinois communities to gain access to the Missouri Country. At the Cahokia mission, Bergier complained about the "libertinage" that "reigns among these Coureurs de bois, of whom many pass whole years

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[81] "On pourroit ceder facilement Les ozages et Missoury aux RR. PP jesuites qui sont dans l'entre deux plus prés d'icy. Ces deux derniers nations ont esté diminuées depuis peu par la maladie, & sont reduiter a peu de chose." Bergier to Saint-Vallier, 13 March 1702, Lettres R, no. 50, La correspondance précieuse, Fonds Séminaire de Québec, CRAF.

[82] Compared to the Kansas and Panimahas, he said, "Les ozages ne sont pas si considerables, et les miss8ris sont Presque reduits a rien." Bergier to his "chez Pere" [Saint-Vallier], 4 May 1702, Lettres R, no. 53, La correspondance précieuse, Fonds Séminaire de Québec, CRAF. As a reflection of these population declines, he attributed only one hundred "cabanes," or mat-covered long houses or wigwams, to the Missourias, two hundred fewer than the Kaws and the Osages, on his map of the Missouri Valley, which he drew sometime between 1699 and 1707. See Bergier, Map of the Missouri River, Les missions, Fonds Séminaire de Québec, CRAF. For the lodging of the Missourias, see Mildred Mott Wedel, "Claude-Charles Dutisné: A Review of his 1719 Journeys," *Great Plains Journal* (Winter 1972): 4-25, 16.

[83] Tonti estimated that it took fifteen days to reach the "300 cabannes" of the Osages; three days from the Osages to the Kansas, who numbered "300 cabannes"; and another three days from the Kansas to the "Panimas," who had "500 cabannes"; and an unknown amount of time from them to the Arikaras. See "Extrait d'une lettre de M. de Tonti," 28 February 1700, Delisle Papers, 2JJ, SH, BANQ-Québec.

without a missionary" and "without sacraments, mass, instruction, and no knowledge at all of festivals, Sundays, Fridays, Saturdays," and "even publicly" married Indian women.[84] These traders moved throughout the confluence region by marrying Illinois women and learning Illinois, which was the lingua franca of the early Missouri fur trade.[85]

In addition to marrying Native women, Canadians established fictive kinship relations through the calumet ceremony. Early travelers appealed to the diplomacy of calumet ceremonialism by planting calumet pipes at the front of their boats and granting gifts to political leaders. Before his visit to the Essanapes (possibly the Mandans), Lahontan identified himself as a peacemaking "father" by setting calumet pipes at the prows of the expedition boats as they ascended the Missouri River toward a village.[86] Similarly, the English explorer Jonathan Carver fixed a calumet pipe at the head of his canoe when he ascended the Minnesota River into Sioux territory.[87] Lahontan and Carver identified navigation as the work of achieving free passage through foreign territories. Bourgmont practiced calumet diplomacy throughout his expedition to the Apaches in 1724. When he arrived at the Kanza settlements, the Kanzas carried "their large calumets that signified

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[84] "le libertinage qui rene parmi ces Coureurs de bois, dont plusieurs passants les années entieres sans missionaire par Consequent sans sacrements, sans messe, sans instruction, ne connoissent plus ny festes ny dimanches, ny vendredys, ny samedys, ny careine, et menants une vie toute animale s'abandonnent a aller tous nus comme les sauvages, jusques meme a prendre publiquement des Sauvagesses pour femmes." This violated the order of the king from 28 April 1697 "leur enjoint de se retirer dans la colonie du Canada, et leur fait tres expresses inhibition de faire aucune Traitte ou Commerce avec Les Sauvages sous peine Des Galeres. Cett'ord. a esté publié en Canada et dans Les missions." Bergier to Abbé Tiberge, 15 April 1701, Lettres R no. 45, La correspondance précieuse, Fonds Séminaire de Québec, CRAF. French-Indian marriages would remain a question mark for French missionaries in the Illinois country. Sebastien-Louis Meurin, the last eighteenth-century Jesuit missionary in the Illinois country, wondered whether the marriages of traders with Indian women from distant nations on the Missouri and Des Moines Rivers were valid. See Sebastien-Louis Meurin to Briand, 14 June 1769, in Robert Boucher, ed., *Lettres de Sebastien-Louis Meurin, 1767-1777* (n.p., 1987).

[85] For the use of Illinois by interpreters, see Lahontan, *New Voyages in North America*, 202; and the statement of St. Ange, Quenel, and Gouïn, 2 January 1724, f. 219, vol. 4, C13A, Archives des colonies, Correspondance générale-Louisiane, Archives nationales de France, reel 4, *Louisiana Colonial Records Project* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1970). For a detailed analysis of communication in Illinois by Jesuit missionaries, see Robert Morrissey, "'I Speak It Well': Language, Cultural Understanding, and the End of a Missionary Middle Ground in Illinois Country, 1673-1712," *Early American Studies* 9 no. 3 (Fall 2011): 617-48.

[86] Lahontan, *New Voyages*, 1:184.

[87] Jonathan Carver, *Travels Through the Interior Parts of North-America* (London: J. Walter, 1778), 81.

peace."[88] A Kanza chief later made a speech in which he called Bourgmont "My father." Stating his hope that Bourgmont would include the Kanzas in his expedition, he asked him to accept his gifts and "believe that we are your children."[89]

Following Bourgmont, traders who wanted to navigate the Missouri River safely and freely embraced their roles as ceremonial "fathers" and granted gifts to secure safe passage. In 1783, when Auguste Chouteau and another St. Louis merchant accused him of violating their license for trade with the Republican Pawnees and Kansas and giving them gifts on behalf of the Illinois commandant, the trader Josef Lameune Martiny attributed an older history to the practice of granting gifts on the Missouri. Martiny defended his appeal to the "father" by stating it was the norm on the Missouri: if the Indians "do not allow him to pass or make trouble, the custom is to make them a present in the name of their father, so that to avoid any trouble and ensure the trade. If this is a crime, it is general among all the traders since the time of the discovery of the Missouri."[90] Trade parties routinely granted gifts to Indian nations on the Missouri River as they were ascending the river.

The custom of granting gifts to secure free passage through Indian territories on the Missouri River persisted well into the nineteenth century. In 1811, when he ascended the river, Henry Marie Brackenridge described how his escort left gifts for the Omaha leader Big Elk even though the chief was away from his village on the Missouri at the time. According to Brackenridge, leaving presents was a "piece of etiquette . . . never omitted without giving offence" by Missouri River navigators.[91] Tolls and gift-giving on the Missouri continued into

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[88] Norall, *Bourgmont*, 126–27.
[89] Norall, *Bourgmont*, 132.
[90] Testimony of Antonio Venzant, 7 June 1783; and testimony of Josef Lemuene Martiny (quote), 13 June 1783, folder 12, box 1, Litigation Collection, Missouri History Museum Library and Research Center, St. Louis.
[91] See Brackenridge, "Journal of a Voyage," 84.

the steamboat era of the 1840s and 1850s, when boat captains gave food and tobacco to groups of Omahas, Sioux, and Arikaras in the river valley.[92]

Yet tolls and gift-giving would get traders only so far on the river. In September 1702, the reports of itinerant coureurs de bois and Indian slaves in the Illinois Country encouraged a group of nine Canadians to mobilize an expedition to the Skiri Pawnees, who lived three hundred leagues upriver. The following March, another seventeen traders in the village of Cahokia ascended the Missouri on a mission to build a fort among the Otoes, Ioways, and Skiri Pawnees, near the Platte River. Lobbying for support from his superior in Québec, Bergier noted that the traders wanted to take a missionary with them because these "nations are the most numerous, and perhaps most disposed to receive the gospel."[93]

Over three months after the traders headed upriver, however, Bergier tempered his expectations. As he wrote to his superior, "We have not had any news of the French who left the last year for the Panimahas, except that they have been pillaged. The seventeen who left this March have failed" to reach the Skiri Pawnees, and have been "forced to throw themselves on an island and fortify themselves there" by the "Pez," or Peoria Illinois Indians.[94] Some of the Frenchmen returned downriver from the "Pani8ngha" in October 1703. They reported to Bergier that the Pawnees had "ten or eleven villages on or near the Missouri River around three hundred leagues" from Cahokia. But the traders said it was too

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[92] See Mark H. Bettis, ed., *For Wood and Water: Steamboating on the Missouri River from St. Louis to Fort Union, Dakota Territory, 1841-1846: A Collection of Journals by Captain Joseph A. Sire* (Villa Ridge, Missouri: Marhbet Productions, 2000), 47, 55, 87, 94.

[93] Bergier to abbé Tremblay, 24 September 1702, Lettres R no. 57; and Bergier to abbé Jacques de Brisacier, 10 March 1703, Lettres R, no. 60, La correspondance précieuse, Séminaire de Québec, CRAF. Translations by author.

[94] "Nous n'avons encore point de Nouvelles des francois qui partirent l'année der. pour les Panimahas, si ce n'est qu'on dit qu'ils ont esté pillés. Les 17. qui partirent ce mois de mars ont faille a l'[?] aussi par La Pez, et ils furent contraints de se jetter dans une isle, et de s'y fortifier." Translation by author. Bergier to Tremblay, 3 July 1703, Lettres R no. 62, La correspondance précieuse, Séminaire de Québec, CRAF. For the identification of the "Pez" as Peorias, see Charles Callender, "Illinois," in *Handbook of North American Indians, vol. 15: Northeast*, ed. Bruce G. Trigger (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), 680.

dangerous for a missionary to go upriver: "almost continuous wars prevail among all the nations who seek to destroy one another, which makes it unstable . . . the hunt will be very difficult to conduct there, and a missionary will only survive there with great difficulty." Abandoning his plans for the Missouri Country, Bergier discouraged other missionaries from heading upriver.[95]

French officials nevertheless imagined the Missouri River as a pathway to the west and a place of free and regular movement. They believed it led not only to furs but also to mineral wealth, a potentially lucrative trade with New Mexico, and the mythical Sea of the West, a corridor to Asia. French officials and Louisiana's promoters imagined the Missouri as a new Seine or Loire River—a waterway that would define the limits of French territory.[96] They asserted territorial sovereignty on the river by gathering information about its navigability and potential as a road, mapping it, and attempting to regulate trade by granting monopolies and licenses with individual Indian nations. In the spring of 1714, the French explorer Bourgmont ascended the Missouri and wrote a detailed navigational log entitled "The Route to Be Taken to Ascend the Missouri River," which he sent to French cartographers. Bourgmont relayed information about the contours of the river itself: in a day-by-day account, he measured the precise distances and amounts of travel time between small

[95] "Quelques François revenues depuis peu des Pani8ngha ont rapporté qu'il y avoit dix a onze villages de cette nation a environ 300 lieües d'icy, su, ou prés de la Riviere des Miss8ris; Mais outre les guerres Presque continuelles qui regnent parmy toutes Les nations qui cherchent a se detruire Les unes les autres, ce qui fait qu'elles ne sont pas stables, le bois, et La chasse y seroint tres difficiles a avoir, et un missionaire ne pourroit qu'avec grande peine y subsister." Translation by author. Bergier to abbé Henri-Jean Tremblay, 18 October 1703, Lettres R no. 63, La correspondance précieuse, Fonds Séminaire de Québec, CRAF.
[96] For early projections about the Missouri River, see De la Salle to Bienville, 16 October 1708, and "Extrait du Mémoire du S. de Mandeville … sur la Louisiane" (1709), vol. 2, C13A, r. 2, *Louisiana Colonial Records Project*; Dartaguiette to unknown, 10 June 1710, in BLC, 10; "Memoire pour la découverte a faire de la Mer de l'ouest drossé et presenté en Avril 1718 par Mr. Bobé prestre de la Congregation de la Mission," p. 138–39, Valdec Memoirs, Newberry Library, Chicago; and "Memoire des connoissances que les. Beranger a tirées et la Province et la Louisianne," in Valdec Mémoires, Newberry Library, Chicago. For the North American West in the French imperial imagination, see Paul W. Mapp, *The Elusive West and the Contest for Empire, 1713-1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 145–258.

tributaries and islands up to the mouth of the Platte River in arpents and fractions of leagues. Nearly every day of his voyage upriver, Bourgmont had to negotiate islands or shallow and impeded channels. Projecting the river as part of greater Louisiana, Bourgmont minimized the presence of Indians in his navigational log: he noted only a "painted boulder," a place where unidentified Indians mined lead, and the locations of the Missouria and Pawnee villages in four of his daily entries. When he stopped—probably at Indian villages—he simply wrote "Halted."[97]

By indicating how far he traveled each day of his ascent and erasing most encounters with Indians, Bourgmont estimated rates of speed and travel that imperial officials could use when planning later expeditions upriver. He imagined the river as a place of free and regular—if slow—movement. His "Route Taken to Ascend the Missouri" reached the royal geographer at Versailles, Guillaume Delisle. In 1718, based on Delisle's maps of the Missouri country, Louis XV declared that the Missouri River composed the northern border of French Louisiana: the borders of the colony were the English Carolinas to the east, New Mexico to the west, and "to the north the Missouri and the Illinois Country."[98]

French officials hoped the Missouri River would join a network of waterways that connected their expansive North American commercial empire, which by 1719 extended from the St. Lawrence Seaway to the mouth of the Mississippi River. In 1712 a cash-strapped Louis XIV had granted Antoine Crozat a trade monopoly over Louisiana. Five years later,

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[97] "The Route to Be Taken to Ascend the Missouri River," in Norall, *Bourgmont*, 115; and Marc de Villiers du Terrrage, *La découverte du Missouri et l'histoire du Fort d'Orléans (1673-1728)* (Paris: Librarie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1925).

[98] Francois le Maire to Guillaume Delisle, 19 May 1719, and (for the borders of Louisiana) Jean Bobé to Guillaume Delisle, 27 May 1718, Delisle Papers, 2JJ, SH, BANQ-Québec. See also Memoire sur la Loüisiane, Par F. LeMaire, prestre Parisien, Missionaire Apostolique et Grand Vicaire de Mgr. l'Eveque de Kébec, 1718," f. 159-60, vol. 2, C13C, r. 66, *Louisiana Colonial Records Project*; Marcel Giraud, *A History of French Louisiana, vol. 2: Years of Transition, 1715-17* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 15-17; and Norall, *Bourgmont*, 21–23.

Crozat transferred his trade privilege to the Scotsman John Law's Company of the West, which attempted to transform lower Louisiana into a tobacco colony that would rival Virginia. The colony's promoters envisioned the Mississippi River as the commercial highway for commodities to the Gulf of Mexico. In early 1718, the governor-general of the colony, Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, founded New Orleans on the river to serve as a commercial hub on the Mississippi. The following year, one of his relatives, Pierre Dugué, Sieur de Boisbriant, ascended the Mississippi River to begin constructing Fort de Chartres in the Illinois Country, which the crown placed under the jurisdiction of Louisiana.[99]

After the founding of Fort de Chartres in 1719, royal convoys moved regularly on the Mississippi between New Orleans and the Illinois Country. Moving downstream, pirogues could reach New Orleans in thirteen days. Merchants also traveled regularly from the Illinois Country to Canada.[100] The Mississippi River and Great Lakes linked an expansive French commercial network between lower Louisiana and Québec.

In the early 1720s, French officials attempted to extend this network up the Missouri River, mainly in order to check Spanish incursions across the Plains. Following the ill-fated Villasur Expedition of 1720, which was itself a response to rumors of French activity on the Plains, Louis XV supported an expedition up the Missouri to investigate contact between the Pawnees and the Spaniards, establish a post up the Missouri, and join the Missouri nations in

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[99] For Louisiana's administration, see Lawrence N. Powell, *Accidental City: Improvising New Orleans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 24-31, 39, 42-43; and Mathé Allain, *"Not Worth a Straw": French Colonial Policy and the Early Years of Louisiana* (Lafayette: University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1988), 67. For Illinois, see Carl J. Ekberg, *French Roots in the Illinois Country: The Mississippi Frontier in Colonial Times* (Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 34–35.
[100] Clarence Walworth Alvord, *The Illinois Country, 1673–1818* (Springfield: Illinois Centennial Commission, 1920), 213–14.

an alliance with their Apache enemies and thereby open trade with New Mexico. The veteran explorer of the Missouri country, Bourgmont, would lead the expedition.[101]

Bourgmont reached the Missouria and Little Osage villages at mouth of the Grand River on 30 October 1723. He was initially optimistic about his rate of travel. The Seminarian missionary Jean-Paul Mercier, whom Bourgmont recruited at the Cahokia mission to accompany the expedition partly because of his fluency in Illinois, wrote from the Missouria village that "the boats that one believed would not be able to enter into the Missouri River are ascending easily and will even be able to ascend with the same ease until the Kansas and beyond, according to the opinion of M. de Bourgmont, who as your Greatness knows is perfectly familiar with all these new countries."[102] In the winter of 1723/24, on the river's northwest side, across from the Missouria and Little Osage villages and south of present-day Carrollton, Missouri, Bourgmont began construction of a small post called Fort d'Orléans.[103] Situated at the outer limit of the navigation network of the Mississipi's confluence region, the post could theoretically protect traffic on the river and serve as a base for expeditions upriver and into the Plains.

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[101] "Mémoire pour le sieur de Bourgmont approuvé par S.A. Royale," in Margry, *Découvertres et établissements*, 6:389; and "Instruction pour le dit Bourmont," 17 January 1722, Bourgmont File, Chicago History Museum Research Center. For the Villasur Expedition, see Alfred Barnaby Thomas, ed., *After Coronado: Spanish Exploration Northeast of New Mexico, 1696-1717* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1935); and Christopher Steinke, "Leading the 'Father': The Pawnee Homeland, Coureurs de bois, and the Villasur Expedition of 1720," *Great Plains Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (Winter 2012): 43-62. For the plunder from the expedition, see Martha Royce Blair, *The Ioway Indians* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979), 30.

[102] Jean-Paul Mercier to Dominique-Marie Varlet, 27 November 1723, "At the village of the Miss8ris," in Pierre Hurtubise, "Relations inédites des missions de l'Illinois," *Eglise et Théologie* 8, no. 2 (May 1977): 280-81. Translation by author. For Mercier's recruitment, see Thaumur de la Source, at the Cahokia Mission, to Dominique Marie-Varlet, 3 March 1724, in Hurtubise, "Relations inédites des missions de l'Illinois," 287.

[103] For the location of Fort d'Orléans relative to the Missouria and Little Osage villages as well as Arrow Rock, see Dumont de Montigny, *Plan du cours de la R. des Missoury, avec le Fort d'Orleans etablis par les Francois, ou M. de Bourgmont ch. de l'ordre de St. Loüis comm., avec La situation des Villages Sauvages, le cours des Rochers, La situation des isles*, c. 1726, photostat, Karpinski Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago. The original has disappeared from the Archives nationales de France. For the river crossing and the fort's situation in relation to the Indian settlements, see Bourgmont to the Compagnie des Indes, 2 January 1724, f. 12, vol. 8, C13A, r. 8, *Louisiana Colonial Records Project*.

Yet Bourgmont struggled to navigate the river above the lower Big Bend. In June 1724, strong currents delayed the arrival of the pirogues at the villages of the Kanzas, who grew "annoyed" at the delay. Another pirogue that Bourgmont sent up to the Otoe village partially capsized, forcing its crew to return downriver. After crossing the Plains to the visit the Apaches, the expedition returned to the Missouri River on November 1. He and six Frenchmen descended the river in a pirogue, while four Frenchmen joined the Missourias in the bullboats. He reached Fort d'Orléans on 5 November 1724. Mercier returned with Bourgmont downriver to the Cahokia mission later that month.[104]

In 1726 Bourgmont's sergeant died in an attack by unknown assailants, who also pillaged his boat, stealing all of the merchandise he had purchased in the Illinois. He may have been one of the eight victims of an attack by a Fox war party on traders who were ascending the Missouri to reach Fort d'Orléans in late 1726 or early 1727.[105] The Foxes would continue to pick off traders who were ascending the Missouri River. Louisiana officials quickly withdrew support for Fort d'Orléans and ordered its evacuation. In 1727, the Compagnie des Indes deemed the fort "absolutely useless." Missionaries joined the military in abandoning the Missouri Country.[106] In the late 1740s, the French government sponsored

[104] For navigational difficulties during the Bourgmont Expedition, see "Journal of the Voyage to the Padoucas," in Norall, *Bourgmont*, 126–27, 128, 131, 133-39, 161. For Bourgmont's trail, see Louis Houck, *A History of Missouri* (Chicago: Donnelley and Sons, 1908), 1:223. Mercier reported later that he had served as a priest in the Missouri Country from the end of 1723 until November 1724. See Mercier to Lyon, 25 May 1732, no. 43, Les missions, Fonds Séminaire de Québec, CRAF.

[105] The sergeant, Du Bois, "est tué avec ses Gens en montant audit missoury [et] sa voiture pillee par led ennemis et toutes la marchandises qu'il pouvoit avoir achettées Icy emportées." See legal document on Françoise and Louis Marin in the Kaskaskia Collection, MHMLRC. This lengthy undated document discusses the property rights of the children from the marriage of Françoise and Du Bois. For the possible role of the Foxes, see Natalia Maree Belting, *Kaskaskia Under the French Regime* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1948), 33n30; and BLC, 23. Dumont de Montigny states erroneously that the Missourias massacred Dubois and the French at Fort d'Orléans. See Dumont de Montigny, *Mémoires historiques sur la Louisiane* (Paris: Bauche, 1753), 78; and Villiers, *La découverte du Missouri*, 118-19.

[106] For official indictments of Fort d'Orléans, see Directors of the Compagnie des Indes to Perrier and de la Chasse, 27 October 1727, f. 91-92, vol. 11, C13A, Archives Nationales, r. 11, *Louisiana Colonial Records Project*; and "Memoir on Louisiana, the Indians and the Commerce that Can Be Carried On with Them," 1726,

the construction of another post, Fort de Cavagnial, at the mouth of the Kansas River. Yet the difficulty and cost of navigating the Missouri left it isolated for most of the year.[107]

Throughout the eighteenth century, French Canadian traders would struggle to even reach the Platte River, let alone the Arikara villages in present-day South Dakota. They compared the the Platte River to distant oceanic thresholds. As late as 1811, French Canadian traders regarded the mouth of the Platte River as "a point of as much importance, as the equinoctial line amongst mariners." Boatmen who passed the Platte for the first time had their heads shaved as a sign they had finally entered "what is called the Upper Missouri," where the "open bare plains . . . prevail" and a "close wood is not to be seen." Even in the mid-nineteenth century, the Platte River remained a benchmark for traders—a place where, "as at sea, the Neptunian tribute was exacted of all pork-eaters (mangeurs de lard), as all were styled who visited the desert for the first time. No one could escape."[108] These voyageur rituals testify to the sheer difficulty of reaching the Platte River, which was over six hundred miles up the Missouri River.

Even as Canadian traders were approaching the Platte River, however, horses began expediting travel to and from the upper Missouri River and reinforcing its centrality in indigenous networks of exchange and communication. After Bourgmont traveled up the Missouri in the fall of 1723, he purchased horses from a group of Kanzas who visited the

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in Dunbar Rowland and Albert Godfrey Sanders, eds., *Mississippi Provincial Archives: French Dominion, 1704-1743* (Jackson, Mississippi: Press of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1932), 3: 514; BLC, 24. For the missionary abandonment of the Missouri country, see Mercier to Lyon St. Ferreol, 8 October 1732, no. 43c, Les missions, Fonds Séminaire de Québec, CRAF. For an optimistic assessment of the Seminary's potential in the Missouri Country, see "Memoire sur l'etablissment de la Mission des Tamarois de 1699 a 1724," p. 8, no. 26, Les missions, Fonds Séminaire de Québec, CRAF.

[107] See Charles Hoffhaus, "Fort de Cavagnial," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 30 no. 4 (winter 1964): 437.

[108] Brackenridge, "Journal of a Voyage," 77 ("equinoctial"); Hiram Martin Chittenden, *Life, Letters and Travels of Father Pierre-Jean De Smet*, 4 vols. (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1906), 2:644 ("Neptunian"). See also Stanley Vestal, *The Missouri* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), 30. For more on the travel rituals of Canadian *voyageurs*, see Carolyn Prodruchny, *Making the Voyageur World: Travelers and Traders in the North American Fur Trade* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005).

Little Osage and Missouria villages. The following summer, when he stopped at their villages on the Missouri (in present-day Doniphan County, Kansas) to buy horses for his expedition to the Apaches, the Kanza leaders rejected his initial offer because it was only half of what a party of Illinois Indians had offered the previous year.[109] Kanzas profited by regulating the exchange of horses across the Missouri River.

Equestrianism would transform not only the practice of mobility but also its politics—the ways in which Native peoples crossed riverine borders, surveyed the river, and defined rights of passage along it. Equestrianism and the fur trade granted Arikaras and Mandans new opportunities to control movement across the midcontinent and capture power, but they also quickly posed challenges. Equipped with horses, the Lakota Sioux would seize most of the upper Missouri River from the Plains villagers and begin traveling freely across the river itself.

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[109] Kanza women also owned and sold horses. When one of Bourgmont's officers enlisted his slave to steal a horse from the Kansas in the winter of 1723-24, "la femme canzé a qui appartenoit le cheval se prit a crier et pleurer disant nous avons promis ce cheval a l'ancien chef" (Bourgmont). Bourgmont to the Compagnie des Indes, 2 January 1724, f. 12, vol. 8, C13C, r. 8, *Louisiana Colonial Records Project*; Norall, *Bourgmont*, 131. For a report of Kanzas and Pawnees acquiring horses as early as 1700, see BLC 6.

2. Capturing Power: Plains Equestrianism, Cottonwood, and the River Blockade

At four or five in the morning on 8 April 1796, the Canadian trader Jean-Baptiste Trudeau heard a number of Brulé Lakota men calling to him from the other side of the Missouri River. Trudeau had spent the previous year living next to Arikara villages in present-day South Dakota, and the Brulés had already accused him of interfering with their own trade on the river. Certain that the Lakotas would kill him, Trudeau had prepared to flee downriver, purchasing the requisite willow poles, bison skins, and cords for bullboats and hiring Arikara women to build the vessels for him. He and one of his employees rowed over to an island, where they spent the day hidden in a willow grove. He watched the men build rafts, cross the river and inspect his previous campsite, and then land on the island where he was hiding. One of the search party came within one hundred feet of him. Trudeau and his employee eventually fled downriver in a small canoe.[1]

Trudeau was not the first nor last trader to narrowly escape a Lakota blockade on the Missouri River. When they descended the Missouri River in 1806, Lewis and Clark were surprised to encounter a Brulé war party under Medicine Bull near the mouth of the Niobrara River, seemingly in the territory of the Poncas and Omahas. Eighty to ninety men appeared on the opposite shore with a "great number of horses." Some of them dared the Americans to cross to the other side of the river.[2] In order to escape Lakota blockades, traders began travelling upriver at night. When he approached the territory of the Brulé Lakotas during an

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[1] Fernand Grenier and Nilma Saint-Gelais, eds., *Jean-Baptiste Trudeau sur le haut Missouri (1794-1796)* (Québec: Septentrion, 2006), 92, 95.
[2] Entry for 30 August 1806, in DJLC 8:329-30.

expedition upriver in 1811, the veteran Spanish trader Manuel Lisa ordered his crew to continue rowing in moonlight to avoid detection.[3]

Indian nations farther downriver—the Missourias, Little Osages, Kansas, and Otoes—had spent the eighteenth century levying their own blockades on the river, but for traders trying to reach the Mandan villages, the Lakotas presented a different kind of obstacle. Instead of building villages on the river, they set up temporary camps along it, surveyed it in war parties, and regularly crossed from one side of the river to the other. Their pervasive surveillance was a benefit of their decentralized political structure and investment in equestrianism. Equipped with horses, the Lakotas could pursue interlopers, monitor long stretches of the river, and maintain control over the river valley from afar. As Zebulon Pike wrote of the Lakotas, "they are here this day, 500 miles off ten days hence, and find themselves equally at home in either place, moving with a rapidity scarcely to be imagined by the inhabitants of the civilized world."[4] Even from camps or villages hundreds of miles away, the Sioux could project power in the Missouri Valley.

Horses collapsed "time-distance" in the river watershed and brought the surrounding world closer to the "heart of the world" and the Big Bend crossroads. Even as Spanish and American fur traders were enlisting larger crews to move more quickly up and downriver, Lakotas were traveling rapidly on horseback along roads and pathways across the Great Plains. By the early 1800s, they had established expansive territorial borders that contained most of the Missouri River in present-day South Dakota and extended from the headwaters of the White, Cheyenne, and Bad Rivers east across the Missouri to the James River, where they

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[3] Henry M. Brackenridge, "Journal of a Voyage, Up the River Missouri," in Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846*, vol. 6 (Cleveland, OH: Arthur H. Clark, 1904), 98.
[4] Elliott Coues, ed., *The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike, To Headwaters of the Mississippi River, Through Louisiana Territory, and in New Spain, During the Years 1805-6-7,* vol. 1 (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1895), 345.

communicated with Dakota and Yankton bands. Lakota bands were surveying a long stretch of the river—nearly three hundred miles, from the Niobrara River to the mouth of the Grand River and beyond. Although their transportation networks decreased in size compared to the expansive Lakota infrastructure, however, Arikaras, Mandans, and Hidatsas continued to retrieve mobility and power from the Missouri River and control passage across the river divide.

In late 1762, following defeat in the Seven Years' War, France transferred Louisiana and New Orleans to Spain and its other holdings east of the Mississippi to Britain.[5] The changeover coincided with a new commercial effort to exploit the Missouri River fur trade. In July 1763, the New Orleans firm of Maxent, Laclède and Company received an eight-year monopoly for trade in the Missouri Country north to the Minnesota River. Later that year, Pierre Laclède Liguest ascended the river with his partner Marie Thérèse Chouteau and her son, Auguste Chouteau. He placed his company's trade post a few miles below the mouth of the Missouri River on the Spanish side of the Mississippi. Chouteau, who was only fourteen or fifteen years old at the time, directed construction of the new post of St. Louis in early 1764. St. Louis thereafter emerged as a center of the upper Mississippi fur and slave trades.[6]

A few years passed before Spain and Britain claimed their new possessions on the Mississippi River, and interim French commandants governed the Illinois Country until the new officials arrived. In October 1765, the veteran French officer Louis St. Ange de Bellerive transferred the old French post on the east bank of the Mississippi River, Fort de

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[5] Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Random House, 2000), 504-5.

[6] For Indian slaves in St. Louis and Ste. Genevieve, see "Declarations Received by Pedro Piernas Concerning Indian Slaves at St. Louis," 12 July 1770, in Lawrence Kinnaird, ed., *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, Annual Report of the American Historical Association (Washington DC: GPO, 1946), 1:172-79 [hereafter SMV].

Chartres, to the British officer Thomas Stirling.[7] In September 1767, Lieutenant Governor Francisco Ríu arrived in St. Louis after traveling up the Mississippi River with forty-four troops and bearing instructions from Governor Antonio de Ulloa to build two forts at the Missouri River's mouth.[8] Ríu and his successors would try to regulate the burgeoning Missouri River fur trade by granting yearly licenses for exchange with specific nations, banning the liquor and slave trades, and demanding passports at Fort San Carlos in St. Louis.[9] On the stage of the court or hearing room, they performed legal sovereignty over the river—penalizing some traders by confiscating slaves and furs, issuing words of warning, and claiming ownership of the lands around the river.

They considered the Missouri River a Spanish property. Not only was it part of greater Louisiana, it also had "its source in the mountains of the New Kingdom of Mexico." The river and its tributaries only became valuable, however, if they were navigable "roads" of commercial and political expansion. Throughout their tenure in upper Louisiana, Spanish officials gathered information about the navigability of rivers on the Great Plains. In 1785 Governor Esteban Miro reported that the Missouri is "extremely swift and full of falls everywhere. Navigation on it is dangerous for this reason and because the palisades which enclose these falls make the current swifter, so that there is hardly a passage in low water for a canoe in the rapids. Its channel changes every year." He also noted whether the Missouri's tributaries were navigable and for how far: "fairly high water is needed" to reach the village of the Grand Osage on the Osage River; "in high water one can ascend [the Kansas River] to

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[7] William E. Foley and C. David Rice, *The First Chouteaus: River Barons of Early St. Louis* (Urbana-Champagne: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 7; Frederic L. Billon, *Annals of St. Louis in Its Territorial Days* (St. Louis: Nixon-Jones, 1888), 20-21.

[8] Gilbert C. Dinn and Abraham P. Nasatir, *The Imperial Osage: Spanish-Indian Diplomacy in the Mississippi Valley* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 59, 60.

[9] See, for example, Pedro Piernas ordinances, 5 August 1770 and 20 December 1772, Edward Graff Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago.

the village of the Republic" Pawnees; the Chato River, or Platte, "is more than half a league wide without being easily navigable"; and the Niobrara "is not navigable."[10] Later reports were even more detailed. Jean-Baptiste Trudeau, who conducted the first trade expedition of the Upper Missouri Company in 1794, noted that while the "largest pirogues" could navigate the upper Missouri "at all times," the "little flatboats, or barges, would be, . . . the most suitable conveyances for traveling there." Lower down, "masses of driftwood" called "enbaras" made navigation dangerous, and the water was more rapid.[11] The Missouri River was a difficult and changeable road: sandbars, *embarras* (uprooted and entangled trees), and shallow water made it a challenge to navigate. As Spaniards envisioned it, however, the Missouri could feasibly bring distant lands and peoples into the imperial orbit.

While Spanish officials were hoping to navigate the river, horses were accelerating indigenous transportation and communication networks within the Missouri watershed. Following the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, Indians across the Great Plains acquired horses. Isolated reports testify to the rapid adoption of the animal. In 1714 the French explorer Etienne Véniard, sieur de Bourgmont reported that the Kanzas and Pawnees were already "good horsemen," and by the mid-eighteenth century, the "boat people," the Missourias, were stealing horses from French posts and settlements.[12]

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[10] Miro to Rengel, 12 December 1785, BLC 121 ("changes"), 123 ("high water").
[11] Trudeau's Description of the Upper Missouri, 1796, BLC, 377.
[12] For the exchange of horses in the Rocky Mountain trade system, see Theodore Binnema, *Common and Contested Ground: A Human and Environmental History of the Northwestern Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma press, 2001), 86-94; Pekka Hämäläinen, "The Rise and Fall of Plains Indian Horse Cultures," *The Journal of American History* 90, no. 3 (December 2003): 833-62, 845, 859-60; Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 73-74; and Elizabeth A. Fenn, *Encounters at the Heart of the World: A History of the Mandan People* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2014), 156. For acquisition of horses by the Omahas and Poncas, see Alice C. Fletcher and Francis La Flesche, *The Omaha Tribe*, vol. 1 (Reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), 78-80; and Trudeau Journal, BLC, 286. For the Kanzas and Pawnees, see Frank Norall, *Bourgmont, Explorer of the Missouri, 1698-1725* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), 131; and Etienne Véniard, Sieur de Bourgmont, "Exact Description of Louisiana," ed. Marcel Giraud, *Missouri Historical Society Bulletin* 15 (1958): 16. For Missouria and Little Osage horse thefts from the French post of Fort Cavagnial, near the mouth of the Kansas River, see Macarty to Vaudreuil,

Funneled along ancient trade routes bordering the Front Range, horses reached Arikara villages in present-day South Dakota by the mid-1700s. According to an Arikara tradition, the first bands to receive horses lived at the Big Bend crossroads, and the animals arrived from the Black Hills along another ancient pathway: the White River/Bad River drainage divide. It recounts how a "mole" made a "road for one of the other tribes to return to" Arikara bands living on the Missouri River. The road "is marked to-day by a very prominent break or chasm in the Black Hills" (Buffalo Gap). According to the tradition, a group of strangers followed the road through the Black Hills, received horses from another people at the Bad Lands, and then delivered the animals to "four bands of Arikara living together near the great bend of the Missouri, between Crow Creek and Fort Sully." The Arikaras initially regarded the horses as "'mysterious dogs'" that were good for travel and "bartering."[13] Other Arikara traditions document how horses revolutionized travel, hunting, and warfare in the Great Plains. In one account, bison used to kill humans before the arrival of horses, but then the first horse challenged a buffalo to a race to the "edge of the water." The horse beat the buffalo, which "swerved to one side" when it approached the water. The people then mounted other horses, pursued the bison, and shot them. The story concludes, "Now this is the reason we ride horses: to chase the buffalo as they roam."[14]

September 1752, in Theodore Calvin Pease and Ernestine Jenison, eds., *Illinois on the Eve of the Seven Years' War, 1747-1755*, Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library 29 (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1940), 663 [hereafter IESYW]. Throughout the 1770s, the Missourias and Little Osages regularly stole horses from Ste. Geneviève. Townspeople complained that the thefts had occurred for the past "seven or eight years." See People of Ste. Genèvieve to Leyba, 28 March 1779, SMV 1:335–36.

[13] George Bird Grinnell, ed., "Arikara Creation Myth," *Journal of American Folklore* 22, no. 83 (1909): 90-92, 91 (quotation). For trails from the Shoshone rendezvous, see James A. Hanson, "A Forgotten Fur Trade Trail," *Nebraska History* 68 (1987): 2–9. For early eighteenth-century occupation at the Three Rivers Pass, see Johnson, *Middle Missouri Plains Village Sites*, 192-97. Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change Among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 179.

[14] Alfred Morsette Sr., "The Race between the Horse and the Buffalo," and "Bloody Hands and the Star Boy," in *Myths and Traditions of the Arikara Indians*, ed. Douglas R. Parks (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 130 (quotations), 133–34, 137–38.

In order to fuel this revolutionary form of transportation, Arikaras, Mandans, and Hidatsas once again enlisted the power of the Missouri River. But they did so in a new way. Instead of using the river current to travel quickly across the Plains, they collected cottonwood along the river to power mobility across the Missouri watershed. The Missouri Valley held the largest supply of cottonwood in the Great Plains. The tree prospered in the river valley because the river channel was always changing. During the spring flood season, mature trees—which can withstand a few weeks of flooding because their deep roots conduct anaerobic respiration—produce millions of seeds, which wind and water carry throughout the river valley. Spring floods created new habitats for these seeds by forming sand bars and "point bars" on the bank, where cottonwood receives the light and space it needs to grow. Seeds have the best chance of survival if they remain moist but avoid inundation on the edges of new banks. Once it takes root on a new sandbar or riverbank, Plains cottonwood grows rapidly—as much as five feet per year, faster than any other tree in the Great Plains. Approaching the mouth of the Nishnabotna River, for example, the German traveler Prince Maximilian of Wied noted that "a large amount of soil has been washed up in a steep bank," and that "on it grow young, slender cottonwoods, 20 to 25 feet high." Farther upriver, he again observed cottonwoods growing on "washed-up soil."[15]

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[15] Stephen S. Witte and Marsha V. Gallagher, *The North American Journals of Prince Maximilian of Wied, Volume 2: April–September 1833*, ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009), 62 ("large amount"), 80 ("washed-up"). In a letter to Jefferson, James Wilkinson proposed harvesting cottonwood and said its "growth is rapid beyond example." See Wilkinson to Jefferson, 6 November 1805, Clarence Edwin Carter, *Territorial Papers of the United States, vol. 13: The Territory of Louisiana-Missouri, 1803-1806* (Washington DC: GPO, 1948), 265. For the close relationship between the Missouri's annual flood cycle and cottonwood reproduction, see Johnson, "Dams and Riparian Forests," 237; Michael L. Scott, Gregor T. Auble, and Jonathan M. Friedman, "Flood Dependency of Cottonwood Establishment along the Missouri River," *Ecological Applications* 7, no. 2 (1997): 678-685, 686; Mark D. Dixon et al., "Status and Trend of Cottonwood Forests along the Missouri River," U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District, Paper 78 (2010), 3; Mark D. Dixon et al., "Dynamics of Plains Cottonwood (Populus deltoides) Forests and Historical Landscape Change along Unchannelized Segments of the Missouri River, USA," *Environmental Management* 49 (2012): 990-1008, 991, 1004; W. Carter Johnson, "Response of Riparian Vegetation to Streamflow Regulation and Land Use in the Great Plains," *Great Plains Research* 10, no. 1 (1999): 357-69, 360; Michael Borman and Larry Larson, *Cottonwood*

Plains cottonwood stores nutrients from the rich bottomland soil of the Missouri flood plain for winters, when the amount of protein in its bark triples, and its bark and branches provided a high-starch food for horses that was reportedly as "'good for them as oats.'" The American traveler Henry A. Boller, who ascended the Missouri in the late 1850s, stated that cottonwood was "very nourishing" for horses. According to later testimony, Hidatsa women typically harvested cottonwood in the winter by setting out in the afternoon, looked for trees about a foot thick, cut down two to three of them, and stripped the outer bark. They then cut off the "green inner bark" and small branches and carried them back to lodges, where they set them by fires to thaw. Frozen bark could evidently cut the throats and stomachs of horses. They reserved the best bark for the best horses. Horses also consumed cottonwood fairly quickly. According to one estimate, relatively small herds—around forty horses—could eat through the available supply of cottonwood branches and bark as well as bunch grass within a half-mile of camp in a single winter.[16] Feeding horses with cottonwood stands demanded a degree of flexibility and access to different parts of the river valley: cottonwood resources shifted over time and moved throughout the river valley. In the mid eighteenth century, when they controlled hundreds of miles of the Missouri Valley, Arikaras could maximize their collection of cottonwood and relocate villages and camps when they needed to.

Establishment, Survival, and Stand Characteristics (Corvallis: Oregon State University Extension Service, 2003), 5–6.

[16] As feed for horses, see Clark's entries for 9 November 1804, DJLC 3:254; and 12 February 1805, DJLC 3:292; Gilbert Livingston Wilson, *Uses of Plants by the Hidatsa of the Northern Plains* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 286 ("green inner bark"), 287; Witte and Gallagher, *North American Journals*, 3:154; Melvin R. Gilmore, *Uses of Plants by the Indians of the Missouri River Region*, Bureau of American Ethnology Annual Report 33 (Washington: GPO, 1919), 72, 73; Hiram Martin Chittenden, *History of Early Steamboat Navigation on the Missouri River* (New York: F. P. Harper, 1903), 49-50; Greg Gordon, "Steamboats, Woodhawks, and War on the Upper Missouri River," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 6, no. 2 (2011): 30–46, 31, 32. For its nutritional value, see Henry A. Boller, *Among the Indians: Four Years on the Upper Missouri, 1858-1862* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), 204-5 ("nourishing"); David A. Dalton, *The Natural World of Lewis and Clark* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2008), 93. For Arikara women gathering cottonwood for horses, see entry for 21 August 1806, DJLC 8: 312.

Fed on Plains cottonwood, horses reduced the "friction of distance" across the vast Great Plains and expedited travel along roads and corridors within the Missouri watershed. Trails followed high ground along rivers and drainage divides where travelers could provide water to horses at least every ten miles. The Missouri's western tributaries—the White, Cheyenne, Moreau, and Grand Rivers—served as the western entryways to the river corridor. By cutting through steep bluffs and sharp terraces, tributary rivers and streams provided access points to the Missouri River.[17]

Within this new world of travel in the Missouri watershed, fording sites became even more important. Moving large numbers of horses across the river, travelers would have needed access to places where they could approach the river easily and cross it without encountering too many obstacles. High terraces line much of the Missouri River in South Dakota, and it can be difficult to find places where it is easy to approach the riverbank.

The animals also did not venture into the Missouri channel willingly. American travelers frequently expressed frustration about leading horses across the river. In early July 1842, when his party was trying to cross the river in present-day South Dakota, topographical engineer Joseph N. Nicollet stated, "It became necessary to urge the horses to swim across—each man of the party taking charge of one horse. It may be well supposed that there was no lack of confusion during this truly perilous ferry; and, to this day, I thank God that men, horses, and baggage were not buried under the slime of the Missouri."[18] Horses also

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[17] For trails with horses, see H. Roger Grant, "Transportation," in *Encyclopedia of the Great Plains*, ed. David J. Wishart (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 793 ("friction") [hereafter EGP]; Donald E. Blakeslee, "Indian Trails," EGP, 803; William R. Swagerty, "History of the United States Plains until 1850," HNAI 13, 1:258; Roy Meyer, *Village Indians of the Upper Missouri* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1977). On trails in the northern Plains, see W. Raymond Wood, "Contrastive Features of Native North American Trade Systems," in *For the Chief: Essays in Honor of Luther S. Cressman* University of Oregon Anthropological Papers 4 (Eugene, 1972), 158-60, 163, 165.

[18] Joseph N. Nicollet, *Report Intended to Illustrate a Map of the Hydrographical Basin of the Upper Mississippi River* (Washington: Blair and Rives, 1843), 44.

expended a considerable amount of energy by swimming across the wide Missouri, which could stretch to four or five miles. When he left the Hidatsa villages in October 1805 to return to Canada, the trader Antoine Larocque ferried his luggage and furs across the Missouri. He reported that his horses "swam the whole bredth [sic] of the River & were nearly spent."[19]

By the time Canadian and American traders reached their villages, however, Arikaras, Mandans, and Hidatsas were leading horses back and forth across the Missouri with apparent ease. When the Canadian trader Alexander Henry visited the Mandan villages in the summer of 1806, he saw young men who were "very expert" in crossing horses. They reportedly "fastened a line to the horses mouth, the end of which one of them takes in his teeth and swims on a head, whilst others swim along on each side, and in the rear drives the horse on very expedeteously [*sic*]. They swim remarkably swift and not withstanding the Missourie at this place is half a mile wide and the current very strong, they drift down but a very inconsiderable distance before they land."[20] When the Mandan elder Crows Heart described a war expedition to the anthropologist Alfred Bowers, he recalled simply, "I plunged my horse into the muddy waters of the Missouri at a point just below the village and swam him to the opposite shore where we were to meet. It was late spring, and the river was quite high."[21] Their practice of the river crossing granted these Native travelers the power to move in ways that others (such as Nicollet's companions) could not.

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[19] Edward Burpee, ed., *Journal of Larocque: From the Assiniboine to the Yellowstone*, Publications of the Canadian Archives 3 (Ottawa: Government Publication Bureau, 1910), 52.
[20] Thiessen, "A New Transcription of Alexander Henry's Account," 78.
[21] Alfred W. Bowers, *Mandan Social and Ceremonial Organization* (Reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 171. See also J.N.B. Hewitt, ed., *Journal of Rudolph Friederich Kurz* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1937), 167.

By conducting horses across the river, the Plains villagers could profit from their sale on the other side. Canadians who witnessed the emerging horse trade on the upper Missouri testified to the organization of horse drives across the Missouri. When the naturalist James Bradbury and American traders appeared across the Knife River from Hidatsa villages, the Hidatsas swam over and then drove their horses "over the river, which they managed with much address, by placing themselves in such a way as to keep them in a compact body."[22] In order to facilitate the transfer of horses from one side of the river to the other and minimize its expense in time and energy, they also identified and controlled the best fording sites, which provided shorter and easier pathways across the river. The Three Rivers Pass in present-day Buffalo County, South Dakota, where Arikaras first acquired horses, was a particularly crucial control point for equestrian traffic moving between the Black Hills and bison hunting grounds to the west and eastern prairies. The ford sat just below the Big Bend and opposite modern-day Des Lauriens Island in present-day Buffalo County, South Dakota. The bend minimized the impact of flooding at the fording site, and the steep terraces and bluffs along the river gave way to a "butifull Plain [*sic*]" on the east bank where Crow, Elm, and Campbell Creeks approached river. Ascending the river in September, the Canadian trader Jean-Baptiste Trudeau described it as a place with "wide sandbars," low waters, the "narrow" channel.[23]

By building new villages in the early 1700s at the Three Rivers Pass, where their ancestors had lived since the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in settlements like Crow Creek, Arikara bands positioned themselves at a checkpoint where they could profit from the

[22] John Bradbury, "Travels in the Interior of America," in *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846, vol. 5*, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (Cleveland, OH: Arthur H. Clark, 1904), 152.
[23] Trudeau's Journal, BLC, 268 ("difficult"), 275 (for location below Big Bend). For the various Lewis and Clark Expedition names for fording site, see entries for 19 September 1804 in Gary Moulton, ed., lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu.

growing equestrian traffic between the western and eastern Plains. Trade partners could conduct horses down and up each side of the river valley and cross the channel itself. By the late 1700s, horses played an essential role in the Arikara calumet ceremony, and archaeological and ethnographic evidence suggests that the Arikara bands at the Big Bend promoted the calumet ceremony in order to cultivate trade partnerships with foreigners and thereby promote the horse trade. Archaeologists working in the remains of the Buffalo County villages dating to the early eighteenth centuries have recovered a number of calumet pipes made of catlinite. The presence of these pipes and the absence of fortifications have led one archaeologist to conclude that these bands of Arikaras established "more intergroup relations than their neighbors to the north."[24]

Their early trade partners included the Lakotas, who traveled across the eastern Plains to visit the "menichoché" (Mni Sose), the Turbid Water. In the late seventeenth century, Lakotas, Yanktons, and Yanktonais controlled prairies in present-day Minnesota. Pressure from well-armed Ojibwes as well as bison depletion east of the Mississippi compelled many to push west. By 1702 they had forced the Omahas and Ioways to evacuate the area surrounding Blood Run on the Big Sioux River. The Omaha people fled west to the Missouri Valley. Throughout the eighteenth century, Lakotas continued to strike Omaha settlements.

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[24] For late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century Arikara settlements in Buffalo County, South Dakota, including those along Campbell Creek, see Craig M. Johnson, *A Chronology of Middle Missouri Plains Village Sites* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 2007), 191, 194, 197. For the lack of fortifications at Arikara settlements around the Big Bend and their relations with the Sioux, see Richard B. Johnston, "The McClure Site and the Protohistoric Period in the Big Bend Region," *Plains Anthropologist* 27, no. 98 (November 1982): 48. The fourteenth-century Crow Creek site sat in the same area, where "it is relatively easy to get back and forth across the Missouri River." See Douglas B. Bamforth and Curtis Nepstad-Thornberry, "Reconsidering the Occupational History of the Crow Creek Site," *Plains Anthropologist* 52, no. 202 (May 2007): 157. For the recovery of Arikara and Sioux catlinite pipes from the Talking Crow site, an early to mid-eighteenth century Arikara village, see Carlyle Shreeve Smith, *The Talking Crow Site* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, 1977), 86–87.

Through captivity or intermarriage, enough Poncas joined Lakotas that they formed a separate bands within the Oglalas and Brulés.[25]

Yet Lakota traditions describe this westward expansion in religious, not military, terms. According to the missionary Aaron McGaffey Beede, who interviewed Lakota elders when he lived on the Standing Rock Reservation in the early twentieth century, their ancestors had left the eastern Plains and approached the Missouri River because of a spiritual calling: they believed that the "'divinities' (spirits) of the land desired them, . . . to 'face downstream, southwest and west'; that over the Missouri plant and animal life and even the rocks (Nature) connected with mysterious beings in these directions; that forcing a route to the great lakes was unnatural (ohantokeca)." They were even reluctant to use catlinite pipestone from present-day Minnesota because it came "'from the east.'"[26]

By the mid-1700s, Lakotas had divided into southern and northern groups. Oglalas and Brulés approached the southern reaches of Arikara territory, while the Saone bands (ancestral Sans Arc, Minneconjou, Two Kettle, and Sihasapa) moved toward the upper reaches of the Arikara homeland. The building blocks of these divisions were the *t^{h}iyóspaye*,

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[25] See Raymond DeMallie, "The Sioux until 1850," HNAI 13, 2: 722, 724. Pierre-Charles Le Sueur was the first European to record the Lakota name for the Missouri. See Claude Delisle, interview with Pierre Le Sueur, 1702, f. 95, Delisle Papers, 2JJ, SH, BANQ-Québec. For twentieth-century names, see Melvin Gilmore, "Nomenclature of the Plains Indians," Gilmore Collection, Nebraska State Historical Society; Eugene Buechel and Paul Manhart, eds., *Lakota Dictionary* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 201; and James R. Walker, *Lakota Society* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 16. For Lakota strikes against the Omahas and removal of the latter, see John O'Shea and John Ludwickson, *Archaeology and Ethnohistory of the Omaha Indians: The Big Village Site* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 17. For the Woisage (Ponca/Osage) division of Brulés, see Annie Heloise Abel, *Tabeau's Narrative of Loisel's Expedition to the Upper Missouri* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1939), 104.

[26] Aaron McGaffey Beede, "Old Indian History," 20 March 1920, *Fort Yates Sioux County (ND) Pioneer*, microfilm r. 5397, North Dakota Historical Society, Bismarck. For their crossing of the Missouri, see Raymond J. DeMallie, "Teton," HNAI 13, 2:794; and DeMallie, "Sioux before 1850," HNAI 13, 2:731.

lodge groups that consisted of at least ten to twenty nuclear families, each connected to the other through "biological and adopted brothers and parallel cousins."[27]

As early as the 1690s, Lakota and Yanktonai winter counts record warfare with the Arikaras that would continue throughout the eighteenth century. It is probable that Lakotas expelled the Arikara bands that had lived at the mouth of the White River, which Oglala traditions identify as the place where they crossed the Missouri and first acquired horses. Early one spring, while they were dressing bison on the west side of the Missouri River, a warm Chinook melted the ice on the river, and they found themselves stuck on the west bank. They left the Missouri valley and ventured toward the valley of the White River, where they saw two Cheyenne scouts riding what looked like large dogs. The scouts invited them to their camp on the White River, where the Oglala leaders received gifts of horses. Thereafter, Oglalas called the place where they had crossed the Missouri—the mouth of Platte Creek, in Charles Nix County, South Dakota—the Pte kdi inyanka, "buffalo returned running."[28]

Although Arikaras evacuated the White River, they retained control of the Big Bend and most of the river valley in South Dakota and continued to regulate the distribution of horses across the Missouri River. In order to acquire horses more easily, individual Lakota *t^{h}iyóspaye* cultivated trade and diplomatic ties with the Arikaras living at the Three Rivers Pass. Long after the Arikaras had abandoned this fording site, Lakotas called the area the

[27] Kingsley M. Bray, "Before Sitting Bull: Interpreting Hunkpapa Political History, 1750-1867," *South Dakota History* 40, no. 2 (2010): 97-135, 99-100; Raymond J. DeMallie, "Teton," HNAI 13, 2:801; and DeMallie, "Sioux Until 1850," HNAI 13, 2:734. For the band structure of Lakotas, see DeMallie, "Sioux before 1850," HNAI 13, 2:742, 756; and James O. Dorsey, *Souian Sociology*, Bureau of Ethnology Report 15 (Washington: GPO, 1893-94), 218.

[28] See account, originally recorded by Ella Deloria, in Joseph White Bull, *Lakota Warrior*, trans. and ed. James H. Howard (Reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), xxiv–xxv. See also testimony of William O'Connor, 26 December 1966, "Interviews with Yanktons on Land, Place Names, etc.," box 3, Dakota Ethnography, Ella Deloria Archive, accessed at zia.aisri.indiana.edu/deloria_archive/index.php. For the Arikara abandonment of the White River villages in the early 1700s, see Johnson, *Middle Missouri Plains Village Sites*, 194.

Maka Tipi (Earth Lodges), a probable reference to Arikara settlements. During the mid 1700s, two Lakota divisions—the Tacorpas (Minneconjou) and Occononas (Oglala)—developed close trade and kinship ties with the Arikaras at the Three Rivers Pass.[29] William Clark recorded a memory of this older landscape of indigenous mobility, trade, and diplomacy when he ascended the river in 1804. He identified the Three Rivers Pass as a "calumet ground" where "all nations who meet are at peace with each other." By carrying calumet pipes to the Maka Tipi, the Lakotas established fictive kinship relations that facilitated their travel into the river corridor.[30]

During the early equestrian period, other Arikara bands and Indian nations built villages along the river to serve as gatekeepers between the western and eastern Plains. In 1743, when two sons of the French explorer Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, sieur de La Vérendrye toured the northern Plains, they conducted horses to an Arikara band named the Gens de la Cerise (Little Cherries), who lived in a village near present-day Pierre, South Dakota.[31] Upriver from these bands, a group of the eastern migrants—the Cheyennes—lived

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[29] For the Lakota name for the fording site area, see A. B. Welch, "Seven Fires, a Story of Dakotah History, 1823," p. 85n116, accessed on welchdakotapapers.com. For a detailed description of the Arikara calumet ceremony in the late eighteenth century, see Grenier and St. Gelais, *Jean-Baptiste Trudeau*, 139–42. For Lakota-Arikara ties, see Trudeau Journal, BLC, 310; Grenier and St. Gelais, *Jean-Baptiste Trudeau*, 63, 88; and Abel, *Tabeau's Narrative*, 104. The Tacorpas probably are the "Richara Sioux" on Too Né's map of the Great Plains. See *Carte ethnographique de la vallée du Missouri*, GED-4781, Bibliothèque nationale du France, Paris.
[30] Entry for 19 September 1804, JLC 3:88-89, 91n2 ("calumet ground"). Nicholas Biddle said that the Three Rivers Pass was a place where visitors had a "right of asylum." See Biddle, *History of the Expedition under the Command of Captains Lewis and Clark* (Philadelphia: Bradford and Inskeep, 1814), 76 ("asylum").
[31] For the Gens de la Petite Cerise, see Smith, *Explorations of the La Vérendryes*, 112. According to the ethnographer Melvin Gilmore, the Little Chokecherry were one of sixteen different Arikara bands. See Douglas R. Parks, "Bands and Villages of the Arikara and Pawnee," *Nebraska History* 60 (1979): 214–39, 216, 219. For the early trade of mules as well as horses, see Smith, *Explorations of the La Vérendryes*, 107; Donald E. Blakeslee, "Indian Pathways," EGP 803; William R. Swagerty, "History of the United States Plains until 1850," HNAI 13, 1:258; Meyer, *Village Indians of the Upper Missouri*; Hämäläinen, "Rise and Fall," 846; Wood, "Contrastive Features", 160, 165; John C. Ewers, "Indian Trade of Upper Missouri," *Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society* 10, no. 4 (1954): 429–46, 436; W. Raymond Wood, "Plains Trade in Prehistoric and Protohistoric Relations," in *Anthropology on the Great Plains*, ed. W. Raymond Wood and Margot Liberty (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980). See also Pekka Hämäläinen, "The Western Comanche Trade Center: Rethinking the Plains Indian Trade System," *Western Historical Quarterly* 29 (Winter 1998): 485–513, esp. 485–86.

in villages along the river and raised corn and tobacco. They profited by serving as intermediaries between the Arikara and Mandan trade centers and as horse brokers into the eastern Plains. Beginning in the 1760s, their trade partners included the Hunkpapa Lakota people, who had broken away from the southern Oglalas and Brulés and moved north.[32]

Although Arikaras profited from the distribution of horses across the Missouri River, the animals also posed local and far-reaching problems. They competed with corn and tobacco crops for space in the river valley, trampled crops, and introduced weeds into village gardens.[33] They also accelerated the transmission of disease across the river watershed. French officials and traders cited epidemics in the Plains throughout the eighteenth century. An epidemic broke out in the Arikara and Mandan villages in the early 1730s. In 1758 a French official noted of the Kanzas that the "wars that they have had with the Pawnees and small-pox have extremely weakened them." In the 1770s, three different epidemics attacked the Arikaras.[34]

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[32] For a detailed account of this migration, see W. Raymond Wood, *Biesterfeldt: A Post-Contact Coalescent Site on the Northeastern Plains*, Smithsonian Contributions to Anthropology 15 (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1971), 51–71. See also George Bird Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians: Their History and Ways of Life*, 2 vols. (Reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 1:17–22; West, *Contested Plains*, 68–69; Joseph Jablow, *The Cheyenne in Plains Indian Trade Relations, 1795–1840* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 6-7; Abel, *Tabeau's Narrative*, 152. For Hunkpapa-Cheyenne trade, see Bray, "Before Sitting Bull," 103.

[33] For the Arikaras' struggle to find wood, see Mirò report, 12 December 1785, BLC 127; Trudeau Journal, BLC, 295; Grenier and St. Gelais, *Jean-Baptiste Trudeau*, 86, 87. For the Mandans and Hidatsas, see W. Raymond Wood and Thomas D. Thiessen, Introduction, in *Early Fur Trade on the Northern Plains: Canadian Traders among the Mandan and Hidatsa Indians, 1738-1818* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 239–40. Villagers removed horse dung from gardens to prevent the introduction of weeds. See Will and Hyde, *Corn Among the Indians of the Upper Missouri*, 84. For bison hunting and the Mandans, see Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 142–44. For the stress placed on valley resources by horse herds, see Hämäläinen, "Rise and Fall of Plains Indian Horse Cultures," 854.

[34] For the Kansas, see report of Kerlérec, 12 December 1758, BLC, 52. For the Arikaras, see "Journal of Truteau," BLC 299; Parks, "The Arikara," HNAI 13, 1:387–88; and Grenier and Saint-Gelais, *Jean-Baptiste Trudeau*, 87. An epidemic that struck the Foxes in mid-1773 was perhaps one of the three that Trudeau cited. See Gary Clayton Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind: Dakota-White Relations in the Upper Mississippi Valley, 1650–1862* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 62. For epidemics among the Yanktonais, see the entries for the 1715, 1722, 1746, and 1762 in the John No Ears winter count, James H. Howard,

The most devastating epidemic, however, reached the upper Missouri River in the winter of 1781-82. Traveling northward from the "northern Mexican provinces" and then New Orleans, a virulent smallpox epidemic reached the Illinois country in the fall of 1781, leading to "extraordinarily high mortality" in the small French settlement of St. Genevieve, a satellite community of St. Louis on the west bank of the Mississippi. Suffering from famine—the Missourias struggled to grow enough corn for their own use and raided French settlements for food—they were particularly vulnerable to the epidemic.[35] Transmitted along overland trade routes and the Missouri corridor, the epidemic struck the Omaha, Arikara, and Mandan villages farther upriver by the end of the year. As historian Elizabeth Fenn concludes, the centrality of the Mandan villages—and those of the Arikaras—in far-flung trade networks eventually "worked against them" by channeling diseases to the Missouri Valley. Over six thousand Mandans died in the smallpox outbreak, including most members of six different clans. The number of Arikara warriors reportedly fell from four thousand to five hundred after the smallpox epidemic of 1781.[36] According to the Scottish explorer and

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"Yanktonai Ethnohistory and the John K. Bear Winter Count," *Plains Anthropologist* 21 no. 73 (August 1976): 1–78.

[35] For the arrival of smallpox in New Orleans, see Elizabeth A. Fenn, *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775–1782* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 214; and St. Genevieve, see Carl J. Ekberg, *François Vallé and His World: Upper Louisiana Before Lewis and Clark* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 253 ("high"). In 1842 the superintendent of Indian affairs, D. D. Mitchell, wrote that the smallpox epidemic of 1781 had arrived from the "Northern Mexican provinces." See Mitchell to T. Hartley Crawford, 12 September 1842, r. 752, *Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-1881*, microcopy 234 (Washington DC: National Archives and Records Service, 1956) [hereafter microcopy 234, NARA]. In 1777 the governor of Spanish Illinois reported that "although [the Missourias] generally plant a small quantity of maize each year, it is not sufficient even for their own support." See Cruzat report, 15 November 1777, in Louis Houck, ed., *The Spanish Régime in Missouri*, 2 vols. (R. R. Donnelley and Sons, 1909), 1:142. In July 1778, the governor of Spanish Illinois complained that the Missourias had been in St. Louis for "two weeks, eating us out of house and home." Leyba to Gálvez, 21 July 1778, SMV 1:298.

[36] For the Omahas, see O'Shea and Ludwickson, *Omaha Indians*, 288. For the Sioux, see Candace S. Greene and Russell Thornton, eds., *The Year the Stars Fell: Lakota Winter Counts at the Smithsonian* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 101–4. For the Arikaras, see Trudeau Journal, BLC 299; Parks, "The Arikara," HNAI 13 pt. 1:387-88; Journal of Trudeau," BLC 299; Richard A. Krause, *The Leavenworth Site: Archaeology of an Historic Arikara Community*, University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology 3 (Lawrence: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, 1972), 15, 20; and Grenier and Saint-Gelais, *Jean-Baptiste Trudeau sur le haut Missouri*, 87. For the Mandans, see Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 159

Spanish agent James Mackay, it "destroyed above two thirds of the Indian Tribes of the N W part of America."[37]

The villages with the widest trade connections and contact with the outside world—the Arikara bands that had controlled the Three Rivers Pass—also "suffered the greatest depopulation" on the upper Missouri River. They abandoned all nine of their villages around the Big Bend of the Missouri. The epidemic broke apart the Arikara band structure and may have fractured their relations with the Pawnees. According to the missionary Stephen Riggs, who served on the Santee Reservation in the 1870s, "all traditions" stated that the Arikaras and Pawnees separated around the Three Rivers Pass.[38]

Although their winter counts testify to the ravages of the epidemic, Lakota bands escaped the damage inflicted on the Arikaras and Mandans, and in the ensuing years they carried out a violent campaign to seize control of the Mni Sose.[39] Cheyennes abandoned the

(quotation), 154-57, 159, 161-62; W. Raymond Wood and Thomas D. Thiessen, Introduction, in *Early Fur Trade on the Northern Plains: Canadian Traders among the Mandan and Hidatsa Indians, 1738-1818* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 7–8; W. Raymond Wood, William J. Hunt Jr., and Randy H. Williams, *Fort Clark and Its Indian Neighbors* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011), 26–27.

[37] See Mackay's "Notes on Indian Tribes," in Charles E. Orser Jr., "The Explorer as Ethnologist: James Mackay's 'Indian Tribes' Manuscript with a Test of His Comments on the Native Mortuary Customs of the Trans-Mississippi West," *Ethnohistory* 30 no. 1 (Winter 1983): 15–33, 22; Michael E. Dickey, *People of the River's Mouth: In Search of the Missouria Indians* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011), 37.

[38] Johnson, *Middle Missouri Plains Village Sites*, 199. According to Riggs, one group of Arikaras—called the "Shtili" by the Lakotas—moved south. The Lakotas drove the "Palani" (Living Head) Arikaras to the north. He identified the separation place as Fort Thompson, in present-day Buffalo County, South Dakota. See Stephen Riggs, "Indian Migrations," *Iapi Oaye: The Word Carrier* (Greenwood, Dakota Territory), 3 no. 5 (1874). For the Lakota term for the Arikara (Palani), and its description of their hairstyle, see testimony of Paul Fast Horse, 2 July 1929, in "Life on the Plains in the 1800's," Welch Dakota Papers, accessed at welchdakotapapers.com. It is possible that these traditions about a Pawnee-Arikara division at Fort Thompson refer to a much older event: the massacre of Caddoan-speaking villagers at the neighboring Crow Creek site in the mid fifteenth century, an attack that some archaeologists have attributed to internecine conflict among Central Plains villagers (ancestral Pawnee and Arikara). This massacre roughly corresponds with the age estimates for the division of Arikara and Pawnee languages.

[39] For the Lakota conquest of the Missouri, see Richard White, "The Winning of the West: The Expansion of the Western Sioux in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Western Historical Quarterly* 62, no. 2 (September 1978): 324–25; Raymond J. DeMallie, "Teton," HNAI 13, 2:794; and DeMallie, "Sioux before 1850," HNAI 13, 2:731; Doane Robinson, *A History of the Dakota or Sioux Indians*, South Dakota Historical Collections 2 (Aberdeen: South Dakota State Historical Society, 1904), 24, 56; John C. Ewers, *Teton Dakota Ethnology and History* (Berkeley, California: National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior), 5; "History of Oglala Sioux, As kept by John No Ears," Aaron McGaffrey Beede Collection, Chicago History

Missouri River and fled into the western prairies to escape Sioux raids. Arikaras, Mandans, and Hidatsas who had survived the smallpox epidemic of 1781 sustained a series of attacks by Lakotas as well as Yanktonais. According to a Yanktonai winter count, 1787 was the winter the "Arikara begged for land and a war started as a result." In 1792 two thousand Lakota, Arikara, and Cheyenne warriors besieged the Hidatsa villages for nine days straight. Three years later, Lakotas were preventing Arikaras from leaving their villages.[40] Barricaded within their settlements, Plains villagers struggled to find the resources and space they needed to feed horses and also grow crops. The smallpox epidemic forced the Mandans to abandon the "heart of the world," their homeland at the mouth of the Heart River, including On-A-Slant Village, and move north. Once numbering over twenty villages along 250 miles of the river corridor, the Arikaras were living in just seven villages in 1785 and only two villages in the early 1790s at the mouth of the Cheyenne River. When Lewis and Clark ascended the river in 1804, they were living in three villages farther up the Missouri, near the mouth of the Grand River.[41]

When they ascended the river in 1804, Lewis and Clark witnessed the remnants of an older world of indigenous travel on the Missouri: a number of discarded bullboats in an abandoned Arikara village. Because of the risk of Sioux attacks, the Hidatsas ceded a degree of mobility on the river. According to the trader Alexander Henry, who visited their villages

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Museum Research Center; Elizabeth A. Fenn, *Encounters at the Heart of the World: A History of the Mandan People* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2014), 145; Greene and Thornton, *The Year the Stars Fell*, 107–59.

[40] For the Cheyenne departure, see Abel, *Tabeau's Narrative*, 152 ("nomadic"). For Lakota and Yanktonai attacks on the Plains villagers in the late 1780s and 1790s, see Greene and Thornton, *The Year the Stars Fell*, 103; Howard, "Yanktonai Ethnohistory," 5-6, 38 ("begged"); Grenier and St. Gelais, *Jean-Baptiste Trudeau*, 88, 89, 100, 152 (the 1792 siege); Thiessen, "A New Transcription of Alexander Henry's Account," 121-22 (a different account of the 1792 siege, dated to 1790); and Trudeau Journal, BLC, 295-96, 301.

[41] For the Arikara villages after 1781, see Miró to Antonio Rengel, 12 December 1785, BLC, 126-27; and Trudeau Journal, BLC, 299–301.

in 1806, the Hidatsas made "but very little use of Canoes having very seldom occasion to cross the River" to the north bank.[42]

Yet Arikaras and Mandans continued to use the river to sustain transportation and communication networks, shipping supplies downriver and traveling along the river to visit friends and neighbors. As they moved upriver, the Ruptare Mandans still built villages in their traditional location, on the east bank of the Missouri. In the mid 1780s they established an east-bank village across from two Nuitadi Mandan villages at the area known as Painted Woods, about twenty-five miles upstream from the Heart River. In the late 1780s, the Lakotas and Yanktons together drove the west- and east-bank Mandans even farther upriver, to the Knife River villages of the Hidatsas. At the Knife River, the Ruptares once again built a village on the east bank of the Missouri, across from the Nuitadi village known as Mitutanka. It would remain the sole village on the east bank of the upper Missouri.[43] By establishing villages across the Missouri from the Nuitadis, the Ruptare Mandans maintained their identity as east-bank residents and asserted Mandan rights of passage across the river itself.

And despite the threat of Lakota attacks, Arikara and Mandan women continued to exercise mobility on the river, enlisting the power of its current to transport heavy supplies downriver. When they reached the Arikara villages at the Grand River in 1804, Lewis and Clark witnessed three women guiding bullboats full of meat across the river.[44] Six years later,

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[42] Thiessen, "A New Transcription of Alexander Henry's Account," 105; entries for 6 October and 7 October 1804, DJLC 3:147, 149.
[43] For the Mandan migration upriver, see Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 166, 168, 171; Wood, *Fort Clark*, 27–28.
[44] 6 October, 7 October, and 9 October 1804, DJLC 3:146–47, 149, 155.

at the same villages, the traveler Henri Marie Brackenridge saw "a number" of Arikara women traveling downriver with bundles of wood tied to the back of bullboats.[45]

Arikara, Mandan, and Hidatsa villages also remained busy intersections in Native North America and destinations for distant travelers. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the upper Missouri River was still a corridor of indigenous power where occupants could control the wider midcontinent. Large numbers of people continued to move across the river watershed and approach the river corridor. In the summer of 1795, for example, thousands of visitors surrounded the Arikara villages at the mouth of the Cheyenne River: 140 lodges of Cheyennes; 80 lodges of the Minneconjou Lakotas; 120 lodges of the Saone Lakotas; and fifty lodges of Yanktonais. With at least four people per lodge, the number of Sioux visitors in the river valley in the month of August alone numbered between 1000 and 1250 people.[46] In August 1804 the French trader Pierre-Antoine Tabeau reported that "more than fifteen hundred" Sioux, Cheyenne, Apache, and Arapaho men assembled around the Arikara villages near the mouth of the Grand River, which the Lakotas called the Palani Wakpe (Arikara River). Assuming that they camped with their families, the total number of visitors to the Missouri Valley probably surpassed six thousand people. He deemed it a "great gathering of different nations."[47]

Arikaras, Mandans, and Hidatsas profited from their position along the emerging horse and gun "frontier" of the late 1700s: western peoples delivered horses, which they

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[45] Brackenridge, "Journal of an Expedition," 112, 123.
[46] Edwin Thompson Denig, *Five Indian Tribes of the Upper Missouri*, ed. John C. Ewers (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), 14–15. For later visits by similar numbers of Sioux and Cheyennes, see Luttig, Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition, 97. For the Cheyenne horse trade with the Arikaras, see Abel, *Tabeau's Narrative*, 158.
[47] Krause, *The Leavenworth Site*, 387–88; Abel, *Tabeau's Narrative*, 137, 162 (quotation). For Palani Wakpe, see Chief Grass on DeSmet, Religion notes, "Life on the Plains in the 1800's," Welch Dakota Papers, accessed at welchdakotapapers.com.

purchased and resold to northeastern suppliers for guns.[48] But corn, squash, and other agricultural produce remained the center of trade. According to early twentieth-century accounts, Arikaras measured trade with the Lakotas in terms of *hunansádu*, the contents of a single basket. They traded *hunansádu* of shelled corn for bison robes, dried meat, tipsin roots, and dried chokecherries.[49] At their new villages on the Knife River, Mandans once again produced large corn surpluses that drew people to the river corridor. One Canadian visitor in the late 1790s received three hundred pounds of corn from the Mandans. Another Canadian reported in 1804 that the Hidatsas raised an "immense quantity of Corn," though it still fell "far short of what is gathered in by the Mandans."[50] Hidatsa villagers carried corn over to Crow camps to trade for clothing, bison robes, and meat, and Assiniboines left the Mandan villages with horses and "loaded with Corn."[51]

Positioned in villages along the river, Mandan, Hidatsas, and Arikaras continued to negotiate and sometimes deny river crossings by foreigners. Different trade partners competed over the corn harvest and, by extension, physical access to the villages. Lakotas regarded Arikara corn yields as their property and as payment for Arikara tenancy in the Missouri Valley. According to the French Canadian trader Pierre-Antoine Tabeau, the Lakotas deemed the Arikaras as "serf[s]" who paid for "protection" with corn.[52] Lakotas attempted to prevent competing trade partners from approaching the Arikara villages during

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[48] The Hidatsas reportedly charged high prices for work horses. See Thiessen, "A New Transcription of Alexander Henry's Account," 111–15 (for horse prices), 188. For the small number of horses compared to the Sioux, see David Thompson's Narrative, 230. For the Crows' horse trade with the Mandans and Hidatsas, see Burpee, "Journal of Larocque," 64.
[49] Melvin R. Gilmore, "Notes on Intertribal Commerce between the Arikara and Other Tribes" [1920s], Gilmore Papers, AISRI.
[50] Mackay's Journal, in BLC 492-93; J. B. Tyrrell, ed., *David Thompson's Narrative of His Explorations in Western America, 1784-1812* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1916), 231-32; Thiessen, "A New Transcription of Alexander Henry's Account," 98 ("fields"), 104 ("immense").
[51] Burpee, "Journal of Larocque," 22; Thiessen, "A New Transcription of Alexander Henry's Account," 152 ("address"), 195.
[52] Abel, *Tabeau's Narrative*, 130–31 ("serf"), 149–50.

the summer and fall harvest. In 1795, when the Arikaras were living in two villages just below the Cheyenne River on the Missouri's west bank, two Cheyenne bands waited a few weeks for the Sioux to leave before they would approach the river. Groups of Arapahos and Kiowas who were with them would not "dare to approach" the Arikara villages because of the Lakotas. The Cheyennes, Arapahos, and Kiowas agreed to visit the Arikara villages only after the Lakotas had departed. The French Canadian trader Jean-Baptiste Trudeau encouraged an Arapaho leader to return next spring, when the Lakotas would be "on the other side of the Missouri."[53]

During the harvest of 1803 or 1804, when the Arikaras were living in new villages farther upriver at the mouth of the Grand River, the tables had turned: Cheyennes were closer to the Arikara villages and prevented the Sioux from crossing the river. As a Canadian trader noted, the river itself—which could grow to eight to nine hundred yards wide in front of the Arikara villages—"separated the two camps." Unwilling to grant the Cheyennes any trade advantages, the Sioux "wished to cross in order to camp near" the Arikara villages. The Cheyennes, however, "opposed this with firmness and with threats."[54]

This episode reveals the potentially contentious nature of river crossings during the Arikara, Mandan, and Hidatsa harvests. Cheyennes and Arikaras denied rights of passage to the Lakotas. Different bands and villages within Arikara, Mandan, and Hidatsa communities could also dispute river crossings and disagree over rights of passage and tolls. In 1805 the Canadian trader Antoine Larocque arrived across from the Hidatsa villages. After he fired a few shots to announce his presence, "many" Hidatsas "came over with Canoes to cross us and

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[53] For the location of the Arikara villages and Lakota blockades, see Trudeau Journal, BLC, 51, 295–96, 301, 305; entry for 1 October 1804, DJLC 3:132–34. For the visit by the Cheyennes, Arapahos, and Kiowas, see Grenier and St. Gelais, *Jean-Baptiste Trudeau*, 82–83 ("dare"), 84 ("other side").
[54] Abel, *Tabeau's Narrative*, 152. For the width of the river in front of the Arikara villages in 1811, see Bradbury, "Travels," 128.

our things."[55] A year later, however, some Hidatsas ignored Alexander Henry when he appeared across the river. His party "stopped [and] called out and waited some time for the natives to come and Ferry us over, but they appeared to take little notice of us." Farther downriver, after Henry and his men had spent the night at the Ruptare Mandan village, they attempted to recruit people from villages on the other side because "it would have been in vain for us to attempt prevailing upon any one of this Village to ferry us over." The Mandan leader Šehékšot (White Coyote) appeared on the river bank and offered to conduct them across the river. The family of another Mandan leader, including his "young wife," ferried Henry back across the Missouri during his return trip. Henry, like French Canadian traders long before him, acquired mobility on the Missouri River by forming connections with individual village leaders and their families.[56]

Mandan and Hidatsa women profited from their work ferrying visitors across the river. When the naturalist John Bradbury and Henry Marie Brackenridge reached the third Hidatsa village in 1810 after a short overland journey, they called across the Knife River. After a "few minutes" they saw Hidatsa men returning with six women, "each of whom had a skin canoe on her back, and a paddle in her hand." The welcome party crossed the river and greeted the visitors. According to Bradbury, the women then "put our saddles in their canoes, where we also placed ourselves," and led the boats across the Knife River. The women charged gunpowder and ammunition as the "price of ferriage." During their visit, the travelers had to cross the Knife River two additional times, and they paid the corresponding ferriage fee to Hidatsa women of different ages who transported them and their supplies

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[55] Burpee, "Journal of Larocque," 15.
[56] Thiessen, "Alexander Henry," 65, 75 ("in vain"), 77, 79, 193 ("wife"), 94.

across the river. These women capitalized on their navigational expertise to demand payment.[57]

Although women in Plains villages continued to retrieve power from the Missouri River, by the late 1700s they had ceded mobility on the river: Lakotas traveled freely past their abandoned villages. By diverting the unique energy resources of the Missouri River from agriculture to equestrianism, Lakotas built a massive transportation network in the river watershed that stretched from the far western Plains to the James and Des Moines Rivers. During the winter, they maximized their own collection of cottonwood from the river valley by dividing into individual *t^hiyóspaye*.[58] By traveling short distances within the river valley during the winter, members of t^hiyóspaye could locate and harvest fresh supplies of cottonwood. They even promoted regeneration by cutting off the tops of cottonwood saplings.[59]

During the rest of the year, horses enabled them to conduct long expeditions across the river watershed. Even though they pushed west, Lakotas maintained close contact with Yanktons, Yanktonais, and Dakotas who lived east of the Missouri. By the late eighteenth century, they were making annual visits to the James River for the so-called Dakota Rendezvous, a "trade fair" and intertribal conference that occurred every May. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, they followed "different routes upon the east bank" of the Missouri to the James River (possibly at a place called Armadale Island) in the spring for annual meetings with the Yanktons, Yanktonais, and Dakotas. At these annual rendezvous east of the Missouri, Lakotas traded things they had acquired and manufactured west of the Missouri River—horses, bison skins and robes, and clothing—for trade goods

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[57] Bradbury, "Travels," 152 ("ferriage"), 162, 165.
[58] Luttig, *Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition*, 98, 104.
[59] For sapling trimming, see Gordon, "Steamboats, Woodhawks, and War on the Upper Missouri River," 31, 32.

that were easier to acquire through Yanktons or Dakotas: guns, catlinite pipes, and merchandise. The Yanktons and Dakotas supplied the Lakotas with guns and ammunition. The conferences also served other functions: men and women from different bands married, and leaders exchanged news and devised policy.[60] By the early nineteenth century, William Clark could report that the Brulé, Oglala, Minneconjou, and Saone Lakotas lived on "both sides of the Missouri."[61]

Lakotas replaced the Arikaras as trade brokers between the Rocky Mountains and the Mississippi valley, and they also claimed the best fording sites on the Missouri River in present-day South Dakota. In October 1794, when he descended the Missouri into former Arikara territories, the Canadian trader Jean-Baptiste Trudeau had to avoid the "ordinary crossings of the Sioux."[62] The Lakotas took advantage of the Arikara population collapse to seize the Three Rivers Pass. By the time Lewis and Clark ascended the river in 1804, the Three Rivers Pass had transformed from an Arikara "calumet ground" into a site of Lakota mobility: the expedition members identified it variously as the "Seaux pass of the 3 rivers" and the great Pass of the Sioux"; the "Sioux 3 river pass"; and the "Sioux-crossing-place of the three rivers."[63] Arikara territories farther upriver also became Lakota fording sites. By the

[60] For the spring Sioux trade fairs, see Abel, *Tabeau's Narrative*, 121–22. The James River councils may have been held at a site called the Tall Oaks near Armadale, Spink County, South Dakota. See A. B. Welch to Katharine S. Nicholson, 16 March 1920, in "Life on the Plains in the 1800's," Welch Dakota Papers, accessed at welchdakotapapers.com. For bison depletion east of the Missouri River by 1795, see Trudeau Journal, BLC, 310.
[61] Biddle, *History of the Expedition*, 61; DJLC 3: 418–19.
[62] Trudeau's Journal, BLC, 273–76. For signs of Lakota travel in the river valley, see BLC, 278 ("higher up"), 279 ("up the Missouri").
[63] Trudeau's Journal, BLC, 268 ("difficult"), 275 (for location below Big Bend). For the Lakotas at the Three Rivers Pass, ee Clark's entries for 19 September 1804, DJLC 3:88-89, 91n2; and (for other expedition members) entries for 19 September 1804 in Gary Moulton, ed., *Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, accessed online at lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu. Kearny wrote that his expedition "passed 'the 3 Rivers of the Sioux Pass' called Pecon-la-lan-la coming in on the right side behind an Island." See Richard Jensen, ed., *Wheel Boats on the Missouri: The Journals and Documents of the Atkinson-O'Fallon Expedition* (Montana Historical Society, 2001), 107. His name is possibly a transcription of the Lakota word "pako," meaning "crooked, bent around," which would describe the adjacent Big Bend. S.v. "pako," *Lakota Dictionary*, 263.

early nineteenth century, northern Lakota bands crossed the Missouri at a landmark known as the Hill of the Patched Hide (present-day Patchskin Buttes), near the mouth of the Moreau River and left the frames of bullboats (Tahupa Wata) for future use.[64]

Although this extensive travel helped them procure new sources of power, it also demanded energy and power. The river crossing itself depleted energy. Later traditions identify the Missouri as the home of *Unktehi*, water spirits or monsters. The Unktehi were dangerous beings that caused floods and high waves, and they sometimes captured people in the water. Lakotas deterred the actions of Unktehi by smoking and offering meat to the river.[65] Like their Mandan and Arikara counterparts, however, Lakota travelers developed a level of expertise that minimized the risks of the river crossing. In late August 1823, the German traveler Paul Wilhelm, Duke of Württemberg witnessed a group of Sioux crossing the Missouri at the Three Rivers Pass, and he made their passage seem routine. They constructed rafts out of willow poles and branches to cross their baggage, pulled the rafts over the river by swimming alongside them, and led horses that were the best swimmers into the water first.[66]

Although they did not navigate the river itself for long distances, Lakotas still traveled along the river valley. When he ascended the river in 1794, Trudeau witnessed Lakota mobility along the Missouri: a road a Lakota band had followed after crossing the Missouri "higher up"; women and children leading dogs and horses from woods along the

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[64] For the "Ford of the Patched Hide Hill," see A. B. Welch, "Seven Fires, a Story of Dakotah History, 1823," p. 58, 85, accessed on welchdakotapapers.com. For the Lakota term for bullboats, see A. B. Welch, "View No 24, Bull Boat (Coracle), 1872," in "Fort Berthold , Dakota Territory, 1872," accessed on welchdakotapapers.com.
[65] James R. Walker, *Lakota Belief and Ritual* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 108, 115–16, 123; William K. Powers, *Oglala Religion* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 55.
[66]; Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 166 ("heart"). For a description of the fording site's qualities in the early 1860s, see Clark W. Thompson to William P. Dole, 1 June 1863, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (Washington: GPO, 1864), 310–11; Paul Wilhelm, Duke of Württemberg, *Travels in North America, 1822-1824* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), 371 ("tracks"). According to Thompson, "Sne-o-tka" creek was one of the tributaries to the Missouri around the fording site.

river; and a band that marched on the prairie "while going up the Missouri." For overland travelers, the river provided a ready source of water, hay for horses, wild berries, and other resources for expeditions. Social and political protocols guided how Lakota war parties and camps traveled within and outside the Missouri corridor. Oglala Lakota officials called *wakiconza* directed camps when they traveled and smoked to the Great Spirit, Wakantanka, the "patron god of moving."[67]

During the winter, messengers traveled between Oglala, Brulé, and Saone bands camped in the river valley. A picture of interband Lakota communication networks emerges in the winter of 1795-96, when Trudeau lived in the Arikara villages at the mouth of the Cheyenne River. In early December, he reported that an Oglala band, the Occononas, camped twelve miles below in the river valley. A large Lakota band—perhaps Brulés—was camping even farther downriver, and they sent messengers to the Oglalas asking them to serve as intermediaries in trade with the Arikaras. Finally, Saone Lakotas camped forty to fifty miles above the Arikara villages within the river valley. Couriers and even war parties traveled along the icebound river. In late December 1795, Trudeau reported that a Lakota war party had "appeared on the other side of the Missouri, descending on the ice to attack the Panis [Arikara] village."[68] Their ability to travel quickly along the river corridor helped them intercept additional resources.

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[67] Trudeau's Journal, BLC, 273–76. For signs of Lakota travel in the river valley, see BLC, 278 ("higher up"), 279 ("up the Missouri"). For Oglala travel protocols, see Walker, *Lakota Society* 60. For distance measurements, see "How far is it from one place to another?" in Sign Language notes, "Life on the Plains in the 1800's," Welch Dakota Papers, accessed at welchdakotapapers.com.
[68] Grenier and St. Gelais, *Jean-Baptiste Trudeau*, 88–89, 90 ("descending"). In late fall 1805 Charles Mackenzie experienced the difficulty of crossing the Plains in winter when he left the Mandan and Hidatsa villages. See Charles Mackenzie Narrative, in Wood, *Early Fur Trade*, 266–69.

Lakotas began capturing other forms of power from the Missouri River in the 1790s: trade goods and weapons. French Canadian traders had spent much of the eighteenth century encountering Missouria, Little Osage, Kanza, and Otoe blockades and paying substantial tolls to navigate the lower Missouri River.[69] The powerful Big Osages exercised territorial sovereignty on the Missouri by regularly blockading the river. Instead of moving freely and stopping where they wanted, traders crossed and re-crossed the river, backtracked upriver, hid in marshes, and traveled by moonlight to escape Osage detection.[70] The Kanza Indians routinely blockaded the Missouri River and occasionally killed French traders, including a group of eight Canadians in 1780, when British forces were threatening to overrun Spanish St. Louis. They forced St. Louis traders to ascend the Grand River through present-day Missouri and circumvent their territory.[71]

The Plains villagers could afford to blockade the Missouri River without fear of Spanish trade embargos or higher prices because new traders were reaching their villages. Before and during the Seven Years' War, Indian allies had extended the British alliance network to nations in the Missouri River valley. In the early 1750s, the Cahokia and Peoria

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[69] See, for example, Piernas to Luis de Unzaga, 4 July 1772, SMV 1:205; Piernas to Unzaga, 12 April 1773, qtd. in Abraham P. Nasatir, "Ducharme's Invasion of Missouri," *Missouri Historical Review* 24, no. 1 (October 1929): 8–9; Cruzat to Unzaga, 18 March 1776, SMV 1:229; Cruzat to Unzaga, 21 November 1776, SMV 1:235; Cruzat Report, 15 November 1777, in Louis Houck, ed., *The Spanish Régime in Missouri*, 2 vols. (R. R. Donnelley and Sons, 1909), 1:142-43.

[70] For vivid accounts of Osage surveillance on the Missouri, see depositions of Jean Portais, Augustin Amiot, and Charles Arny, 25–26 April 1786, folder 1, box 2, Litigation Collection, MHMLRC. In the spring of 1773, the Big Osages killed a trader named Juan Maria Toulouse while he was coming down "from the nation of the Otoes to that of the Kansas." See Inventory of the effects of the deceased Juan Maria Toulouse, 8 July 1774, Instrument no. 2324, St. Louis Archives, MHMLRC.

[71] See Abraham P. Nasatir, "The Anglo-Spanish Frontier in the Illinois Country during the American Revolution, 1779-1783," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 21, no. 3 (1928): 291–358; and Inventory of the deceased Francisco Larche, 4 February 1781, Instrument no. 2365, and Inventory of the deceased Baptista La Croix, 4 February 1781, Instrument no. 2366, St. Louis Archives, MHMLRC. The U.S. factor George Sibley later deemed the Kanzas the "terror of the country" and said "one instance is related of their having actually burned some Frenchmen alive." See George Sibley Journal, 1811, photocopy, Lindenwood College Collection, MHMLRC. For their use of the Grand River to bypass the Kanza blockades, see Brackenridge, "Journal," 50. For other reports of Kanza blockades, see Francisco Cruzat to Don Luis de Unzaga, 2 December 1775, legajo 81, Papeles Procedentes de Cuba, Archivo General de Indias [hereafter AGI], microfilm, MHMLRC; Cruzat Report, 15 November 1777, in Houck, *Spanish Régime*, 1:142-43.

Illinois made repeated overtures to the Little Osages, Missourias, and Kanzas to ally with Britain.[72] After the war, British agents and traders started reaching the Missouri Valley themselves. They established posts at Michilimackinac, Prairie du Chien, and Detroit, and after the Britain crown relaxed trade laws in 1768, more traders could pursue furs west of the Great Lakes. By 1773 the British had seized control of the Wisconsin River portage, which granted a pathway to the Mississippi River and lands west of it.[73]

The French Canadian trader Tabeau, who lived in the Arikara villages on the upper Missouri River, denigrated the British "ways of transporting by portages multiplied in the mountains and wastelands" that entail "great expense." By comparison, he concluded, St. Louis traders have "facility of . . . communications" and "transport always upon the rivers themselves and in large boats."[74] Yet the reality was much different. Although transportation from the Mississippi River to the Missouri Valley was more expensive than river carriage per commodity ton, horses and the low initial cost of merchandise allowed British traders to offer Indian trade partners more goods for fewer furs than their French competitors.[75]

British traders followed preexisting Indian trails to travel from the Mississippi Valley to the Missouri River, and they quickly established themselves in the Missouri region. According to Antoine Soulard's "Route que les anglais tannent pour se rendre sur le Missouri" (route that the English take to go to the Missouri) on his map of the trans-

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[72] In the early 1750s, the Illinois made repeated overtures offers to the Missouri villagers to join the British. See Benoist to Raymond, 11 February 1750, IESYW, 163-65; Vaudreuil to Macarty, 9 September 1751, IESYW, 334; La Jonquière to Rouillé, 27 September 1751, IESYW, 376; Vaudreuil to Rouillé, 10 October 1751, IESYW, 402; Macarty to Vaudreuil, 20 January 1752, IESYW, 448; and D'Orgon to Vaudreuil, 7 October 1752, IESYW, 738. For the difficulty of competing with British merchandise, see Macarty to Rouillé, 1 June 1752, IESYW, 641.

[73] For the commercial dominance of Britain in post-1763 North America, see Harold A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 1962), 166–67; Din and Nasatir, *Imperial Osage*, 59, 60; Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind*, 61–62

[74] Abel, *Tabeau's Narrative*, 165.

[75] Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind*, 61–62.

Mississippi West, they descended the Mississippi to the mouth of the Des Moines River, ascended this river, and then headed directly overland for twenty or thirty miles to reach the Otoe villages at the confluence of the Platte and Missouri Rivers.[76] In 1773 and 1777 reports reached St. Louis that British traders had left the Des Moines River and followed overland routes to the Otoe villages. In the summer of 1778, St. Louis traders captured two Englishmen who were trading with the Otoes, seizing 1,473 pounds of deerskins from the fugitive traders.[77] That same summer, three St. Louis traders—Jean-Baptiste Duchesne, François Larche, and Nicolas LeCompte—stopped their boats at an Otoe encampment on the Missouri River between present-day Nebraska and Iowa. The Otoes told Duchesne that "they did not have enough merchandise at their post and that he needed to leave half of his pirogue." They stated in no uncertain terms, "You are bound for our village." After two Otoe men captured their boat in midstream, the traders eventually paid a large toll in merchandise.[78]

Competing British and St. Louis traders granted village leaders such as the Otoe chief the latitude to deny rights of passage on the river itself or demand heavy tolls. The smallpox epidemic of 1781, however, decimated the populations of Plains villagers in the lower Missouri valley and shook their control of the waterway. Converting the river from a barrier to an extraction zone and crossing site, Sauk and Fox raids forced the Plains villagers to cede most of their territory in the lower river valley. The Missourias and Little Osages fled their old homeland at the mouth of the Grand River by the fall of 1792, after a party of Sauk and

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[76] Antoine Soulard, Idée topographique des hauts du Mississipi et du Missouri: pour servir à la connaissance d'une partie des nations sauvages qui y habitent (1795), copy by Pierre Margry (1850), Edward Ayer Map Collection, Newberry Library. For the portage distance, see Blaine, *Ioway Indians*, 60.
[77] Leyba to Gálvez, 9 December 1778, SMV 1:317.
[78] See depositions of Jean-Baptiste Duchesne, 9 July 1779 (quotation), Pierre LeCompte, 8 July 1779, Francois Larche, 6 July 1779, Antoine Moran, 25 June 1779, folder 11, box 1, Litigation Collection, MHMLRC.

Winnebago warriors surprised their camp on an island in the river and killed as many as three hundred Missourias as they tried to escape in canoes downriver. A nation that once numbered in the thousands lost nearly half of its eight hundred people. Most of the survivors moved north to the Platte River to live with their Otoe relatives. Around 1795 their longtime neighbors, the Little Osages, fled Ioway attacks and moved to the Osage River, the location of the Big Osage and Auguste Chouteau's new trade post. By 1804 the lower Big Bend of the Missouri River, the longtime location of Missouria and Little Osage villages, held what William Clark called a "crossing place" for Sauk, Fox, Sioux, and Ioway raids against the Big Osages.[79] Around the same time, Sauk and Ioway raids drove the Kanza west onto the Plains.[80] The lower Missouri Valley became a perilous buffer zone separating the Osages from the Sauks, Foxes, and Ioways, and traders began passing abandoned and derelict villages along lower Missouri.

The Omaha people held on to power in the Missouri Valley, however, and their village remained the effective limit of the St. Louis fur trade in the early 1790s. In 1775 Large Village, which counted some 2,500 residents, was over twice the size of St. Louis. Over the next few decades, under the leadership of the imposing Black Bird, or Wazhinga

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[79] Pedro Vial reported that the Missourias and Little Osages had abandoned the river in September 1792. See Noel M. Loomis and Abraham P. Nasatir, *Pedro Vial and the Roads to Santa Fe* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 379, 386. For the attack on and removal of the Missourias, which Clark attributed to the Sauks, see Clark's entries for 13 June 1804, 15 June 1804, 17 June 1804, DJLC 2:295-96, 303, 306; and 17 June 1804, DJLC 2:306; Michael E. Dickey, *People of the River's Mouth: In Search of the Missouria Indians* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011), 105–6, 110–11; R. David Edmunds and Joseph L. Peyser, *The Fox Wars: The Mesquakie Challenge to New France* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 102; Thorne, *Many Hands of My Relations*, 111; and Nicolas de Finiels, *An Account of Upper Louisiana*, ed. Carl J. Ekberg and William E. Foley (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989), 90-91. For Ioway raids on the Little Osages, see Brackenridge, "Journal of an Expedition," 51. On the Big Osage trading post, see Din and Nasatir, *Imperial Osages*, 253–71; Trudeau to Carondelet, 18 April 1795, BLC, 320; Duval, *Native Ground*, 172.

[80] For the Kanza removal, see William E. Unrau, *The Kaw Indians: A History of the Wind People, 1673-1873* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), 22–23; and Clark, 28 June 1804 and 5 July 1804, DJLC 2:327, 349. For the location of the Kansa village in 1811, see George Sibley Journal, 1811, photostat, Lindenwood College Collection, MHMLRC.

Saba, the Omahas would emerge as a formidable power in the region partly by regulating navigation on the river next to their village: blockading traffic, capturing boats, and limiting traders' access to nations upriver.[81] Even from a single village, the Omahas could monitor traffic moving up or down the river corridor. As one Spanish official complained, it was necessary to make concessions to the Omahas "because even the least of its individuals could obstruct communication because they are situated on the banks of the Missouri River."[82]

Black Bird's blockades helped transform the Omaha Nation into well-armed power brokers in the region. The "prince of the nations," as he described himself to Trudeau, had returned from childhood captivity among the Sioux to become a war-party leader in the Earth-Lodge Maker clan. He had emerged as a "principal chief" of the Omaha people by 1777, when Francisco Cruzat cited "El Pajaro Negro" in a report on nations who visited St. Louis. Cruzat noted optimistically of the Omahas that "we have never experienced any harm from them." Blackbird would quickly prove that he was no "pliant tool" of traders. By the 1790s, he was demanding at least a third of traders' merchandise in exchange for his personal "protection" in Large Village.[83] Reaching Large Village from the Des Moines River portage, British traders reportedly sold their merchandise at such a low price that the Omahas, under Black Bird, "robbed, maltreated, and ridiculed" traders coming from St. Louis. He announced

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[81] John O'Shea and John Ludwickson, *Archaeology and Ethnohistory of the Omaha Indians: The Big Village Site* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 271, 290–91; and Alice C. Fletcher and Francis La Flesche, *The Omaha Tribe*, vol. 1 (Reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), 86, 91, 95. Black Bird's name evidently referred not to the bird species but to a bird that was black in color. See Melvin R. Gilmore, notes appended to "Blackbird, Chief of the Omahas," folder 7, box 1, RG3308, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln. For St. Louis, see J. Frederick Fausz, *Founding St. Louis: First City of the New West* (St. Louis: The History Press, 2011), 116; and Patricia Cleary, *The World, The Flesh, and the Devil: A History of Colonial St. Louis* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011), 130.
[82] Petition of Clamorgan, New Orleans, January 15, 1800, BLC, 608.
[83] Fletcher and La Flesche, *The Omaha Tribe*, 82; John Ludwickson, "Blackbird and Son: A Note concerning Late-Eighteenth- and Early-Nineteenth-Century Omaha Chieftainship," *Ethnohistory* (winter 1995): 134, 136, 144; Tanis C. Thorne, "Black Bird: King of the Mahars": Autocrat, Big Man, Chief," *Ethnohistory* (Summer 1993): 410–37; Cruzat Report, 15 November 1777, Houck, *Spanish Régime*, 1:144; Trudeau Journal, BLC, 284 ("protection").

to the Spanish lieutenant governor in St. Louis that unless he received merchandise worth four thousand pesos and a six-inch medal like his British medal, he would deny free passage to every trader on the river.[84]

Black Bird's domination of the Missouri fur trade would pose a serious obstacle for St. Louis merchants, who increasingly looked toward the Mandan villages and Missouri River headwaters. In May 1794 Auguste Chouteau and twenty-seven other merchants in St. Louis capitalized on the recent depopulation of the lower river valley to form the Upper Missouri Company, which would "discover" new Indian trade partners above the Poncas and to establish a trading post among the Mandans.[85] Instead of looking overland to Santa Fe, the company's merchants—mostly Frenchmen from New Orleans or Canada who were accustomed to working on waterways—proposed transporting the commodities of the fur trade on the river, which would connect them to distant Indian customers on the northern Plains and deliver furs to St. Louis. The Missouri directed their commercial ambitions and organized their knowledge of Indian nations. They hired three traders to lead expeditions up the Missouri to the Mandan and Hidatsa villages: the French Canadian Jean-Baptiste Trudeau, a Scotsman named James Mackay, and another French Canadian named Lecuyer.

Before they left St. Louis, Trudeau, Mackay, and the director of the company, Jacques Clamorgan, expected the Omahas and Poncas to pose the biggest obstacle to reaching the upper Missouri country. Clamorgan hoped Trudeau, who was leading the first expedition, would have the "good fortune" of "pass[ing] without being detained" or "without

[84] Trudeau to Carondelet, 28 September 1793 and 24 April 1794, BLC, 198, 208 ("robbed"). See also Mackay's Journal, BLC, 359; Trudeau to Carondelet, St. Louis, April 24, 1794, *BLC*, 208; Trudeau Journal, BLC, 283.
[85] Articles of Incorporation of the Missouri Company, St. Louis, May, 1794, BLC, 217–28; Trudeau to Carondelet, St. Louis, 27 May 1794, BLC, 215; Trudeau to Carondelet, St. Louis, 31 May 1794, BLC, 228–29.

being seen" by the Omahas and Poncas.[86] Accordingly, Trudeau adopted a few strategies for avoiding detection when he passed the Omaha and Ponca villages. Assured that the Omahas or Poncas would detain him, in early August 1794 he gave the load of guns on his pirogue to a trader named Jacques d'Eglise, who was in a "little pirogue" and could therefore "easily pass the villages, even at night and also the back passages which are on the way."[87] D'Eglise could ferry the contraband past the Omaha and Ponca villages and up to the Arikaras. Trudeau followed behind d'Eglise, passing the Great Nemaha, Platte, and Little Sioux Rivers before approaching the Large Village of the Omahas.

Ten leagues before reaching the Omaha village, Trudeau had stamped out small campfires and destroyed his crew's lean-tos every morning. He approached the village "with caution, afraid of being of being discovered by someone of that nation, who would have prevented me without fail from going further." He waited until nightfall to bypass the village and then camped a few miles upriver. He reached the Ponca village around noon on 14 September. He hid "behind an island" until nightfall, then proceeded upriver in the pirogue. When the boat grounded on sandbars, he spent the night on a sandbar without lighting fires.[88] Mackay, who led the third Upper Missouri Company expedition in 1795, stressed the importance of avoiding detection by Plains villagers to the Welshman John Evans before the latter's own exploratory journey up the Missouri River. In article 7 of his instructions to Evans, Mackay declared:

> You will never fire any guns except in case of necessity; you will never cut wood except with a knife unless it should be strictly necessary; you will never build a fire without a true need, and you will avoid having the smoke

[86] Clamorgan's Instructions to Trudeau, St. Louis, June 30, 1794, in Nasatir, Before Lewis and Clark, 249, 250.
[87] Trudeau Journal, BLC, 262, 307.
[88] Trudeau Journal, BLC, 266.

> seen from afar, camping if it is possible in the valleys. You will not camp too early and will always leave before daybreak; you will always be on guard against ambushes and will always have your arms in good condition, changing the tinder evening and morning, and you will never separate them from you or place them in the hands of the savages. When you will see some nations, raise your flag a long way off as a sign of peace.[89]

By advising Evans to avoid detection at all costs, Mackay admitted the extent to which the Otoes, Omahas, and Poncas controlled and regulated traffic on the river. Their surveillance converted the Missouri River into a foreign territory where traders adopted the strategies of smugglers to move their cargos.

Beyond the Omaha and Ponca villages, however, Mackay and Trudeau would encounter a different kind of territorial surveillance. Although Spanish and American officials complained about passage through the territory of the "Sioux," Trudeau and Mackay would have to travel through lands claimed by different Lakota divisions: Brulé territory around the mouth of the White River; Oglala territories around the mouth of the Bad River; and "Saone" (Minneconjou, Sans Arc, and Sihasapa) lands even farther upriver. Within these divisions, individual *tʰiyóspaye* might disagree about navigation rights on the Missouri. Traders who were ascending the river in the late summer and fall, when Trudeau made his voyage upriver in 1794, could expect to find thousands of Lakotas visiting the river valley for the annual fall trade fairs with the Arikaras.[90]

In September 1794, when he reached the Three Rivers Pass in present-day Buffalo County, South Dakota, Trudeau saw a plume of smoke rising from the banks up ahead. He went to the location of the fires, where he found the "trail of a band of Sioux" numbering around ten or twelve lodges. Soon Trudeau heard a "cry from the other side of the river" and

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[89] James Mackay to John Evans, 28 January 1796, BLC, 411–12.
[90] For Lakota political structure, see DeMallie, "Sioux before 1850," HNAI 13, 2: 727.

saw a number of Brulé Lakota and Yankton Sioux descending to the bank of the river. The party interrogated the interloper, asking Trudeau who he was, where he had been, and where he was going. He replied in their own language that "they could easily see that we were French." Recognizing that "flight was difficult and dangerous in this place" because of sandbars, low water, and narrow channel, Trudeau decided to meet with the Indians, but only if they would smoke the calumet pipe with him. When three men swam over to a sandbar in the middle of the river to smoke the calumet, they converted the river ford temporarily into a meeting place where Trudeau proposed peaceful travel through Sioux lands—the "calumet ground" in Clark's description of the fording site.[91] An experienced trader in the Missouri country who had lived with the Republican Pawnees and Yanktons and who spoke both languages, Trudeau appealed to long-standing practices of gift-giving and calumet ceremonialism to secure free passage on the river.[92]

But the Brulé Lakotas in the party would deny his free passage on the river. Once he guided his pirogue into a narrow and practically dry channel, a group of men seized the boat and dragged it toward their camp, where many of the Brulés refused to smoke the pipe. Trudeau "suspicioned evil from this refusal for among all these peoples the calumet is a symbol of peace and friendship."[93] Trudeau quickly discovered that he had a problem: he did not have a free road. Instead, he had what a Yankton leader called a "bad road." This Yankton man, who had correctly identified him from the other side of the river bank, told him that the only way to "open up the bad road" was "by giving presents," and that "this was the only means to pacify the Tetons, all of whom had a bad heart." Trudeau followed his

[91] Trudeau Journal, BLC, 268 ("flight"), 269. Trudeau encountered the Lakotas and Yanktons just below the Big Bend—the location of the Three Rivers Pass. See BLC 275.
[92] For his previous trading experience, see Grenier and St. Gelais, *Jean-Baptiste Trudeau*, 29, 41.
[93] Trudeau Journal, BLC, 270.

advice, arranging on the shore of the river a number of trade items to grant as a toll to travel upriver through Brulé Lakota lands.[94]

The Brulés, however, replied by announcing they "had no Spanish father." By supplying the Arikaras with guns and ammunition, the French interfered with the Lakotas' own trade with the Arikaras and empowered the latter to resist the Sioux. As Trudeau concluded, the Lakotas "were disposed to do as much damage possible to those who carry merchandise to outlying nations."[95] They also denied that Trudeau was traveling peacefully and that he was a kinsman: they accused him of planning to trade guns and ammunition to the Arikaras, who would use them to kill the Lakotas. Affirming their new dominance in the Missouri Valley, they replied, "Do you think . . . you can escape the hands of the Sioux, who border the Missouri on both sides, even to the village of the Arikaras and even above that." The Brulés sent couriers to neighboring bands up and downriver warning them that Trudeau was on the river.[96]

During the rest of Trudeau's expedition, the Lakotas would prove their ability to monitor the river corridor and pursue trespassers. The next day, recognizing that he had what the Yankton leader called a "bad road," Trudeau fled the village. Some of the Yanktons reluctantly helped him push his pirogue into the main river channel late in the afternoon. Because he was moving in the shallow water of the Missouri's Big Bend, where the Lakotas could overtake him easily by land, he decided to abandon the river altogether. He hid the merchandise in a cave on the other side of the river and sank the boat by punching it with holes—a dramatic forfeiture of his mobility on the river. In early October his crew set out overland for the Arikaras, remaining seven or eight miles from the river for fear of being

[94] Trudeau Journal, BLC, 271.
[95] Grenier and St. Gelais, *Jean-Baptiste Trudeau*, 111.
[96] Trudeau Journal, BLC, 273.

discovered. When they reached the Arikara village, however, the Frenchmen found only empty, half-burned lodges left by Sioux attackers. Trudeau decided to return to the hidden merchandise instead of walking to the Mandans, who were still hundreds of miles away.[97]

The following summer, when Trudeau returned upriver to the Arikara villages, the Lakotas prevented his crew from traveling safely on the river. They broke the "best pirogue" of one trader and pursued two other employees for dozens of miles. The Canadian engagés escaped three attempts to detain them, but the Lakotas finally surrounded them on either side of the river and seized all their dried meat, guns, powder, balls, hatchets, and knives. The men returned to Trudeau's trade post to report that "from the top of the Big Bend down to the White River"—a stretch of one hundred miles—"the Missouri River was bordered by Sioux who crossed to the west bank of the river." During the same summer, they forced another employee of the Upper Missouri Company—the Welshman John Evans—to flee downriver.[98] In April 1796, when Trudeau fled the Arikara villages, the Lakotas pursued him downriver and nearly captured him.[99] As St. Louis traders pushed beyond the Omahas, Brulés profited from controlling the flow of trade goods not only to the Arikaras but also to Lakota bands living above them. They also tried to prevent traders from supplying their Omaha and Otoe enemies farther downriver.[100]

The Sioux did not hesitate to claim their new lands in the Great Plains. The winter count of John No Ears records 1791 as the winter the Lakotas "carried a flag to other

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[97] Trudeau Journal, BLC, 273–76. For signs of Lakota travel in the river valley, see BLC 278 ("higher up"), 279 ("up the Missouri").
[98] Grenais and St. Gallier, *Jean-Baptiste Trudeau*, 59-60, 84. For Evans, see BLC 494-95.
[99] Trudeau gave two accounts of his escape downriver. See Grenier and St. Gelais, *Jean-Baptiste Trudeau*, 95–96, 100–1.
[100] For Brulés profiting as middlemen between the Americans and other Lakota bands, see Kingsley M. Bray, "'Singing the Big Belly Song': The Making of the Robe Trade Alliance with the Lakota," *Museum of the Fur Trade Quarterly* 43, no. 3-4 (2007): 88–99, 92. In the fall of 1810, the Sioux raided Robert McCllellan's trade post at the mouth of the Platte. See entry for 8 January 1811, Sibley Diary, Lindenwood College Collection, MHMLRC.

nations." According to the missionary Aaron McGaffey Beede, this year was an "epoch" in Lakota history when they collectively decided to "reinstate, with force, the old exclusive discipline, to require honor to officials, upon penalty of death or ostracism, and to fight all intruders out of the country claimed by the Sioux." They marched through their "claimed territory" holding a flag known as the *wapaha* or *wowapi* and a sacred pipe and allowed others to live under their protection so long as they would fight the whites.[101]

Lakotas retrieved and articulated power in the Missouri corridor in ways that challenged European and American expectations about how to claim and control rivers. Trudeau described the Lakotas as a "ferocious people, little civilized, who wandered around constantly for food, filled with barbarous customs."[102] When Lewis and Clark ascended the river, the Lakotas forced the Americans to grant merchandise and tobacco as tolls for safe passage. The explorers depended on a Brulé Lakota leader named Black Buffalo to secure their free passage on the river. When men working for his political rival, The Partisan, seized the boat cable and anchor, Black Buffalo diffused the situation and threw tobacco to other Lakota bands that Lewis and Clark farther upriver.[103]

Writing from Fort Mandan in early 1805 before continuing toward the headwaters of the Missouri River, Clark informed William Henry Harrison that the Lakota Sioux "may be justly termed the pirates of the Missouri." Linking Lakota blockades to the deprivations of the British navy, he explained that trade goods from the English allowed the Lakotas to "continue their piratical aggressions on all who attempt to ascend that river [the

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[101] See Aaron McGaffey Beede to Norton William Jipson, 10 February 1923, Aaro Beede Collection, Chicago History Museum Research Center; and Greene and Thornton, *The Year the Stars Fell*, 114-16. For a discussion of the meaning of the 1791 event in No Ears' calendar and its representation of an American flag, see Walker, *Lakota Society*, 128.
[102] Trudeau Journal, BLC, 269.
[103] 25 September 1804, DJLC 3:111–14. For the size of their respective bands, see Abel, *Tabeau's Narrative*, 111; DJLC 3:123–29, 130 (quotation); and Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*, 37-40.

Missouri]."[104] Clark identified the Lakotas as a group of stateless actors, "pirates" who interrupted the commercial progress of the United States. Until "some effectual measures" were "taken to render them pacific," he concluded, they "will always prove a serious source of inconveniance [*sic*] to the free navigation of the Missouri."[105] By comparing the Lakotas to pirates, Clark denied their territorial sovereignty but acknowledged the speed and flexibility with which they moved along the river valley and the pervasiveness of their surveillance. For the Lakotas, their mobility in the river valley was a measure of their newfound power: they could prevent others from traveling on parts of the river where they moved freely. For the next six decades, the Lakotas would prove their territorial control of the Missouri by granting or denying rights of passage to American navigators and capturing power in the river corridor.

[104] William Clark to William Henry Harrison, 2 April 1805, in Donald Jackson, ed., *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition: With Related Documents, 1783–1854*, 2 vols. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 1:228; and DJLC 3:356.

[105] Clark to Hugh Heney, 20 July 1806, in Jackson, *Letters*, 1:310.

3. Making a Road: Native Delegates on the Missouri River

In 1738, when the French explorer Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, sieur de La Vérendrye visited Mandan villages in present-day North Dakota, he inquired about the course of the Missouri River below their villages. The Mandans replied that they would "not dare go very far" to the south because they had been "at war with the Panana" [Arikaras] since 1734 and the "pathways [were] closed to them."[1] Other French Canadians failed to recruit Indian escorts through the Missouri Valley because of the dangers of border crossing. When the Baron de Lahontan ascended the Missouri River in 1689, the Missourias claimed that "they knew nothing" about the upper Missouri River, but "that the other Nations that liv'd higher up were able to inform us."[2] In the late 1770s, Omaha Indians expressed a "fear that they were going to other nations" when a trader named Jean-Baptiste Dechesne asked them for help delivering merchandise down the Missouri to the Platte River, the territory of the Otoes. A few years later, the Missourias and Little Osages had similar reservations about traveling upriver with a trader into Kanza territory.[3]

Although French explorers and traders envisioned the Missouri River as a road for long-distance travel, their Native correspondents looked up or downriver and saw the territories of foreigners and enemies. The longest river in the continent, the Missouri crossed many different indigenous territorial borders. If Mandans had wanted to use the river to reach the Illinois country in the 1730s, they would have had to pass through territories of the Arikaras, Omahas, Otoes, Kansas, Little Osages, and Missourias. But the Arikaras and

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[1] G. Hubert Smith, *The Explorations of the La Vérendryes in the Northern Plains, 1738-43*, ed. W. Raymond Wood (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), 57, 58 ("pathways").
[2] Baron de Lahontan, *New Voyages to North-America* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1905), 1:202.
[3] Deposition of Jean-Baptiste Duchesne, 9 July 1779, folder 11, box 1, Litigation Collection, MHMLRC; deposition of Charles Arny, 26 April 1786, folder 1, box 2, Litigation Collection, MHMLRC.

Mandans did not really need to travel long distances on the river. Their villages on the upper Missouri River were trade centers and destinations. Through down-the-line trade, merchandise and people moved along and across the river corridor without long-distance navigation of the river itself.

When they ascended the Missouri River, Lewis and Clark invited Arikara and Mandan leaders to make long and mostly unprecendented trips downriver to St. Louis. They attempted to change how Native peoples traveled on and used the river itself. Claiming that the river was a "clear road" through Louisiana, the Americans promised Indian delegates that they could travel safely and freely on the Missouri River. Indian borders filled North America and limited travel on other waterways. The sheer difficulty and length of the Missouri River, however, forced European officials to confront both the reality of indigenous territorial sovereignty and a failure of the colonial project: the inability to regularize and expedite transportation and control nature. As the only navigable river west of the Mississippi River and the longest river in the continent, the Missouri figured prominently in colonial and American aspirations in the North American West. Yet it resisted control, and American efforts to transform it into an economic and political tributary ultimately backfired.

Indian leaders who traveled down the Missouri had things to gain by visiting St. Louis. They could receive merchandise from Euro-American officials, solidify alliances, and accrue influence in their own communities. Perhaps even more crucially, they gathered information about the whites who were entering their lands. The Mandan leader Šehékšot and the Arikara leader Too Né—the two village leaders from the upper Missouri who traveled to Washington—viewed their travels as reconnaissance expeditions. Just as Lewis and Clark reached the Pacific Ocean, they were investigating the East Coast. Travel downriver allowed

Indians to communicate their interests in St. Louis and gather intelligence about white communities. Their newfound mobility on the river was a measure of power: they enlisted the boats of white traders and explorers to travel through the lands of enemies and expand their own influence in European and American capitals.

If travel downriver augmented individual power, however, it also facilitated captivity and dislocation. Delegates spent months and even years away from their villages, and many never returned home at all. The British diplomat Charles William Janson, who lived in Washington when western Indian delegations visited the capital, called the American exchange program a "master-piece of policy, as the government of the United States were in that case in possession of hostages for the safe return of their citizens through the savage territories."[4] By keeping Indian leaders on American soil, Jefferson tried to safeguard Lewis and Clark during their return downriver. Yet the failure to conduct visiting delegates back to their villages left the Americans in a worse position on the Missouri River than they were before the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The experiences of the few delegates who did travel to St. Louis proved that the river remained in Indian hands, and people could travel on it safely only by complying with indigenous protocols of border crossing.

When Lewis and Clark ascended the Missouri, they learned that Indian leaders had made previously made trips to visit French and Spanish officials in the Illinois country. The Otoe chief Little Thief informed Clark that he "went often to the french," presumably in the Illinois country, and he asked the Americans to give him paper commissions like those of the Spaniards.[5] Promising that he would visit St. Louis the following spring, the Yankton leader Shake Hand stated that he had already traveled to Spanish as well as English posts. Another

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[4] Charles William Janson, *The Stranger in America: Containing Observations Made during a Long Residence in That Country. . . .* (London, 1807), 220.
[5] 19 August 1804, DJLC 2:490.

Yankton leader, Arcawecharchi, The Half Man, told Lewis and Clark that he had visited the Spaniards when he "was a young man."[6]

Yet captives and slaves, especially women, had much more experience traveling from the upper Missouri River to the Illinois country than political leaders. As early as 1702, Skiri Pawnee captives from the Platte River were living in the Illinois country. A Panimaha (Skiri Pawnee) slave reported to the Seminarian missionary Louis-Marc Bergier that his nation was "fixed and sedentary," lived in a "fort" and went out on hunts, was numerous, and that his people were also at war with the "Blacks"—a possible reference to the Wichitas or Osages, who wore black paint when they attacked enemies.[7] Arikara captives also reached the Illinois Country. In 1726, at the French settlement of Kaskaskia, a freed Arikara ("Ricarra") slave named Jacques Hyacinthe married a freed Apache slave named Thérèse. In 1741 at Cahokia, another French settlement, the daughter of Marie-Anne Padoka Desricaras, "Apache from the Arikaras," was baptized. In his report on Indian nations in Louisiana from 1758, the governor of Louisiana, Louis Billouart de Kerlérec, spoke with Arikara slaves who described the size of their nation on the upper Missouri. Arikara slaves continued to reach the Illinois Country in the Spanish period. In late 1770, Thérèse Ricara married the Frenchman Jean-Baptiste Jacquemain dit La Joie, her former owner, in the small settlement of Prairie du Rocher, south of St. Louis.[8] In the 1770s, Spanish governors attempted to outlaw the slave trade, but captives from the Missouri Country still reached the Illinois settlements. In early 1770, a

[6] Entry for 31 August 1804, DJLC 3:29, 30 ("young").
[7] Bergier to his "chez Pere" [Saint-Vallier], 4 May 1702, Lettres R, no. 53, La correspondance précieuse, Fonds Séminaire de Québec, CRAF.
[8] Carl J. Ekberg, *Stealing Indian Women: Native Slavery in the Illinois Country* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 43–44, 48, 79; BLC 53.

trader named Trudot conducted three Indian slaves from the "upper Missouri" to St. Louis, despite an ordinance prohibiting Indian slavery in Spanish Louisiana.[9]

While traders escorted female captives down the Missouri River to the Illinois country, they also married Otoe, Omaha, Arikara, and Sioux women—in what French officials called marriage *à la façon du pays*—in order to move through indigenous territories. Some of these women accompanied their husbands to the Illinois country and St. Louis. In addition to providing kinship connections to trade partners, these women probably helped their French Canadian husbands identify the best routes and pathways in the Missouri River. Their experience as navigators offered essential knowledge of the river itself. Women who were able to revisit their own communities after reaching the Illinois country returned with knowledge about foreign lands and information about white settlers. Like Europeans who ventured into unexplored territories, indigenous women who traveled down the Missouri River conducted reconnaissance missions. They explored the Missouri by traveling downriver.[10]

As captives and wives of *coureurs de bois*, the unlicensed French Canadian traders, anonymous Indian women traveled on the Missouri River throughout the eighteenth century. Colonial officials more frequently noted the movement of Indian diplomats on the river. Jefferson's diplomatic program had old precedents in colonial America. According to the historian Herman J. Viola, French officials instituted trans-Atlantic Indian diplomacy in the seventeenth century, when they escorted Indian delegates to Versailles. English officials

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[9] See Ordinances of Pedro Piernas, 1770-1775, p. 6, Everett D. Graff Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago; Piernas to Unzaga, 2 July 1770, and Piernas to Unzaga, 23 July 1771, legajo 81, Papeles Procedentes de Cuba, AGI, microfilm, MHMLRC. For baptisms of Indian slaves in Spanish St. Louis, see Ekberg, *Indian Slavery*, 58–59.

[10] Tanis Thorne, *The Many Hands of My Relations: French and Indians on the Lower Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1996), 78.

followed suit by inviting Indian leaders to London.[11] Long-distance Indian travel from the Missouri country to colonial outposts began as early as 1719, when the French explorer Etienne Véniard, sieur de Bourgmont conducted four Missouria leaders and Illinois representatives down the Mississippi River to Dauphine Island on the Gulf Coast, where they "s[a]ng the calumet" and received presents from the members of the French Superior Council of Louisiana. When all but one of the Missourias died, the council commanded Bourgmont to escort the sole survivor safely back to his village and deliver presents to "cover" his death.[12]

The fate of the Missouria delegates probably discouraged Otoe leaders, who kept in close contact with their Missouria relatives, from making their own trip down the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers in 1725, when most of them declined Bourgmont's invitation to visit New Orleans and Versailles. Decades of conflict with the Sioux and other enemies had depleted their numbers, and none of the chiefs were willing to risk the trip. Explaining their reluctance to send more than one delegate to Paris, the Otoe spokesman told Bourgmont, "[A]ll the French in this land know that we are a nation destroyed by war." The daughter of a Missouria leader, along with nine other chiefs, accompanied Bourgmont down to New Orleans, where the Louisiana Superior Council cut expenses by reducing the size of the Osage, Missouri, and Otoe delegation to five. After their ship sank off the Gulf Coast, the contingent had to board another vessel, and they survived on salted beef and dry beans for the length of their voyage across the Atlantic.[13]

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[11] See Herman J. Viola, *Diplomats in Buckskin: A History of Indian Delegations in Washington City* (Reprint, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 13–16.

[12] "Minutes of the Council of Commerce Assembled at Dauphine Island on the Thirteenth of September, 1719," in Dunbar Rowland and Albert Godfrey Sanders, eds., *Mississippi Provincial Archives, Volume 3: French Dominion, 1704-1743* (Jackson, Mississippi: Press of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1932), 260–61.

[13] Norall, *Bourgmont*, 83.

Following Bourgmont's delegations, French officials in the Illinois country made scattered reports of Indian representatives traveling down the Missouri River, including a Pawnee leader named Stabaco who visited Fort de Chartres before the Seven Years' War. In 1751 Stabaco, who reportedly ruled the Pawnees with two of his brothers, pledged to his "father" that he would monitor the "children" of the French in his country. After hearing news of this meeting, a Canadian official declared confidently that with the Pawnees as firm allies, the French would be "masters on both sides of the Missouri."[14]

By hosting Indian deputations, colonial officials hoped to secure alliances and project imperial authority in distant places. For Indian leaders like Stabaco, though, visits downriver allowed them to communicate their authority in European capitals, and their mobility on the river was an expression of indigenous power. Indian leaders harnessed the power of the Missouri River current to communicate their interests in the Illinois country and co-opted European technologies and labor to achieve mobility on the river.

When a group of Kanza, Otoe, and Pawnee delegates traveled downriver in 1768 to meet the new Spanish governor in Illinois, Francisco Riu, they demanded transportation on the river itself. Ríu, who had arrived in the Illinois country the previous fall, was under orders to reduce expenditures in upper Louisiana, and he told the delegates that they would have to travel home by land—a cheaper but more dangerous option. The Pawnee delegation, which included someone from Stabaco's village, insisted that they go back "by water." They explained that the "last time they had come downriver, they had returned by land and several

[14] La Jonquière to Rouillé, 25 September 1751, IESYW, 367–68. See same letter in Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, vol. 18: The French Régime in Wisconsin* (Madison WI: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1908), 93. This was perhaps the same Pawnee chief whom the Jesuit Vivier records meeting at Fort de Chartres in October 1750. Vivier went to meet the Pawnee leader, who invited the Jesuits to his village and told him that "the sky is always serene while the Frenchman sojourns there." See Vivier to a Jesuit father, 17 November 1750, *Jesuit Relations*, 69:225.

had died due to the heat." The following day, Ríu distributed presents and informed the delegates that he could not provide a boat for their return trip because "this would be a great expense for the king." Comparing the Spaniards unfavorably to the French, the "principal chief" of the Kanzas

> responded to this by saying that four years ago the French supplied them with all they needed. Thus they were ready to accept the Spanish and came to see them when they arrived in St. Louis expecting to receive great presents. Today they learn that the Spanish cannot send them back by water and are ordering them to go by land which is the same as to receive them with tomahawk in hand in order to kill them, particularly the old. He says they will go by land despite the fact that they will be attacked by many of their enemies.[15]

The meeting quickly fell apart. The Kanza chief "left without taking the present . . . at [his] feet." An Otoe leader told Ríu that his gifts could not compare to those of the French. Soon "all of the nations walked out of the council." Ríu tried to repair the situation by inviting them back the next day and promising larger gifts. But the Indians forced his hand, threatening to destroy the new Spanish post if Ríu did not send them traders. Ríu decided that Governor Antonio de Ulloa's order to "preserve the peace" outweighed his prohibition of trade with Indians, and he assigned traders to escort the chiefs back to their villages. This was a more economical option anyway, Ríu reasoned in his report to Ulloa; the traders would bear the costs of carrying their Indian passengers on boats up the Missouri. On June 19 the traders Montardi, Cardinal, and Beausoleil left to escort the Pawnee leaders to the "place[s] called Stabaco, . . . Tapage, and . . . Panimaha"—the villages of the Skiri and Chaui Pawnees; Labadie and Laderout accompanied the Kanza delegates back to two of their villages; and

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[15] Ríu to Antonio de Ulloa, 25 June 1768, legajo 109-1184, Papeles Procedentes de Cuba, AGI, microfilm r. 18, MHMLRC (translation by Anna Price). For Governor Antonio de Ulloa's directions to Ríu, see Gilbert C. Din and Abraham P. Nasatir, *Imperial Osages: Spanish-Indian Diplomacy in the Mississippi Valley* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 59, 60, 62.

Labuxiere left with the Otoe chief. By threatening to destroy the post, these delegates forced Ríu to provide transportation on the Missouri River, which they transformed into a channel of indigenous mobility, communication, and power. In a weak position on a remote frontier of the Spanish empire, Riu had little choice but to comply with their demands.

By comparing the generosity and power of the new Spanish régime to the French, the Kanza delegate implicitly threatened to ally with Britain—a consistent threat to Spanish interests in Louisiana. During times of war, Indian delegates from the Missouri country capitalized on their position between imperial rivals to demand larger concessions from Spanish colonial officials in St. Louis, and Spanish officials spent money trying to reach potential allies who lived far upriver. In 1781, responding to rumors that a Frenchman and English loyalist named Roque was attempting to turn the Sioux against the Spaniards, Lt. Gov. Francisco Cruzat sent a Canadian named Pierre Dorion Sr. upriver with "three men, a flag, and some merchandise" in order to win the allegiance of the Sioux. Dorion, who had lived with a band of Yankton Sioux and was married to the sister of a chief named La Oja, promised to escort the "principal chiefs" of the Sioux to St. Louis the following May.[16] During the Revolutionary War, Spanish officials struggled to meet the growing cost of awarding gifts to visiting deputations.[17] After the American Revolution, Indian leaders used the specter of British and American activity to compel the Spaniards to give them more money to secure their loyalty. By the 1790s, Pawnee, Otoe, Omaha, and Yankton Sioux delegates were accruing power by making regular trips to visit Spanish governors in St.

[16] Cruzat to Galvez, 16 January 1781, legajo 2, Papeles Procedentes de Cuba, AGI, microfilm, MHMLRC.
[17] For the types of presents distributed, see Cruzat to Galvez, 21 December 1780, legajo 11, AGI-PC. For the shortage, see Council of War, 9 July 1782, SMV 2:39.

Louis.[18] In addition to visiting St. Louis, peoples in the Missouri Country also made overland trips to British posts in the pays d'en haut, especially Fort Malden, across from Detroit.[19]

Although long-distance travel to the Illinois country increased the authority of Indian delegates, it created a new avenue to power that disrupted traditional pathways to leadership in Indian communities. According to one Omaha tradition, an Omaha man visited St. Louis in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century and "on his return assumed an air of importance, saying that he had been made a great chief by the white men." The diplomat may have been the son of the powerful chief Black Bird, who was also named Black Bird.[20] Trips downriver not only elevated young or disreputable men to leadership positions but also carried considerable risks. Moving downriver in the boats of French traders, Indian envoys could evade surveillance and pursuit by foreigners and enemies. Return trips were much more difficult and dangerous: time-distance increased from the Illinois country to the upper Missouri country. Although the delegates in 1768 preferred boat travel to long overland expeditions through enemy territories, boats still moved extremely slowly through foreign territories, and their exposure in the river channel made it harder to avoid detection.

Ascending the Missouri in June 1804, Lewis and Clark averaged ten to twelve miles per day, probably a little over a mile per hour. In a boat loaded with merchandise moving at

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[18] For visits to St. Louis by Pawnee, Otoe, Omaha, Kanza, and Yankton Sioux delegates to the Illinois country, see Ríu to Antonio de Ulloa, 25 June 1768, legajo 109-1184, Papeles Procedentes de Cuba, AGI, r. 18, MHMLRC; "Statement of Payment for Indian Presents," 9 January 1770, SMV 1:155; Leyba to Galvez, 21 July 1778, SMV 1:298; Miró, 12 December 1785, SMV 2:160; John Ludwickson, "Blackbird and Son: A Note concerning Late-Eighteenth- and Early-Nineteenth-Century Omaha Chieftainship," *Ethnohistory* 42, no. 1 (Winter 1995): 133–49, 136. When the trader Jean-Baptiste Trudeau ascended the Missouri in 1794, the Yanktons could report that "their chiefs had been at different times in the country of the French, that they had been well received by the great chief of the Spaniards." See Trudeau Journal, BLC, 271. He also met an "ancient chief" of the Republican (Kitkahahki) Pawnees who had been "many times in his youth to the French establishments in the Illinois." See Grenier and St. Gelais, *Jean-Baptiste Trudeau*, 134.

[19] British officials welcomed an Omaha delegation in 1800. See Petition of Jacques Clamorgan, 15 January 1800, BLC, 613.

[20] See John C. Ewers, "Symbols of Chiefly Authority in Spanish Louisiana," in *The Spanish in the Mississippi Valley, 1762-1804*, ed. John Francis McDermott (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 273, 275–76, 280; and Ludwickson, "Blackbird and Son," 136.

the average rate of twelve miles per day, it would take Kanza delegate approximately thirty-one days to travel the 364 miles to the mouth of the Kansas River and then additional time to reach their villages, which in 1768 sat another fifty miles up the Kansas River. Otoe delegates would have to travel upriver for close to fifty-three days before he reached their villages on the Platte River—630 miles above the mouth of the Missouri. Finally, the Pawnee delegates would have to travel nearly two months to reach their villages, which were another hundred miles up the Platte River.[21] Ascending the Missouri River, Indian and white travelers confronted the tyranny of distance in the Great Plains.

Indian delegates who traveled upriver in the late eighteenth century encountered a number of different indigenous territorial borders, particularly those surrounding the lands of the powerful Osages. In a detailed description of Indian territories in the upper Mississippi Valley, which drew on notes from the late eighteenth century, the fur trade scion Auguste Chouteau identified borders throughout the river corridor: the Grand and Kansas Rivers separated Little Osage and Missouria lands from Kanza territory, the mouth of the Grand Nemaha River marked the beginning of Otoe territory, and the mouth of the Platte River separated Omaha from Otoe territory. The most prominent border in Chouteau's account was the Missouri-Mississippi drainage divide, which was the western boundary of Fox territory; the southern boundary of Sioux territory; and the northern boundary of the territories of Big Osage allies: the Little Osages, Missourias, and Kansas.[22] By traveling hundreds of miles up

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[21] The distances are based on Clark's table in 22 July 1804, DJLC 2:405-6. For measurements in leagues, see "Table of Distances Along the Missouri in Ascending from the Mouth up to the White River, Taken by James Mackay, 1797," BLC 487, 489. For the average speeds of Missouri River watercraft before the steamboat, see David J. Wishart, *Fur Trade in the American West*, 86; and William Lass, *Navigating the Missouri: Steamboating on Nature's Highway* (Norman: Arthur H. Clark, 2008), 28.

[22] For Pawnee-Osage conflict in the early 1790s, see Loomis and Nasatir, *Pedro Vial and the Roads to Santa Fe*, 400. In 1816 Auguste Chouteau wrote a report on Indian territories in the upper Mississippi region based on "notes which from time to time I have made for my own Satisfaction during a long residence in this Country." Most of his descriptions date to the period before the 1790s, when the Little Osages and Missourias abandoned

the Missouri River, Kanza, Otoe, and Pawnee delegates trespassed through the lands of foreign nations.

By inviting Indian leaders from the upper Missouri River to St. Louis, Lewis and Clark asked Indian delegates to cross even more indigenous borders and spend additional months on the river itself. Before Lewis and Clark ascended the Missouri River, Thomas Jefferson had granted them the option of sending a few "influential chiefs" back to Washington DC "at the public expence."[23] As historians William Foley and Charles David Rice conclude, Jefferson hoped trips to Washington would prevent even costlier military intervention in the West by encouraging Indian leaders to accept American dominance and assimilate to American ways.[24] Enlisting their expedition keelboat, which could hold dozens of Indian passengers, Lewis and Clark tried to transform the Missouri River into a channel of diplomacy that would carry Indian leaders to centers of American power.

During the trips up and down the Missouri River, Lewis and Clark recruited leaders from various Indian nations to visit St. Louis and Washington. They told the Otoes that they could select up to five chiefs to travel downriver with a trader to St. Louis in the spring, and that they should show the American commandant their American flag and medal when they arrived. They also asked the Otoes to exchange any French, Spanish, or British flags and medals for American ones. When they met an encampment of Yanktons in September 1804, Lewis and Clark asked the trader and interpreter Pierre Dorion, whom a Spanish lieutenant

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the Grand River region. Stella M. Drumm, ed., "Notes of Auguste Chouteau on Boundaries of Various Indian Nations," *Glimpses of the Past* 7 (1940): 117–40, 134 (quote), 137–40. The drainage divide extended near the present-day towns of Mexico, Huntsville, Macon City, and Kirksville, Missouri, and then along the Chariton and Thompson Rivers into Iowa. See Drumm, "Chouteau's Notes," 137n21; Walter Williams, ed., *A History of Northeast Missouri*, vol. 1 (Canton, Missouri: Lewis Publishing Company, 1913), 419–20; and Jean Cutler Prior, *Landforms of Iowa* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1991), 32, 105–6.

23 Jackson, *Letters*, 1:64.

[24] William E. Foley and C. David Rice, *The First Chouteaus: River Barons of Early St. Louis* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 106.

governor had dispatched on a similar mission in 1781, to "accompany as many of the Sioux chiefs as he could collect, down to the seat of government" before the river closed with ice.[25] As Otoe and Yankton leaders told the Americans, they had made trips downriver before and were familiar with the rituals of alliance building on the Mississippi River, including the granting of gifts, medals, and certificates.

But the Americans also extended invitations to people who had never visited St. Louis before. As Pierre Chouteau informed James Wilkinson, who assumed the governship of Louisiana in 1806, the Lewis and Clark Expedition "will attract to St. Louis Indian nations who until then had never come, such as the Ricaras, . . . Sioux from the Upper Missouri, Mandans, Mahas," and Pawnees. For Chouteau, this diplomatic program would help the United States maintain allies on the upper Missouri River and prevent the Mandans and Arikaras from allying with the British.[26]

Chouteau was only partially correct about who had visited St. Louis. Omaha and Pawnee leaders were familiar with Illinois and made regular visits to Spanish governors. Even an Arikara leader had visited St. Louis. Thirty years before Lewis and Clark ascended the Missouri, an Arikara delegate joined representatives of the Omahas, Otoes, and Pawnees on a trip downriver and greeted the lieutenant governor of Spanish Louisiana, Pedro Piernas, in St. Louis. According to Piernas, the Arikara delegate asked to receive a trader like the other delegates from the Omahas, Otoes, and Pawnees, who all received their corresponding presents "and returned content to their villages."[27] Yet this Arikara leader traveled downriver

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[25] For the invitation to the Otoes, see Lewis and Clark to the Oto Indians, 4 August 1804, Jackson, Letters, 1:207. For Yanktons, see entry for 31 August 1804, DJLC 3:31; Biddle, *History of the Expedition*, 58–59.
[26] Chouteau to Wilkinson, 12 April 1806, BLC, 769–70.
[27] With the traders "han venido las Naciones mas distantes del rio Misuri qe. son las de Maha, Pani, Paninuan, y Hotoes, y una nuevamenta descubienta . . . llamada de Ricarrà." See Pedro Piernas to Luis de Unzaga, 13 July 1774, legajo 81, Papeles Procedentes de Cuba, AGI, microfilm, MHMLRC. The Pawnees, who were neighbors and distant relatives of the Arikaras, were in regular contact with St. Louis traders by the 1770s. See, for

in 1774, when the Arikaras still claimed a number of villages along the Missouri River. By 1804, the Arikara survivors not only lived farther upriver, but the landscape of territorial power in the middle Missouri Valley had changed dramatically. The smallpox epidemic of 1781 had destroyed Arikara, Mandan, and Hidatsa communities and forced them to cede most of the Missouri Valley to the Lakota Sioux. When Lewis and Clark invited Arikara, Mandan, and Hidatsa leaders to St. Louis, they asked them to make a long and dangerous trip through newly conquered Lakota territories.

In order to recruit Arikara, Mandan, and Hidatsa leaders to St. Louis, Lewis and Clark had to convince them not only that they could travel safely through Lakota lands but also that the river itself was a truly a "road" for long-distance travel. For the Arikara people, however, the Missouri River was not necessarily a road. During their long journey up the *tswaarúxti'*, or Holy Water, they had left behind the country farther downriver and had little reason to travel below the Platte River.[28] They used the river to transport goods and supplies for short distances in bullboats, but long-distance navigation of the river, especially travel against the current, was dangerous. By calling the Missouri River a "road," Lewis and Clark awarded value to the river based primarily on its navigability and redefined it as a place where men, not women, achieved mobility and power. Instead of negotiating passage across the river like James Bradbury when he approached the Hidatsa villages, Lewis and Clark were reaching villages on the upper Missouri River without the help or consent of Arikara, Mandan, or Hidatsa ferrymen and women.

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example, Francisco de Cruzat to Bernardo de Galvez, November 15, 1777, in Louis Houck, *The Spanish Régime in Missouri*, (Chicago, IL: R.R. Donnelly, 1909), 1:143-44.

[28] Douglas Parks, ed., *Myths and Traditions of the Arikara Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 22. For the Arikara term for the Missouri River, see Witte and Gallagher, *North American Journals*, 2:477.

Lewis and Clark were not the first non-Indians to call the river a "road" for transportation across the continent. Before they ascended the Missouri, they had consulted the writings of their Jean-Baptiste Trudeau and James Mackay, who conducted expeditions up the Missouri for the Spanish government in the 1790s. They also spoke with Mackay in Illinois.[29] According to his journal, Trudeau called repeatedly for the "free road" on the Missouri in front of Omaha, Arikara, and Sioux audiences. When he met with the Omaha leader Black Bird, James Mackay expected the Omaha leader to "clear the road of the upper Missouri."[30]

The term that Trudeau used, *chemin*, translated into Lakota as *chankú*, into Omaha as *ujañ-ge*, and into Arikara as *hatuúnu'*, roots of longer words indicating road types (like the Arikara *hatuhcita*, "road to fork") and the act of making a road. There is no clear indication in Trudeau's or Mackay's journal how their interpreters translated the "road," and Trudeau recommended employing Canadian traders who could speak Lakota and Arikara because he believed Indian interpreters "never repeated speeches in the manner or in the sense they are stated."[31]

For his audiences, traveling a road involved both the physical labor of travel but also the political work of securing rights of passage through foreign territories. It represented a course of conduct as much as a physical space. As historian Peter Nabokov concludes, the

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[29] Jefferson sent Lewis and Clark copies and translations of Mackay's and Trudeau's journals. See Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*, 10–12, 263n26.
[30] For "chemins libres," see Grenier and St. Gelais, *Jean-Baptiste Trudeau*, 49. For the "beau chemin" and "beaux chemins," see Grenier and St. Gelais, *Jean-Baptiste Trudeau*, 49, 50, 54, 60, 62, 69, 71, 77. For Mackay, see BLC, 361. For the original text, see Jean-Baptiste Trudeau, cahiers 3 and 4, no. 73-74, Fonds Viger-Verreau 50, Centre de reference l'Amérique française, Musée de l'Amérique francophone, Ville de Québec, Canada. According to an authoritative French dictionary from the late 1780s, the term he used—"chemin"—connoted a "track, road, or space where one goes from one place to another." The word also denoted "conduct that leads to some end, to some termination." S.v. "chemin," Jean-François Féraud, *Dictionaire critique de la langue française*, 3 vols. (Marseille: Mossy, 1787–1788), in "Dictionnaires d'autrefois," ARTFL Project, Dept. of Romance Languages and Literatures, University of Chicago, artfl-project.uchicago.edu/content/dictionnaires-dautrefois.
[31] Grenais and St. Gallier, "Jean-Baptiste Trudeau," 79.

road, pathway, or journey constituted "one of the most fertile, wide-spread tropes in American Indian consciousness." Native traditions refer to proper ways of opening and closing roads, the act of making a road, and life itself as a road through time. Roads served as metaphors for "proper action."[32] In the vision of the Lakota healer Black Elk, the fourth grandfather identified the black and red roads as sources of power—paths he can follow both to defend his people and "do good." He described the black road as the "fearful road" and the red road as the "good road."[33] And in one Omaha story, the leader of an expedition asks his men to "make the road straight."[34] Travelers "made" a road by establishing fictive kinship relations through the calumet ceremony: granting gifts and smoking tobacco to secure safe and peaceful passage as a visiting "father." After Trudeau accused them of raiding the Omahas and Poncas, Arikara leaders promised that they had "preferred to hold to the beautiful road rather than avenging" a previous attack.[35] Later travelers made clear roads by granting gifts of tobacco and securing passage across territorial borders. When he visited the Hidatsa villages in the summer of 1805, the Canadian trade Antoine Larocque worried that the Hidatsas would not allow him to visit the Crow Indians. Yet he recognized that a "certain method to get the road clear would be to assemble the Chiefs, make them a present of Tobacco and ammunition, make them smoke & speak to them what occasion I may have for them in [the] future." The Hidatsa leader The Borgne later promised to "clear the road before us if necessary."[36] When he visited St. Louis in 1807, the Brulé leader White Blackbird recalled that he had only seen Clark briefly a few years earlier, when Clark "made the road

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[32] See Peter Nabokov, "Orientations from Their Side," in *Cartographic Encounters: Perspectives on Native American Mapmaking and Map Use* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998): 256 ("fertile"), 257 ("proper").
[33] Raymond J. DeMallie, ed., *The Sixth Grandfather: Black Elk's Teachings Given to John G. Neihardt* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 118 (quote), 119–30.
[34] James Owen Dorsey, *The Cegiha Language* (Washington DC: GPO, 1890), 178, 186-87.
[35] Grenier and St. Gelais, *Jean-Baptiste Trudeau*, 60.
[36] Burpee, "Journal of Larocque," 21 ("method"), 23 ("necessary").

clear going up the troubled water [the Missouri]."[37] This delegate understood Lewis and Clark's expedition up the Missouri River not as a violent assertion of American sovereignty in the Missouri Country, but as the act of making a clear road through peaceful conduct.

Drawing on what he knew of Pawnee and Lakota calumet ceremonialism, Trudeau tried to make a road on the Missouri River and cross multiple territorial borders by claiming that he traveled upriver for purposes of peace, not war. He repeatedly asked his Native audiences to hold to the "beautiful road" and establish peace with enemies. By transporting guns and ammunition and traveling secretly on the river, however, Trudeau faced accusations that he was not traveling peacefully but promoting war.

When he reached the Lakota and Yankton encampment above the White River, Trudeau appealed to the connection between clear roads and peaceful skies in Arikara and Sioux calumet ceremonialism. Following instructions to grant only "blue cloth and woolen blankets" to tribes that detained him and express the Spanish king's love of "free roads, and a serene sky," Trudeau used blue cloth to request free passage on the river. He placed "on the sand" of the riverbank "the blue cloth, symbolic of the clear road which I demanded of them."[38] Yet Trudeau's destination and cargo betrayed his intentions. The Lakotas accused Trudeau of traveling upriver as an agent of war, not peace, because he was going to trade weapons of war to their Arikara and Mandan enemies.

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[37] Harry H. Anderson, ed., "Dakota Resources: Transcript of Williams Clark's Council with the Sioux, 22 May 1807, Saint Louis, Missouri," *South Dakota History* 35, no. 1 (2005): 71–87, 79.
[38] Clamorgan's Instructions to Trudeau, BLC, 251 ("free roads"); Trudeau's Journal, BLC, 272 ("placed"). See Raymond J. DeMallie and Douglas R. Parks, Introduction to *Sioux Indian Religion: Tradition and Innovation* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), 4. For the Arikaras, Trudeau stated, blue calumet pipes represented peaceful skies, while those painted yellow, white, or red symbolized stormy and violent skies. See Gelais and St. Grenier, *Jean-Baptiste Trudeau*, 137. When representatives of the Santees, Yanktons, and Tetons met with the English explorer Jonathan Carver in 1767, the "principal chief" of the Sioux proclaimed his hope that Carver would open the "blue sky of peace." Carver, *Travels Through the Interior Parts of North-America*, 91.

Trudeau encountered similar accusations when he returned downriver to the Ponca and Omaha villages, where he spent the winter of 1794/95 trying to convince the powerful Omaha leader Black Bird to grant St. Louis traders free passage on the Missouri. Black Bird defended his blockades and tolls on the Missouri road by arguing that traders were no longer following the correct protocols of travel through foreign territories. The "first French," he told Trudeau, had "open[ed] the road between them and each village through which they passed, announcing the words of their great chief, making presents on his behalf when it was necessary; placing the savages in union everywhere." They had followed the peaceful road of the Wa-wa*n*, the Omaha calumet ceremony, bringing together potential enemies, even though the "road which they had opened had been red with their blood." Now, however, traders were moving more like camouflaged war parties, hiding their passage in enemy territory, and they encouraged interband conflict to eliminate rivals. Instead of declaring their presence as "fathers" on the road and "marking out the road with good understanding with all the nations who are situated on" it, Black Bird explained, traders "have sought only to irritate [the Omahas] by hurrying along the road secretly." He held particular scorn for a trader named Jacques d'Eglise, who "hastens stealthily along the road every summer." He also knew that Trudeau himself had hurried past the Omaha village in the summer of 1794. In keeping with the secretive passage of traders, Black Bird said, the Spanish king planned to "open the road with blood and pillage."[39] The Spaniards had abandoned the peaceful road in favor of a violent one—a road marked by evasion and war.

Like Mackay and Trudeau, Lewis and Clark used the term "road" to describe both the Missouri River itself and the future course of Indian conduct, and their speeches to Indian

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[39] Trudeau Journal, BLC, 284 ("burdensome tribute"), 286. Black Bird's name evidently referred not to the bird species but to a bird that was black in color. See Melvin R. Gilmore, notes appended to "Blackbird, Chief of the Omahas," folder 7, box 1, RG3308, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln.

audiences switched back and forth between the literal and metaphorical meanings of the word. When they first encountered the Arikaras, Lewis and Clark gave a speech that they had also delivered to the Otoes and Sioux. Claiming rights of passage on the Missouri River, the Americans commanded Indian leaders: "Do not obstruct the passage of any boat, pirogue, or other vessel, which may be ascending or decending the Missouri River, more especially such as may be under cover of your great fathers flag neither injure any red or white man on board such vessels as may possess the flag." Claiming that they traveled upriver mostly for purposes of exploration and diplomacy, not trade, they announced they had come to "open the road."[40] Drawing on diplomatic boilerplate, they asked the Otoes to "walk" a "road" where they "live in peace with all the white men, for they are his children; neither wage war against the red men your neighbours."[41]

Recognizing the benefits of having a new supply of American merchandise, Arikara leaders were initially receptive to Lewis and Clark's call for free roads. The "first chief" of the Arikaras, Kakawissassa, who lived in the island village, informed Clark that "his people promised to attend to our advise, and Said the road was open for us and no one Dar[e] Shut it, & we might Departe at pleasure."[42] The "second" chief, Pocasse, stated that he was "glad to See you & that your intentions are to open the road for all we See that our Grand father has Sent you to open the road," and that "you come to See the water & roads to Clear them as Clear as possible." When Lewis and Clark invited them to St. Louis, however, these leaders doubted that the Americans could make a clear road on the river through Lakota territories. Pocasse worried about his own safety on the road: there were "many bad nations on the

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[40] Lewis and Clark to the Oto Indians, 4 August 1804, Jackson, *Letters*, 1:206 ("obstruct"), 207 ("open").
[41] Jackson, *Letters*, 1:205–6.
42 Entry for 11 October 1804, DJLC 3:158.

road," and he was reluctant to travel downriver. He raised a "Doubt as to the Safty on passing the nations below particularly the Souex [*sic*]."[43]

In August 1806, when Lewis and Clark returned to the Missouri River, Mandan and Hidatsa leaders also expressed concerns about traveling through Sioux lands. The Mandan leader Posecopsahe (Black Cat) told Clark that the Sioux "were very troublesom [*sic*] and the road to his great father dangerous."[44] While Lewis and Clark imagined the Missouri River as a free road through American territory, Posecopsahe and the other delegates saw the river more clearly for what it was: a long road across hundreds of miles of Lakota territory.

Only two village leaders from the Upper Missouri River agreed to travel downriver to St. Louis: the Arikara leader Too Né and Mandan village chief Šehékšot. In the spring of 1805, after Lewis and Clark spent the winter at Fort Mandan, Too Né traveled to St. Louis on the expedition keelboat, which Corp. Richard Warfington conducted downriver. Despite his assurances otherwise, Lewis was certain that the barge would be "fired on by the Siouxs," but the crew members evidently "pledged . . . that they will not yeald [*sic*] while there is a man of them living."[45] Along with Too Né, the boat picked up forty-four other Indian passengers—delegates from the Sioux, Poncas, Omahas, Otoes, and Missourias.[46] When Too Né traveled downriver, he passed recent and ancient village sites of the Arikara people at the Cheyenne River, Big Bend, and even farther south, reenacting journeys made by Mother Corn and the Holy Grandmother Cedar each spring when priests placed them in the river. His trip downriver was a journey into the Arikara past.

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[43] 12 October 1804, DJLC 3:160, 162 (quote).
[44] 15 August 1806, DJLC 8:301-2.
[45] Lewis to Jefferson, 7 April 1805, in Jackson, *Letters*, 1:233 (quote), 237n7.
[46] Pierre Chouteau to William Henry Harrison, 22 May 1805, in Jackson, *Letters*, 1:242. For Tabeau, see Abel, *Tabeau's Narrative*, 41.

His delegation arrived safely in St. Louis in late May 1805. Territorial governor James Wilkinson and the fur trader Pierre Chouteau, who was serving as an Indian agent, decided to postpone their trip to Washington until the fall, after the summer recess and when the weather was cooler. In order to reduce the costs of transportation to Washington, Wilkinson hoped that most the delegates would agree to return upriver after visiting St. Louis. Those who remained in St. Louis stayed in a house that Chouteau built next to his own home.[47] By late September 1805, only the Arikara chief Too Né; the Otoe and Missouria delegates, including the Otoe chief Little Thief; and a few Sioux, Sauk, Ioway, and Fox representatives remained in St. Louis. Their escort to the capital would be Capt. Amos Stoddard, who was prepared to "turn showman" and "excite curiosity" in the Native delegates during the trip East.[48]

Like the Kanza, Pawnee, and Otoe leaders who traveled downriver in 1768, the diplomats who could not travel to the capital struggled to find transportation back upriver. In the fall of 1804, the longtime trader Pierre Dorion Sr.—who had led a delegation of Sioux leaders to St. Louis over twenty years earlier—escorted the Yankton leaders Grey Bear and Afraid of the Bear down the Missouri.[49] Afraid of the Bear recalled later that after they had reached St. Louis, "We could not go on and were obliged to return to our Nation, through the high grass and weeds a long distance on foot. We were all sick and with great difficulty

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[47] Wilkinson to Chouteau, 27 May 1805, Jackson, *Letters*, 1:247-48; Harrison to Dearborn, 27 May 1805, in Jackson, *Letters*, 1:246; Foley and Rice, *The First Chouteaus*, 106–8, 115; Lewis to Stoddard, 16 May 1804, Amos Stoddard Collection, MHMLRC.

[48] Wilkinson to Dearborn, 22 September 1805, Jackson, *Letters*, 1:259; Stoddard to Jacob Kingsbury, 21 September 1805, letterbook 1, Jacob Kingsbury Papers, Chicago History Museum Research Center (quotation). For Stoddard's delegation, see also Kingsbury to Amos Stoddard, 16 October and 18 October 1805, letterbook 2, Chicago History Museum Research Center.

49 DJLC 3:28-29. For Dorion's recruitment by Lewis and Clark, see DJLC 2:294. On 11 March 1805, another seven Sioux delegates reached St. Louis. Chouteau to Dearborn, 11 March 1805, Pierre Chouteau Letterbook, reel 22, pt. 2, *Papers of the St. Louis Fur Trade*, ed. William R. Swagerty (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society, 1991); Shirley Christian, *Before Lewis and Clark: The Story of the Chouteaus, the French Dynasty that Ruled America* (Reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 132–33.

reached our Bands."[50] After three weeks in St. Louis in the summer of 1805, Omaha and Ponca delegates "expressed clearly" their wish to return back upriver instead of continuing on to Washington. They told Chouteau that the journey was already "long enough" and the weather too warm to make the journey east. Instead of boarding a boat for their travel upriver, however, the delegates traveled on foot—a distance of over six hundred miles. Chouteau provided a horse to a Ponca delegate who was too sick with dysentery to walk.[51]

When the Arikara leader Too Né and Otoe village chief Little Thief fell ill in St. Louis, they cited Lewis's promise to return them safely before demanding transportation back upriver. In a letter to Secretary of War Dearborn, Wilkinson concluded that the potential threat to the security of Lewis and Clark justified the expenditure: traders told him that the Arikaras and Otoes would eventually hear about the predicament of Too Né and Little Thief from other Indians and traders who were returning upriver, and that losing either one of the leaders could imperil the safe return of Lewis and Clark. But Wilkinson also saw an opportunity station to his son, Lt. James Biddle Wilkinson, on the Platte River and use government funds to capitalize on the profitable Pawnee trade. He sent James and thirty-two soldiers upriver with Little Thief and Too Né and couched the military deployment as an effort to protect Little Thief and Too Ne—even though most of the soldiers would remain at the Platte, and only two soldiers would continue with Too Né to his village.

Little Thief died a short distance upriver, in St. Charles, and Too Né never even made it to the Platte River. Twenty leagues below the Kansas River, a group of Kanza Indians "marched up the River and took Post at a difficult and narrow pass." James Wilkinson claimed that the Kanzas had forced Too Né's escort to return downriver, but the party

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[50] Anderson, "Dakota Resources," 73, 79.

51 Chouteau to Dearborn, 20 April 1805; and Chouteau to Harrison, 12 June 1805, Pierre Chouteau Letterbook, reel 22, pt. 2, *Papers of the St. Louis Fur Trade*.

returned to St. Louis only after accidentally shooting an American who had been descending the river with his brother.[52] Belying American claims that the Missouri was an open road through American territory, delegates such as Too Né encountered blockades and checkpoints on the length of the river. Moving hardly more than a mile per hour against the current, boats heading upriver became easy targets for blockades by the Kanza, Otoe, Sauk and Fox, and Sioux. The Hidatsa leader One Eye noted the particular danger of ascending the Missouri when he affirmed that the Sioux "will be on the river and will kill us on our return home."[53]

After spending nearly six months in St. Louis, Too Né eventually traveled to Washington and died of illness in the capital in early April 1806, a year after he had left his village on the upper Missouri River. Secretary of War Dearborn ordered James Wilkinson to dispatch the interpeter Joseph Gravelines with gifts to deliver to his wives and children, including a military commission for his favorite son. His family and relatives would have to wait another year to find out what exactly had happened to him, and his death would imperil the safe return of Šehékšot (White Coyote). When Lewis and Clark returned to the upper Missouri in August 1806, Šehékšot agreed to travel to St. Louis and Washington as long as his family and interpreter could join him. Just before reaching the Arikara villages, Lewis and Clark encountered two French Canadian traders moving upriver who delivered some

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[52] Wilkinson to Dearborn, 8 October 1805, Jackson, *Letters*, 1:261-62; Wilkinson to Dearborn, 22 October 1805, Jackson, *Letters*, 1:266; Dearborn to Wilkinson, 21 November 1805, in Clarence Edwin Carter, *Territorial Papers of the United States, vol. 13: The Territory of Louisiana-Missouri, 1803-1806* (Washington DC: GPO, 1948), 290; Wilkinson to Dearborn, 10 December 1805, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 13:297-98 (quotation); Wilkinson to Dearborn, 30 December 1805, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 13:356–57. For Little Thief, see Donald Jackson, "Lewis and Clark among the Oto," *Nebraska History* 41 (1960): 237–48. For accusations against Wilkinson by an officer and return to St. Louis, see Kate Gregg, "Building of the First American Fort West of the Mississippi," *Missouri Historical Review* 30, no. 4 (July 1936): 361–62. Dr. Andrew Steele, who accompanied the expedition, gives the fullest account of it and the encounter with the Kanzas. Yet he does not mention Too Né. See the *Kentucky Gazette and Advertiser*, 1 March 1806, accessed online at Kentucky Digital History.

[53] 16 August 1806, DJLC 8:304.

troubling news: Too Né had died, apparently somewhere near the Missouri. Still trying to recruit Indian leaders to travel to Washington, Lewis and Clark withheld this information from the Arikara village chiefs when they met later the same day. Clark told them "not to be afraid of any nation below [and] that none would hurt them."[54]

Although they still had not received definitive word of the death of Too Né, the Arikara leaders suspected something was wrong. The Arikara chief Grey Eyes, who was away from his village when Lewis and Clark ascended the Missouri, informed Clark that "Several of the chiefs wished to accompany us down to See their great father, but wished to see the Chief who went down last Sumer return first," and he "expressed Some apprehention as to the Safty of that Chiefs in passing the Sieoux [*sic*]." He suspected that Lewis and Clark had failed to clear the road and conduct Too Né safely to and from the home of the "great father." In a forecast of things to come, Clark suddenly feared for the safety of Šehékšot at the Arikara villages and announced to the village chiefs that Šehékšot traveled downriver under the protection of the United States.[55] The Arikara village leaders, however, granted their safe passage downriver. Three weeks after Lewis and Clark had left the Arikara villages, in mid-September 1806, near present-day St. Joseph, Missouri, the Americans found Too Né's interpreter, Joseph Gravelines, the longtime Yankton trader Pierre Dorion Sr. traveling slowly upriver on a keelboat with Robert McClellan. Gravelines informed them that Too Né had in fact died in Washington.[56]

Still committed to recruiting delegates, Lewis and Clark asked Dorion to recruit Lakota ambassadors to St. Louis. The following spring, when the navigation season opened once again, another delegation traveled downriver. It included representatives from different

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[54] Dearborn to Wilkinson, 9 April 1806, *Territorial Papers*, 13:487; 21 August 1806, DJLC 8:311, 312 (quote).
[55] 21 August 1806, DJLC 8:313, 315.
[56] 12 September 1806, DJLC 8:333; Jefferson to the Arikaras, 11 April 1806, Jackson, *Letters*, 1: 306

"powerbases" within Brulé Lakota society. The Partisan, the leader of the second largest Brulé *tiyospaye*, represented the chiefs. Two other men—Stabber and Afraid of Bear—represented the *wichasha yatapika*, or Praiseworthy Men, whose high standing granted them leadership positions. The delegation also included a representative of the *akichita*, or tribal police; and representatives for the Hunkpapas and Oglalas. The Yankton leader Grey Bear joined the expedition as it proceeded downstream. For him and Afraid of Bear, it was their second visit to St. Louis.[57]

Before reaching St. Louis, their boat was fired on by a group of Otoes. Clark informed the commander at Fort Bellefontaine, Thomas Hunt, that the Lakota delegates, who had traveled downriver with women and children, were very "alarmed" about the Otoe attack and asked for a military escort for their return upriver.[58] The incident cast a cloud over Clark's meeting with them. When he greeted the Lakota delegation, he admonished them for detaining the expedition three summers before and mistreating a trader since then. Declaring that the "road is open," he encouraged them to travel to Washington DC. Yet The Partisan was doubtful that they could travel safely. He declared that he did not have "much hopes of getting back to my Nation again." Describing the trip to St. Louis as punishment for mistreating Lewis and Clark during their ascent of the river, he expected he would never return home. In addition to the territory of the Otoes, whom they had escaped narrowly during the first leg of the trip, the Lakota and Yankton delegates would have to travel through lands of the Sauks and Foxes, Osages, Kanza Indians, Omahas, and Poncas before reaching their own lands along the Big Sioux, White, and Cheyenne Rivers. Although Clark

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[57] Anderson, "Dakota Resources," 46, 66, 76-80; Kingsley M. Bray, "'Singing the Big Belly Song': The Making of the Robe Trade Alliance with the Lakota," *Museum of the Fur Trade Quarterly* 43, no. 3-4 (2007): 88, 90.
[58] Clark to Thomas Hunt, 15 May 1807, Daniel Bissell Papers, St. Louis Mercantile Library, University of Missouri-St. Louis, accessed online at dl.mospace.umsystem.edu; and Clark to Dearborn, 1 June 1807, in Jackson, *Letters*, 2:414.

claimed that the road was "open," The Partisan recognized the perils of crossing so many indigenous borders and the demands—in time, energy, and resources—of traveling upriver. Delegates who traveled downriver in a month found that the return trip could take months and even close to a year if the river froze before they had reached their destination. After distributing medals and flags to the visitors, Clark requested a military detachment to conduct them back upriver, and Thomas Hunt assigned Lt. Joseph Kimball and seven soldiers to escort them to their villages.[59]

The Mandan leader Šehékšot had by this point returned from Washington and insisted on accompanying the Sioux delegates upriver for his own protection. In order to protect American interests on the upper Missouri River and maintain the Mandans as allies, Secretary of War Dearborn ordered a veteran of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Capt. Nathaniel Pryor, to escort Šehékšot upriver "by as safe and Speedy conveyance as practicable."[60] Clark even tried to convince the Lakota leaders who were visiting St. Louis, including The Partisan, to join the expedition, promising them that the "road to your country will be safe."[61] Pryor recruited two other members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, George Shannon and George Gibson, to accompany him upriver. The expedition also included a detachment of traders under Auguste-Pierre Chouteau, the son of Pierre Chouteau, who were going to conduct trade at the Mandans. Auguste-Pierre was a recent graduate of West Point, and though he had grown up in Osage communities, he was unfamiliar with

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[59] Cruzat to Galvez, 16 January 1781, legajo 2, Papeles Procedentes de Cuba, AGI, MHMLRC; "William Clark, . . . In council with the Chiefs and warriors of the Yanktons and Several Bands of the Tetons," 9 May 1807, reel 2, microcopy 222, Office of the Secretary of War, *Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Unregistered Series, 1789-1861* (Washington: National Archives and Records Service, 1963) [hereafter microcopy 222, NARA]; Anderson, "Dakota Resources," 75, 77 (quote); Clark to Thomas Hunt, 15 May 1807, Daniel Bissell Papers; and Clark to Dearborn, 1 June 1807, in Jackson, *Letters*, 2:414.
60 Henry Dearborn to Clark, 9 March 1807, Jackson, *Letters*, 2:382.
[61] Anderson, "Dakota Resources," 86-87 (quote). The chiefs declined to visit Washington. See Jay H. Buckley, *William Clark: Indian Diplomat* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 17.

politics on the upper Missouri River. The commercial branch of the expedition, approved by Secretary of War Dearborn because it would help defray costs, would eventually cause serious problems for Pryor and Šehékšot when they reached the Arikara villages.[62] The final party consisted of four officers, eighteen privates, three French Canadian boatmen, and forty-two traders headed for the Mandans and Sioux. Clark concluded that the military detachment, after it received reinforcements, would be "fully sufficient to pass any hostile band which [Pryor] may probably meet with."[63]

Kimball's party traveled upriver with Pryor, Chouteau, and Šehékšot as far as the White River, where the Lakota delegates disembarked. Kimball reported that "two thousand Soux [sic] had collected on the river to see us but without any hostile motives" and that they welcomed the Americans and Šehékšot. The safe return of the Partisan as well as a "soldier" who was a pipe owner of the Kit Fox society, the principal Brulé warrior association, helped solidy Brulé relations with the Americans. As Kingsley Bray concludes, the conference at the White River in the summer of 1807—which lasted four days, a "sacred number" in Lakota cosmology—marked a turning point in Brulé-American relations that Lakota winter counts commemorated by depicting "many flags flying," a probable reference to flags distributed by Clark to the visiting delegates in St. Louis.[64]

On 23 August 1807, after a few days in camp, Kimball left Pryor and Chouteau and proceeded downriver. He expected them to have a successful trip upriver to the Mandan villages, and he believed the safe delivery of the Lakota delegates would lead the Lakotas to abandon "their former marauding manner of life & . . . no longer obstruct the navigation of

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[62] For the composition of the 1807 Pryor expedition, see Clark to Dearborn, 1 June 1807, in Jackson, *Letters*, 2:414; Larry E. Morris, *The Fate of the Corps: What Became of the Lewis and Clark Explorers after the Expedition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 29.
63 Clark to Henry Dearborn, 1 June 1807, Jackson, *Letters*, 2:414.
[64] Bray, "'Singing the Big Belly Song,'" 91.

the River."[65] Although Brulés welcomed the American alliance, Lakota divisions farther upriver maintained close ties to British traders. Different Lakota bands were at the Arikara villages when Pryor and Chouteau arrived, and the Americans would find the Arikaras ill-disposed to grant Šehékšot safe passage.

Already that summer, two separate expeditions had reached the Arikara villages. The first included Joseph Gravelines, who had made it as far as the Omaha village the previous winter. Over two years after Too Né had left the Arikara villages to descend the river to St. Louis, in June 1807, Gravelines reached the Arikara villages bearing Jefferson's message. Another trader, Charles Courtin, read the message in French for a long-time resident in the Arikara villages, the trader Pierre Garreau, to translate into Arikara. After listening to Jefferson's statement, the Arikaras replied:

> there was no other liar but their father, and that no others but them had had ears, and at present they had no more ears, since the Sioux told them that all the threats of their father would be without effect, that they had resolved to do the same as the Sioux in stopping and plundering all and every boats that would ascend as far as their villages and that they would also kill all those who would oppose their designs because the Americans were incapable of revenging themselves.[66]

Pierre Chouteau concluded that the Arikara response was "not surprising given the death of the chief," Too Né. According to Courtin, a warrior accused the Arikara chief Pocasse (the Straw), the leader of the AxtáRAhi band, of "bad discourse" throughout the previous winter and spring. Too Né himself may have lived in the AxtáRAhi settlement, which was the

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[65] Kimball to William Clark, 1 November 1807, r. 5, microcopy 221, Office of the Secretary of War, *Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Main Series, 1801-1870* (Washington DC: National Archives and Records Service, 1965) [hereafter microcopy 221, NARA].
66 Charles Courtin to Frederick Bates, 22 June 1807, r. 3, microcopy 221, NARA.

largest of three villages and possibly contained refugees from depopulated villages farther downriver.[67]

Additional proof of the "insecurity of the navigation of the Missouri," as one American official put it, arrived later that summer.[68] Following the Lewis and Clark Expedition, St. Louis traders began targeting the rich beaver trapping grounds at the Missouri headwaters and along the Yellowstone River. The Spanish trader Manuel Lisa, who grew up in New Orleans, was the first person to lead trapping expeditions up the length of the Missouri. In 1807 his team traveled up the Missouri to the Arikara villages, where they encountered two to three hundred warriors along the banks of the river. They fired a volley across the river to "indicate the place where he should land." When some women approached his boats carrying bags of corn, an Arikara man rushed forward and cut the bags, spilling their contents on the shoreline. After pointing swivel guns toward the crowd, Lisa met with Arikara leaders and secured his safe passage upriver by turning over half their merchandise. Lisa reportedly saved himself by telling the Arikaras that an even larger expedition was approaching.[69]

When Pryor and Šehékšot approached the Arikara villages a few weeks later, they saw close to 650 Arikaras and Lakotas from the "upper bands"—Minneconjous, Hunkpapas,

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67 Pierre Chouteau to Dearborn, 11 August 1807, Pierre Chouteau Letterbook, r. 22, pt. 2, *Papers of the St. Louis Fur Trade*, ed. William R. Swagerty (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society, 1991) [hereafter PSLFT]; Courtin to Bates, 22 June 1807, r. 3, microcopy 221, NARA. For Pocasse, see Abel, *Tabeau's Narrative*, 125, 139. For AxtáRAhi, which was the Pawnee name for the Arikaras, see Douglas R. Parks, "Bands and Villages of the Arikara and Pawnee," *Nebraska History* 60 (1979): 214–39, 224. Too Né's travels to the borders of New Mexico raises the possibility that his band in particular had close ties with the Pawnees. For early Arikara-Pawnee contacts, see Johnson, *Middle Missouri Plains Village Sites*, 194, and Grenier and St. Gelais, *Jean-Baptiste Trudeau*, 67.

68 Bates to Dearborn, 20 August 1807, r. 3, microcopy 221, NARA.

69 For Lisa's upriver expedition in 1807, see Henry Marie Brackenridge, *Views of Louisiana* (Pittsburgh, PA: Cramer, Spear and Richbaum, 1814), 90 ("indicate"); Nathaniel Pryor to Clark, 16 October 1807, Jackson, *Letters*, 2:432-37; Manuel Lisa v. John B. Bouche, May 1811, Manual Lisa Papers, MHMLRC; and Richard Edward Oglesby, *Manuel Lisa and the Opening of the Missouri Fur Trade* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 40–41, 48–50.

Sihasapas, and Sans Arcs—along the river, some of whom fired shots past the boats to force them to stop. The Mandans had recently killed two Arikaras along the Cannonball River, and Arikara leaders were unsurprisingly reluctant to allow a Mandan leader to travel freely past their villages. After learning that the Arikaras were determined to kill Šehékšot, Pryor hid the Mandan delegate in his cabin behind a "breast work of trunks and boxes."[70]

Pryor and Chouteau proceeded upriver to the third village, where a group of Arikaras "seized the Cabel" of Chouteau's barge. The chief of the upper village asked Pryor to hand over Šehékšot. When Pryor refused, the Arikaras demanded all their ammunition and Grey Eyes threw his medal to the ground. Some of the Arikaras began firing on the boats from willow groves along the river. Pryor and Chouteau turned the boats around and retreated downriver. The Arikaras and Lakotas pursued Pryor and Chouteau downriver for an hour, until sunset, when one of the Sioux leaders was shot as he tried to cut off the boats at an outcropping in the river. Four of Chouteau's men died in the attack. Refusing to travel overland with his family, Šehékšot returned downriver with Pryor, who informed Clark that four hundred men would be needed to escort Šehékšot through the Arikara and Sioux lands, and that "even one thousand men might fail in the attempt."[71]

Blaming the attack partly on the "inroads" of British traders on the Upper Missouri, Clark was satisfied that the Lakotas who had attacked Pryor's detachment did not include any of the delegates (principally Brulés) who had visited St. Louis. Pryor and Chouteau had spent at least four days at the White River with the Brulés, Oglalas, and Saones before they proceeded upriver to the Arikara villages, more than enough time for messengers to travel ahead of their boats. Kimball, who headed downriver before Pryor and Chouteau had left the

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70 Nathaniel Pryor to Clark, 16 October 1807, Jackson, *Letters*, 2:432-37, 433 ("boxes"), 434 ("amicable").
[71] Pryor to Clark, Jackson, *Letters*, 2:436, 437 ("attempt").

White River, may have missed brewing trouble. The factor at Fort Bellefontaine, Rudolph Tellier, received steady news from the Missouri country, and he later attributed the attack to missteps by Pryor and Chouteau. He wrote in 1809, "[I]t is said the Ricaras disclaim also to have had any evil intention to oppose the U.S., and that it was intirely [*sic*] owing to the misunderstanding and mismanagement of the parties of Lieut. Pryor and Chouteau's people."[72]

Although the Arikaras had repelled Chouteau and Pryor, Lisa continued his voyage upriver, successfully negotiating passage through Mandan and Hidatsa territories and evading a large Assiniboine war party. He guided his boats up the Yellowstone River to the mouth of the Bighorn, where he constructed Fort Raymond in the middle of Crow territory. In the summer of 1808, his crew left the fort to trap beaver at the Three Forks of the Missouri while Lisa himself returned to St. Louis, where he recruited investors for a second, even larger expedition upriver. The members of the newly formed Missouri Fur Company included Lisa's earlier partners, Pierre Menard and William Morrison; William Clark, who was serving as the Indian agent for the territory; and two veterans of the Missouri fur trade, Pierre Chouteau and Sylvestre Labbadie.[73]

Lewis hired the Missouri Fur Company and 125 Americans to ensure the "safe conveyance and delivery" of Šehékšot and his family to the Mandan villages.[74] Following Jefferson's instructions, Lewis told Pierre Chouteau Sr., the leader of the expedition, that he hoped the Arikara nation would be "severely Punished for their unprovoked attack" on Pryor.

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72 For Clark's accounts of the incident, see Clark to Dearborn, 3 December 1807, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 14:154; Clark to Dearborn, 30 October 1807, "Letters of William Clark and Nathaniel Pryor," *Annals of Iowa* 1 (1893-95): 620. For Black Buffalo's presence, see Robinson, *History of the Sioux or Dakota Indians*, 81; and Luttig, *Journal of an Expedition*, 57n82. For Tellier's judgment, see Tellier to Madison, 27 April 1809, r. 4, microcopy 222, NARA.
73 Oglesby, *Manuel Lisa*, 48–50, 65–69.
74 Agreement for Return of the Mandan Chief, 24 February 1809, Jackson, *Letters*, 1:447.

The Arikaras should turn over anyone who killed the Americans as hostages, who would "be shot in presence of the nation." If the Arikaras refused to turn over the attackers, then Chouteau was supposed to encourage the Mandans and Hidatsas to drive them from their villages or destroy them.[75]

In June 1809, nearly three years after Šehékšot left his village, Chouteau and Lisa led a fleet of thirteen barges and keelboats out of St. Louis. After stopping at the Omahas' Large Village, Chouteau's party encountered around 350 Lakotas or Yanktons, who informed him that the bands upriver were prepared to seize their cargo. When they reached the mouth of the James River, they met a large group of Brulé Lakotas, who "fired into the water before the forward barge." While fifty men stood guard around the boats, the Brulé spokesmen explained that they would allow the expedition to proceed upriver because Chouteau had treated some of their representatives well in St. Louis. When Chouteau tried to enlist them in an attack against the Arikaras, however, the Lakotas told him that "one tribe ought not to countenance any attempt to distroy another," and if he "still persisted in that resolution my self and party might be destroyed before we reached the ricaras." Chouteau concluded that "Persuasion and favor," not "the strength of the detachment," were the reasons why they "peaceably passed that nation." When the boats approached the Arikara villages, the party set up camp a half mile outside the village and set up a cannon. Fearing an attack, an older Arikara chief sent the older men as well as women and children into the villages. When Sioux chiefs demanded the "pardon of the ricaras," Chouteau remained noncommittal.[76] The

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[75] Jefferson to Lewis, 24 August 1808, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 14:222 ("indispensable"); Lewis to Chouteau, 8 June 1809, Jackson, *Letters*, 2:454 ("severely"); Lewis to Chouteau, 8 June 1809, Jackson, *Letters*, 2:455; Lewis to William Eustis, 18 August 1809, Jackson, *Letters*, 2:461.

[76] James, *Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans*, 25 ("fired"), 28; Chouteau to Eustis, 14 December 1809, Jackson, *Letters*, 2:480, 481 ("one tribe"). For the Brulé encounter with Chouteau, see Bray, "'Singing the Big Belly Song,'" 92.

Arikaras refused to meet with Chouteau unless he sent over hostages and turned aside the cannon. Chouteau complied, sending four men into their village, and eight Arikara leaders went over to meet with him. Chouteau informed them that Šehékšot and his family were "under the safe conduct and protection of the United States." Explaining that they had attacked Pryor's contingent out of anger over the death of Too Né, the Arikara spokesmen said Šehékšot could "with Great safety now pass in their Villages without fearing any thing."[77]

Chouteau's party proceeded upriver to the Mandan villages. Catching sight of Šehékšot, some Mandans rowed over to the flotilla in bullboats, fighting high waves along the way. As the American boat pilot Thomas James recalled, "they rowed themselves across the turbulent river, one moment lost from view between the waves, and the next, riding over them like corks."[78] Šehékšot returned home to the sight of members of his village navigating the river in bullboats—a stark contrast to the large keelboats that Chouteau and Lisa led upriver. The encounter encapsulated the competing visions and definitions of the upper Missouri River.

During the expedition upriver, Lisa assigned two teams of traders to operate in Sioux territory between the James and Bad Rivers, one team at the Arikara villages, and a third at the Mandan and Hidatsa villages. His partner Pierre Menard complained about the expenditure, but Lisa, as historian Richard Oglesby concludes, was cultivating trade and alliances that allowed the Missouri Fur Company "to use the great highway of the Missouri without fear of being blocked or cut off" by the Sioux and the Plains villagers. By establishing a line of trade posts along the Missouri River, Lisa could supply Indians along

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77 Chouteau to Eustis, 14 December 1809, Jackson, *Letters*, 2:482.
78 James, *Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans*, 30 ("turbulent"), 32; Chouteau to Eustis, 14 December 1809, Jackson, *Letters*, 2:482.

the river and theoretically reduce the risk of blockades. After the first Cedar Post burned to the ground in 1810, Lisa reestablished the post at the Big Bend, partly to supply the Lakotas and encourage them to remain allied to the Americans during the War of 1812.[79]

After the death of Too Né, however, the Arikara villages served as the effective limit of American influence and mobility on the Missouri River. Although the success of the 1807 Brulé delegation had helped establish American relations with the Brulé Lakotas, the tragic death of Too Né on American soil as well as the detention of Šehékšot pushed Arikaras and Mandans toward the British alliance. William Clark and his agents, especially Lisa, built alliances with Sioux bands and Indian peoples living below the Arikaras, such as the Omahas, Otoes, Osages, Pawnees, and Oglala Tetons, who maintained neutrality during the War of 1812. Yet peoples living farther upriver—the Saone Lakotas, Yanktonais, Arikaras, Mandans, and Hidatsas—cultivated economic and political ties with British agents in Canada, and few if any of them visited St. Louis.[80]

Before and during the War of 1812, rumors of British activity in the Missouri Country reached American officials in St. Louis. Lisa later recalled that during the war "wampum was carrying by British influence along the banks of the Missouri," and that "all the nations of this great river, were excited to join the universal confederacy then setting on foot."[81] The Shawnee Prophet Tenskwatawa sent wampum belts to the Missouri Country to recruit tribes there to join the nativistic anti-American alliance, and the British trader Robert Dickson also recruited allies at the Dakota rendezvous. In April 1812 the merchant Charles

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[79] Oglesby, *Manuel Lisa*, 90. See also Wishart, *Fur Trade*, 43, 45. For the reestablishment of Cedar Fort and Lisa's role in maintaining Lakota neutrality, see Oglesby, *Manuel Lisa*, 152–53; Doane Robinson, "A Sioux Indian View of the Last War with England," *South Dakota Historical Collections* 5 (1910): 399–400.
[80] Galler, "Yanktonai," 475; Robinson, *A History of the Dakota or Sioux Indians*, 85n155; Howard, "Notes on the Ethnogeography of the Yankton Dakota," 288; and Denig, *Five Tribes of the Upper Missouri*, 31.
[81] Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge, 1991), 511–13; Manuel Lisa to William Clark, 1 July 1817, printed in the *Missouri Gazette*, 5 July 1817.

Gratiot reported that "sundry tribes on the Missoury" had received the belts, and he suspected their "loyalty" to the United States.[82] In the spring of 1813, British-allied Saone Lakotas and Yanktonais would force Luttig and the rest of Lisa's men to evacuate a post he established near the Arikara villages.[83]

By working closely with a Dakota leader named Tamaha, who helped secure Brulé and Oglala neutrality during the conflict, Clark and Lisa limited Lakota communication with the Yanktonais and Dakotas. They also maintained allies during the war by inviting them to St. Louis. Over thirty chiefs, including representatives of the Yankton Sioux, Ioways, Big Osages, and Little Osages, traveled to Washington in August 1812.[84] In 1814, Manuel Lisa ascended the Missouri River bearing merchandise to enlist the nations of the Missouri River against the British and their allies. Instead of threatening force, Lisa fulfilled his role as a ceremonial "father" to open the stretch of river below the Arikaras and recruit Lakota and Omaha leaders to visit St. Louis, granting gifts and offering shelter and supplies to older Lakotas.[85]

When ice stopped him at his post at Council Bluffs, Fort Hunt, he sent messages to the Sioux to meet him at the mouth of the James River the following spring. In the winter of 1814/15, Lisa offered presents to the Omahas and Otoes to enlist their support against the British. He claimed that the Omahas repelled a party of thirty Ioways who were coming to attack the fort. The following spring, he ascended the Missouri and met a large party of Yanktons and Lakotas in late March 1815 at the James River. Criticizing the British for

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[82] Gratiot to John Jacob Astor, 25 April 1812, Gratiot Letterbook, MHMLRC; and Patrick J. Jung, *The Black Hawk War of 1832* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), 23.
[83] Luttig, Journal, 122–24; Bray, "'Singing the Big Belly Song,'" 94.
[84] For Tamaha's crucial diplomacy, see Bray, "'Singing the Big Belly Song,'" 94. For deputations during the war, see Clark to William Eustis, 28 October 1811; Clark to Eustis, 30 April 1812; William Clark, "Deputation of Indian Chiefs to Washington," 26 August 1812, r. 43, microcopy 221, NARA.
85 Manuel Lisa to the Editors, *Missouri Gazette and Public Advertiser*, 5 July 1817; Bray, "'Singing the Big Belly Song,'" 95.

fomenting war, Lisa handed out presents to the Sioux and then recruited thirty-three leaders among the Lakotas and Yanktons to accompany him downriver to St. Louis. When he passed Large Village, he convinced another thirteen Omaha leaders to join him to visit St. Louis, which the Omahas called Pahi zhide tonwan, or "Red Hair City," after William Clark.[86]

For many of these delegates, the trip to St. Louis was already a familiar one. When James Bradbury ascended the river in 1811, he met two Omaha men in Large Village who recognized him from a popular publishing house in St. Louis. According to Bradbury, they "pointed down the river to St. Louis" and "took up the corner of their buffalo robe, held it before their faces, and turned it over as a man does a newspaper in reading it," to communicate where they had seen him. Big Elk had already been to St. Louis five times and received goods from the Indian factory at Fort Bellefontaine as early as the summer of 1807. It was also the second trip by the Brulé leader the Partisan, who had first visited St. Louis in the 1807 delegation.[87]

Yet the increase in communication between the upper Missouri River and St. Louis also delivered violence and suffering. A day after their arrival, the delegates met Clark.[88] An unnamed Omaha leader was wearing a "well-dressed" bison robe covered with red and black hands, representing the Americans and Indians, respectively. According to a newspaper account, the painting on the robe also included a "pretty good representation of the Missouri,

[86] Lisa to Clark, 23 November 1815, r. 68, microcopy 221, NARA. Letter also appears in Walter B. Douglas, *Manual Lisa*, ed. Abraham P. Nasatir (New York: Argosy Antiquarian, 1964), 166-71. For the members of the party, see *St. Louis Missouri Gazette and Illinois Advertiser*, 10 June 1815. For the Omaha term for St. Louis, see Melvin R. Gilmore, "Report on Aboriginal Geography of Nebraska," 20 January 1912, p. 7, folder 1, box 1, Gilmore Papers, RG 3308, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln. For the Dakotas' encounter with Lisa in St. Louis, see Robinson, "A Sioux Indian View of the Last War with England," 400.
[87] Bradbury, *Travels in the Interior of America*, 68. For Big Elk's visit to St. Louis in 1807, see accounts of factor at Bellefontaine given in Russell M. Magnaghi, "The Belle Fontaine Indian Factory, 1805–1808," *Missouri Historical Review* 75, no. 4 (July 1981): 410.
[88] Lisa to Clark, 23 November 1815. The Missouri Gazette dates the arrival as Tuesday, June 6. For the members of the party, see *St. Louis Missouri Gazette and Illinois Advertiser,* 10 June 1815,

from its mouth to their village"—Large Village—"the water stained with blood." The leader showed the robe to Clark and explained that the Missouri is "red with the blood" of an Omaha chief who died at the hands of the whites. Clark insisted that the British, not the Americans, were responsible for his death.[89]

By early July 1815, two to three thousand delegates had traveled to Portage des Sioux, including the Sioux and Omaha delegates whom Lisa had escorted downriver. Black Buffalo died just before the start of the treaty negotiations, and the Omaha leader Big Elk made a funeral oration in which he stated that he had been to the Missouri-Mississippi confluence five times and "never returned with sorrow or pain." Nine Lakotas and eleven Yankton leaders signed separate treaties recognizing that they lived under the protection of the United States. On 20 July 1815, eight Omaha leaders, including Big Elk and the grandson of Black Bird, signed the same treaty. The following summer, the commissioners had secured treaties with the Sacs and Foxes, Winnebagos, Ottawas, Chippewas, and Potawatomis.[90]

In August 1815, during their return trip, disease broke out on Lisa's boat, taking the lives of five Sioux delegates and one Omaha representative. Lisa buried them "with all the honors in my power." On 3 October, they reached the Omaha village, where forty-lodges of Sioux were waiting for their arrival. Lisa affirmed to Clark that the "nations of the Missoury"—he listed the Pawnees, Otoes, Omahas, Poncas, and Sioux—were all firmly allied with the United States.[91]

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[89] *St. Louis Missouri Gazette and Illinois Advertiser*, 10 June 1815.
[90] For speech of Big Elk, see Bradbury, *Travels in the Interior of America*, 228–29. For Yankton and Lakota agreements, see treaties for 19 July 1815 in Charles J. Kappler, ed., *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties* (Washington: GPO, 1904), 2:112; and Robinson, *History of the Sioux or Dakota Indians*, 95–97. For the Omaha treaty at Portage des Sioux (which does not appear in *Kappler's Indian Affairs*), see Richard Peters, ed., *Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America* (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1846), 7:129. For discussions of the conference, see Buckley, *William Clark*, 109–11; and Rice and Foley, *The First Chouteaus*, 153–57.
[91] Lisa to Clark, 23 November 1815, r. 68, microcopy 221, NARA.

Lisa would lead a second large delegation downriver in 1817, but it would include no Arikara, Mandan, or Hidatsa representatives. Those who did travel downriver—eight Poncas, twelve Otoes, five Missourias, the chief of the Republican Pawnees, and two representatives from the "upper band" of Sioux, perhaps the Saone Lakotas or Yanktonais—informed Clark that a trip downriver in 1815 would have been too dangerous because of enemies. In order "to avoid these enemies they applied to Mr. Lisa U.S. Indian Agent who has thought it his duty to accompany those chiefs to this place." River travel on the Missouri, accompanied by Lisa, granted some measure of safety in the lands of enemies. On 21 June 1817, the delegates signed treaties with Clark and Chouteau that replicated the terms of the Portage des Sioux treaties of 1815.[92]

According to one account, the Arikaras, Mandans, and Hidatsas had joined the Cuthead Yanktonais, Crows, Assiniboines, and a few Lakotas in an expedition to the Great Lakes to help the French and Indians there throw out both the British and the Americans. The Yanktonai leader and British ally Waanatan or Waneta (He-rushes-upon-them) led the contingent. By the time they reached the Great Lakes, in 1815, the war was already over. Among the lands to which they claimed "unquestionable title" was the Missouri from the mouth of Hawk Creek, downriver to "a place were [*sic*] a stone was set up a very long ways down the river," approximately parallel with the pipestone quarry. This description places the stone near the Three Rivers Pass.[93] Instead of granting American rights of passage on the

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92 Clark to unknown, 1 July 1817, Clark Papers, MHMLRC; Clark to Secretary of War, 27 August 1817, Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 15:301; See Treaty with the Oto, 24 June 1817, and Treaty with the Poncas, 25 June 1817, *Kappler's Indian Affairs*, 2:139-40; and Clark and August Chouteau to Howard, Clark Papers, MHMLRC. On Lisa's reputation among the Missouri valley tribes and his skills as a trader, see Oglesby, *Manuel Lisa*, 120–21.

93 According to Beede, the Crow leader was Magazu, the Assiniboine leader was Okedeska, and the Lakotas were led by Tawsokeza. See Aaron McGaffey Beede, "Old Indian History," *Fort Yates Sioux County (ND) Pioneer*, 8 December 1921, r. 5398, North Dakota Historical Society, Bismarck. For the leadership of Waneta, see Robinson, *History of the Dakota or Sioux Indians*, 101.

Missouri River, these allies affirmed indigenous control of the Missouri River by citing an ancient landscape of indigenous mobility in the river watershed—pathways and fording sites where their ancestors had traveled and communicated with neighbors. At the conclusion of the War of 1812, the upper Missouri River was still very much a world of indigenous travel and mobility, where people conducted river crossings to visit family members, trade, and transport supplies. The Arikara, Mandan, and Hidatsa villages remained central nodes in indigenous transportation networks.

Yet the withdrawal of British traders from the Missouri country and the Great Lakes would open the door to American expansion. As historian Alan Taylor has concluded, the Treaty of Ghent precipitated an "ultimate American victory that ensured continental predominance." In 1816 the Americans seized control of the *pays d'en haut* by closing British trade routes. Britain ceded Michilimackinac, the gateway to the western fur trade, and the "middle ground" faded after its temporary revivial through an anti-American alliance. The Americans built Fort Dearborn at Chicago, the mouth of the Illinois River, and Fort Howard at Green Bay, the mouth of the Fox River. They also constructed two forts farther west, along the Mississippi River: Fort Armstrong, at the mouth of the Rock River, and Fort Crawford, at Prairie du Chien and the mouth of the Wisconsin River. Indian peoples in the Great Lakes as well as the Missouri Country lost economic and political leverage. No longer fearing Sauk and Fox raids, emigrants flooded the lower Missouri Valley.[94] The ensuing expansion of the

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[94] Alan Taylor, *Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, and Indian Allies* (New York: Knopf, 2010), 428–30, 432–33, 437 (quote); Colin Calloway, "The End of an Era: British-Indian Relations in the Great Lakes Region after the War of 1812," *Michigan Historical Review* 12, no. 2 (Fall 1986): 7–8, 10–12; Robert L. Fisher, "Treaties of Portage des Sioux," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 19, no. 4 (March 1933): 508; Jung, *Black Hawk War*, 33–34; and Vicki L. Twinde-Javner, "Fort Shelby, Fort McKay, and the First Fort Crawford, 1814–1831," in *Frontier Forts of Iowa: Indians, Traders, and Soldiers, 1682-1862* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2009), 79. For the collapse of the middle ground in the pays d'en haut, see White, *Middle Ground*, 516–17. For population growth in Missouri following the war, see Foley, *Genesis of Missouri*, 238, 240; Buckley, *William Clark*, 125.

American fur trade would threaten to supplant indigenous mobility networks on the upper Missouri River.

4. The Costs of Mobility: The Fur Trade and the Remaking of the River Corridor

On a clear morning in late June 1855, the Indian agent Edwin Hatch awoke to the sound of someone calling from the banks of the Missouri River to the steamboat *St. Mary*, which was carrying him upriver to his post. Hatch discovered it was a Sioux woman whose daughter had boarded the boat with her American husband at Fort Pierre, in present-day South Dakota. He noted in his journal, "We did not stop."[1]

His brief account conveys the tyranny of steamboat schedules on the Missouri River. Beginning in 1832, when the *Yellow Stone* became the first steamboat to navigate the upper Missouri River, steamboats made annual trips upriver, and as much as possible they followed regular schedules that placed them at Fort Union, the fur trade hub at the mouth of the Yellowstone River, no later than July. As a Scots fur trader at an upriver post wrote, "we date our years here not from 1st January, but from [the] arrival of [the] Steam Boat" every summer.[2] Because they only had a short window to travel up and down the Missouri before the end of the flood season, steamboat captains prioritized speed above all else. For the captain of the *St. Mary*, the woman on shore probably represented a potential delay.

Although American officials expected steamboats to frighten Native Americans and thereby eliminate blockades on the Missouri River, indigenous peoples quickly appropriated steamboats for their own ends. They boarded them to receive food and gifts, used them to conduct war expeditions and local travel, and occasionally forced steamboat captains to land and pay tolls for passage through their territories. In other ways, however, steamboats converted the Missouri River from a corridor of indigenous communication and mobility into

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[1] Entry for 28 June 1855, Edwin A. C. Hatch Diary, Edward Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago.
[2] Andrew Dawson to Abram Dawson, 15 June 1850, in Lesley Wischmann, ed., *This Far-Off Wild Land: The Upper Missouri Letters of Andrew Dawson* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013), 232.

a channel and road for American travelers that left Native peoples like the Sioux mother on the outside looking in. Many Native peoples simply could not afford to pay for their passage on steamboats. Beyond ascribing new costs of mobility on the river, steamboats participated in the ecological remaking of the Missouri corridor and diverted the river's power from Native peoples to Americans.

By repeatedly carrying diseases upriver and consuming natural resources, steamboats nearly destroyed the landscape of indigenous mobility in the Missouri River valley. Following a series of epidemics that decimated Native populations, the amount of Indian traffic on the river dropped precipitously. Native peoples also increasingly struggled to find wood to feed horses and bison to make bullboats. By consuming riparian forests and driving bison from the river valley, the fur trade literally destroyed the equipment and fuel of indigenous mobility along the river. In the 1860s and 1870s, Indians continued to visit the Missouri Valley to trade for Arikara, Mandan, and Hidatsa corn and other agricultural produce, and the Arikaras and Hidatsas continued to navigate the river in bullboats. Yet the fur trade gradually attached new prices to travel on the river itself and created new dependencies in transportation and mobility.

Following the Lakota and Yanktonai attack on his post during the War of 1812, Manuel Lisa and the Missouri Fur Company retreated to the Council Bluffs area, where he maintained a post called Fort Lisa that supplied the Omahas, Otoes, and Yankton Sioux with merchandise. Lisa quickly recruited new partners in a reformed Missouri Fur Company, and he reestablished a post upriver at the Big Bend. As early as 1819, Michael Immell, who worked for the Missouri Fur Company, was conducting large quantities of furs downriver to St. Louis from the Sioux post, which was known as Fort Recovery. Soon thereafter, two

veterans of the Missouri fur trade, Bernard Pratte and Pierre Chouteau, built a competing post a few miles upriver called Fort Lookout. The two posts surrounded the Three Rivers Pass and intercepted Sioux traffic at a busy crossing point. Writing from Fort Lookout in June 1821, an employee of the Missouri Fur Company named Angus McDonald reported that all the "Teton" (Lakota) bands were "approaching the Missouri." By 1824 Joshua Pilcher, who operated Fort Recovery, could report that the Big Bend was the center of trade with the Yanktons, Oglala Lakotas, Minneconjou and Hunkpapa Lakotas, and Yanktonais. Fur trade returns suggest that these groups dramatically escalated their procurement of furs in the early 1820s to take advantage of the growing supply of merchandise.[3]

Following the merger of the North West Company and Hudson's Bay Company in 1821, a third competitor, the Columbia Fur Company, built Tilton's Post at the Mandan and Hidatsa villages on the Knife River. St. Louis traders also mobilized new expeditions to try to harvest beaver pelts from the Missouri headwaters. All of this activity threatened the economic and military security of the Arikara people. Trade posts were supplying their Mandan enemies with ammunition, the Lakotas had new suppliers of merchandise and were less invested in the village trade, and Americans were approaching the western territories of

[3] For the Sioux trade at the Big Bend, see Michael Immell to Joshua Pilcher, 19 April 1820, Fur Trade Collection, MHMLRC; McDonald to Joshua Pilcher, 17 June 1821, in Richard Jensen, ed., "The Last Days of the Missouri Fur Company: The Correspondence of Angus William McDonald," *Museum of the Fur Trade Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (2001): 2–21, 4 ("all the bands"); "Mr. Pilcher's Answers to Questions put to him by the Committee of the Senate on Indian Affairs," *American State Papers: Indian Affairs* (Washington DC: Gales and Seaton, 1834), 2:453; and Richard E. Oglesby, *Manual Lisa and the Opening of the Missouri Fur Trade* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 176. For the construction of Fort Recovery and Fort Lookout (also known as Fort Kiowa and Fort Brazeau), see John E. Sunder, *Joshua Pilcher: Fur Trader and Indian Agent* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), 34-35, 37; Harry H. Anderson, "The Fort Lookout Trading Post Sites: A Reexamination," *Plains Anthropologist* 6, no. 14 (November 1961): 221–29, 222; Richard Jensen, ed., *Wheel Boats on the Missouri: The Journals and Documents of the Atkinson-O'Fallon Expedition* (Montana Historical Society, 2000), 107; Wilhelm, *Travels in North America*, 368. For Sioux investment in bison hunting in the early 1820s, see Kingsley Bray, "'Singing the Big Belly Song': The Making of the Robe Trade Alliance with the Lakota," *Museum of the Fur Trade Quarterly* 43, no. 3/4 (Fall/Winter 2007): 88–99, 96. For contemporaneous posts around Council Bluffs, see Richard E. Jensen, *The Fontenelle and Cabanné Trading Posts: The History and Archeology of Two Missouri River Sites, 1822-1838* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1998), 12, 15.

the Cheyennes and Kiowas. Instead of entering the river corridor to approach Arikara villages for trade, their former trade partners were approaching new trade posts in the river valley or not visiting the river at all. By passing their villages, trappers were threatening their longstanding position as middlemen between people up and downriver and between people on the east and west sides of the Missouri. Although their corn crops would continue to attract trade partners, the fur trade was diverting traffic to and from the Arikara villages.[4]

The Arikaras responded to these new challenges by trying to prevent traders from supplying other Indian nations. In April 1820, eighty to ninety Arikara men traveled downriver, robbed Fort Recovery at the Big Bend, and beat up the resident traders. The following summer, they killed three traders on their way to the Mandans, and traders feared "some difficulty in passing the boat" by the Arikara villages. In 1822 Joshua Pilcher learned that one of the Arikara chiefs planned to rob his boat when it left the Mandan and Hidatsa villages. In March 1823, another Arikara war party of eighty men traveled downriver to Fort Recovery, where they robbed, beat, and stripped six men who were trading with the Sioux. Shortly thereafter, the head of Fort Recovery, Angus McDonald, fired on a war party and killed two men.

The circumstances of the deaths are cloudy: Pilcher claimed that McDonald and his men fired in self-defense, while another account says that the Arikara men were trying to recapture an escaped Sioux woman who was running toward the fort. An anonymous military official later accused McDonald of shooting the men in order to provoke Arikara attacks on competition, particularly William Ashley and Andrew Henry, who were making another attempt to harvest beaver pelts from the Missouri headwaters. In any case, one of the two

[4] For analysis of the economic position of the Arikaras and other upper Missouri villagers in 1823, see Roger L. Nichols, "Backdrop for Disaster: Causes of the Arikara War of 1823," *South Dakota History* 14, no. 2 (1984): 93–113; Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 280.

victims was the son of the Arikara leader Grey Eyes, and his death precipitated the conflict known as the Arikara War of 1823.[5]

Grey Eyes had met Lewis and Clark during their return down the Missouri River in 1806, when the chief Kakawissassa informed Clark that Grey Eyes was the first chief of the Arikaras. The following year, after receiving a medal from Nathaniel Pryor, he participated in the attack on the expedition to return Sheheke-shote to his village. According to one account, Grey Eyes was not a hereditary chief but had claimed his position through acts of heroism. He was the chief of the lower Arikara village at the Grand River.[6]

In the summer of 1823, Ashley led a second expedition up the Missouri to trap beaver at the river headwaters. At the Arikara villages, he met Little Soldier and Grey Eyes, who both regretted the skirmish with traders at Fort Recovery. When Grey Eyes asked for gifts to compensate for the death of his son, however, Ashley refused because it had occurred at the hands of a rival company.[7] Later one night, when Ashley's boats were anchored outside the villages, a group of Americans entered the lower village, where Grey Eyes lived, without permission. An interpreter, Edward Rose, ran back to the shore after midnight to inform Ashley that a man named Aaron Stephen had been killed in the village. Ashley decided to

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[5] F. A. Chardon to Pierre Chouteau Jr., 20 August 1820 (quotation), r. 10, pt. 1, hereafter PSLFT; Joshua Pilcher, Report to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, in Dale L. Morgan, ed., *West of William H. Ashley: The International Struggle for the Fur Trade of the Missouri, . . .* (Denver, CO: Fred S. Rosenstock, 1964), 24. For the death of Grey Eyes' son and accusations against Pilcher, see letter by one of Ashley's men, 3 September 1823, *National Intelligencer*, in Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 32; James Clyman, *American Frontiersman, 1792-1881: The Adventures of a Trapper and Covered Wagon Emigrant as told in his Reminiscences and Diaries*, ed. Charles L. Camp (San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1928), 15; *Missouri Intelligencer*, 9 July 1823; and Sunder, *Joshua Pilcher*, 49. See also Roger L. Nichols, "Causes of the Arikara War of 1823," 106.

[6] For earlier encounters with Grey Eyes, see entries for 21 August 1806, DJLC 8:312; and Nathaniel Pryor to William Clark, 16 October 1807, in Jackson, *Letters*, 2:434. For historian Sylvia Drumm's account of Grey Eyes' rise to power, see Luttig, *Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition*, 73n113.

[7] Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 24, 28; Clyman, *American Frontiersman,* 14–15.

wait until the morning to confront the Arikaras and demand Stephens's body and the murderer.[8]

The next morning, on 2 June 1823, from behind the pickets, members of Grey Eyes' village sent a barrage of fire toward the men guarding the horses six hundred yards away on the shoreline. Caught in the middle of the Missouri River, Ashley ordered his crew to lift anchor and steer the boats toward the men camped on the beach, who were under heavy fire and using horses as a "breastwork." After collecting the men on shore, Ashley retreated downriver. Fourteen men died in the attack.[9]

By June 18, forty-three members of the Ashley expedition had returned back downriver to the army post at Council Bluffs, Fort Atkinson, where the post commander, Col. Henry Leavenworth, began mobilizing a punitive expedition.[10] Military officials expected the expedition to punish the Arikaras and demonstrate American power on the upper Missouri River. Gen. Henry Atkinson, the commander of the sixth military department, believed it would "impress the Indians in that quarter with a just idea of our capacity to chastise every outrage they may commit."[11] By threatening to punish the Arikaras and expel them from the Missouri Valley, the Leavenworth expedition was an attempt to establish a road across the Plains.

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[8] Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 29–30, 32, 38; Ashley to O'Fallon, 4 June 1823, r. 97, microcopy 221, NARA; Clyman, *Diary*, 15; Nichols, "Causes of the Arikara War," 111.

[9] Clyman, *Diary*, 16, 17 (quotation); Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 26, 33.

[10] Clark to Calhoun, 4 July 1823, r. 91, microcopy 221, NARA; Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 33–34; Henry Leavenworth, Orders, 18 June 1823, enclosure in Atkinson to the adjutant general, 5 December 1823, in Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General, RG 94, National Archives and Records Administration (accessed at fold3.com) [hereafter RG 94, NARA].

[11] Atkinson to Jacob Brown, 13 July 1823, in vol. 1, Letters Sent, Western Department, Records of the U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1821–1920, RG 393, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington DC [hereafter RG 393, NARA] ("chastise"). For Atkinson's orders immediately following the attack, see Atkinson to Fowler, 13 July 1823, enclosure in Atkinson to adjutant, 5 December 1823, RG 94, NARA (accessed at fold3.com). For the same letter with slightly different wording, see Atkinson to Fowler, 13 July 1823, in vol. 1, Letters Sent, Western Department, RG 393, NARA. See also Atkinson to Brant, 13 July 1823, in vol. 1, Letters Sent, Western Department, RG 393, NARA.

Yet the Leavenworth expedition did the opposite of what American officials intended: it proved the weakness of the Americans on the Upper Missouri River. Like military expeditions before and after it, the Leavenworth expedition struggled to even move on the river. On June 22, six companies of the Sixth Regiment left Fort Atkinson and began ascending the river in three keelboats. Because of the June rise, the river was so high that "navigation was exceedingly difficult and hazzardous [*sic*]." Some of the troops pulled the boats upriver with ropes from the shoreline. Others marched along the river bottoms, which were "so much inundated" that they often had to swim or wade through waist-deep water to keep up with the boats. Seven men drowned when one of the keelboats ran into a snag and broke in half. Strong winds drove another boat into a sandbar, breaking its sails and rigging in the process. On July 19, the expedition arrived at Fort Recovery, where the troop reorganized and rearmed after its "aquatic misfortunes," as Leavenworth put it. He began doubting whether the troops would leave much of an impression on the Plains Indians. "We make but a small show on a large prairie," he concluded.[12]

In addition to problems navigating the river, Leavenworth led a coalition of groups with different interests. Pilcher and fifty employees of the Missouri Fur Company joined the expedition. The motives of Pilcher are unclear, but an official later accused him of joining the expedition mainly to steal Arikara horses. Looking west toward the Rocky Mountains, he clearly viewed the Arikaras as an impediment to transportation on the Missouri River and a threat to his post at the Big Bend, Fort Recovery. When the troops arrived at the post, Leavenworth and Pilcher also recruited 750 Sioux warriors to join the expedition. Although a few Brulé Lakotas and Yanktons joined the Americans, most of the warriors were Saones,

[12] O'Fallon to Ashley, 22 June 1823, r. 97, microcopy 221, NARA; Leavenworth to Gaines, 20 October 1823, RG 94, NARA (accessed on fold3.com) ("aquatic"); Leavenworth to O'Fallon, 18 July 1823, r. 97, microcopy 221, NARA ("small show").

the more northern bands of Lakotas: Sihasapas and Hunkpapas under the leader Fire Heart; and Sans Arcs under a *wichasha yatapika* named Charger.[13] According to Fort Atkinson's resident Indian agent, Benjamin O'Fallon, the Sioux and other Plains tribes were "suspending their opinion of us until they near the result of this expedition."[14] The Lakotas seized an opportunity to gather Arikara corn and, if the Americans proved incompetent, even turn on them.

On August 8, about twenty-five miles below the Arikara villages, an advance party of Sioux warriors left the army flotilla and traveled ahead on horseback to prevent the Arikaras from escaping. The Arikaras, who had surrounded their two villages with a ditch and filled bullboats by the river with corn to prepare for an evacuation, initially drove back the advance party of Sioux warriors. When they saw the American troops approaching, they fled back into their villages. The next morning, an artillery barrage by American forces killed Grey Eyes and, according to Leavenworth, broke the opposition: its "first shot killed their celebrated and mischievous Chief called Grey Eyes and the second cut away the staff of their medicine flag." In the eyes of Lakotas, however, the Americans seemed to be stalling. American troops had not entered the battlefield, and the Sioux had done most of the fighting. After the initial assault, they retired to the Arikara corn fields. Annoyed by American inaction, the Lakotas took matters into their own hands, inviting kin who had married into Arikara communities to serve as intermediaries and establish peace. The Lakota forces left the battleground after two days.

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[13] Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 33–34; Henry Leavenworth, Orders, 18 June 1823, enclosure in Atkinson to adjutant general, 5 December 1823, RG 94, NARA (accessed at fold3.com); Benjamin O'Fallon, 19 June 1823, Benjamin O'Fallon Letterbook [hereafter OLB], Beinecke Library, Yale [hereafter BL].
[14] O'Fallon to Clark, 24 June 1823, r. 97, microcopy 221, NARA.

Leavenworth had detected signs that the Lakotas were not fully committed to the Americans. They had given him conflicting reports about the size and defenses of the Arikara villages, and they refused to share any of the corn or horses they had seized from the villages.[15] Without Sioux cooperation, Leavenworth attempted to establish his own peace treaty with the Arikaras in which they recognized American rights of passage on the Missouri River. But the other contingent in the expeditionary force—Joshua Pilcher and the members of the Missouri Fur Company—would nearly sabotage the proceedings. At Leavenworth's invitation, Little Soldier left his village and approached the American keelboats on the river. Pleading for a ceasefire, Little Soldier stated that "the man who had done all the mischief and who had caused both us and themselves so much trouble"—Grey Eyes—had been "killed." Ten to twelve Arikara leaders then approached the American camp appearing "to be very much terrified." Leavenworth demanded the return of Ashley's merchandise as well as five hostages, and he warned the delegates that the Americans had demonstrated only a small "specimen" of their power. Hoping to end the conflict and discourage reprisals, Leavenworth offered them a "pipe of peace." Yet Joshua Pilcher and members of the Missouri Fur Company remained steadfastly opposed to peace with the Arikaras. During negotiations, Pilcher told the Arikaras through his interpreter that he was in fact the "principal, or first Chief" of the expedition, and that he still had a "bad heart." The first conference ended with Pilcher and his interpreter firing shots at the delegates as they fled back to their villages.[16]

Leavenworth finally convinced the Arikara delegates to return to his keelboat. Fighting exhaustion, Little Soldier and the "principal men" signed a treaty devised by

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[15] Leavenworth to Gaines, 20 October 1823, RG 94, NARA (accessed on fold3.com). For an analysis of Lakota motives in the Leavenworth Expedition, see Bray, "'Singing the Big Belly Song,'" 97.
[16] Leavenworth to Gaines, 20 October 1823, RG 94, NARA (accessed on fold3.com).

Leavenworth. The first article focused on the restoration of Ashley's property. Article 2 of the treaty addressed navigation rights on the Missouri River. It held,

> "The Ricara nation agree that the navigation of the Missouri shall not be obstructed by them; that all American citizens duly authorized by the United States to come in their country, shall be treated by them with kindness and civility; and in case any of the nation commit acts of violence upon any American citizen, such individual shall be punished for the offence."[17]

Leavenworth forced the Arikara delegates to acknowledge American sovereignty on the Missouri River: Americans could travel freely past the Arikara villages. Two hundred years earlier, Arikaras maintained a line of villages that allowed them to control traffic moving across the Missouri River. By 1823 they had ceded control of most fording sites, but their two villages allowed them to intercept people and resources moving up or downriver. The treaty asked them to surrender a fundamental part of their political sovereignty: the ability to define rights of passage on the river.

Leavenworth believed that the "trade & navigation of the river would be restored and probably a long and expensive Indian war avoided."[18] Yet matters quickly spiraled out of his control. Fearing reprisals by Pilcher and other fur traders, the Arikaras fled their villages early in the morning on 14 August 1823 after Little Soldier had agreed to the treaty, and Leavenworth hurriedly sent out a message asking them to return.[19] After the expedition keelboats set off downriver, Pilcher's business partner Angus McDonald and another

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17"Treaty with the Ricaras. Official. Camp 6th Regy. U.S. Infantry. Near the Ricara towns, Aug. 11, 1823," *Missouri Republican*, 5 November 1823, p. 2 ("navigation").

[18] Leavenworth to Gaines, 20 October 1823, in RG 94, NARA (accessed on fold3.com)

[19] Leavenworth to Gaines, 20 October 1823, in RG 94, NARA (accessed on fold3.com); Leavenworth, "to the Chiefs and Warriors of the Ricaras nation of Indians," Headquarters, Missouri Legion, 14 August 1823, in *Documents Accompanying the Message of the President of the United States to Both Houses*, 3 December 1823 (Washington DC, 1823), p. 100, Newberry Library, Chicago.

employee of the Missouri Fur Company returned to the Arikara villages and set them on fire—against Leavenworth's orders.

Following the Arikara campaign, McDonald defended his actions by claiming that the Arikara villages endangered Fort Recovery.[20] Leavenworth and Pilcher exchanged heated words in the press. In an editorial directed at Leavenworth, Pilcher charged, "You came (to use your own language) to 'open and make good this great road: instead of which, you have by the imbecility of your conduct and operations, created and left impassable barriers." Fifteen years later, he regarded the "result" of the Leavenworth expedition "as a total failure."[21] This indictment persisted in military circles. Discouraging a military expedition against the Sioux in 1847, one officer wrote that the expeditions of 1823 and 1825 had in fact made the Sioux question the "power" and "efficiency" of the U.S. army.[22]

Although Pilcher viewed the Arikaras as an obstacle to commercial gain, the expedition did in fact backfire in a few ways. After the campaign, the Arikaras fled upriver to the villages of the Mandans, who had previously extended an offer of refuge. They built a temporary village a mile below the Mandan villages, where they levied attacks against some American traders who were operating at Tilton's Post. In the spring of 1824, the Arikaras returned downriver to the Grand River, rebuilt their villages, and replanted corn. Pilcher and company would abandon Fort Recovery at the same time.[23]

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[20] For McDonald, see Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 69. In a letter to McDonald, Lucien Fontenelle wished he had "been prudent enough in not letting out that you had burnt the village," an admission used by Pilcher's critics. See Fontenelle to McDonald, 23 December 1823, in Jensen, "The Last Days of the Missouri Fur Company," 8. McDonald eventually addressed Leavenworth's charges in a published letter. See Angus W. McDonald, "On the Arickara Expedition," *Daily National Intelligencer*, 30 September 1824.
[21] *Missouri Republican*, 15 October 1823 ("barriers"); Joshua Pilcher to William Clark, 15 September 1838, r. 884, microcopy 234, NARA ("failure").
[22] Harvey to William Medill, 4 February 1847, r. 754, microcopy 234, NARA.
[23] Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 281-82; O'Fallon to Atkinson, 17 July 1824, OLB, BL.

American officials feared the consequences of this repossession. In order to affirm American rights of passage on the Missouri River, Secretary of War John Calhoun sent Gen. Henry Atkinson and the Indian agent Benjamin O'Fallon upriver in 1825 to conduct treaties with the Arikaras and other tribes. The Atkinson-O'Fallon Expedition produced a number of treaties in which the Arikaras, Mandans, Sioux, Blackfeet, and Assiniboine admitted they were subjects of the United States. Atkinson and O'Fallon added special language for the Arikaras: the treaty would "put an end to an unprovoked hostility on the part of the Ricara Tribe of Indians against the United States."[24] In his report on the expedition, Atkinson proclaimed confidently that despite the Arikaras' "late outrages" against the Americans, "a good understanding has been established, and all former difficulties removed." "We have no doubt they will remain friendly toward the Americans."[25]

In the five years following the expedition, however, Arikaras reportedly killed thirty Americans on the Upper Missouri, and reports regularly reached St. Louis about their attacks. Pilcher later recalled how "all boats ascending the river . . . were laid under heavy contribution," and traders "were frequently beaten and abused, and sometimes wantonly murdered by wandering war parties."[26]

The Leavenworth Expedition of 1823 also helped push one-time Lakota supporters into lasting opposition. The northern Lakota bands "counted a good many dead and

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[24] "Treaty with the Arikara Tribe," in Charles J. Kappler, ed., *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties* (Washington: GPO, 1904), 2:237.
[25] See Roger L. Nichols, ed., "General Henry Atkinson's Report of the Yellowstone Expedition of 1825," *Nebraska History* 44 (1963): 76.
[26] Pilcher to William Clark, 15 September 1838, r. 884, microcopy 234. For rumors and reports of Arikara attacks, see J. P. Cabanné to Pierre Chouteau Jr., 12 September 1827, r. 13, pt. 1, PSLFT; Clark to McKinney, 25 February 1828, r. 748, microcopy 234, NARA; entry for 18 December 1830, in Doane Robinson, ed., "Fort Tecumseh and Fort Pierre Journals," *South Dakota Historical Collections, Vol. 9* (Pierre: South Dakota Historical Society, 1918), 141, 143; Barton H. Barbour, *Fort Union and the Upper Missouri Fur Trade* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 44; Laimont to Richard Holliday, 30 December 1830, in Fort Tecumseh Letterbook, reel 17, pt. 1, PSLFT.

wounded" from a campaign that did not seem to accomplish much at all. The Americans, by contrast, suffered few if any casualties.[27] According to Edwin Denig, a trader on the Missouri, the Sioux remembered the Leavenworth expedition as a complete failure and proof of American "cowardice." Recalling how the Americans prepared for battle with the Arikaras by making bandages, Denig wrote, "To this day a Sioux Indian cannot see a piece of cloth torn lengthwise without enquiring if bandages are wanted, and relating the anecdote of the great quantity of this article uselessly wasted on the eventful evening of the great battle with the Arickaras [*sic*]."[28] The expedition also generated confusion about American policy. In the eyes of the Sioux, Mandans, and Hidatsas, Arikara blockades seemed to go unpunished. As an Indian agent noted in 1830,

> "[I]t is beginning to be a common remark among the better disposed Tribes in that Country that 'if we wish to be treated well and have every thing we want of the whites, it is only necessary to kill a few like the Aricaras do and then they will always meet us with one hand stretched out to greet us, and in the other, Tobacco and Merchandize….You big knives talk a great deal and threaten much, but you do nothing, you are cowards, you are killed and robbed, yet you pass it by."[29]

Instead of affirming American power on the upper Missouri River, the Leavenworth Expedition revealed American indecision and weakness.

The poor performance of American soldiers, and the heavy losses of the Sioux, helped solidify anti-American factions within Lakota leadership. In the winter of 1823/24, a

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[27] Atkinson to Calhoun, 11 October 1823, Atkinson File, Consol, Corres., Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, RG 92, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington DC [hereafter RG 92, NARA]. For Saone losses, see Paul Wilhelm, Duke of Württemberg, *Travels in North America, 1822-1824*, trans. W. Robert Nitske, ed. Savoie Lottinville (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), 366 ("many"), 369.

[28] Denig, *Five Indian Tribes of the Upper Missouri*, 55, 56-57 (quote); Harry H. Anderson, "The Letters of Peter Wilson, First Resident Agent Among the Teton Sioux," *Nebraska History* 42 (1961): 237–64.

[29] Sanford to William Clark, 20 October 1830, Vol. 6: Correspondence, 1830–32, Central Superintendency of Indian Affairs, Office of Indian Affairs, accessed online at *KansasMemory*.org.

few months after the Leavenworth Expedition, Saone Lakotas received invitations from Arikara factions to carry out war against the Americans. Hunkpapa, Minneconjou, and Sans Arc leaders debated which course to take: "isolationists" favored closing the Missouri River to the Americans, but others such as Charger supported diplomacy with the Big Knives. Limited evidence suggests that he was murdered by opponents.[30] When Atkinson and O'Fallon arrived at the Arikara villages in 1825, a Hunkpapa Lakota delegation was already there that included the leader Little Bear, who had joined the Leavenworth campaign in 1823. Little Bear reluctantly signed a treaty in which he acknowledged the sovereignty of the United States. But he would go on to champion an "isolationist policy" in future decades that would influence a generation of "intellectual successors," including Sitting Bull.[31]

These Lakota leaders were debating not only their own stance toward the United States but also the direction of trade on the Missouri River. If American traders began traveling freely upriver to the Mandans, more traffic would be moving up the river instead of across it. As historian Elizabeth Fenn concludes, the American fur trade threatened a "reorientation" of trade and diplomacy on the upper Missouri River. Instead of sitting at the center of transcontinental indigenous trade networks, the Arikara and Mandan villages would become distant outposts and collection depots for American markets based in eastern cities. The businessman John Jacob Astor accelerated this reorientation by eliminating Canadian competitors. By 1827 the Missouri Fur Company had disbanded, and Astor's American Fur Company had incorporated both the French Fur Company and the Columbia Fur Company and established a monopoly over the upper Missouri fur trade. Mobilizing much larger amounts of capital, Astor was able to send many more boats and employees up the

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[30] For a reconstruction of this conflict, see Bray, "'Singing the Big Belly Song,'" 97 ("isolationists").

[31] Treaty with the Arikara Tribe, *Kappler's Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, 2:237; Nichols, "General Henry Atkinson's Report of the Yellowstone Expedition of 1825," 76; Bray, "'Big Belly Song,'" 98.

Missouri.[32] Americans pursued this reorientation not only by developing transportation technologies that collapsed "time-distance" in the vast Great Plains but also by establishing territorial borders that divided transcontinental indigenous transportation and communication networks. After its establishment along the 49th parallel in 1818, the U.S.-Canada border did little to restrict Native and métis trade between the Missouri Valley and the Canadians Plains. By the 1870s, however, American soldiers were attempting to sever métis and Sioux trade networks.[33]

American commercial traffic threatened to supplant indigenous ways of traveling and communicating on the river itself. By occupying the river channel, American boats could interrupt Arikara and Mandan traffic on the river and block river crossings. But Arikara, Mandan, and Hidatsa villages remained sites of indigenous traffic. During fall harvests, they continued to invite people into the river corridor, transport corn and trade goods across the river, and ferry visitors to and from their villages. Corn provided the Arikaras with a degree of protection from the Lakotas. Its importance emerged during the Leavenworth expedition. Lakotas gathered corn during the artillery barrage, and after the Arikaras had abandoned villages, Saone Lakotas returned to harvest the rest of the crop.[34]

When corn crops failed, however, Arikara, Mandan, and Hidatsa villages became targets instead of trade destinations. By the late 1820s, villagers throughout the river valley were struggling to grow and preserve large quantities of corn. Americans introduced foreign species in the Missouri Valley that threatened corn crops. The Atkinson-O'Fallon expedition delivered Norway rats into the Mandan and Hidatsa villages, where the rodents ate through

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[32] Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 267, 283; Wishart, *Fur Trade*, 53.
[33] See Michel Hogue, "Between Race and Nation: The Creation of a Métis Borderland on the Northern Plains," in *Bridging National Borders in North America: Transnational and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Benjamin Johnson and Andrew R. Graybill (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 68–72.
[34] See Morgan, *West of William H. Ashley*, 69.

enormous quantities of corn stored underground. Farther downriver, American settlers were beginning to send cattle and horses to the river bottoms to feed on high grasses, or rushes, where the animals trampled fields around Omaha and Otoe villages.[35]

Growing congestion in the river valley also made it more difficult to produce corn in large quantities. In the 1820s, eastern groups—Sauks and Foxes and Yanktonais—pushed west and tried to expel the Plains villagers from the river valley. A single Lakota strike killed thirty Ponca chiefs in 1824, and a decade later they were living as refugees along the Niobrara River. After the Sauk and Fox expelled the Omaha people from Large Village in 1820, the Yanktons and Brulé Lakotas seized their former homelands along Omaha Creek, where the chief Black Bird had once dominated the Missouri fur trade.[36]

The Mandans and Hidatsas also ceded territory in the river valley. In 1823 the Ruptare Mandans abandoned their village on the east bank of the Missouri and moved across the river into the old Mitutanka village. In 1834 Lakotas destroyed two of the three Hidatsa settlements and forced them into Big Hidatsa and the two Mandan villages, a "nine-mile span of river and prairie."[37]

The Arikara position deteriorated rapidly in 1831, when their corn crop failed. That winter, fur traders recorded a withering campaign by the Yanktonais and Lakotas to drive the Arikaras from their villages and monopolize trade with the American Fur Company.[38] Taking

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[35] Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 290-94, 307. For the destruction by cattle of Otoe and Missouria corn crops in 1836, see David J. Wishart, An *Unspeakable Sadness: The Dispossession of the Nebraska Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 78–79. For the practice of sending horses and cattle to the lower river valley to rushes, see Brackenridge, "Journal of an Expedition," 39; entry for 28 April 1824, Kennerly Diary, MHMLRC; and (in the mid 1850s) James Wallace Adams, "Historical, Biographical, and Reminiscent," 1924, typescript, HR-46, SC 17, Iowa Historical Records Survey Project, Sioux City Public Museum, Iowa [hereafter IHRSP].

[36] Wishart, *Unspeakable Sadness*, 74–77. For the Yanktonai push west, see Denig, *Five Indian Tribes*, 32.

[37] Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 277, 308 ("span"), 308–10.

[38] For accounts of Sioux-Arikara conflict, see letters in r. 17, pt. 1, PSLFT: William Laidlaw to Pierre Chouteau, 23 October 1831; Laidlaw to David T. Mitchell, 2 November 1831; Laidlaw to Henry Picotte, 27 November

advantage of the commercial monopoly of the American Fur Company, Pilcher also mobilized a trade embargo against the Arikaras. In the spring of 1832, members of one of the two Arikara villages made a last-ditch effort to plant a corn crop.[39] By the end of the year, they had evacuated the villages. They moved south to live with their Pawnee relatives and traveled between the headwaters of the Platte and Arkansas Rivers.[40] Their departure ended thirty years at the Cottonwood Creek villages above the mouth of the Grand River.[41]

When the Sioux visited the river valley, they increasingly saw American trade posts instead of Native villages. In the late 1820s and early 1830s, the American Fur Company built new posts farther upriver: Fort Pierre (1832), which replaced Fort Tecumseh at the mouth of the Bad River; Fort Clark (1824/1831) next to the Mandan and Hidatsa villages at the mouth of the Knife River; and, most significantly, Fort Union (1830) at the mouth of the Yellowstone River—a post that effectively replaced the Mandan villages as the center of commerce in the northern Plains.[42] Other posts appeared on the western Plains: Fort Cass (1832) on the Yellowstone River, in the territory of the Crows; Bent's Fort (1835) in present-day eastern Colorado, in Cheyenne territory; and Fort Laramie (1834) in present-day eastern

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1831; Laidlaw to Kenneth McKenzie, 27 November 1831; Laidlaw to Pierre Papin, 4 December 1831; Laidlaw to Pascal Cerré, 15 February 1832; Laidlaw to McKenzie, 15 February 1832; Laidlaw to McKenzie, 15 February 1832. For Yanktonai motives during their push into Arikara territories, see Denig, *Five Indian Tribes*, 32; Robert W. Galler Jr., "Sustaining the Sioux Confederation: Yanktonai Initiatives and Influence on the Northern Plains, 1680-1880," *Western Historical Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (Winter 2008), 467–90, 473, 476–77.

[39] For crop failure, the trade embargo, and Yanktonai raids, see Witte and Gallagher, *North American Journals*, 2:180; John Sanford to William Clark, 17 July 1832, r. 750, microcopy 234, NARA; Jacob Halsey to James Kipp, 15 September 1832, r. 17, pt. 1, PSLFT; Pilcher to Clark, 12 November 1834, r. 883, microcopy 234, NARA; Pilcher to Clark, 15 September 1838, r. 884, NARA.

40 Pilcher to Clark, 12 November 1834, r. 883, microcopy 234, NARA; Pilcher to Clark, 15 September 1838, r. 884, microcopy 234, NARA.

[41] A year later, Yanktonais traded with the Hidatsas for corn. Sublette to Kenneth McKenzie, September 1833, Risvold Collection, Spink Shreves Galleries, http://stampauctionnetwork.com/; Denig, *Five Tribes*, 45–47.

[42] David J. Wishart, *The Fur Trade of the American West, 1807-1840* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), 42-43, 48-55; Sunder, *Joshua Pilcher*, 37–40. For Fort Clark, which had two iterations, see W. Raymond Wood, William J. Hunt Jr., and Randy H. Williams, *Fort Clark and Its Indian Neighbors: A Trading Post on the Upper Missouri* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011), 54. For Fort Union, see Barbour, *Fort Union*, 39–43; Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 286.

Wyoming, an area claimed by the Lakotas and Cheyennes. In the late 1830s, the Upper Missouri Outfit of the American Fur Company also established branch posts up the Cheyenne and White Rivers. These posts supplied people who had spent decades visiting the Missouri corridor to trade for corn, tobacco, and squash. By 1833 the Crows rarely visited their long-time Mandan and Hidatsa trade partners at the Knife River. The Cheyennes and Lakotas also gradually abandoned the Missouri corridor. The Oglalas pushed of the Black Hills and invited Miniconjous to join them. Supplied with American merchandise, they increasingly abandoned travel to the James River trade fairs with the Dakotas and Yanktonais. Although Lakotas still claimed lands on the east bank of the Missouri River by right of conquest, old fording sites such as the Three Rivers Pass gradually fell out of regular use.[43]

For those people who still visited the river valley, American trade posts became the new destinations. Harvests at forts replaced the annual trade fairs at Arikara, Mandan, and Hidatsa villages. In August 1830, a trader at Fort Tecumseh, William Laidlaw, reported that Sioux were "pouring in from every quarter," and that they "Played great havoc in our garden," seizing corn, potatoes, and pumpkins. In late August 1835, trader Charles Larpenteur reported that 160 Assiniboines arrived at Fort Union for a "feast of corn which generally [is] the case at this time of the year." The traders decided to harvest the potatoes and "pull the corn green" because "at the rate that the indians were gathering it they would

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[43] Wishart, *Fur Trade*, 48, 59–60; Elliott West, *The Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush to Colorado* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998); 83; Barbour, *Fort Union*, 39–45; Sunder, *Fur Trade on the Upper Missouri*, 59; Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 286. For Lakota abandonment of the Missouri Valley and conquest of the western Plains, see White, "Winning of the West," 333–36. For the "Saone" Lakota (Minneconjou, Sans Arc, Sihasapa, Hunkpapa, and Two Kettle) presence in the Black Hills by the late 1830s and push west by the Oglalas, see Kingsley Bray, "The Lakotas and the Buffalo Robe Trade: The Season of 1838-1839," *Museum of the Fur Trade Quarterly* 49, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 1–24, 3, 10.

not have left one ear by morning."[44] Hunger increasingly drove Indians to steal crops from the river valley. In early April 1824, an officer at Fort Atkinson reported that "Indians [were] stealing corn" from Cabanné's Post.[45] The trader Honoré Picotte began raising Mandan corn on an island nine miles below Fort Pierre in order to protect the crops from raids by neighboring Indians.[46]

American traders and soldiers replaced Arikara or Mandan women as guides across the Missouri. Trade post operators regularly ferried Indian visitors back and forth across the river. In late April 1824, approximately seven lodges of Omaha Indians camped across the river from Fort Atkinson and asked for transportation across the river. In the spring of 1830, when groups of Yanktonais and Saone Lakotas appeared on the opposite shore of Fort Tecumseh with robes, the head of the post, William Laidlaw, repeatedly sent over boats to conduct them across the Missouri.[47] In August 1833, traders ferried members of a Piegan Blackfoot band across the river to Fort McKenzie.[48] Traders at Fort Union, at the mouth of the Yellowstone River, regularly ferried Assiniboines to the other side of the river. In late August 1835, for example, they "Crossed a Party of one hundred Assiniboine indians which were a going to war against the gros ventre." This traffic continued into the 1850s. In early November 1851, the trader Rudolph Friederich Kurz spent three days ferrying Cree and Assiniboine families across the Missouri from Fort Union and tried to corral horses and dogs

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[44] See entries for 25 August and 28 August 1830, Robinson, "Fort Tecumseh Journals," 133 ("pouring"); Michael M. Casler, ed., *The Original Journal of Charles Larpenteur: My Travels to the Rocky Mountains between 1833 and 1872* (Chadron, NE: Museum Association of the American Frontier, 2007), 37 ("morning").
[45] 6 April 1824, James Kennerly Diary, Kennerly Family Papers, MHMLRC.
[46] Picotte to O. F. Vinton to Commanding Officer, 2nd Infantry, 9 April 1855, Fort Pierre file, Consol, Corres., RG 92, NA.
[47] See 30 November 1804, DJLC 3:244. For Omaha traffic at Fort Atkinson, see entry for 30 April 1824, James Kennerly Diary, Kennerly Family Papers, MHMLRC. For Yanktonai and Saone travel, see entries for 2 April 1830, 9 April 1830, 26 May 1830, in Robinson, "Fort Tecumseh Journal," 109–11, 121; and entries for 15 May 1830, 2 June 1830, 9 June 1830, in Abel, "Fort Tecumseh Journals," *South Dakota Historical Collections* 9 : 118, 121, 122, 124.
[48] Witte and Gallagher, *North American Journals*, 2:375.

onto flatboats.[49] This mobility on the Missouri empowered Indian leaders: they earned transportation across the river from post operators. When post operators refused to provide transportation, visitors occasionally seized boats for their own use. After someone seized Fort Union's "scow" from the boat landing, traders found it on the other side of the river and believed "some of the indians [had] taken it during the knight to cross the river."[50]

Trade posts ultimately changed the process of Native travel across the Missouri, however. Indians who crossed the river to visit Native villages had to perform the protocols of border crossing by establishing fictive kinship relations. Although Indians still performed the rituals of alliance building within and outside trade posts, the traders who escorted them back and forth across the river calculated the economic costs and profits of their time on the river. After they had helped the group of Assiniboines across the river, employees at Fort Union had warned them what would happen "if they were to be abandon [sic] by the traders": "they would be distroyed by their enemies when they would hear that they were no longer supplied with Ammunition."[51] Trade post operators could deny transportation across the river to Indians who did not offer furs. By controlling the distribution of trade goods and especially firearms, traders could dictate the price of transportation on the river.

The structure and position of trade posts in the river valley communicated the priorities of traders. Trade posts were usually square or rectangular structures that contained houses for company employees, magazines, workhops, and wearhouses. They guarded against Native mobility as much as they invited visitors. Fort Recovery was located on an island and was guarded by towers, pickets, and a cannon. Fort Lookout, which sat only a few

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[49] Witte and Gallagher, *North American Journals*, 3:23, 25; *The Journal of Rudolph Friederich Kurz: The Life and Work of this Swiss Artist* (Fairfield, WA: Galleon Press, 1969), 225–26.
[50] Casler, *Original Journal of Charles Larpenteur*, 37 ("knight").
[51] Casler, *Original Journals of Charles Larpenteur*, 37 ("abandon").

miles below the Three Rivers Pass, was surrounded by high cottonwood pickets and contained a small tower. The gate at the successor to Fort Tecumseh, Fort Pierre, faced the river, a position that invited access by river travelers while defending the post against attacks from the surrounding plains.[52]

Although post operators calculated short- and long-term earnings when they conducted Indian visitors back and forth across the Missouri, a new transportation technology would eventually attach firmer costs and prices to Native mobility in the river corridor. By the mid-1820s, steamboats were traveling regularly between St. Louis and Council Bluffs. In the summer of 1824, the steamboat *Mandan* traveled to Council Bluffs and back in forty-six days, a record at the time.[53] Its name reveals an aspiration of fur traders and merchants in St. Louis: the expansion of steamboat traffic upriver to the Mandan and Hidatsa villages. The first steamboat to reach their villages was the *Yellow Stone*. Built in Louisville, the *Yellow Stone* made its first run up the Missouri in 1831, traveling as far as present-day Pierre, South Dakota and Fort Tecumseh before turning around because of low water. Carrying 144 tons, it reached the site of the fort in 64 days, compared to 113 days for Lewis and Clark. The following summer, the *Yellow Stone* traveled upriver again and made it to Fort Union at the mouth of the Yellowstone River.[54]

By collapsing "time-distance," steamboats reordered space in the North American West. The Mandan and Hidatsa villages on the upper Missouri River suddenly grew closer to

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[52] For the locations and structure of posts in the 1820s and early 1830s, see Wishart, *Fur Trade*, 49, 53–55, 87–88; Charles E. Deland, "Old Fort Pierre and Its Neighbors," *South Dakota Historical Collections Vol. 1* (Pierre: South Dakota Historical Society, 1903), 326-27; Barbour, *Fort Union and the Upper Missouri Fur Trade*, 39–40; Constant R. Mark, ed., "Autobiography of Louis D. Letellier," *South Dakota Historical Collections* 4 (Pierre: News Printing Company, 1908), 221; Jensen, *Wheel Boats on the Missouri*, 107; Anderson, "The Fort Lookout Trading Post Sites," 222; Wilhelm, *Travels in North America*, 368.
[53] On the arrival of the General Neville and Mandan, see Edgar. B. Wesley, ed., "Diary of James Kennerly," *Missouri Historical Society Collections* 6, no. 1 (October 1928): 72, O'Fallon to William Clark, 9 July 1824, OLB, BL; List of steamboat arrivals and departures, *Missouri Republican*, 9 August 1824.
[54] Donald Jackson, *Voyages of the Steamboat Yellow Stone* (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 185), 3–4, 22–25.

St. Louis. After the successful run of the *Yellow Stone* in 1832, the fur trader Ramsay Crooks congratulated Pierre Chouteau Jr. for having "brought the Falls of the Missouri, as near comparatively, as was the River Platte in my younger days."[55] For every boat that made it to Council Bluffs or Fort Union, however, a few more grounded in low water or sunk. By the 1860s, hundreds of steamboat wrecks littered the river channel, and steamboat travel frequently became a struggle as captains battled low water, sandbars, and snags.

Fur traders and the military worked together to improve steamboat transportation on the Missouri. The American Fur Company continuously modified steamboats to enhance speed and carrying capacity, and the military sent engineers to the lower Missouri River to try to remove obstructions.[56] In 1842 the head of the army's Western Department, Edward Gaines, recommended the removal of the "numerous snags which now obstruct the navigation of that noble river" between St. Louis and Fort Leavenworth. Journeying upriver to Fort Leavenworth on the steamboat *Bowling Green*, he counted as many as one hundred snags and noticed several steamboat wrecks. He proposed hiring a veteran steamboat captain, Henry Shreve, to spend two summers clearing the lower Missouri River with snag boats. Between 1842 and 1845, Shreve conducted snag prevention—chopping down trees along river banks—and snag removal on the lower Ohio, Mississippi, and Missouri Rivers.[57]

The Missouri River never became a good river for steamboat navigation, but it became the essential transportation route for the U.S. army across the Plains before the

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[55] Crooks to Chouteau Jr., 16 November 1832, reel 20, pt. 1, PSLFT ("younger days"). The head of the American Fur Company, John Jacob Astor, thereafter supported the use of steamboats on the Missouri River. See John Jacob Astor to Pierre Chouteau Jr., 17 October 1832, reel 20, pt. 1, PSLFT. For "time-distance" and the *Yellow Stone*, see Wishart, *Fur Trade*, 86.
[56] See, for example, Sanford to Chouteau Jr., 12 June 1839, r. 26, pt. 1, PSLFT; and Laidlaw to Chouteau Jr., 10 July 1839, r. 26, pt. 1, PSLFT.
[57] Gaines to Sec. of War John C. Spencer, 7 December 1841, vol. 8, Letters Sent, Western Department, Entry 5568, RG 393, NARA; Louis C. Hunter, *Steamboats on the Western Rivers: An Economic and Technological History* (Reprint, New York: Dover, 1994), 199.

expansion of the railroad. American officials continued to envision the river as a transportation corridor. Facing questions about the practicality of shipping supplies upriver to present-day South Dakota, Secretary of War Jefferson Davis responded curtly, "Rivers are usually considered facilities rather than obstacles to transportation and a few snows should render the Missouri available to bring wood . . . to the post."[58]

American proponents of steamboat use on the Missouri River believed they would expedite conquest and expansion by intimidating Native Americans. One of the first steamboats to ply the river, the *Western Engineer*, created the illusion that it was a dragon: a painted dragon ran along the sides of the vessel, and the chimney sat at the front of the boat, belching smoke and fire through the serpent's mouth. A few mirrors sent light from a whale oil lamp through the mouth, and a tail covered the stern wheel. The *Niles' Weekly Register* reported that the boat's "equipment is at once calculated to attract and to awe the savage. Objects pleasing and terrifying are at once before him:—artillery; the flag of the republic; portraits of a white man and an Indian shaking hands; the calumet of peace; a sword; then the apparent monster with a painted vessel on his back, the sides gaping with port-holes, and bristling with guns."[59] The boat elicited an admiring description in the *Franklin, Missouri Intelligencer*: "the bow of the vessel exhibits the form of a huge serpent, black and scaley, rising out of the water from under the boat, his head as high as the deck, darted forward, his mouth open, vomiting smoke…the illusion is complete, that a monster of the deep carries her on his back, smoking with fatigue, and lashing the waves with violent exertion."[60]

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[58] Davis, 24 August 1855, on cover of Vinton to Jesup, 14 August 1855, Fort Pierre file, Consol., Corres., RG 92, NA.

[59] Roger L. Nichols and Patrick L. Halley, *Stephen Long and American Frontier Exploration* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1980), 65-66; Lass, *Navigating the Missouri*, 41–42; and "Chronicle," *Niles' Weekly Register*, 24 July 1819.

[60] *Missouri Intelligencer*, 25 June 1819.

According to Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, steamboats like the *Western Engineer* would allow the army to move on the river without fear of Indian blockades. Responding to reports of Indian attacks on the Missouri River in late 1818, Calhoun informed Jackson that "if the Missouri will admit of [steamboat] navigation, all resistance from the Indians, even if aided and instigated by British traders, will easily be overcome." Johnson's boat, he noted, would be "prepared with strong bulwarks, and will mount a few light pieces on her deck."[61] He believed Indians would not try to attack or detain larger, well-defended steamboats. Atkinson initially shared Calhoun's faith in the power of steamboats to impress on-lookers. Preparing for the Yellowstone Expedition of 1819, which ended at Council Bluffs, he wrote Quartermaster General Thomas Jesup that "should the upper Indians be inclined to dispute our passage, (which I do not apprehend if they are properly treated) the imposing appearance of these boats would tend to awe many feeling of the sort."[62]

According to the artist George Catlin, who was on board the steamboat *Yellow Stone* when it reached the upper Missouri River, the boat provoked astonishment in Indians. It caused "excitement and dismay" among the Lakotas.[63] The first Mandan to see the steamboat reportedly called it a "thunder-boat." The villagers hesitated to approach the boat until a few leaders who boarded discovered that their agent, John Sanford, was on board.[64] The German traveler Prince Maximilian of Wied, who joined the second successful steamboat trip to Fort Union, in 1833, noted that the hissing of the steamboat *Assiniboine* evidently "roused the curiosity" of the Yanktons and Lakotas at Fort Pierre, and according to Maximilian a group

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[61] Calhoun to Jackson, 5 January 1819, in W. Edwin Hemphill, *Papers of John C. Calhoun, vol. 3: 1818-1819* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1967), 453.
[62] Atkinson to Jesup, 23 February 1819, Henry Atkinson File, Consol. Corres., RG 92, NARA.
[63] George Catlin, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians*, 2 vols. (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1844), 1:227–28.
[64] Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, 1:137–38.

of them viewed the steamboat "with amazement."[65] He wrote that the Mandans "gazed with astonishment at the roaring *Assiniboine* as we departed, and then this whole population followed us for a stretch along the bank."[66]

Some Native traditions suggest that Indians initially regarded steamboats as sources of power. According to Omaha traditions, the Omaha first saw a steamboat in 1836, when the steamboat *Antelope* ascended the river. They called it the monde'waxube, or "mystery boat."[67] Other accounts, however, show that steamboats did not intimidate Indians or convince them to cede control of the river. In 1819, when the *Western Engineer* and its painted serpent reached Council Bluffs, five Sioux warriors—four Lakotas and one Yankton—boarded the boat fearing that it contained, one witness reported, "great medicine of the Big Knives" (Americans). But a warrior thereafter concluded that "'he hardly thought the Big-knives had any medicine to hurt them.'"[68] Mandan and Hidatsa later called steamboats a "snorting-boat" and "boiling-boat."[69]

Instead of traveling freely through the Great Plains, steamboat captains had to pay tolls to secure safe passage through Native territories. As Col. Alfred Sully recalled in 1865, "Steamboats travelling up the river were compelled frequently to land and pay the Indians for permission to navigate the river."[70] In the 1840s, Pawnees, Omahas, Arikaras, Lakotas, and Yanktons regularly hailed steamboats and received tobacco and merchandise from captains and crew. In his steamboat logs, French captain Joseph Sire complained frequently about

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[65] Witte and Gallagher, *North American Journals*, 2:160, 161.
[66] Witte and Gallagher, *North American Journals*, 2:209.
[67] Fletcher and La Flesche, *Omaha Tribe*, 1:87.
68 James, *Account of an Expedition*, 1:161.
[69] "Steamboat" notes, 1950/1951, John Peabody Harrington Collection, Smithsonian Institute, accessed online at www.collections.si.edu. For the Lakota term for "steamboat," see Eugene Buechel and Paul Manhart, eds., *Lakota Dictionary* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 273, 354.
[70] Alfred Sully to Joseph Bell, 14 September 1865, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 210.

losing time with Native delegations as his boats ascended the river.[71] When De Smet descended the Missouri below Fort Berthold in 1846, bands of Indians called to them "from the shore" and asked them to meet. The priest advised future travelers,

> the best thing to do in such cases is to obey, and you seldom have cause to repent of this small condescension; you accept the calumet; you furnish something to fill it with; you smoke one or two rounds with them and in their manner; both sides exchange little items of news; if they see that you are without provisions, they hasten to give you the choice pieces from their hunt; then you embrace and part friends. To refuse to come, when you are on their premises and they call you, would irritate them and expose you to great dangers.[72]

By regulating passage through their lands, Native peoples effectively expanded "time-distance" on the river and disrupted American efforts to transform the Missouri River into a road for regular travel. They reaffirmed indigenous protocols of border crossing and travel through foreign territories.

When Henry Atkinson led wheelboats upriver in 1825, Lakotas and Yanktons did not hesitate to board the boats for transportation on the river.[73] They also quickly enlisted steamboats to combat the vast distances of the Great Plains. In late May 1833, at the Three Rivers Pass in present-day Buffalo County, South Dakota, a hunting party of twenty-three Lakotas and Yanktonais boarded the *Assiniboine* to receive passage upriver so they could reestablish peace with the Mandans, who had recently killed a Sioux man.[74] On 19 June

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[71] For steamboat tolls in the early 1840s, see Mark H. Bettis, ed., *For Wood and Water: Steamboating on the Missouri River from St. Louis to Fort Union, Dakota Territory, 1841-1846: A Collection of Journals by Captain Joseph A. Sire* (Villa Ridge, Missouri: Marhbet Productions, 2000), 47, 55, 57, 87, 92, 94, 96, 110–11, 124, 125 [hereafter FWW]. See also Daniel G. Taylor, "Journal of Trip of Steamer Clermont," 7-28 July 1846, Steamboat Collection, MHMLRC; Hiram Martin Chittenden, *History of Early Steamboat Navigation on the Missouri River: Life and Adventures of Captain Joseph La Barge* 2 vols. (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1903), 1:29–31, 160.

[72] Hiram Martin Chittenden, *Life, Letters and Travels of Father Pierre-Jean De Smet*, 4 vols. (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1906), 2:605–6.

[73] Jensen, *Wheelboats on the Missouri*, 102–3, 145–46, 165, 167.

[74] Witte and Gallagher, *North American Journals*, 146, 149

1833, when the *Assiniboine* left Fort Clark to continue on to the mouth of the Yellowstone, a Blackfoot man traveled on board in order to return to his family. Mandan leaders also remained on board until they reached the Hidatsa villages. Above the Little Knife River in western North Dakota, a group of Assiniboines boarded the *Assiniboine*, and a chief asked if he could have passage up to Fort Union. In 1843, a Hidatsa chief named Four Bears traveled on the steamboat *Omega* from the Cannonball River up to the Knife River. In July 1845, a Yankton war party traveled on the *General Brooke*, which dropped them off above the Vermillion River, where they continued a mission against the Pawnees.[75] Native travelers also enlisted steamboats to visit distant family members, relatives, and allies.

Although these travelers may have received free passage on the steamboat, others were not so fortunate. In 1849, when the Hidatsa leader Four Bears gave the trader Andrew Dawson fifty robes and expressed his desire to travel downriver on the steamboat to St. Louis, the trader concluded that the payment "may please the avaricious Lords of said Boat" enough to "take him below."[76] Although Hidatsa women requested payment for ferrying John Bradbury and Henry Marie Brackenridge in bullboats, the expansion of steamboat upriver attached prices to transportation on the river, which company agents measured in actual money and in robes.[77]

Steamboats would also transform the biology of the river corridor. The things that made steamboats efficient vehicles for commodity transportation—their size and relative speed—also promoted the spread of epidemics. Steamboats not only compressed time-

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[75] See Witte and Gallagher, *North American Journals*, 2:193–94, 205, 2:219–29. For Four Bears, see entry for 6 June 1843, John G. Bell Diary, WA Mss S-1752, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. For Yanktons, see entry for 11 July 1845, FWW 124.

[76] Andrew Dawson to Christian Dawson, 28 May 1849, *Far-Off Wild Land*, 213.

[77] For average costs of steamboat travel in the mid-nineteenth century, see Hunter, *Steamboats on Western Rivers*, 391–92, 420–21, 423; Ronald R. Switzer, *The Steamboat Bertrand and Missouri River Commerce* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013), 86–87.

distance in the vast Great Plains but also dramatically increased the number of Americans traveling on the river itself. Before the expansion of steamboat transportation on the river, keelboats were carrying dozens of traders upriver in occasionally large commercial expeditions. In 1819 the St. Louis merchant Pierre Chouteau submitted bids to ship merchandise upriver to the Mandan villages and promised he could employ one to two hundred "French Boatman who have been long engaged in navigating the Missouri River."[78] Yet a single steamboat could carry two to three hundred people. As a "passenger as well as a freight carrier," steamboats carried trade goods and annuities for Indians on the Upper Missouri as well as soldiers, traders, missionaries, and Indian agents. Operators tried to pack as much cargo and people on board as they could without the boat drawing too much water.[79]

Filled with passengers and cargo, boats incubated disease for long-distance transmission. Before the Civil War, steamboats were the "chief vehicle" for the transmission of cholera in the trans-Mississippi West. During outbreaks, inspectors in St. Louis and other towns along western rivers examined boats at quarantine stations before allowing them to dock at the wharf. Deck passengers, who lived in crowded and unsanitary conditions below the boat cabins, bore the brunt of cholera, which only rarely killed cabin passengers.[80] During the late spring and early summer, when boats had enough water to ascend the river, high temperatures exacerbated conditions on board. When the French steamboat captain Joseph Sire directed the *General Brooke* upriver in 1845, he complained, "The boat and the cabins are like real frying pans and the nights are not long enough to let them cool off."[81] When

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[78] Adain Stewart to Thomas S. Jesup, 13 December 1819, Fort Des Moines file, Consolidated Correspondence, RG 92, NARA.
[79] Hunter, *Steamboats on Western Rivers*, 390.
[80] Hunter, *Steamboats on the Western Rivers*, 430–32.
[81] FWW 113.

merchants like Pierre Chouteau Jr. commissioned steamboats for use on the Missouri River, they built disease carriers.

Officials in the Indian department were aware of the potential for epidemics in the Great Plains, but they did little to prevent them. In 1832 the Indian agent John Dougherty allocated two thousand dollars to vaccinate Indian nations as high as the Arikaras. Two doctors traveled upriver on board the *Yellow Stone*, the first steamboat to reach Fort Union. At the urging of Secretary of War Lewis Cass, however, Dougherty advised them to stop vaccinations at the Arikara villages, before reaching the Mandans, Hidatsas, Assiniboines, Crows, and Blackfoot. A year later cholera broke out on the steamboat *Assiniboine* as it approached the Mandan and Hidatsa villages.[82]

Led upriver by captains who put commercial profit ahead of safety, steamboats repeatedly carried disease into Indian villages in the Missouri Valley. During the cholera outbreak of 1832/1833, Bernard Pratte Jr. wrote that every steamboat arriving in or departing from Cincinnati had smallpox on board.[83] During an upriver voyage in 1833, cholera broke out on the *Yellow Stone*, which was carrying eight traders to Council Bluffs and another four to the Upper Missouri, some of whom were sick. Residents in the river valley effected impromptu quarantines to control the spread of the disease. Learning that there was an outbreak on board, Cyprien Chouteau refused to allow Joseph La Barge to enter his trading post at the mouth of the Kansas River. The disease claimed eight people on board, struck a number of people at the Bellevue agency, and spread as high up the river as the Fort Union.

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[82] Dougherty to Lewis Cass, 6 June 1832, reel 883, microcopy 234, NARA; Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 324. For the 1833 outbreak, see Chittenden, *Early Steamboat Navigation*, 1:33–34; Jackson, *Voyages of the Yellow Stone*, 101–2; William B. Astor to Pierre Chouteau Jr., 25 July 1833, reel 22, pt. 1, PSLFT; Joshua Pilcher to Pierre Chouteau Jr., 1 August 1833, 21 August 1833, and 11 September 1833, r. 22, pt. 1, PSLFT.
[83] Pratte to unknown [Pierre Chouteau Jr.], 10 November 1832, r. 20, pt. 1, PSLFT.

According to Pilcher, the Omahas and Otoes fled the Missouri Valley almost to the mountains because of the cholera outbreak.[84]

A single steamboat run in 1837 would decimate Native populations in the central and northern Great Plains and transform the indigenous landscape of the upper Missouri valley. In mid-May 1837, Capt. Bernard Pratte Jr. conducted the steamboat *St. Peter's*—reportedly the "largest boat" ever destined for the mouth of the Yellowstone River—out of St. Louis to begin a fifteen hundred mile trip up the Missouri River. When the boat reached Fort Leavenworth at the mouth of the Kansas River, an employee on board began showing symptoms of smallpox, but Pratte needed his help on board and refused calls to set him ashore. Farther upriver, at Council Bluffs, the crew unloaded annuities for the Omahas, Pawnees, and Otoes. Three Arikara women who had been living with the Pawnees received permission to board the boat to return to their relatives. After evacuating the Missouri Valley in 1832, the Arikaras had returned to the river only a month before the *St. Peter's* set out from St. Louis. In April 1837, members of 250 Arikara lodges arrived at the Mandan villages on the Knife River, where they established new villages. Separated from their families and relatives at the Pawnee villages, these women boarded the boat in order to reach the Knife River.[85]

When the boat grounded in low water at the mouth of the Niobrara River, smallpox was spreading rapidly to other passengers. In a letter written during the delay, Pratte complained to his partner, Pierre Chouteau Jr., that "as a further blessing I have smallpox on

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[84] Chittenden, *Early Steamboat Navigation*, 1:33–34; Jackson, *Voyages of the Yellow Stone*, 101–2; William B. Astor to Pierre Chouteau Jr., 25 July 1833, r. 22, pt. 1, PSLFT; Joshua Pilcher to Pierre Chouteau Jr., 1 August 1833, 21 August 1833, and 11 September 1833, r. 22, pt. 1, PSLFT; William Laidlaw to Pierre Chouteau Jr., 29 August 1833, and Laidlaw to William Dickson, 30 October 1833, Fort Pierre Letterbook, r. 20, pt. 1, PSLFT.
[85] For the Arikara move to the Knife River in the spring of 1837, see Wood, *Fort Clark and Its Indian Neighbors*, 168. For the three Arikara women who boarded the boat, see Joshua Pilcher to William Clark, 10 June 1837, 1 July 1837, and 5 February 1838, r. 884, microcopy 234, NARA.

board." He had buried one trader, and there were "eight new cases" within a span of twenty-four hours. By the time the boat reached Fort Clark at the mouth of the Knife River, the three Arikara women had also contracted the disease. Anxious to reach Fort Union before the river grew too shallow, however, Pratte continued the steamboat run up to Fort Union.[86] Spreading quickly from the Missouri Valley into the Plains, the smallpox that Pratte conducted upriver would decimate the Indian population of the midcontinent. The Indian agent for the upper Missouri River, Joshua Pilcher, estimated that it killed over 17,000 people: 1200 Sioux; 1500 Mandans (leaving sixty to eighty survivors); 1200 Arikaras; 1300 Hidatsas; 3840 Assiniboines; and 8160 Blackfoot.[87]

When he ascended the river on the *St. Peter's* two year's later, the Jesuit missionary Pierre-Jean de Smet identified the causes and scale of the epidemic: "by an unpardonable imprudence of the captain, this disease was introduced into the Indian country by the same vessel, and produced ravages frightful and unheard-of in Indian annals. Twenty-five or thirty thousand died in a few weeks."[88] But fur traders and their government allies shielded Pratte from much blame. Instead, they targeted non-whites. Members of the American Fur

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[86] *Pennsylvania Inquirer*, 27 July 1837, *America's Historical Newspapers*, infoweb.newsbank.com ("largest boat"). Pratte wrote, "pour bénédiction J'ai la picotte a bord—Nous avons en terre ce matin Vital papin, et avons 8 nouveau cas; dont 2 depuis hier." See Pratte to Pierre Chouteau Jr., 29 May 1837, Risvold Collection, Spink Shreves Galleries, http://stampauctionnetwork.com/f/121/146.jpg (accessed November 2014). See Joshua Pilcher to William Clark, 10 June 1837, 1 July 1837, and 5 February 1838, r. 884, microcopy 234, NARA; Pilcher to Jacob Halsey, 30 May 1837, r. 24, pt. 1, PSLFT; entry for 19 June 1837 in Annie Heloise Abel, ed., *Chardon's Journal at Fort Clark, 1834-1839* (Reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 118; and Clyde D. Dollar, "The High Plains Smallpox Epidemic of 1837-38," *Western Historical Quarterly* 8, no. 1 (Jan. 1977): 15–38, 7–9, 32–33. For the financial situation of Pratte, Chouteau & Company, see Wood, *Fort Clark and Its Indian Neighbors*, 160–61.

[87] Pilcher to Clark, 12 September 1838, r. 884, microcopy 234, NARA. Other estimates gave similar numbers. Taking care to exonerate American officials, the editors of the *Missouri Literary Register* estimated the survivors: 36 of the 1600 Mandans; 500 of the 1000 Hidatsas; half of the 3000 Arikaras; and few of the Assiniboines, Crees, and Blackfoot. See *St. Louis Daily Commercial Bulletin and Missouri Literary Register*, 2 March and 3 March 1838. Trader Francis Chardon reported that only twenty-one Mandan men and sixty Hidatsa men had survived the epidemic. Francis Chardon to P. D. Papin, 11 April 1838, r. 25, pt. 1, PSLFT. According to another trader, only 31 Mandan men had survived the epidemic and less than one-fourth of the Piegans, Bloods, and Blackfoot; one-fourth of the Hidatsas "are destroyed and more than one half of the Aricaras." See J. A. Hamilton to Pierre Chouteau Jr., 25 February 1838, r. 25, pt. 1, PSLFT.

[88] Chittenden, *Life, Letters and Travels of Father Pierre-Jean De Smet*, 1:188-89.

Company spread the rumor that an African American trapper named William F. P. May had placed infected goods on board the *St. Peter's* before it left St. Louis because the company had refused to give him passage upriver.[89] Pilcher believed the three Arikara women who had boarded the boat carried the disease into Fort Clark. Another agent charged an Arikara Indian with stealing an infected blanket and carrying it into the post. According to trader Jacob Halsey, a Blackfoot man carried it to his people when he boarded the *St. Peter's* at the mouth of the Little Missouri.[90] These theories exploited not only anti-Arikara biases but also fears of indigenous mobility on the Missouri River, and particularly the specter of independent travel by Native women.

According to the Scots trader Andrew Dawson, "It was along after the disease had passed away ere the Rees in particular forgave it, and many whites were killed by them in token of revenge."[91] By February 1838, reports reached Stephen Watts Kearny, the head of the First Dragoons, that the survivors of the epidemic were prepared to attack the next steamboat on the river.[92] Scrambling to determine the causes and scale of the epidemic from

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[89] William Clark to C. G. Harris, 6 February 1838, r. 880, microcopy 234, NARA. For accounts that blame May, see Cabanné to P. Chouteau Jr., 22 December 1837, r. 25, pt. 1, PSLFT; May's entry (based on information from Baptiste Clement) in "Gazetteer of Pioneers and Others in North Dakota Previous to 1862," *Collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota* 1 (1906): 374; and "Affairs at Fort Benton from 1831 to 1839: From Lieut. Bradley's Journal, Period 1831 to 1839," *Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana* 3 (1900): 221-22. For May's activities as a trapper in the Rocky Mountains, see Abel, *Chardon's Journal*, 274n269. Barbara Alice Mann argues that the AFC sent an African American man named John Beckwourth upriver to introduce smallpox blankets among the Blackfoot. See Mann, *The Tainted Gift: The Disease Method of Frontier Expansion* (AFC-CLIO), 63, 71.

[90] Pilcher to Clark, 5 February 1838, r. 880, microcopy 234, NARA; Halsey to Pratte and Chouteau, 2 November 1837, printed in Abel, *Chardon's Journal*, 395. For a summary of the different transmission scenarios, see Michael K. Trimble, *An Ethnohistorical Interpretation of the Spread of Smallpox in the Northern Plains Utilizing Concepts of Disease Ecology*, Volume 33, Reprints in Anthropology (Lincoln, Nebraska: J & L Reprint Company, 1986), 35–37.

[91] Andrew Dawson to Eben Dawson, 28 June 1849, *Far-Off Wild Land*, 222.

[92] "Reports from above state, that many Indians have died the last season, from Small Pox, introduced amongst them, by the Fur Compy. Steam Boat.—that very many of the survivors are highly excited at it and threaten to attack the Boat, if she goes up this Summer." Kearny to Brig. Gen. Henry Atkinson, 15 February 1838, Letters Sent by the Headquarters of the First Dragoons, vol. 1, entry 612, Records of United States Regular Army Mobile Units, 1821-1942, RG 391, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington DC [hereafter RG 391, NARA].

William Clark, who was in his final year as the superintendent of Indian affairs, the commissioner of Indian affairs mobilized a limited vaccination program. In early April 1838, Pilcher and a physician named Joseph R. de Prefontaine traveled on the steamboat *Antelope* upriver to vaccinate the Sioux. Before reaching Sioux country, Prefontaine vaccinated "such Indians as visited the boat," including a "few" Otoes, Omahas, and Sauks and Foxes. When the boat reached the mouth of the White River, a few miles below the Sioux Sub-Agency, Pilcher saw three to four thousand Yanktons and Dakotas assembled on the riverbank who had been waiting for the boat to receive annuities. As the boat continued upriver, Prefontaine vaccinated close to three thousand members of "the difficult bands of Sioux"—probably the northern Lakotas—at the Sioux Sub-Agency; "a number of small parties" above the agency; and additional people at Fort Pierre. But many of the Sioux had already left the river valley because of the boat's delay. Dismissing rumors of Indian hostilities in the aftermath of the epidemic, Pilcher reported to Clark that the "steam boat has passed up the Missouri 2000 miles uninterrupted," and there has never "existed an intent" to attack the boat.[93]

Following the smallpox epidemic, the surviving Arikaras—nearly two hundred men and their families—seized the Mandan village known as Mih-tutta-hang-kusch. The few Mandan survivors could do little to prevent the takeover. In January 1839, while the Arikaras were camped in their winter village, the Sioux burned Mih-tutta-hang-kusch to the ground. The Arikaras built a new village at the Knife River next to Fort Clark. By 1845 the Hidatsas had abandoned the Knife River and moved thirty miles upriver to build Like-a-Fishhook

[93] Pilcher to Clark, 3 July 1838, r. 884, microcopy 234, NARA ("2000 miles"); Pilcher to Clark, 12 September 1838, r. 884, microcopy 234, NARA. For the number of vaccinations administered, see Prefontaine to Pilcher, 9 July 1838, r. 884, microcopy 234, NARA. For the itinerary of the *Antelope*, see Kenneth McKenzie to Pierre Papin, 11 May 1838, r. 25, pt. 1, PSLFT; Account of Sioux Outfit, 1 May 1838, r. 25, pt. 1, PSLFT; and Abel, *Chardon's Journal*, 163.

village on the north bank of the Missouri. It sat next to a new fur trade post called Fort Berthold. Some Mandan survivors joined them, while others remained at the Knife River.[94]

Following the devastating smallpox epidemic of 1837, steamboats would carry additional epidemics upriver to the Arikara, Mandan, and Hidatsa settlements. In late 1848, a major cholera epidemic traveled from Europe to the United States.[95] After the epidemic reached St. Louis in 1849, five different steamboats carried cholera up the Missouri River in the span of three years. Cholera broke out on the steamboats *Amelia* and *Tamerlane* during their ascent of the Missouri in 1849. As far upriver as Fort Berthold, the Scots trader Andrew Dawson heard that the two boats were "tied up somewhere on the boarders [*sic*] of the settlements and that all hands on board are dying of Cholera." He planned to encourage the surviving Hidatsas, Arikaras, and Mandans to leave the river valley. The *Tamerlane* had cholera on board when it reached Fort Clark in mid-July 1849. When it returned to St. Louis from the Yellowstone in early August 1849, passengers reported that "great numbers of Indians were dying of cholera, at the head of the Platte." Passengers on the *Dahcota* also contracted the disease. In the summer of 1850, cholera killed six people on the upriver voyage of the *El Paso*, which reached Fort Union in June 1850. The Sioux reportedly tried to escape the disease by dividing into small parties and fleeing the river valley.[96] The outbreak culminated in the summer of 1851, when the *St. Ange* spread cholera along the upper

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[94] Francis Chardon to P. D. Papin, 11 April 1838, r. 25, pt. 1, PSLFT; Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 328, 330–31; Wood, *Fort Clark and Its Indian Neighbors*, 168.

[95] See Charles E. Rosenberg, *The Cholera Years: The United States in 1832, 1849, and 1866* (Reprint, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 99–172.

[96] For the *Amelia*, *Tamerlane*, and *Dahcota*, see *Kanesville (IA) Frontier Guardian*, 16 May 1849, 30 May 1849; Andrew Dawson to Eben Dawson, 28 June, 18 July, and 19 July 1849, *This Far-Off Wild Land*, 222, 228 ("all hands"); "Arrival of the Steamer Tamerlane," *Daily Missouri Republican*, 9 August 1849 ("Platte"); Sunder, *Fur Trade*, 120. The *Amelia* ascended the river late in the season after a fire destroyed the *Martha* in St. Louis. See Andrew Dawson to Christian Dawson, 24 July 1849, *Far-Off Wild Land*, 215. For the *El Paso*, see Sunder, *Fur Trade*, 127; Andrew Dawson to mother, 14 June 1850, in Wischmann and Dawson, *Far-Off Wild Land*, 229; *Daily Missouri Republican*, 23 September 1850.

Missouri. By January 1852, reportedly one-fourth of the combined Arikara, Mandan, and Hidatsa population had died of the disease.[97]

Following in the footsteps of Bernard Pratte Jr., steamboat captains continued to place profits ahead of safety. In 1856 smallpox broke out on the *Clara* at Jefferson City, Missouri. During the thousand-mile journey upriver to present-day North Dakota, the boat's captain, John S. Shaw, kept the sick passengers on board, and "immediately after the arrival of . . . the boat at the Yellow Stone river, the disease broke out" at Fort William, the post of the American Fur Company's "opposition," Harvey, Primeau and Company. By November, the epidemic had entered Fort Union. Thousands would eventually perish, including three hundred Assiniboines, "80 Lodges of Crees," and many of the Crows. The epidemic also struck the Arikaras and Mandans. The American Fur Company agent at Fort Union, James Kipp, called for the government to punish Harvey, Primeau and Company for deliberately introducing smallpox on the Upper Missouri.[98]

By repeatedly carrying disease upriver, steamboats destroyed the Native corridor, decimating Native populations and transforming a center of indigenous communication and exchange into a disease corridor and quarantine zone. Yet the Arikara and Hidatsa survivors clung to their ways of living and traveling within the Missouri valley. At their new Knife River villages, the Arikaras still produced two to three thousand bushels of corn annually and regularly welcomed Native trade partners. In 1853, an army officer noted that the Arikaras raised "a great amount of corn and pumpkins, which they exchange with the Crows and

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[97] Chittenden, *Life, Letters and Travels of Father Pierre-Jean De Smet*, 2:650 ("many"); Bradbury, "Affairs at Fort Benton," 265; "Cholera among the Indians," *Daily Missouri Republican*, 14 October 1851, p. 2; Andrew Dawson to brother, 22 January 1852, in Wischmann and Dawson, *Far-Off Wild Land*, 236; and Andrew Dawson to mother, 8 January 1852, in Wischmann and Dawson, *Far-Off Wild Land*, 234.

[98] James Kipp to Pierre Chouteau Jr., 29 January 1857, r. 34, pt. 1, PSLFT; Vaughn to Cumming, 25 December 1856, r. 885, microcopy 234, NA; Wood, *Fort Clark*, 202; and Sunder, *Fur Trade on the Upper Missouri*, 94 (for Fort William), 178–79.

Dacotahs for dried meat and robes." When they struggled to find enough bison, bands of Lakotas relied more heavily on Arikara corn and established temporary truces to conduct trade. American traders at Fort Clark also depended on Arikara corn supplies. According to the trader Edwin Denig, the Arikaras traded anywhere from five to eight hundred bushels of corn to residents in Fort Clark after a good harvest.[99]

Arikaras and Hidatsas also continued to travel on the river itself. In the mid 1850s, Denig reported how Arikara men and women led flotillas of "fifty, sixty or a hundred canoes" downriver after hunting expeditions. Other traders witnessed Hidatsas navigating the river. In mid-March 1854, traders who were heading downriver from Fort Union passed a "flotilla" of bullboats led by Hidatsas who were returning to Fort Berthold. At the post, Hidatsa women continued to ferry "hunters and horses" across the Missouri River in bullboats.[100]

In 1861 Yanktonai Sioux raids, the closure of Fort Clark, and heavy timber depletion forced the Arikaras to abandon the Knife River and move upriver to the locality of Like-a-Fishhook village, where the Hidatsas and surviving Mandans lived. The Hidatsa leader Four Bears and another emissary crossed the Missouri and asked the Arikaras to relocate next to Like-a-Fishhook, on the northeast side of the river. The Arikaras had already placed tribal bundles on the opposite bank, and they "refused, assigning as a reason that they, and their ancestors before them, had always lived on the west side of the great river, where they thought it more prudent to remain." The Arikaras would occupy this new west-bank

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[99] For the Arikara corn trade at Fort Clark on the Knife River, Wood, *Fort Clark*, 168, 179, 185 ("Dacotahs"), 194-95; Andrew Dawson to Grace Scott Dawson, 28 May 1848, *Far-Off Wild Land*, 186; Denig, *Five Indian Tribes*, 35, 45–47.

[100] Denig, *Five Indian Tribes*, 52 ("canoes"); Mark, "Autobiography of Louis D. Leteillier," 235-36 ("flotilla"); *Journal of Rudolph Friederich Kurz*, 74 ("hunters").

settlement, Star Village, for only a year—from the summer of 1861 to the summer of 1862—before Lakota attacks drove them across the Missouri to Like-a-Fishhook.[101]

After they had moved upriver to Like-a-Fishhook village, the Arikaras continued to use the river to conduct trade and enter Sioux territories. The French-American military officer Régis de Trobriand, who commanded the new post of Fort Stevenson next to the village between 1867 and 1869, recorded frequent traffic on the river. In late August 1867, a group of Arikaras and Hidatsas traveled downriver in bullboats to trade corn and other vegetables to the soldiers at Fort Stevenson. Trobriand remarked that the "principal use" of the bullboat is to "cross from one bank to the other of the river in front of Fort Berthold." Ignoring their long history as expert navigators, he stated that Arikara women "do all the work" of paddling for men, and "are charged with delivering their lord and master wherever he pleases to go."[102] Sarah Canfield gave a somewhat more generous portrait of bullboat use when she visited her husband at Fort Berthold in 1867. Writing in her journal on June 12, she remarked,

"Today I saw a curious object coming across the river which on coming near proved to be a bull boat. They are in constant [use] here and are made by stretching a buffalo skin over a willow frame that is shaped exactly like a farmers corn basket only a little more flat in the bottom. They are Sometimes made large enough to carry four or five persons.

"The motive power is a Squaw with a paddle. Capt O[sborne] told me that last year he wanted to send a wagon with a hay rack across the river where the soldiers were cutting hay for winter. He put a bullboat under each wheel a Squaw in each boat and they took it over all right—each Squaw bringing back her own boat."

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[101] Alfred W. Bowers, *Hidatsa Social and Ceremonial Organization* (Reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 40–41; Lewis H. Morgan, "The Stone and Bone Implements of the Arickarees," *21st Annual Report of the Regents of the University of the State of New York, on the Condition of the State Cabinet of Natural History* (Albany: Van Benthuysen Printing House, 1871), 30 ("refused"); Wood, *Fort Clark*, 205–6.

[102] *Army Life in Dakota: Selections from the Journal of Philippe Régis Denis de Keredern de Trobriand* (Chicago: Lakeside Press, 1941), 40 ("work").

Elsewhere Canfield expressed a wish to "teach them better ways of living." But her account of their navigation shows a limited amount of respect for their mobility and "motive power" on the river.[103] Arikara, Mandan, and Hidatsa women continued to navigate the Missouri in the early 1870s and conducted newly built bullboats loaded with dried bison meat downriver after hunting expeditions. They also continued to serve as essential diplomats, ferrying trade partners and visitors across the river. During the fall harvest of 1869, a Hunkpapa band camped across the river from Like-a-Fishhook village and spent "several days . . . going and coming from one bank of the river to the other in bullboats," traffic that Trobriand deemed "very active." After smoking the "pipe of peace," the Lakotas and the villagers traded corn and horses.[104]

Positioned above Sioux territories, Arikaras and Hidatsas also used the river to reach Sioux horse herds. In 1869, twelve warriors "of the Three Tribes" traveled downriver in four bullboats to steal horses from the Sioux. In late October, three Arikaras traveled downriver at night in bullboats to steal horses from the Sioux, who had recently seized Arikara horses. In early April 1869, seventeen Arikaras once again traveled downriver past Fort Stevenson in bullboats to steal Sioux horses.[105] In 1873 the infantry commander at Fort Stevenson complained that his small garrison could do little to monitor Arikara and Hidatsa war parties "either going up or going down the river." Two years later, the Arikara leader Sitting Bear led about thirty men downriver from Like-a-Fishhook village in bullboats on a war expedition against the Sioux. They traveled for nine nights, resting in concealment during the

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[103] Ray H. Mattison, "An Army Wife on the Upper Missouri: The Diary of Sarah E. Canfield, 1866–1868," *North Dakota History* 20, no. 4 (1953): 191–220, 205 ("living"), 206 ("motive power").
[104] Trobriand, *Army Life in Dakota*, 336–37 ("active").
[105] Trobriand, *Army Life in Dakota*, 45, 133, 361. See also excerpts of de Trobriand's journal in Ray Mattison, "Old Fort Stevenson—A Typical Missouri River Military Post," *North Dakota History* 18, no. 1 (1951): 65-67. For the early 1870s, see entries for 19 June 1871, 3 August 1871, Russell Reid, ed., "Diary of Ferdinand A. Van Ostrand," *North Dakota Historical Quarterly* 10, no. 1 (April 1944): 20, 27.

day, until they approached the mouth of the Grand River, where they attacked a small Sioux camp. Their long trip downriver brought them to one-time Arikara territories and to the villages where Grey Eyes led the attack on William Ashley. Ethnographic accounts of Hidatsa travel later reported that war parties frequently traveled downriver in bullboats to steal horses.[106]

But steamboats and the fur trade would gradually destroy the equipment of indigenous mobility in the Missouri Valley and the surrounding Plains. By 1830 bison robes were the principal article of exchange in the upper Missouri fur trade, and large numbers of robes traveled downriver in keelboats and steamboats. The number of bison robes reaching St. Louis every year jumped from 25,000 in 1825 to 100,000 by the 1840s. The Scotsman Andrew Dawson, who worked for the American Fur Company, estimated that fur traders and Indians had killed 270,000 bison in 1848 alone.[107]

Growing steamboat traffic on the Missouri River drove bison from the river valley. As early as 1823, the German traveler Paul Wilhelm von Wurttembürg testified that bison had "withdrawn" following the "march of so many Indians and whites along the banks of the river" during the Leavenworth expedition.[108] The rapid expansion of steamboat traffic on the upper Missouri River created even more disruption. In the 1830s, at least one steamboat ventured up the Missouri River every year to Fort Union. By the 1840s, two steamboats were reaching the post while hundreds of boats were plying the lower Missouri River. In 1857, 174 steamboats landed in the new settlement of Omaha. Heavy steamboat traffic spread to

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[106] J. P. Schindel to the asst. adjutant general, 1 June 1873, r. 294, microcopy 234, NARA (quotation); biographies of Red Star and Sitting Bear in Edward S. *North American Indian, vol. 5: The Mandan, The Arikara, The Atsina* (Boston: Blackwell, 1909), 180. In 1911 Gilbert L. Wilson's Hidatsa informant, Goodbird, told him that war parties "often" made such trips. See Gilbert L. Wilson, *The Horse and the Dog in Hidatsa Culture*, Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History 15, pt. 2 (New York: American Museum Press, 1924), 285n1.

[107] Wishart, *Fur Trade*, 33; Andrew Dawson to Eben Dawson, 10 June 1848, *This Far-Off Wild Land*, 190.

[108] See Wilhelm, Duke of Württemberg, *Travels in North America*, 362.

the upper Missouri River in 1862, following the discovery of gold in Montana. Steamboat traffic on the upper Missouri peaked in 1867, when seventy steamboats reached Fort Benton.[109]

By consuming timber, steamboats destroyed woodlands that bison had used for shelter during the winter. Steamboats killed bison as they were crossing the river and cornered them in the water to facilitate hunting. Even the sound of steamboats disrupted the natural environment. Animals fled the river valley at the approach of steamboats, which disturbed game—a complaint that Sioux leaders brought to American treaty commissioners in 1868.[110]

By the late 1830s, the bison population in the river valley had plummeted because of a number of different factors: competition for pasture with horses, drought, the introduction of bovine diseases, and the consumption of riparian woodlands by steamboats. Bison fled the Missouri River and pushed into the western Plains. In 1830 the Yanktonais reportedly killed fifteen hundred bison near Fort Pierre during a single hunting expedition; by the mid-1850s, bison had left the area, and the Yanktonais had to pursue them far to the north into Canada. In 1854 the trader Edwin Denig reported that bison had "abandoned" prairies east of the Missouri and the Yanktons also struggled to find bison west of the Missouri River in present-day Nebraska. The number of robes traded at Fort Pierre declined from 75,000 in 1849 to 19,000 in 1857 and fewer still by the mid 1860s.[111] In the early 1870s, growing markets for

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[109] Hunter, *Steamboats on the Western Rivers*, 33, 35; Chouteau Jr. to Laidlaw, 10 January 1840, r. 26, pt. 1, PSLFT.

[110] Gordon, "Steamboats," 41; Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 313; Witte and Gallagher, *North American Journals*, 2:96, 122; and *The Journal of Rudolph Friederich Kurz*, 65. For Sioux complaints about steamboats, see Vine Deloria Jr. and Raymond DeMallie, *Proceedings of the Great Peace Commission of 1867-1868* (Washington DC: Institute for the Development of Indian Law, 1975), 142–43.

[111] For bison depletion, see Fontenelle cite in Wishart, *Fur Trade*, 34, 50–53, 65–66; Wishart, *Unspeakable Sadness*, 42, 45–47; Andrew C. Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison: An Environmental History, 1750–1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 108–9, 112–13; Denig, Five Tribes, 30, 36; and Dan Flores,

gun and industrial belts encouraged white hunters to harvest the remaining bison in the western Plains. Armed with high-powered rifles, the hide hunters seized the remaining herds, which also suffered increasingly from disease and hunger. A decade later the animals were nearly exterminated.[112]

The consequences of this depletion emerged in 1875, when two Arikara leaders appealed to President Grant for their promised annuities. Directing their appeal through military officers at Fort Stevenson, they asked specifically to have cattle hides "be given direct to us as in the absence of Buffalo we need the skins very much for manufacturing boats and to use as moccasin soles." Lacking bison skins, these men requested the skins of cattle to build "cowboats," which were smaller than bullboats.[113]

When hide hunters destroyed the remaining herds, Plains Indians lost not only an essential source of essential source of food and shelter but also the material to build bullboats and, by extension, mobility on the river itself. Steamboats also consumed resources within the river corridor that fueled indigenous transportation and travel within the river watershed. By the 1860s, Missouri River steamboats were consuming, on average, twenty to thirty cords of wood every twenty-four hours.[114] Steamboat crews literally erased older lines of settlement in the Missouri valley by collecting wood from abandoned Arikara and Mandan villages.[115]

Indians sometimes profited by selling wood to passing steamboats. When he ascended the Missouri River in 1851 on the *St. Ange*, Pierre-Jean de Smet wrote that Arikara women

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"Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy Redux," in *The Natural West: Environmental History in the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 53–54, 65-68. For the dating of Denig's manuscript (1855–56), see Denig, *Five Tribes*, xxxiv.

[112] Isenberg, *Destruction of the Bison*, 130–142; Ostler, *Plains Sioux*, 57–58.

[113] White Shield and Son of the Star to Ulysses S. Grant, 16 May 1875, Fort Berthold Agency, r. 295, microcopy 234, NARA.

[114] Gordon, "Steamboats," 37; Fenn, *Heart of the World*, 298–99.

[115] For the destruction of Arikara villages, see entry for 18 June 1844, FWW, 96.

"had prepared a great quantity of dry wood" for the steamboat near the Big Bend of the Missouri. The crew paid the women in tobacco, lead, flour, coffee and sugar."[116] More often, however, white woodhawks seized timber without paying for it and depleting reserves that Indians used to feed horses.

By the 1860s, steamboat traffic was one of the principal complaints of Sioux leaders when they met with American officials. In March 1863, the agent for the upper Missouri, Samuel Latta, reported that the Sioux did not "concede the right to emigration to pass through their country, by river or overland," and that the previous August they had repeatedly fired at the steamer *Shreveport*. Minneconjou, Hunkpapa, and Sihasapa Lakotas fired at the *Shreveport* again outside of Fort Berthold in June 1863, when it traveled upriver with the *Robert Campbell*, and some of the Sioux attempted to board the boat when its crew was chopping wood and fired at the woodhawks. The governor of Dakota Territory, John Hutchinson, reported worriedly that the Indians were making the "Missouri river impassable, except by a large force." He stated, "This river has now become, on account of the new gold discoveries, a great thoroughfare, and it is highly important that it should be kept open." By the late 1860s, the Arikaras, Mandans, and Hidatsas at Like-a-Fishhook village were also complaining that woodhawks were selling their timber to steamboat crews.[117]

As environmental historian Greg Gordon concludes, steamboats directly threatened the survival of the Sioux by consuming cottonwood, which fed their horses during the winter. When Sioux leaders met with William Harney at Fort Rice in the summer of 1868, they

[116] Chittenden, *Life, Letters and Travels of Father Pierre-Jean De Smet*, 2:649. On the lower Missouri, métis and Indian women also profited by selling wood. Gordon, "Steamboats," 37.

[117] Samuel N. Latta to William P. Dole, 7 March 1863, in Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* (Washington DC: GPO, 1864), 167 ("pass through") [hereafter ARCIA]; Hutchinson to William P. Dole, 23 September 1863, ARCIA, 153, 155 ("impassable"). For the attacks in 1863, see Latta to Dole, 27 August 1863, ARCIA, 170–71; William P. Dole to Henry W. Reed, 16 August 1863, ARCIA, 172; Meyers, *Village Indians*, 111–12.

complained about the amount of steamboat traffic on the river and the intrusions of woodhawks. The Hunkpapa leader The Man that Goes in the Middle stated that peace would be assured only if the army removed military posts on the Missouri River and stopped steamboats from ascending the upper Missouri River. Another Hunkpapa representative, Magpie, declared unequivocally that the "steamboats must be stopped."[118] The so-called Woodhawk War culminated at the mouth of the Musselshell River in May 1869, when a Lakota war party group of woodhawks surrounded a Lakota party and killed thirteen of them.[119]

The completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 led to a precipitous drop in steamboat traffic on the upper Missouri River.[120] Yet steamboats had already depleted riparian woodlands and consumed the fuel of indigenous mobility in the Great Plains. They diverted the resources and power of the river corridor from Native peoples to Americans, who would exercise control of the Great Plains by navigating the Missouri River. The environmental destruction of the fur trade and its transportation technologies limited Native Americans' ability to establish and sustain travel and communication networks in the river corridor. By the 1860s, American officials were defining the upper Missouri River as a place of confinement, where they could imprison and monitor indigenous populations. But the Lakotas would reestablish their own territorial borders in the river watershed and regulate traffic across the Mni Sose.

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[118] Gordon, "Steamboats," 32–33; Deloria and DeMallie, *Proceedings of the Great Peace Commission*, 137, 141 (quotation).
[119] Gordon, "Steamboats," 43–44.
[120] Gordon, "Steamboats," 44.

5. Creating Boundary Lines: The Politics of River Crossings

In January 1844, the longtime Indian agent John Dougherty complained to Capt. Thomas Swords of the First Dragoons that the town of Weston, Missouri, was threatening to grow faster than the neighboring settlement of Iotan, where they were trying to sell plots of land. But Dougherty held out hope that the Missouri River "will play the Weston boys one of her usual tricks" and pass around "on the opposit [sic] side of the Island," where Weston settlers cut timber. If the main river channel separated Weston from the island, the island and its timber would formally belong to the Kickapoo Indians who were living on a reservation across the river.[1]

His hopes came true. In late March 1848, Lt. Col. C. Wharton of the First Dragoons wrote the adjutant general that after serving for "several years" on the frontier, he "had been frequently troubled by citizens of Missouri, and by Indians, as to their respective rights to use the islands in the Missouri." In the past few years, Wharton explained, the river's main channel had shifted sides of two different islands: it now separated the lands of the Stockbridge Indians from an island that had formerly belonged to them, and it placed the Weston island on the side of Kickapoo lands. The changing course of the Missouri, he concluded, made it "difficult to apply any of the rules of the Land of nations on the subject of water courses between states." Two years later, Kickapoo leaders petitioned a local judge to prevent citizens of Weston, Missouri, from cutting the timber on what was now their island

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[1] Dougherty to Swords, 16 January 1844, John Dougherty Papers, MHMLRC.

in the river. White squatters had built a houses and even a steam saw mill on the island, which held "valuable" timber at the edge of the treeless prairie.[2]

Other islands in the river channel invited jurisdictionary disputes. In 1874 a merchant named Charles Gage asked a congressional representative of Dakota Territory, M. K. Armstrong, whether "Cheyenne Island is considered Indian land or not." The agent at the Cheyenne agency prosecuted trespassers for cutting wood there. Refusing to believe that the island was "indian land," Gage stated, "if the indians have a reservation I think they should stay on it."[3]

American settlers and politicians expected the Missouri River to serve as a natural border between the expanding United States and Indian lands. Beginning in 1829, when the government established a Delaware Indian reservation at the Kansas-Missouri confluence, government agents enlisted the Missouri River as a border of Indian territories: Kickapoo and Delaware reservations in present-day Kansas; Potawatomi, Otoe, Missouria, Omaha, and Ponca reservations in present-day Iowa and Nebraska; Yankton, Lakota, and Dakota reservations in present-day South Dakota; and a Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara reservation, Fort Berthold, in present-day North Dakota. All of these except for Fort Berthold, which contains the river, were bordered by the Missouri. The river itself became the site of forced mobility and relocation: steamboats shipped thousands of Native Americans to reservations along the river.As historian Rebekah Mergenthal concludes, however, the Missouri River was an imperfect boundary line between states and Indian reservations, and Native

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[2] Wharton to Adj. Gen. B. Jones, 21 March 1848, r. 302, microcopy 234, NARA; Kickapoo Petition to Judge R. W. Wells, 8 December 1850, r. 303, microcopy 234, NARA.

[3] Gage to Armstrong, 5 December 1874, r. 253, microcopy 234, NARA.

Americans living on reservations continually tested the river border.[4] Although officials hoped the river would circumscribe the mobility of Indians living on reservations, Native peoples regularly crossed the river into state lands and profited by regulating white traffic across the river. Instead of prohibiting Native mobility, the river facilitated escape and evasion from white authority. Native Americans contested American definitions of the Missouri River as a border of Indian country by reaffirming claims on the opposite side of the river.

Overland pioneers deemed the Missouri River the boundary line between civil authority and Indian territory. As historian Michael L. Tate concludes, "For many pioneers, crossing the Missouri River was a profound event, almost comparable to a voyage across the Atlantic Ocean." The editor of the *Kanesville Foreign Guardian* warned emigrants headed for California that when they "cross the Missouri river at this point, you find yourselves in an Indian country."[5] In the late 1840s, most migrants crossed the Missouri at St. Joseph, Missouri, the hub of overland travel across the Plains. By the early 1850s, however, over half of all migrants, many of them from the Upper Midwest, were crossing the Missouri at Council Bluffs, which provided a convenient access point to the north bank of the Platte River. The Missouri crossing left a deep imprint in American culture, symbolizing a break from the past and turn toward unknown futures in the American West.[6]

By the late 1840s, the Platte River—for French Canadians, the dividing line between the lower and the upper Missouri River—was becoming a giant road across the Great Plains

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[4] Rebekah Mergenthal, "Border Lines: The People of the Lower Missouri River Valley," (Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2008), 215-17.

[5] Michael L. Tate, *Indians and Emigrants: Encounters on the Overland Trails* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 23; *Kanesville (IA) Frontier Guardian*, 16 May 1849.

[6] John Mack Faragher, *Women and Men on the Overland Trail* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 24–25, 27; and Richard E. Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri: Winter Quarters, 1846-1852* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 46–47, 65–66. For an early emigrant crossing at Council Bluffs, see *Daily Missouri Republican*, 30 May 1844, in *Nebraska State Historical Society Publications* 20 (1922): 126.

for emigrants. On a single day in late May 1849, over two thousand people traveled past Fort Kearny on the Platte River Trail.[7] This trail carried them through lands claimed by a number of different Indian nations: Otoes, Omahas, Pawnees, Cheyennes, and Lakotas, among others. In 1851 American officials sought to protect overland travelers by convening a conference at Fort Laramie. At the meeting, representatives from the Sioux, Cheyennes, Crows, Hidatsas, Mandans, and Arikaras recognized the right of the United States to construct roads and military posts in their lands. The superintendent of Indian affairs, D. D. Mitchell, also attempted to end intertribal conflict by delineating specific national boundaries. Foremost among these boundaries were the Platte and Missouri Rivers, which he defined as the borders of Indian territory in the northern Plains. According to the terms of the Fort Laramie of 1851, the Lakotas, Mandans, Hidatsas, Arikaras, and Assiniboines agreed to cede all lands east of the Missouri River.[8]

As historians have concluded, however, the Fort Laramie Treaty hardly gathered the support of all Lakotas. Most of the Lakota signatories were Brulés, who generally favored conciliation with the Americans. Many others, especially leading figures among Hunkpapas, Minneconjous, and Sihasapas, did not consent to the treaty. Lakotas remembered the gathering principally as the "Big Giveaway"—an effort by the American government to compensate them for losses sustained because of the Oregon Trail.[9] In the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, the government promised to deliver annually fifty thousands dollars worth of merchandise for fifty years to the participating nations: the Sioux, Cheyennes, Arapahoes,

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[7] See Faragher, *Women and Men on the Overland Trail*, *5*, 7–9; Tate, *Indians and Emigrants*, 121–43.
[8] Treaty of Fort Laramie, 17 September 1851, Charles J. Kappler, ed., *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties* (Washington: GPO, 1904), 2:594; Chittenden, *Life, Letters and Travels of Father Pierre-Jean De Smet*, 2:676; Catherine Price, *The Oglala People, 1841-1879* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 31–35.
[9] Ostler, *Plains Sioux*, 19, 37; Price, *Oglala People*, 29–33; Kingsley M. Bray, *Crazy Horse: A Lakota Life* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 19–21.

Crows, Assiniboines, and Arikaras. The Senate later reduced the term of the annuities to ten years.[10]

Traffic along the Platte River road remained a point of contention between the Lakotas and Americans. On 19 August 1854, Lt. John L. Grattan and twenty-nine soldiers approached a joint Brulé, Oglala, and Minneconjou encampment outside Fort Laramie to arrest a Minneconjou man who had allegedly killed a cow belonging to a Mormon emigrant. When the man refused to surrender, the soldiers opened fire in the camp. The Sioux returned the fire and ended up killing the entire group of soldiers.[11] A year later, Gen. William S. Harney led a retaliatory expedition up the Platte River to Ash Hollow in present-day Nebraska, where the troops massacred the camp of the Brulé leader Little Thunder. Harney invited Sioux leaders to meet at Fort Pierre, which the army had purchased from the American Fur Company. Traveling through late winter snowstorms, Lakotas reached the fort in late February 1856 and endured Harney's scorn during negotiations.[12]

A year later, in the Black Hills, Lakota leadership gathered in a council to decided how to manage the growing American threat. They acknowledged that the Fort Pierre treaty had granted whites the "privilege of traveling on the Platte and along the White River between Fort Pierrre and Fort Laramie, and to make roads there and to travel up and down the Missouri in boats." But they would punish uninvited whites who ventured west of the

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[10] See "Treaty of Fort Laramie with Sioux, etc.," 17 September 1851, in *Kappler's Indian Affairs*, 2:595; and D. D. Mitchell to Luke Lea, 3 August 1852, 28 September 1852, 26 March 1853, vol. 9, Letters Received by Central Superintendency, accessed on KansasMemory.org).

[11] See James Bordeaux to Whitfield, 29 August 1854, and Whitfield to Cumming, 2 October 1854, in ARCIA 1854, 93-94, 96-97; Ostler, *Plains Sioux*, 40; Bray, *Crazy Horse*, 30–31.

[12] For Ash Hollow and the conference at Fort Pierre, see Ostler, *Plains Sioux*, 41–42; George Rollie Adams, *General William S. Harney: Prince of Dragoons* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 129–33, 140–44. For the purchase and supply of Fort Pierre, see D. M. Frost to D. H. Vinton, 17 August 1855, Fort Pierre file, Consol, Corres., RG 92, NARA; Vinton to Thomas S. Jesup, 8 June and 4 August 1855; and enclosed articles of agreement between Wessells and Shaw, 3 July 1855, Fort Pierre file, Consol. Corres., RG 92, NARA. See also N. Lyon to Vinton, 31 July 1855, Fort Pierre file, Consol, Corres., RG 92, NARA. For requested intelligence about Indians, see Asst. Adj. Gen. O. H. Winship to Commanding Officer, 2nd Infantry, 5 June 1855, Fort Pierre file, Consol, Corres., RG 92, NARA.

Missouri River. They also agreed to expel any Yanktons who ceded their territories and tried to cross the Missouri. Witnessing the growing American activity in present-day South Dakota, Lakota bands that rejected American sovereignty increasingly abandoned the Missouri Valley and accused band leaders who accepted annuities along the river of being collaborators. When American miners began approaching the Black Hills, Lakotas prevented them from even crossing the river.[13]

Yanktons and Yanktonais who remained east of the river, however, found it harder to escape the grasp of the Americans. The Americans would go on to establish reservations along the Missouri River not only for eastern Sioux but also for the northern bands who led the Lakota resistence. By enlisting the river as a reservation border, American officials believed it would become a place where they could move but indigenous peoples could not.

Well before the pivotal Black Hills conference of 1857, American officials had been redefining the Missouri River as a border and place of confinement for Native peoples. The architect of this policy helped lead the first American expedition up the Missouri River. After returning St. Louis in 1806, William Clark became the head of Indian affairs west of the Mississippi River. He first enlisted the Missouri River as a detention site in 1808, when he was negotiating with the Osages to open traffic not only on the Missouri but also on the Arkansas River.[14]

In early August 1808, Capt. Eli Clemson led troops in six boats upriver to Fire Prairie to begin constructing the westernmost trade post in the U.S. factory system. Clemson named

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[13] Ostler, *Plains Sioux*, 42–43; Kingsley M. Bray, "Lone Horn's Peace: A New View of Sioux-Crow Relations, 1851-1858," *Nebraska History* 66 (1985): 28–47, 42–43; Doane Robinson, *A History of the Dakota or Sioux Indians*, South Dakota Historical Collections 2 (Aberdeen: South Dakota State Historical Society, 1904), 228 (quotation), 229.
[14] Jay H. Buckley, *William Clark: Indian Diplomat* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 66.

the post, which was initially called Fort Clark, Fort Osage "as a small mark of respect to the Osage Indians."[15] Clark, who was helping oversee construction of the new post, quickly dispatched the trader and interpreter Paul Loisel to the Osage towns to see "if they intend to come here to settle." He "recommend[ed] them very strongly to do so, and avoid the fatal consequence of refusing."[16]

Later that month, eighty Osage leaders traveled to the Fire Prairie to discuss a treaty with Clark. On 15 September, they signed the treaty, in which Clark promised that the fort would protect the Little and Big Osages, supply them year-round with merchandise in exchange for furs, and house a blacksmith for their use. Exaggerating claims of Osage "depredations" in the Missouri Country, Clark forced them to cede all land between the Arkansas and Missouri Rivers lying east of the new factory and grant American citizens the right to pass "free and unmolested" through the ceded lands. He also warned the Osages that those who did not relocate to the neighborhood of Fort Osage would "be considered enemies and would certainly be cut off." By the end of the month bands of Little Osages and Big Osages had relocated to the Fire Prairie, and the factory opened on October 1.[17]

When the Osages protested Clark's treaty, Pierre Chouteau ascended the river on a government boat in early November 1808 and devised a similar treaty "in great haste and made use of threats to make the Indians sign it." He listed Clemson and Lt. Louis Lorimier as signitaries even though they were not present at the conference. The second treaty promised annual annuities to the Little Osages and Big Osages in the amount of five hundred dollars

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15 Order given 9 October 1809, in Cantonment Bellefontaine Order Book, MHMLRC; Clark to Sibley, 19 August 1809, Sibley Papers, MHMLRC ("small mark").
16 Sibley Diary, 4 September 1808, MHMLRC.
17 For treaty negotiations, see Sibley Diary Vol. 2, 15 September, 22–24 September, 10 October 1808, Lindenwood College Collection, MHMLRC; and Buckley, *William Clark*, 76–78. For Clark's demand for relocation, see George Sibley to S. Sibley, 16 September 1808, Sibley Papers, MHMLRC (quote). See also Bates to John Bush Treat, October 1808, Bates Letterbook, MHMLRC.

and one thousand dollars, respectively, and Chouteau added land cessions north of the Missouri River.[18]

Yet the Americans failed to control how the Osages used the river and protect its uses as a road and boundary line. In March 1809, the Big Osages and Little Osages established two separate villages within two hundred yards of the garrison, right next to the river. In 1810 Clemson blamed the factor George Sibley and Dr. John Robinson, the medical supplier at Fort Osage, for encouraging the Little Osage to "stop boats by force," even though Governor Lewis had licensed the boats to trade on the Missouri above Fort Osage.[19] In a meeting with Sibley and Robinson, the Little Osage leader Big Soldier recalled that William Clark had guaranteed his people that "no traders" would "pass this place," and "that should these boats attempt to go past, he would place himself in the middle of the River and stop them." Robinson replied that he would enlist soldiers from the garrison if necessary to stop boats from proceeding to the Kansas and above.[20] Clark had promised the Little Osage leader complete control over Missouri River traffic and a trade monopoly.[21]

Following the War of 1812, the army introduced a regime of crime and punishment farther upriver, toward the mouth of the Platte. Members of the Yellowstone Expedition of 1819 established two new posts along the river where army officers imprisoned Indian offenders. In the fall of 1818, after they had built a post near the mouth of the Kansas River to support the planned Yellowstone Expedition, members of the First Battalion of the Rifle Regiment encountered a number of blockades by the Kanza Indians, who raided army boats,

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[18] 7 and 11 November 1808, (for treaty text) 9 March 1811, (for annuity distribution) 25–27 September 1811, Sibley Diary, Lindenwood College Collection, MHMLRC. For the failures of the treaty, see entries for 13 November 1808, and 9 March 1811, Sibley Diary, Lindenwood College Collection, MHMLRC.

[19] Clemson to Henry Dearborn, 11 December 1808, Clemson to Dearborn, 30 April 1809, r. 20, microcopy 221, NARA; Clemson to Eustis, 16 January 1811, r. 43, microcopy 221, NARA.

[20] Deposition of Paul Loisel, 16 July 1810, r. 35, microcopy 221, NARA.

[21] Howard to Bissell, 4 April 1813, TP 14:665; Chouteau to Eustis, 20 May 1813, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, 14:671; Drumm, *Luttig Journal*, 34 n. 19; Buckley, *William Clark*, 77.

seized cargos, and fired on boats they could not detain. Cap. Wyly Martin, who commanded the 2d Company of the First Battalion of the U.S. Rifle Regiment, responded by taking hostage a principal chief of the Kanza who happened to be present. In order to insure "the good conduct of the tribe," Martin placed the chief in irons and sent messengers to the Kanza village to demand the delivery of the perpetrators. On 21 November, a party of soldiers surprised and captured eight Kanza warriors. Two days later, the prisoners were arraigned before Captain Martin, who charged them with theft and assault.[22]

This Kanza leader identified the Missouri River as a place of confinement and imprisonment, where military officials could monitor and regulate the movement of Indians. Declaring that he and his people could not "confine ourselves to one solitary valley, to practice discipline and subordination to live in idleness and indolence," the chief affirmed that the Kanza Indians owned the surrounding country: "These woods and streams are ours; the beaver which inhabit this river and the Buffaloe which range in those forests are ours; their skins afford us clothing and shelter from the rude blasts of winter; their meat a luxurious subsistence." He offered to turn over the offenders. Punishing what he deemed piracy on the Missouri River, Martin responded by having five of the captured men "severely flagellat[ed]." Farther upriver, the new post of Cantonment Missouri at Council Bluffs also held Indian prisoners. In the spring of 1819, an officer at Cantonment Missouri "severely punished" five Otoes and Ioways whom he accused of robbing the canoe of the post quartermaster general. Between 1821 and 1826, army officers imprisoned Omaha and Otoe leaders with their families at Fort Atkinson at Council Bluffs. By 1827 Fort Leavenworth at

[22] Roger L. Nichols, ed., *The Missouri Expedition, 1818-1820: The Journal of Surgeon John Gale with Related Documents* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), 5, 33–35, 36 (quote), 37–39.

the mouth of the Kansas River was the center of army operations in the central Plains and also the main penitentiary for Indians in the lower Missouri valley.[23]

Yet Clark would soon try to relocate the Kanzas and Osages and reassign their lands to eastern Indian emigrants. In 1821 he became the superintendent of Indian affairs, and it fell to him to extract land cessions in the West. In December 1823, anticipating the removal of Indians from the eastern United States, he proposed that the government purchase lands on the Missouri River from the Osage and Kanzas to serve as homes for relocated Indians. He carried out this plan in the summer of 1825, when he met with Kanza and Osage representatives and wrested away most of their lands in present-day eastern Kansas.[24] In September 1829, the government removed Delaware Indians from Missouri and relocated them on Kanza territory: the mouth of the Kansas River, which marked the western border of the state of Missouri. In May 1830 Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, accelerating relocation westward into the Missouri Valley. Two years later, the Treaty of Castor Hill relocated two bands of Kickapoos from Missouri and Illinois to a tract of land west of the Missouri River, across from present-day St. Joseph, Missouri, also in former Kanza lands.[25]

Clark would also play a pivotal role in establishing the most volatile border along the Missouri River: the line separating present-day Iowa from Indian territory. In order to end ongoing warfare between the Dakota and Yankton Sioux, on one side, and the Ojibwas and

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[23] Nichols, *Missouri Expedition*, 39–40 (Kanzas), 54, 58 (Otoes). For a summary of these punishments by the army, see John Dougherty to Lewis Cass, 9 March 1832, p. 32–34, John Dougherty Papers, MHMLRC. The army continued imprisoning Indians on the Missouri River. See, for example, the imprisonment of two Otoe men described in R. Mason to Daniel Miller, 17 July 1843, Letters Sent by the First Dragoons, Entry 630, RG 391, NARA. One of two men escaped. See J. H. LaMotte to Asst. Adj. Gen. S. Cooper, 13 September 1843, Letters Sent by a Detachment of Dragoons, 1834-1837, Entry 630, RG 391, NARA.

[24] William Clark to John C. Calhoun, 8 December 1823, Photostat in Forsyth Papers, MHMLRC; Buckley, *William Clark*, 169–70.

[25] Wishart, *Unspeakable Sadness*, 59, 61; John P. Bowes, *Exiles and Pioneers: Eastern Indians in the Trans-Mississippi West* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 70–71; Arrel M. Gibson, *Kickapoos: Lord of the Middle Borders* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 109–10.

the Sauks and Foxes on the other, Clark invited representatives to Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin Territory, in 1825.[26] The resulting treaty focused on a stretch of contested territory between the upper Des Moines River and the Big Sioux River. It established the lands on the east side of the Missouri River, below the Big Sioux River, as Sauk, Fox, and Ioway lands. Yet Clark never received the permission of the Otoes, who did not send representatives to the conference. Acknowledging their absence, the treaty said vaguely that the Otoe claim "shall not be affected" by any agreements.[27]

Since the seventeenth century, Otoes had lived on both sides of the Missouri River—French travelers met them at wintering camps in the Mississippi Valley in the 1670s and 1680s—and they frequently visited river valleys in Iowa. Although Clark couched the land concession in terms that recognized Otoe claims, the treaty would deprive the Otoes of a crucial hunting ground. Between the Kansas River and Platte River, a stretch of the Missouri River that French Canadian fur traders had been visiting for a century, the Otoes increasingly struggled to find game and faced starvation. In 1829 the Indian agent for the Missouri River, John Dougherty, confirmed that the lands of the Otoes and Omahas around Council Bluffs were "entirely destitute of any thing like game." In early 1830, he stated that the Kansas, Ioways, Omahas, Otoes, and Yankton Sioux "from the diminution and scarcity of game in their country, starve almost half the year."[28] The land cession included a "buffer zone" that still contained game.

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[26] Patrick J. Jung, *The Black Hawk War of 1832* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), 47.

[27] "Treaty with the Sioux, etc., 1825," in *Kappler's Indian Affairs*, 2:251.

[28] John Dougherty to John H. Eaton, 23 June 1829, John Dougherty Letterbook, microfilm, State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia ("destitute") [hereafter SHSM]; Dougherty to T. L. McKinney, 30 January 1830, typescript in John Dougherty Papers, MHMLRC ("starve"). For game depletion as far north as the Omaha village, see Dougherty to William Clark, 28 June 1827, 20 August 1827, 27 September 1827, 30 September 1827, John Dougherty Letterbook, SHSM. For game depletion and starvation among the Poncas, Omahas, and Otoe-Missourias by the late 1820s and 1830s, see also Wishart, *Unspeakable Sadness*, 76–79.

Otoes expressed their disappointment with the treaty at a meeting with Dougherty in October 1828. Dougherty traveled upriver from Fort Leavenworth to Council Bluffs, where he met with the Sauk and Fox leader Keokuk and Otoe, Missouria, and Omaha representatives. Keokuk said that Clark had promised his people all the land east of the Missouri River between the Nodaway and Big Sioux Rivers in the Treaty of Prairie du Chien of 1825. He defended his right to kill any Otoes who crossed to the east bank of the river and trespassed on their claims. He told the Otoe leaders who were present to "keep your own side of the Missouri." The Otoes replied that the "bones of our fathers" were "buried on both sides of the Missouri, and we will cross and recross to visit them when we please, so long as the master of life gives us breath."[29]

Five years after the first treaty at Prairie du Chien, Clark convened another conference there in which he tried to settle the dispute over present-day Iowa. In the summer of 1830, Dougherty escorted Ioway, Sauk, Otoe, and Missouria delegates downriver to St. Louis and placed them on board a steamboat to travel upriver to Prairie du Chien. The Indian agent for the upper Missouri, Jonathan Bean, escorted Omaha delegates across the prairie to the conference. The delegates signed a "Treaty of Peace and Friendship" with the United States. In exchange for payments of a few thousand dollars each, the representatives ceded the lands contained within four boundaries: the northern Missouri state line, the Missouri River, the Big Sioux River, and the Missouri-Des Moines drainage divide. The commissioners allowed the Sauks and Foxes to remain temporarily near the mouth of the Little Platte River. Reporting the agreement to Secretary of War John Eaton, Clark expected the tract of "high Lands" along the drainage divide to serve as a future home for eastern

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[29] Dougherty to Clark, [no day] November 1828, John Dougherty Papers, SHSM. In November 1819, for example, ten lodges of Otoes crossed the Missouri at the Nishnabotna River. See Joseph Perkins to Manuel Lisa and Joshua Pilcher, 2 November 1819, Fur Trade Collection, MHMLRC.

Indians. The other lands would make a "fine farming and grazing country," he stated. The 1830 Treaty of Prairie du Chien established the Missouri River as the eastern border of Omaha, Otoe, and Missouria land. After reaching St. Louis, the delegates returned upriver on a steamboat.[30]

Although the Otoes and Missourias ceded claims to lands east of the Missouri, they retained hunting rights across the river. This concession would pose a problem for a new group of settlers in western Iowa Territory. In the late 1830s, the federal government decided to relocate Potawatomi Indians to present-day Iowa, on lands where the Otoes and Omahas hunted. Indian agents had expected the Platte Country, which sat north of the 1820 Missouri state line, to serve as a home for Potawatomis, some of whom relocated to the area after ceding their lands around Chicago in an 1833 treaty. But members of the Missouri House of Representatives lobbied to extend the boundaries of their state to include the Platte country, and push the western border to the Missouri River, which would provide a "visible boundary and natural barrier between our settlements and the bounds allotted to those restless and dangerous savages." The Missouri Senate eventually proposed making the river's main channel the border. Congress appropriated money to build an arsenal on the Missouri River and station an additional regiment of dragoons in the western part of the state to protect settlers. Lobbying for the expansion of the state of Missouri to include the Platte Country, in 1837 Missouri senators Thomas Hart Benton and Lewis F. Linn defeated opposition to adding land between the river and Missouri's western border to the state of Missouri, and President Martin Van Buren officially transferred the territory to the state of Missouri. The

[30] William Clark to John H. Eaton, 11 July 1830, r. 2, *Documents Relating to the Negotiation of Ratified and Unratified Treaties with Various Tribes of Indians, 1801-1869*, microcopy T-494, National Archives and Records Service ("Treaties"); Clark to Eaton, 16 July 1830, r. 2, microcopy T-494, NA; H. Jason Combs, "The Platte Purchase and Native American Removal," *Plains Anthropologist* 47, no. 182 (August 2002): 265–74, 267; Wishart, *Unspeakable Sadness*, 59–60.

government would relocate the 1600 Potawatomis living in the Platte Country yet again, this time to present-day western Iowa. In 1835 and again in 1836, Stephen Watts Kearney dispatched dragoons to drive Potawatomis to the Missouri River.[31]

The commander of the Western Department, Edmund Gaines, hired the steamboats *Howard* and *Kansas* to transport the Potawatomis from the Little Platte River in present-day northwest Missouri upriver to the newly established Council Bluffs Sub-Agency, which sat across from the Missouri-Platte confluence in present-day Iowa. In July 1837, close to two hundred Potawatomis traveled upriver to Council Bluffs in the steamboats *Howard* and *Kansas*, while those who could travel overland—over twelve hundred Potawatomis—accompanied a detachment from Fort Leavenworth led by Col. Henry Atkinson.[32] This relocation was the perhaps the first of many large-scale removals on the Missouri River. In early December 1837, after it had carried smallpox up the Missouri River to the Arikara, Mandan, and Hidatsa villages, the steamboat *St. Peter's* transported 72 Delawares from St. Louis to the mouth of the Kansas River, near their reservation.[33] As steamboats grew in size, so too did the number of Indian prisoners on board. In May 1863, following the Dakota War of 1862, the steamer *Florence* carried 1,400 Dakotas and Yanktons to Yankton, South Dakota Territory. A month later, the *West Wind* relocated 800 Dakota prisoners to Yankton.[34]

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[31] 1832 House Journal, First Session, Missouri General Assembly, p. 119 ("General Assembly), 1834 Senate Journal, Missouri General Assembly, p. 63, 64 ("main channel), 1836 House Journal, First Sessions, Missouri General Assembly, p. 41, accessed online at cdm.sos.mo.gov; Stephen Aron, *American Confluence: The Missouri Frontier from Borderland to Border State* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 230–33; R. David Edmunds, "Potawatomis in the Platte Country: An Indian Removal Incomplete," *Missouri Historical Review* 68, no. 4 (1974): 376-77, 384; Combs, "Platte Purchase," 269-70; Stephen Watts Kearny to J. B. Browne, 8 March 1835, Letters Sent by a Detachment of Dragoons, August 1834-June 1837, Entry 630, RG 391, NARA; Kearny to R. Thompson, 22 July 1836, and Kearny to E. G. March, 26 January 1837, Letters Sent by the Headquarters of the First Dragoons, vol. 1, Entry 612, RG 391, NARA.

[32] Edmunds, "Potawatomis in the Platte Country" 387, 389-91; Edwin James, report, in ARCIA, 1837, 28.

[33] See "Abstract of Requisitions" for 1837, Superintendency of Indian affairs, 31 December 1837, r. 751, microcopy 234, NA.

[34] William E. Lass, *A History of Steamboating on the Upper Missouri River* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1962), 25.

In the summer of 1881, one steamer carried close to 1200 Lakotas, including the leaders Gall, Black Moon, and Fools Heart, downriver to Fort Yates, the agency headquarters for the Standing Rock Reservation. A few weeks later, five steamboats carried 1700 Lakotas down the Missouri River to the post.[35] Indian removal transformed the Missouri River into a site of forced relocation.

In 1836 the Indian agent at Bellevue, below the mouth of the Platte River, struck a second treaty with parties of the 1830 Treaty of Prairie du Chien in which they forfeited any claims to the Platte Country—the lands along the Little Platte River in present-day northwest Missouri.[36] The United Bands of Odawa, Ojibwa, and Potawatomi, who were mostly Potawatomis, would establish six villages in western Iowa.[37] The arrival of the Potawatomis in Iowa displeased the Otoes and Omahas, who protested the cession of lands east of the Missouri River under the Treaty of Prairie du Chien. They asserted that they had never fully ceded these lands, and only agreed to share them with the other parties to the treaty—the Ioways, Sauks, and Foxes, and Sioux, not the Potawatomis. They agreed to the treaty with the understanding that the United States would serve as a peacekeeper and define borders between Indian nations. The Indian agent at Council Bluffs, Dougherty, admitted that the annuities promised in the treaty—five thousand dollars annually for ten years—could not begin to compensate the Otoes and Omahas for the extensive tract of country in Iowa, which held their only remaining hunting ground. The Otoes and Omahas, he said, had "always held

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[35] Robert W. Larson, *Gall: Lakota War Chief* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), 173; Ostler, *Plains Sioux*, 195.
[36] "Treaty with the Oto, Etc., 1836," *Kappler's Indian Affairs*, 2:479.
[37] James to Dodge, 29 November 1837, r. 215, microcopy 234, NARA.

+ been in undisputed possession of Country on the Missouri, between the Nodaway + Big Sioux Rivers" in present-day Iowa.[38]

The Otoes asserted their hunting rights in Iowa by crossing the Missouri River. In September 1837, the head of the Potawatomi agency, Edwin James, met with Otoe and Missouria leaders who were "resident west of the Missouri River," who informed him that they had "never ceded the right to hunt on the lands" given to the Potawatomis. In November 1837, James informed William Clark that a group of six to eight Otoes had crossed the Missouri into Potawatomi hunting grounds "though advised . . . not to do so." The Otoes claimed that they retained rights to hunt on Potawatomi lands under the Treaty of Prairie du Chien of 1830.[39]

When they met Kearny later that winter, leaders of the Potawatomis complained that the Otoes were crossing the river and entering their lands, stealing stock and horses. They attributed the recent thefts to the smallpox epidemic of 1837, which had struck the Otoes. They petitioned the government to build a post to keep the Otoes on "their side of the river."[40] Over a year later, however, in October 1839, small parties of Otoes and Missourias were still crossing the river to hunt on land reserved for the Potawatomis, who once again protested the intrusion. As conditions in Nebraska deteriorated, Otoes repeatedly ventured across the river to steal horses and hunt in Iowa, especially in the winter when the river

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[38] Dougherty to Harris, 6 December 1837, r. 215, microcopy 234, NARA.
[39] James to Clark, 25 September 1837, r. 751, microcopy 234, NARA; James to Clark, 5 November 1837, r. 215, microcopy 234, NARA; Kearny to Brig. Gen. Henry Atkinson, Letters Sent by the Headquarters of the First Dragoons, vol. 1, Entry 612, RG 381, NARA.
[40] Potawatomi chiefs, memorial, 5 February 1838, r. 215, microcopy 234, NARA.

channel was frozen. They continued to assert centuries-old claims on the east side of the Missouri River.[41]

The federal government would force the Potawatomi people to relocate once again—this time to Kansas. Above the Missouri state line, the river served as the western boundary of Michigan Territory from 1834 to 1836 and, following the admission of Michigan as a state, for Wisconsin Territory from 1836 to 1838. In June 1838, the stretch of the Missouri River from the Missouri state line to the river's northern limit near Canada became the western border of Iowa Territory.[42] Potawatomis were living within the bounds of Iowa Territory and the future state of Iowa. As early as 1840, six years before Iowa became a state, the military was warning the Potawatomis about a potential move to Kansas. When Stephen Watts Kearny visited Bellevue in the fall of 1840, they expressed their reluctance to leave Iowa for Kansas. In 1842 the superintendent of Indian affairs was already anticipating Iowa statehood and the removal of the Potawatomis from Council Bluffs to the other side of the Missouri.[43]

Because it granted more latitude to create additional states in the West, Ohio congressmen favored a western boundary for Iowa at the head of the Des Moines and Iowa Rivers. Territorial officials and residents, however, preferred the Missouri River as the western boundary in order to promote commerce and traffic on the river. The House Committee on Territories extended the western boundary of Iowa to the "middle of the main

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[41] Joseph V. Hamilton to Joshua Pilcher, 18 October 1839, r. 751, microcopy 234, NARA; D. D. Mitchell to J. Hartley Crawford, 29 September 1843, r. 752, microcopy 234, NARA; and Richard D. Elliot to Thomas H. Harvey, 18 March 1844, r. 216, microcopy 234, NARA.

[42] Benjamin F. Shambaugh, "Maps Illustrative of the Boundary History of Iowa," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* 3 (July 1904), 370–72; Derek R. Everett, *Creating the American West: Boundaries and Borderlands* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014), 193–94.

[43] Kearny to Atkinson, 16 October 1840; and "Speech made by Chiefs of the Pottawattomy Nation," 6 October 1840, r. 752, microcopy 234, NA; D. D. Mitchell to T. Hartley Crawford, 12 September 1842, r. 752, microcopy 234, NARA.

channel of the Missouri River." The second constitutional convention of Iowa approved the new boundary line, and Iowa entered the Union as a state in late December 1846.[44]

In 1847 the government relocated the Potawatomis to Kansas Territory. Deeming it "very important" to see the Potawatomis cross the Missouri, Superintendent of Indian Affairs Harvey offered to conduct them across the river himself. By mid October, most of the Potawatomis had crossed the river "at different points."[45] Following the expulsion of the Potawatomis, settlers "rapidly" filled the lands along the east bank of the Missouri River as far north as the Little Sioux River.[46]

White emigrants invaded Indian lands and crossed illegally into reservations. Following the Kansas-Nebraska Act, settlers streamed across the Missouri into Omaha, Otoe, and Missouria lands in Nebraska.[47] Military officials and Indian agents defined the Missouri River as the eastern border of Indian country and periodically attempted to prevent white settlers from taking reservation lands. In September 1836, Stephen Kearny ordered a lieutenant in the First Dragoons to expel intruders who had settled "on the other side of the Missouri River" from Clay and Clinton Counties in the state of Missouri.[48]

The operation of ferries between states and Indian country became a particularly contentious issue for settlers, emigrants, and traders. People who operated ferries across from reservations on the Missouri River led travelers across federal and indigenous borders. In

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[44] Dorothy Schwieder, *Iowa: The Middle Land* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996), 33; Shambaugh, "Maps Illustrative of the Boundary History of Iowa," 373-74, 375 (quote). For Nicollet's proposed boundaries, see Joseph N. Nicollet, *Report Intended to Illustrate a Map of the Hydrographical Basin of the Upper Mississippi River* (Washington: Blair and Rives, 1843), 257.
[45] Harvey to Wedell, 5 October 1847 and 11 October 1847, r. 217, microcopy 234, NARA; and Harvey to Medill, 13 October 1847, r. 754, microcopy 234, NARA.
[46] Harvey to Medill, 28 March 1848, r. 755, microcopy 234, NARA.
[47] George Manypenny to Robert McClelland, 1 March 1854, r. 218, microcopy 234, NARA; and Hepner to Cumming, 12 November 1854, r. 218, microcopy 234, NARA; Wishart, *Unspeakable Sadness*, 102, 117–18; C. A. Weslager, *The Delaware Indians: A History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1972), 401–4.
[48] Kearny to E. Steen, 11 September 1836, Letters Sent by the Headquarters of the First Dragoons, vol. 1, Entry 612, RG 391, NARA.

order to operate ferries that landed in Indian territory, outsiders had to secure permission from Indian agents to build docks on the west bank of the river as well as licenses from officials on the east bank. As early as 1828, William Clark authorized two Americans to build a ferry landing at Fort Leavenworth and the new Delaware reservation. In 1839 Platte and Buchanan Counties in Missouri granted Isaac McEllis and Julius C. Robidoux, respectively, licenses to operate ferries on the east bank of the Missouri River. The boats would land on the Kickapoo reservation.[49]

Indians themselves sometimes profited from the enormous emigrant traffic across the Missouri River and its tributaries. They operated ferries mostly on tributaries and small streams west of the Missouri River, especially the Kansas River. Kanza Indians ran ferries across the Kansas River and directed emigrants to crossing points, and Omaha Indians charged tolls to cross creeks near the Missouri River. When two Americans asked the Indian Department to approve their operation of a ferry over the Elkhorn River, thirty miles west of the Missouri, they stressed that they had consulted and received the permission of the Omahas and Otoes, whom they would pay a fee in powder, lead, and other goods.[50] The Wyandots were perhaps the only Indian nation to operate a ferry on the Missouri itself. By the late 1840s, they were electing a "national ferryman" to run a ferry at the Kansas-Missouri confluence for one hundred dollars per year. The ferrymen charged different rates based on the height of the river.[51]

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[49] Dougherty to Clark, 26 February 1828, John Dougherty Letterbook, SHSM; entry for 11 March 1839, in William McClung Paxton, *Annals of Platte County, Missouri* (Kansas City, Missouri: Hudson-Kimberly, 1897), 26; and *History of Buchanan County* (St. Joseph, Missouri: Union Historical Company, 1881), 167.
[50] Tate, *Indians and Emigrants*, 27-33. For the Elkhorn petition, see William Martin and J. Gengry (?) to J. E. Barrow, 4 December 1849, and J. E. Barrow to D. D. Mitchill, 3 January 1850, r. 217, microcopy 234, NARA.
[51] Bowes, *Exiles and Pioneers*, 112 ("national").

Farther upriver, along Otoe and Omaha lands, however, a fur trader named Peter Sarpy nearly monopolized the ferry business. Sarpy came from an old French fur trading dynasty based out of New Orleans. He was married to an Ioway woman, who may have helped him gain access to Otoe communities. Before operating the boats, he ran the Bellevue post of Chouteau, Pratte, and Company. As a licensed trader, Sarpy could legally enter Otoe and Omaha lands across the Missouri. He capitalized on this access by operating a number of different ferries across the river.[52] In early 1846 thousands of Mormon emigrants ventured west across Iowa and camped north of Sarpy's fur trade post. Mormon leaders negotiated with Sarpy to use his ferry on the river. The Mormons also crossed the Missouri by constructing their own ferry, which they had to operate day and night to transport everyone across the river.[53]

Sarpy belonged to the last generation in a long line of French fur traders on the Missouri River, and he was probably familiar with Plains Indian protocols for border crossing and trade, such as gift giving and ritual adoption. Most of the new American emigrants were not, however, and they were mainly interested in expanding the number of ferry crossings on the river. Emigrants complained about the limited number of ferries operating on the river and fought one another to board the boats.[54] Officials in the Indian Bureau juggled the demands of emigrants and licensed traders. In 1850 someone—perhaps Sarpy himself—petitioned the superintendent of Indian affairs to allow only one ferry to

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[52] See, for example, trade licenses to Sarpy dated 13 June 1848 and 9 August 1849, r. 217, microcopy 234, NARA. For companies receiving ferry licenses, see *Kanesville (IA) Frontier Guardian*, 7 March 1851 (Wheeling, Clark, and Co. at Traders' Point and across the Loup River). For Sarpy, see John E. Wickman, "Peter A. Sarpy," in *French Fur Traders and Voyageurs in the American West: Twenty-Five Biographical Sketches*, ed. LeRoy R. Hafen (Spokane, Washington: Arthur H. Clark, 1995), 290.
[53] For Sarpy's encounters with Mormons, see Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 46–47, 65–66.
[54] "Diary of E. W. Conyers, a Pioneer of 1852," *Transactions of the Oregon Pioneer Association* 33 (1905): 430-32; and John T. Kerns, "Journal of Crossing the Plains to Oregon in 1852," *Transactions of the Oregon Pioneer Association* 42, 157.

operate between Iowa and Indian Territory, supposedly so Indian agents could more easily monitor who was trading with the Otoes and Omahas. The editor of the *Kanesville Guardian* complained that the proposed restrictions on the number of ferries violated "free-trade and sailor's rights." Three ferries ended up running that summer: one twelve miles above Council Bluffs at the Mormon crossing, another at Council Bluffs, and a third at the mouth of the Platte.[55]

Sarpy's competitors believed he and other licensed Indian traders received an unfair advantage because they could build ferry landings on Indian lands. In 1854 the owners of the Council Bluffs and Nebraska Ferry Company complained that Sarpy, who had become new subagent at the Council Bluffs Indian Agency, had a monopoly on ferry transportation across the Missouri River. They believed he wanted to "keep exclusive control of the Indian country if he could," and would "incite the Indians to destroy our [illegible] unless we had permission from the headquarters." They petitioned George Manypenny, the commissioner of Indian Affairs, for licenses to build a "ferry house" and stock pens across the river from Council Bluffs, on the Nebraska side of the river, to assist overland migration to the Pacific.[56] Facing down these challenges, Sarpy retained his ferry business between Iowa and Council Bluffs and began hauling passengers in a steam ferry in the spring of 1855.[57]

Most of the new reservations along the Missouri River acquired official ferry and steamboat landings. In 1858 the steamer *Omaha* landed at the Omaha Reservation's landing, which was near a mission house and post office. A group of Omahas and a missionary

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[55] *Kanesville (IA) Frontier Guardian*, 20 February 1850, 3 April 1850.
[56] Mitchell, Pegram, and Co. to Manypenny, 1 February 1854, r. 218, microcopy 234, NA; Essoe Lowe to B. Horn, 5 January 1854, reel 218, microcopy 234, NA; and A. Dodge to Manypenny, 24 January 1854, r. 218, microcopy 234, NA.
[57] *History of Mills County, Iowa* (Des Moines: Iowa State Historical Company, 1881), 430–31; newspaper abstracts in *Nebraska State Historical Society Publications* 20 (1922): 255.

welcomed the steamboat passengers. In 1869 the Board of County Commissioners in Yankton, South Dakota, accepted bids for "Ferry Franchises" to operate on the Missouri at Yankton and St. Helena, Nebraska. In 1872 a ferry operated between Springfield, South Dakota, and the Santee Reservation in present-day Nebraska. Travelers who wanted to reach the Yankton Reservation from Nebraska often crossed on the Springfield ferry and then traveled overland to the west.[58] One of the few exceptions was the Fort Berthold Agency. Its agent asked the commissioner of Indian affairs for authorization to purchase a skiff to cross the Missouri River. He complained, "Hitherto the only means of getting across the river has been by Indian 'Bull boats,' which are unsafe, and practically almost useless for this purpose."[59]

Although Indian agents granted licenses for landings on some reservations, many other ferries operated illegally across the river. This traffic created problems for the military and the Indian Bureau because it violated two different regulations in "Indian territory": the prohibition of liquor and the ban on unlicensed Americans. In 1832 and 1832, Congress passed two different acts prohibiting the importation of liquor into the Indian country, the second even stronger than the first. According to the Intercourse Law of 1834, government agents could fine anyone who carried alcohol into Indian country and inspect boat cargos and destroy any alcohol on board. The act defined western "Indian country" as any land west of the Mississippi that did not fall into the states of Missouri and Louisiana or Arkansas

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[58] Diary of J. W. Lewis Kepton, 1858, HR-76, SC 17, IHRSP; *Yankton Press and Dakotan*, 9 December 1869; *Dakota Republican*, 1 February 1872.
[59] L. B. Sperry to the commissioner of Indian affairs, 15 May 1875, r. 295, microcopy 234, NARA.

territory. The law also prevented unauthorized American citizens from entering Indian country.[60]

Yet military and Indian agents struggled to regulate river traffic between reservations and white settlements. Instead of restricting movement to and from Indian territory, the river became a site of illegal traffic. The boundaries of Indian country, including the Missouri River, became profit centers for liquor dealers. As Commissioner of Indians Affairs George W. Manypenny concluded in 1853, the problem was not liquor traffic within Indian land but "along its borders, where there is no law, and no power on the part of the general government to restrain it.'"[61] Between 1830 and 1860, whiskey dealers established themselves next to all the Indian reservations along the Missouri River.

In October 1827, the Indian agent John Dougherty reported that Frenchmen who lived in the state of Missouri were selling liquor to Kanzas who were camped at the mouth of the Kansas River.[62] Only in the late 1840s did Missouri county officials and Indian agents begin to regulate ferries moving from states to Indian country. As late as 1848, Lt. Col. Wharton admitted that ferries had operated freely on the river for the past few years and wondered whether Missouri citizens "had the right, or not" to land ferries in the "Indian country." Several people operated ferries that landed on Wyandot, Delaware, and Kickapoo lands in eastern Kansas, including a woman who for a number of years ran a ferry between Missouri and Fort Leavenworth. In 1848 she abandoned the ferry when the county court denied her license request.[63]

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[60] For an insightful analysis of the prohibition laws, see Jill E. Martin, "'The Greatest Evil': Interpretations of Indian Prohibition Laws, 1832-1953," *Great Plains Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (winter 2003): 35–53, 38–39.
[61] Qtd. in Martin, "'The Greatest Evil,'" 40.
[62] John Dougherty to William Clark, 12 October 1827, John Dougherty Letterbook, microfilm, SHSM
[63] Wharton to Adj. Gen. B. Jones, 21 March 1848, r. 302, microcopy 234, NARA.

Ferries also operated illegally farther upriver, in Otoe, Omaha, and Sioux lands. In 1850 superintendent of Indian affairs John Haverty noted with concern that "some of the ferries already established" on the Missouri are "operating greatly to the prejudice of the Indians." In February of that year, the Indian agent at Council Bluffs reported that "two notorious whiskey dealers" were hoping to operate a ferry in the spring, and that the Mormons were hoping to land their ferry four miles below the Platte, at the Otoe villages.[64] In 1851 the Indian agent John E. Barrow reported that white whiskey dealers were living along the Missouri and continually trading liquor to the Omahas and Otoes. As he concluded, whiskey smugglers took advantage of the flimsy jurisprudence in Indian country, "where the law is so ignorantly, and some times so faithlessly, administered."[65] In March 1861, the Indian agent at the Yankton reservation complained that a liquor dealer named Smith had "established himself . . . on the opposite bank of the Missouri River and <u>in</u> <u>sight</u> <u>of</u> <u>my</u> <u>Agency</u> <u>buildings</u>." He was sending liquor into the reservation from across the river and along Chouteau Creek, a half mile outside the reservation. In the late 1860s, a ferry landing and "whiskey-shop of the worst class" sat across from the Upper Brulé Agency at Whetstone. The Brulé leader Spotted Tail tried to prevent his people from approaching the river to try to discourage the traffic.[66] Other ferries landed just outside reservations, allowing their owners

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[64] John Haverty to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Orlando Brown, 20 February 1850, r. 217, microcopy 234, NA; and J. E. Barrow to D. D. Mitchill, 1 February 1850, r. 217, microcopy 234, NARA.

[65] For Council Bluffs in 1851, see John E. Barrow to D. D. Mitchell, 1 October 1851, ARCIA ("administered"). See also Aron, *American Confluence*, 232. Ewing reported that the Ioways and Sauks were "constantly across among the whites" in the Platte Purchase. See George W. Ewing to James Madison Porter, 7 February 1844, r. 753, microcopy 234, NARA. Squatters in Indian country also supplied liquor to soldiers at Fort Leavenworth. See Kearney to Reuben Jones, 8 October 1841, Letters Sent by the Headquarters of the First Dragoons, vol. 1A, Entry 612, RG 391, NARA.

[66] Redfield to unknown, 7 March 1861, Yankton Agency, r. 959, microcopy 234, NARA ("established"). For the Whetstone ferry, see "McKay's Ranch (opposite Whetstone), June 12," *A Month Among the Indian Missions and Agencies on the Missouri River, and in Minnesota and Wisconsin* (New York: American Church Press Company, 1872), n.p. ("whiskey-shop"); Ernest L. Schusky, *The Forgotten Sioux: An Ethnohistory of the Lower Brulé Reservation* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1975), 72. For Fort Randall, see Jerome A. Greene, *Fort Randall on the Missouri, 1856-1892* (Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2005), 120.

to circumvent federal authority. In 1855 the Nebraska Territorial House of Representatives authorized Sarpy and three other associates to established the Decatur Town and Ferry Company "at the south line of the Omaha Indian Reservation."[67]

Yet Omahas and Otoes continued to cross the river themselves, without the help of ferry operators. Game depletion and the loss of crops forced Otoes, Missourias, and Omahas to cross to the east bank of the Missouri, especially in the winter. In March 1849 the editors of the *Kanesville (IA) Frontier Guardian* complained that parties of starving Omahas and Otoes had stolen livestock and produce throughout the previous winter, when the ice "afforded them a very convenient bridge to cross the river." The editors concluded, "Suffer not the Indians to roam on this side of the river. If they attempt it, apply the hickory to them." Settlers continued to complain of horse thefts and killed Indians on the other side of the river.[68]

The following winter, Omaha and Otoe hunting parties crossed the river again and allegedly stole horses and killed an "immense quantity of game." The complaints of the newspaper editor suggest that the Omahas and Otoes considered the animals payment for the Mormons living on Indian land at Winter Quarters. He concluded, "These red men should be taught to stay on their own side."[69] In October 1850 they apparently seized and destroyed crops around Kanesville, and toward the end of the month a large party of Omahas crossed the river at night and allegedly set fire to the prairie surrounding the town. Reiterating his complaint that he did not want Indians on "this side of the river," the editor of the *Frontier*

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[67] *History of Monona County, Iowa* (Chicago: National Publishing Co., 1890), 166; and *Laws, Joint Resolutions, and Memorials, passed at the Second Session of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Nebraska* (Omaha City, Nebraska Territory: Hadley D. Johnson, 1856), 191.
[68] *Kanesville (IA) Frontier Guardian*, 21 March 1849 (quote), 30 May 1849, 26 June 1850; and Mergenthal, "Border Lines," 216.
[69] *Kanesville (IA) Frontier Guardian*, 6 February 1850.

Guardian wished the army would station a detachment of dragoons at Council Bluffs. He dismissed concerns that liquor traders drew the Omahas and Otoes across the Missouri.[70] In 1851 settlers in Pottawatamie County formed a vigilante committee to watch the river and prevent Indians from crossing it. The members agreed that any Indians who stole property would be tried under the laws of the state of Iowa.[71] Leaving Indian territory, Omahas crossed the Missouri to trade in Council Bluffs, where traders provided them credits and liquor. Crimes against Omahas who crossed the river went unpunished. After emigrants killed two Omaha men outside Council Bluffs, the Indian agent, James Gatewood, failed to convince the circuit judge, sheriff, or U.S. deputy marshal to prosecute the murders.[72] Omahas and Otoes continued to cross the river to steal food and livestock from settlements in Harrison County, Iowa, and Sioux and Omaha war parties both crossed the river and traveled by white settlements to strike each other.[73] As one early settler recalled, the Omaha Indians "were over frequently. We heard their guns; saw their signs & saw them often. They would come about the houses but not in them."[74]

Facing starvation, the Nebraska Indians had little choice but to sell their lands for payment.[75] In March 1854, the Otoes, Missourias, and Omahas ceded their lands bordering the Missouri River, shortly before the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. After receiving a reserve along the Boyer River, the Indian agent, George Hepner, requested that they move to the Blackbird Hills along the Missouri River, which he deemed a more suitable location

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[70] John Gooch Jr. to A. H. H. Stewart, 21 October 1850; Jonathan Sutherland to Luke Lea, 22 May 1851, r. 217, microcopy 234, NA; and *Kanesville (IA) Frontier Guardian*, 30 October 1850 and 21 February 1851.
[71] *Kanesville (IA) Frontier Guardian*, 21 March 1851.
[72] Gatewood to Manypenny, 19 May 1854, r. 218, microcopy 234, NARA.
[73] For alleged thefts of crops and livestock, see Citizens of Harrison County to Pres. Franklin Pierce, 1 January 1854, r. 218, microcopy 234, NARA; and affidavits dated January to March 1851, r. 218, microcopy 234, NARA. For Sioux-Omaha conflict across the river, see M. Tronsley to [Manypenny], 3 February 1854, r. 218, microcopy 234, NA.
[74] Examination of J. B. Gard, 5 October 1858, r. 604, microcopy 234, NARA.
[75] Wishart, *Unspeakable Sadness*, 102–3.

because of its timber and farmland. Over the protests of speculators, the Omahas received a small reservation in an old home, the Blackbird Hills.[76]

Once again, however, Otoes and Omahas continued to exercise rights of passage across the river border. Farmers in Monoma County, Iowa, directly across the Missouri from the Omaha reservation, blamed Omahas whenever their cattle disappeared. In December 1858, a farmer named Michel Cayon accused three Omahas of crossing the river at night to the "Iowa side" and stealing his pigs. Although no one saw any Indians steal the pigs, one witness testified that the Omahas "very frequently cross the Missouri" to Cayon's farm, which sat across from the reservation. He petitioned the Omaha Indian agent, William J. Wilson, for payment of ten dollars out of the Omaha annuity.[77]

More often, however, outsiders were crossing the river to enter Omaha lands. Between the 1840s and early 1860s, the Sioux continued to cross the Missouri to attack the Omahas, Otoes, Missourias, and Pawnees. In 1865 the agent at the Omaha reservation, R. W. Furnas, reported that the Sioux had raided their livestock since they had moved to the reservation.[78] Other outsiders would arrive in much larger numbers.

Following the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862, the U.S. army removed Dakotas and Winnebagos to two adjacent reservations along the upper Missouri River. In the spring of 1863, the head of the Northern Superintendency, Clark W. Thompson, ascended the Missouri on the steamboat *Isabella* to select land for the Dakota and Winnebago reservations. After a slow trip upriver, he surveyed the land above Fort Randall and picked a timbered section of

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[76] George Manypenny to Robert McClelland, 1 March 1854, r. 218, microcopy 234, NARA; and Hepner to Cumming, 12 November 1854, r. 218, microcopy 234, NARA; Wishart, Unspeakable Sadness, 102, 117–18; C. A. Weslager, *The Delaware Indians: A History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1972), 401–4.
[77] See Michel Cayon vs. Omaha Tribe, 24 December 1858, r. 604, microcopy 234, NARA.
[78] Harvey to M. Kawland, 12 October 1847, r. 754, microcopy 234, NARA; E. B. Taylor to R. B. Van Valkenburgh, 24 August 1865, ARCIA, 401, 404–5;

the river valley surrounding Crow Creek.[79] He established the western boundary of the reservation as the middle channel of the Missouri.

The Winnebagos had to pay their own transportation expenses on the steamboats that carried them up the Missouri River to Crow Creek, an amount that totaled fifty thousand dollars.[80] When Gen. Alfred Sulley ascended the river, they told him that the surrounding land was too dry to farm and that they had been promised land along the Big Sioux River, closer to the Omaha people, whom they knew and traded with. He reported that they were "hard at work making canoes, with the intention of quitting the agency and going to join the Omahas, or some other tribes, down the river." Although Sulley believed the Winnebagos would starve in their current location, he told them to stay on the reservation and warned them that his troops at Fort Randall would shoot them if they tried to descend the river. The troops did detain some of those who traveled downriver. By October, however, the agent at the Omaha Reservation, O. H. Irish, reported that "small detachments of Winnebagos are constantly arriving in canoes" and "begging for food to keep . . from starving." Over one thousand Winnebagos had arrived at the Omaha reservation by the summer of 1864.[81]

Winnebagos from within and outside the Omahas reservation traveled across the river border. In late August 1864, after the Winnebagos had relocated to the Omaha reservation, three Winnebago men crossed the Missouri to the east bank of the river, in Iowa, where they encountered a group of Dakota men making bullboats. In the ensuing skirmish, two of the Winnebagos were killed, and one man swam back across the river to the Omaha agency. A

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[79] Clark W. Thompson to William P. Dole, 28 May 1863, 1 June 1863, ARCIA, 310–11, 316–17; Colette A. Hyman, "Survival at Crow Creek, 1863-1866," *Minnesota History* 61, no. 4 (Winter 2008/2009): 148–61, 152.
[80] E. B. Taylor to D. N. Cooley, 23 August 1865, ARCIA, 410.
[81] Sulley to Maj. J. F. Meline, 15 July 1863, ARCIA, 323 ("at work"); O. H. Irish to H. B. Branch, 16 October 1863, ARCIA, 325 ("arriving"); Mix to Thompson, 31 October 1863, ARCIA, 324; 1 October 1864, ARCIA, 396.

large war party of Winnebagos swam to the east bank of the river and pursued the Dakotas.[82] Omahas complained in 1872 that Winnebagos from Wisconsin were visiting their relatives on the reservation, stealing ponies from the Omahas, and then "crossing the Missouri River into Iowa" where they could "escape to their homes."[83]

By 1856 reservations dotted the lower Missouri valley. For the Lakotas who assembled in the Black Hills in 1857, however, the United States had up to that point seized lands that they never fully claimed. That would change in the late 1850s, when white settlers began venturing toward Lakota and Yankton lands along the Missouri River soon after Minnesota became a state in 1858. Although Republicans wanted the Minnesota state boundaries to extend to the Missouri River, Democrats successfully set the western boundary of the state at the Red River. This demarcation left a section of undefined territory between the Minnesota state line and the Missouri River. Hoping to fill a new state with their supporters, Republicans in Minnesota pushed the settlement of lands west of Minnesota.[84] The center of this activity was Sioux City, at the mouth of the Big Sioux River, a traditional village site of the Yankton Sioux.[85]

At the mouth of the Big Sioux River, white settlers gradually seized control of river crossings on the Missouri and its tributaries. A historian in Sioux City, Gertrude Henderson, encapsulated this process in a timeline she called "High Lights in the History of the Crossing of the Big Sioux River." "Prior to 1850," Henderson wrote, "Indians were in undisturbed possession of the banks of the 'Tchamkasandata', and crossed at will in their canoes." In

[82] Clark W. Thompson, annual report of the Northern Superintendency, 1 October 1864, ARCIA, 398.
[83] Barclay White to F. A. Walker, 24 September 1872, ARCIA.
[84] Everett, *Creating the American West*, 194.
[85] For Yankton village sites at the mouth of the Big Sioux River, see Howard, "Notes on the Ethnogeography of the Yankton Dakota," pt. 1, *Plains Anthropologist* 17, no. 58 (November 1972): 284.

1856, however, General William S. Harney commissioned a French Canadian settler named Paul Paquette to build and operate a ferry for troops crossing the Big Sioux River. Three years later, Paquette received a license from the Woodbury County judge to operate a ferry across the river.[86] Henderson's timeline defines the transition from Indian to white control of the Big Sioux River in terms of mobility and the ferry crossing.

Land speculators and politicans targeted Yanktons, who claimed the Big Sioux River valley, for relocation to a reservation. Yanktons had agreed to land cessions in the treaties at Prairie du Chien, but they never fully received their annuities from the federal government. Indian agents themselves conspired with fur traders upriver to withhold annuities unless Indians handed over furs or traveled to trade posts. Under the Treaty of Prairie du Chien of 1830, the Yanktons were entitled to receive three thousand dollars annually for ten years, and then funds for a blacksmith, iron and steel, and agriculture tools. Their leader Ha-sas-hah, or the Ioway, was a signatory of this treaty and the Atkinson-O'Fallon treaty of 1825. According to the trader Edwin Denig, he was a "good financier" who calculated the "relative value of merchandise" and "detect[ed] any gross difference" between the federal annuity and goods received.[87]

The Indian office repeatedly failed to deliver the annuities it promised in the 1830 treaty. Indian agents conspired with employees of the American Fur Company to send annuity goods to trade posts, a tactic that led the son of the Ioway to lead an attack on the steamboat *Martha* in 1848.[88] When an Indian agent ascended the river in 1856, Yanktons

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[86] Gertrude Henderson, "High Lights in the History of the Crossing of the Big Sioux River," HR-12, SC 17, IHRSP.
[87] Denig, *Five Tribes*, 37 (quotation).
[88] For the failure to pay annuities, see Pilcher to Clark, 25 November 1835, r. 883, microcopy 234, NARA. For the complaints in 1847, see Matlock to Thomas H. Harvey, 29 June 1847, r. 753, microcopy 234, NARA. For the attack on the Martha, see Hiram Martin Chittenden, *History of Early Steamboat Navigation on the Missouri River: Life and Adventures of Captain Joseph La Barge* 2 vols. (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1903), 182–83;

asked him for money owed to them for agricultural equipment under the Treaty of Prairie du Chien and stressed that there was not enough game to support them.[89]

In 1858 a group of Yankton leaders traveled to Washington, where they agreed to a treaty ceding most of their lands east of the Missouri River but retaining rights to the pipestone quarry in Minnesota.[90] When the steamboat *Twilight* ascended the Missouri in 1858, Yankton chiefs came on board above Sioux City and entered the cabin, where the crew had arranged chairs in a semicircle for the meeting. They refused to accept the annual presents from the government until they had carried the merchandise outside and counted it. They protested the impending sale of lands along the Big Sioux River and predicted that the Sioux near Fort Pierre would prevent the steamer from proceeding farther upriver. After this meeting, Vaughn enlisted a group of soldiers from Fort Randall to accompany him upriver under the command of Henry W. Wessells. Sioux leaders who boarded the steamboat at Fort Pierre criticized the sale of lands along the Big Sioux River and were reluctant to accept their annuities, even refusing to sign the receipts for their delivery.[91] In 1859 the Indian agent Alexander Redfield ascended the river again on the steamboat *Carrier*. He forced the Yanktons to move to their newly established reservation before he would deliver the annuities, and they followed him forty miles upriver to Greenwood.[92]

"Steamboat 'Martha,' May 1848," Joseph La Barge file, folder 28, Mss 296, St. Charles County Historical Society, St. Charles, Missouri; Matlock to Thomas H. Harvey, 16 June 1848, r. 884, microcopy 234, NARA.

[89] Statement of Yankton chiefs, 3 March 1856, r. 885, microcopy 234, NARA.

[90] See Thomas Constantine Maroukis, *Peyote and the Yankton Sioux: The Life and Times of Sam Necklace* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004); 38–39; Letter of Yankton Chiefs, 26 July 1866, in Chittenden, ed., *De Smet*, 4:1286–87.

[91] See Henry W. Wessells to Asst. Adj. Gen, Dept. of the West, 7 July 1858, RG 94, NARA (accessed on fold3.com); Henry A. Boller, *Among the Indians: Eight Years in the Far West, 1858-1866* (Philadelphia: T. Ellwood Zell, 1868), 26-27; Charles Ferdinand Wimar, "Travels among the Indians," in *Arts of St. Louis*, ed. William Tod Helmuth (St. Louis: n.p., 1864), 41–44; and "News from the Upper Missouri," *Daily Missouri Republican*, 24 October 1858.

[92] Lass, *Steamboating on the Upper Missouri River*, 23; and George W. Kingsbury, *South Dakota: Its History and Its People*, ed. George Martin Smith (Chicago: Clarke, 1915), 1:141–43.

When they visited the commanding officer at Fort Randall, Lakota leaders expressed "no little dissatisfaction" with the impending treaty with the Yanktons. Lakotas still regarded the ceded lands as their own because they had granted them to the Lakotas.[93] In the ensuing years, Lakotas lost other historic lands. When officials established the Crow Creek reservation, they seized one side of the Three Rivers Pass for the Winnebagos and Dakotas. Yet Thompson was expressed concerns about this location because it was only a few miles from what he called "their great crossing of the Missouri"—the Three Rivers Pass, which Lewis and Clark identified nearly sixty years earlier. He concluded that a "stockade or some other defence is, in my mind, absolutely necessary to protect government employés and property."[94] Thompson feared the repercussions of closing the fording site to Sioux traffic.

A few years later, commissioners would establish the first Lakota reservation on the Missouri River on the other side of the Three Rivers Pass and Crow Creek. Following the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864, the Fetterman attack of 1866, and Red Cloud's War, government commissioners proposed confining the Lakotas on a reservation north of the state of Nebraska and west of the Missouri River. The military responded to Sioux threats by forming, in 1866, the Department of Dakota, a precursor to the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868. Sen. John B. Henderson of Missouri, who introduced the bill into Congress in July 1867 that led to the creation of the Peace Commission and the Great Sioux Reservation, proposed removing the Lakotas to the Missouri River because it provided the cheapest route for the delivery of annuities. This plan would also benefit his constituents who transported the merchandise upriver. Henderson assured the senators that the tract of ceded land along the Missouri River consisted of the "Mauvais terre country" and that it would not attract settlers.

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[93] Hannibal Day to Adj. Gen. S. Cooper, 16 May 1858, RG 94, NARA (accessed on fold3.com); Richard White, "Winning of the West: The Expansion of the Lakota Sioux," *Journal of American History* 65, no. 2 (1978): 342.
[94] Thompson to Dole, 1 July 1863, ARCIA, 318 (quotations).

The Lakotas recognized the removal to the Missouri River as an effort by the U.S. government to confine them to a place they did not want to live.[95]

As historian Jeffrey Ostler concludes, the Sioux participants understood the second Fort Laramie negotiations, in 1868, as a restoration of peace between "two equal parties" and the removal of causes of bison depletion, including forts, roads, and steamboats. For military officials, the establishment of the reservation set future boundaries of Sioux mobility. General Sherman informed the Oglalas that they "select a country on the Missouri River . . . to have forever." He encouraged them to live as close to the river as possible because "by that river our steamboats can carry up your annual supplies and by it your traders can get their goods cheap." Military officials expected the river to serve as a border between the Sioux and white settlers and clearly viewed the Missouri River as a site of control. They pushed the Two Kettles band of Lakotas to select land on the "west side of the river."[96] After the agencies for Red Cloud and Spotted Tail relocated from the Missouri River farther west, Gen. Philip Sheridan expressed his disappointment that they were no longer on the river. He stated emphatically that "the sooner we can get them again upon the River the better it will be."[97] Recalling that "some time ago the road by this river belonged to the Chiefs of the Indians," the Yanktonai leader Two Bears objected to moving across the Missouri. As he informed the treaty commissioners, "Our country is over on the other side of the river. We are Yanctonais." [98]

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[95] *The Congressional Globe*, 40th Congress, 1st Session, 1867, p. 669; Oman, "The Beginning of the End," 35-37, 43. For the Department of the Dakota, see Paul Andrew Hutton, *Phil Sheridan and His Army* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 131.

[96] Ostler, Plains Sioux, 49; and Deloria and DeMallie, *Proceedings of the Great Peace Commission*, 62 ("select"), 63 ("that river"), 145 ("west side").

[97] Qtd. in Hutton, *Phil Sheridan and His Army*, 282. He continued to express this puzzlement over the move. See Sheridan to Gen. William T. Sherman, 3 March 1874, Dakota Superintendency, r. 253, microcopy 234.

[98] Vine Deloria Jr. and Raymond DeMallie, *Proceedings of the Great Peace Commission of 1867-1868* (Washington DC: Institute for the Development of Indian Law, 1975), 139 ("we are"), 143 ("other side").

According to the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868, the Sioux received title to land "commencing on the east bank of the Missouri River . . . thence along low-water mark down said east bank to a point opposite where the northern line of the State of Nebraska strikes the river." The Sioux technically received title to the Missouri River itself, but the "low-water mark" reserved as much land as possible on the east bank of the river for white settlers. The government planned to construct agencies along the river.[99]

The Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 led to the establishment of three new agencies and reservations on the river: the Lower Brulé Reservation directly across the Three Rivers Pass from Crow Creek; the Cheyenne River Agency, to serve the Sans Arc, Minneconjou, and Two Kettles Lakotas; and the Grand River Agency, for the Hunkpapas and Sihasapas Lakotas as well as Yanktonais. In 1865 a government peace commission met with leaders of the Lower Brulé Lakotas, who had remained near the Missouri River when the Upper Brulés moved up the South Platte River nearly three decades earlier. Their resulting treaty with the Lower Brulé Lakotas established the Missouri River as the eastern boundary of their reservation for twenty miles around the mouth of the White River, an area that included the Three Rivers Pass and Fort Lookout.[100] In 1873 Grand River Agency was renamed the Standing Rock Agency, and its headquartered moved sixty miles downriver to Fort Yates. The Sioux regarded agency posts along the Missouri as distribution sites for annuity payments and continued to cross the boundaries of the Great Sioux Reservation, including the Missouri River.[101]

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[99] Kappler, *Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties*, 2: 998; Kelly R. Oman, "The Beginning of the End: The Indian Peace Commission of 1867-1868," *Great Plains Quarterly* 22 (Winter 2002), 35–51, 43.
[100] For a Lower Brulé account of how they split with the Upper Brulés, see Iron Nation et al. to the secretary of the interior, in William Dougherty to Carl Schurz, 4 January 1881, qtd. in Schusky, *Forgotten Sioux*, 112–14. For the peace commission of 1865 and resulting treaty, see "Treaty with the Sioux—Lower Brulé Band, 1865," *Kappler's Indian Affairs*, 2:885; and Schusky, *Forgotten Sioux*, 53.
[101] Ostler, *Plains Sioux*, 54; Larson, *Gall: Lakota War Chief*, 79–80, 98.

Following the establishment of the Lower Brulé reservation in 1868, the agent at Crow Creek was also responsible for the new Lower Brulé agency on the west side of the Missouri. The Lower Brulé agency was initially located twenty miles below Crow Creek on the west bank. The agent for both agencies, William French, complained that sandbars made it "very difficult and expensive to cross the river," and he pushed to have the Lower Brulé agency moved farther upriver. The first governor of Dakota Territory, John A. Burbank, supported the move because it would allow French to visit the Lower Brulés and return the same day.[102] Even after the agency had moved upriver, however, the crossing remained time-consuming. When a member of the Board of Indian Commissioners visited Crow Creek and Lower Brulé in 1871, he complained that the "ferriage across the Missouri river at this point is so tedious that the cost of transporting stores is very great and the agent is unable to visit the Brule frequently or to encourage them to become farmers." The risks of transporting food and supplies from Crow Creek Agency to Lower Brulé caused problems for agents. In 1870 a Brulé Lakota man fell overboard from a boat that transporting beef across the Missouri and drowned. The Brulés accused the agents of placing "bad medicine into the water for the purpose of killing them" and shot at a farming superintendent.[103]

Despite the construction of reservation boundaries, Lakotas from different bands moved regularly between the Yankton, Lower Brulé, and Crow Creek Reservations. As historian Ernest Schusky concludes, "kinship ties cut across reservation and even tribal lines," and agents at the Lower Brulé regularly filed transfers for families and issued passes to visitors.[104] In the late 1870s, Yanktonais living at Crow Creek left their reservation to visit

[102] John A. Burbank to Eli S. Parker, 30 July 1870, r. 888, microcopy 234, NARA.
[103] Qtd. in Schusky, *The Forgotten Sioux*, 82 ("ferriage), 79 ("medicine"), 65, 75. For original letter, see William French to John A. Burbank, 6 April 1870, r. 888, microcopy 234, NARA.
[104] Schusky, *Forgotten Sioux*, 102.

kinspeople at Grand River Agency. The resident Indian agent at Crow Creek reported that they drew annuities at both places.[105] Native peoples living on reservations also continued to maintain indigenous trade connections. In the early 1860s, the Omahas reportedly continued to raise surpluses of corn and welcomed visitors throughout the winters who traded for corn.[106]

American settlement, however, would nearly erase the landscape of Lakota mobility and power in the Missouri Valley. By 1875, the emigrants were crossing the river at the Three Rivers Pass. The *Yankton Dakotan* newspaper recommended that overland travelers trying to reach the Black Hills should proceed "to a point above the mouth of the White river, about where Fort Lookout stands, by steamboat, stage, or private conveyance, and from thence across the country, keeping on the north side of the White river."[107] By 1880 the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul railroad reached from the South Dakota-Iowa border to Chamberlain, South Dakota, which sat only a few miles south of the Three Rivers Pass. Fearing the consequences if the railroad crossed the river and passed through their reservation, Lower Brulé leaders petitioned the secretary of the interior to prevent the construction of tracks west of the Missouri.[108]

In the early 1890s, the federal government forced the Lower Brulés to cede the western side of the Three Rivers Pass and the White River Valley because it offered a direct route to the Black Hills. Their reservation shifted north, to the west side of the Big Bend. Residents in Chamberlain constructed a pontoon bridge across the river just below the Three Rivers Pass so they could conduct horses and cattle across the river. In 1905 the Chicago,

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[105] Henry Livingston to J. T. Smith, 13 June 1877, Special File 248, Special Files of the Office of Indian Affairs, r. 69, microcopy 574, NA.
[106] Edward B. Taylor to R. B. Van Valkenburgh, 15 September 1865, ARCIA, 400, 403.
[107] *Yankton Press and Dakotan*, 11 March 1875.
[108] Schusky, *Forgotten Sioux*, 109, 110–11.

Milwaukee, and Saint Paul Railroad—known as the Milwaukee Road—constructed a pontoon bridge with rails across from Chamberlain, South Dakota, to expedite travel to the Black Hills. The bridge, which consisted of connected floating pontoons that could open for boat traffic, spanned 336 feet of the Missouri River.[109]

Railroads also carved away Arikara, Mandan, Hidatsa lands around Fort Berthold. In 1879 the president of the Northern Pacific Railroad convinced the Indian Bureau to redraw the boundaries of Arikara, Mandan, and Hidatsa lands to grant his line right-of-way through their hunting territory. In late 1886, the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara representatives ceded additional lands along the Missouri River for allotment under the Dawes Act of 1887. In 1886 the Arikaras left Like-a-Fishhook village, and the other inhabitants had mostly followed them within two years. Many of them moved to the west bank of the Missouri to avoid the Indian agent, who lived on the east side. A band of Hidatsas led by Crows-Flies-High attempted to settle as far away from the agent as possible, on the west side of the Missouri. In 1894, however, an army official convinced him to cross the river and approach the agency.[110]

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[109] Schusky, *Forgotten Sioux*, 141-42; John Gruber, "Milwaukee Road's Pontoon Bridges," in *North American Railroad Bridges*, ed. Brian Solomon (Minneapolis: Voyageur Press, 2008), 140–41; Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, 303.

[110] 51st Congress, 2nd Session, section 23, p. 425, in *Kappler's Indians Affairs*, 1:425–28; Meyers, *Village Indians*, 111, 113, 141.

Conclusion

In the early twentieth century, anthropologists began documenting how Mandans and Hidatsas traveled on the Missouri River. In 1907 the ethnographer Gilbert L. Wilson visited the Fort Berthold Reservation and took a series of photographs of Mandan bullboats. He decided that to "arrive at an accurate description of the construction of a bullboat," he would "have one built." In late July 1912, he hired a Mandan woman named Owl-woman to build him one. Her daughter helped her dress the hide, and Wilson and his informant Goodbird, who also provided him information about bullboat construction and use, spent a few hours gathering willow poles along the river. Wilson wrote a detailed account of how Owl-woman built the boat frame and attached it to the hide. He later donated the boat to the collections of the University of Minnesota anthropology department.[1]

Later collectors turned to a Mandan-Hidatsa man named Crows Heart to acquire bullboats. Crows Heart is best known as a primary informant of the anthropologist Alfred W. Bowers. Bowers visited him in the late 1920s and again in the late 1940s to ask him about Mandan and Hidatsa ceremonies. When Bowers returned to the reservation in 1947, Crows Heart was ninety-two years old, and Bowers worked with him to record an autobiography that later appeared in his study of Mandan society.[2] In the late 1930s, Crows Heart built a bullboat for the Mariner's Museum in Virginia Beach, and in 1948 he built what was

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[1] Bella Weitzner, *Notes on the Hidatsa Indians based on Data Recorded by the Late Gilbert L. Wilson*, Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History 56, pt. 2, (New York: American Museum of Natural History, 1979), 247–52. For the boat built by Owl-woman, see "Mandan bullboat," A76:2:399, Science Museum of Minnesota, Minneapolis. For Goodbird's early life and experiences on the river, see Edward Goodbird and Gilbert L. Wilson, *Goodbird the Indian: His Story* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1914), 13.

[2] For Bowers's visits with Crows Heart, see Alfred W. Bowers, *Hidatsa Social and Ceremonial Organization* (Reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), xlii–xliii. For his published reminiscences, see Alfred W. Bowers, *Mandan Social and Ceremonial Organization* (Reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 169-73. For the original recordings of his interview, see Crows Heart Autobiography, 1947, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

probably his final bullboat for the ethnographer George F. Will, who later donated it to the Southwest Museum in Los Angeles. When Will found him, Crows Heart was reportedly the oldest surviving Mandan. According to Will, Crows Heart asked his daughter, Annie Crows Heart Eagle, to find willow branches for the frame. The ones she returned with were not adequate, so the Mandan elder ventured out himself on a cold November afternoon. He became lost and "walked in circles all night to keep alive, but collapsed before rescuers found him the next day." His illness lingered, but he built a boat and carved a paddle that depicted four horseshoes, indicating how many times he had counted coup. He passed away within a year of the incident.[3]

Crows Heart was not only a source for anthropologists but also someone who bridged both sides of the Fort Berthold Reservation. In 1923 the ethnomusicologist Frances Densmore visited Fort Berthold to speak with surviving Mandans about their music and song traditions. Most of the Mandans had accepted allotments on the west bank of the Missouri, while the Hidatsas and Arikaras lived in lands on the east bank. Crows Heart had built an earthlodge on the banks of the Missouri that served as a "communal center for the Mandans." He conducted Densmore across the river to his home, where she attended one of the "feasts and gatherings" at the lodge. After the meeting, Crows Heart conducted her back across the river in a bullboat. Densmore reported that the Mandan-Hidatsa leader had conducted many other travelers "as well as the Indians" across the river, "so that the location [his home] is

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[3] See "Bull Boat" (ca. 1939), 1 June 2014, Collections Department, The Mariners' Museum, Newport News, VA, www.marinersmuseum.org/blogs/collections/2014/06/01/artifact-of-the-month-bullboat. For Will's visit, see Ruth DeEtte Simpson, "A Mandan Bull-Boat," *Masterkey* 23, no. 3 (spring 1949): 174–75. For Crows Heart's death, see Bowers, *Hidatsa Social and Ceremonial Organization*, xli.

known as 'Crow's Heart's Landing,' or 'Crow's Heart's Ferry,' and from this business he has acquired a considerable income." She recalled later that his ferry "had a wide reputation."[4]

By conducting visitors back and forth across the Missouri, Crows Heart accrued power and influence in his own community and endorsed travelers' rights of passage. Like Šehékšot, who led the Canadian trader Alexander Henry across the Missouri in 1806, Crows Heart functioned as a negotiator and broker between different communities, bridging families, clans, and both sides of the world—the flat prairies of Lone Man, and the rugged landscape of the First Creator. His ferriage replicated the work of the Mandans, Arikaras, and Hidatsas in transcontinental trade networks. They accrued power by connecting different regions and peoples of North America, transferring goods, people, and ideas from one side of a continental divide to the other. Travel across the watershed and the river, as much as long-distance travel up and down the river channel, formed the connective tissue of Native North America.

Apart from small exhibits on bullboats, however, museums still define the Missouri River in terms of Lewis and Clark and the expansion of the American fur trade. In popular narratives of westward expansion, Americans traveled and explored the Missouri while indigenous peoples waited for them on the riverbank, and travel and exploration are themselves seemingly European and American properties—products of the Enlightenment and the Age of Discovery. In this work, I have attempted to recover a counter-narrative that begins in the 1500s and continues to the present day: a history of Native American travel and exploration on the Missouri River. Far more than simply a road for Americans, the Missouri was a corridor of indigenous power where Native peoples established control of the

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[4] Frances Densmore, *Mandan and Hidatsa Music*, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 80 (Washington DC: GPO, 1923), 27, 28 ("communal," "feasts"); Frances Densmore, "Our Mandan Bull-Boat," *Masterkey* 24, no. 1 (winter 1950): 23 ("reputation," "ripples").

midcontinent. Indians used the river to achieve mobility in the Great Plains. Even when steamboats were crossing the Plains, the river remained a site of indigenous mobility, and in the 1880s, when the American military controlled much of the Missouri Valley, indigenous power continued to operate on the Missouri in different degrees: individual women and men, such as Crows Heart, moved freely on the river.

Yet federal dam construction in the mid-twentieth century would destroy much of the landscape of indigenous mobility in the Missouri Valley, covering trails, markers, and fording sites such as the Three Rivers Pass. In 1944 Congress passed the Flood Control Act, which contained earmarks for a series of dams along the Missouri River. The dams were part of the Pick-Sloan Plan, an effort to control flooding and improve irrigation in North and South Dakota. Despite strong opposition from members of the Three Affiliated Tribes at Fort Berthold, the Army Corps of Engineers pressed ahead and built dams that would flood valuable bottomlands on reservations along the upper Missouri River.[5]

When the reservoir for the Garrison Dam flooded bottomlands within the Fort Berthold Reservation, in 1953 and 1954, Mandans, Hidatsas, and Arikaras faced insurmountable losses. The Garrison Dam flooded 150,000 acres, destroying timber that residents had used to build homes, fences, and livestock shelters; springs that supplied clean water; and wild berries and other traditional food sources. Inundating the town of Elbowoods, the reservation's administrative center, and the Four Bears Bridge, the dam forced the Three Affiliated Tribes to move "on top," to dry uplands on the wind-swept plateau. While Crows Heart's home had linked together both sides of the reservation in the early twentieth century, Lake Sakakawea divided the reservation and "isolated the people

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[5] Roy W. Meyer, *The Village Indians of the Upper Missouri* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1977), 211-22. For communities and homes flooded, see Paul Van Develder, *Coyote Warrior: One Man, Three Tribes, and the Trial that Forged a Nation* (New York: Little, Brown, 2004).

living south and west of the river." By 1953 Crows Heart's Landing was submerged under Lake Sakakawea. Following the flood, a new Four Bears bridge would finally arrive in 1955.[6]

Damming also flooded bottomlands within Sioux reservations in South Dakota. In 1946 the Army Corps of Engineers began building the Fort Randall Dam. Although it sat one hundred miles below the Crow Creek and Lower Brule Reservations, the dam still flooded nearly ten thousand acres on the two reservations, covering valuable timber and bottomlands and inundating Crow Creek's largest town, Fort Thompson. It forced many families out of homes along the river.[7] Both reservations lost additional land in 1959 and 1960, when the Corps built the Big Bend dam. Lower Brulés ceded nearly fifteen thousand additional acres of land, including a town named Lower Brule and nearly all their remaining timber and pasture along the river. By flooding the Three Rivers Pass, which sat between the Lower Brulé and Crow Creek Reservations, the Fort Randall and Big Bend dams erased an ancient landscape of indigenous mobility and communication. Engineers instead used the fording site for other purposes. The contour of the river's Big Bend allowed engineers to construct a smaller dam than normal. It stood only ninety-five feet high, and its reservoir, Lake Sharpe, was comparatively small.[8]

The Three Affiliated Tribes began pursuing compensation for flood losses in the mid 1980s, when Raymond Cross (Mandan-Hidatsa), a graduate of Yale Law School, first presented their claims before members of Congress. In response, the secretary of the interior created the Joint Tribal Advisory Committee, which eventually proposed compensation

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[6] Michael L. Lawson, *Dammed Indians Revisited: The Continuing History of the Pick-Sloan Plan and the Missouri River Sioux* (Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 1982), 52, Meyer, *Village Indians*, 220, 227 ("isolated"), 265.
[7] Lawson, *Dammed Indians*, 46.
[8] Lawson, *Dammed Indians*, 49.

amounts not only for Fort Berthold Reservation but also for the Standing Rock Reservation in South Dakota. President George H.W. Bush signed the resulting compensation act into law in 1992.[9]

In the late 1980s, tribes within the Missouri River basin also began combining forces to address management of the river itself. Citing their "prior" and "superior" rights to water in the White and Cheyenne Rivers under the *Winters* doctrine and later amendments, the Oglala Lakota tribal president Paul Iron Cloud petitioned the Army Corps of Engineers for more input about management of the Missouri River. He expressed concerns about the supply of diverted water from the main river channel as well as the high cost of electricity on the Pine Ridge Reservation, which did not receive electricity generated by the dams. Noting that the "Indian Tribes of the Missouri River Basin have joined historically in loose-knit coalitions," Iron Cloud warned the Corps that the Oglala Lakotas would join a "renewed coalition of Indian tribes to address our rights, title and interest in the Missouri River Basin and its tributaries."[10]

This coalition formed in January 1993, when nineteen tribes along the main stem of the Missouri and its largest tributaries formed the Mni Sose Intertribal Water Rights Coalition, named after the Lakota term for the Missouri, "Turbid Water." Funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the organization later expanded to include twenty-eight different nations, including the Crow Nation, Eastern Shoshones and Northern Arapahos at the Wind River Reservation, Dakotas at the Spirit Lake Reservation, and the Kickapoo Nation in Kansas. Based in Rapid City, South Dakota, the organization drew members from across the

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[9] Lawson, *Dammed Indians*, 255-66, 269-88.
[10] Paul Iron Cloud to Brig. Gen. Robert Ryan, 12 October 1989, Army Corps of Engineers, *Missouri River Master Water Control Manual: Review and Update*, Appendix (2006),1:57.

Missouri River watershed, and it fulfilled Iron Cloud's expectation of indigenous cooperation and mobilization along the Missouri River corridor.[11]

When the Army Corps of Engineers drafted its "master manual" for the management of Missouri River flows, Mni Sose presented its own revisions. A particular point of contention was the Corps of Engineer's continued efforts to preserve a navigation channel in the river. As one Mni Sose spokesperson testified in 1994, the Corps was preserving navigation while Indians on reservations had to haul water to their homes.[12] Members of Mni Sose also documented other kinds of losses. In the parlance of the Army Corps of Engineers, these "cultural resources" included cottonwood and cedar used to build sweat lodges and altars as well as burial sites along the length of the river. The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) provided tribes with a legal mechanism to block development of the river channel. In order to avoid future litigation, the Army Corps of Engineers began compiling information about archaeological and burial sites in the river valley. As the Mni Sose committee informed representatives from the Corps, however, limited archaeological surveys would identify only some of the burial and cultural sites along the river: "Our ancestors are buried along these rivers from Montana's Milk River, all along the nearly 1,500 mile Missouri River main stem, to Kansas' Republican River." A Sicangu

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[11] For formation and objectives of Mni Sose, see Missouri Basin States Association, *The Missouri River Report* (Missoula, MT: April 1993), 4 (accessed at archive.org); Richard Bad Moccasin, "Mni Sose Intertribal Water Rights Coalition," *Encyclopedia of the Great Plains*, ed. David J. Wishart (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 856.

[12] See Mni Sose Inter-tribal Water Rights Coalition, "Coalition's Response to Corps of Engineer's Preferred Alternative Plan," 6 June 1994, in Army Corps of Engineers, *Missouri River Master Water Control Manual: Review and Update* (Omaha, NE: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Northwestern Division, 2004), appendix, pt. 1, 245.

(Brulé) Lakota filmmaker named Carol Burns documented the ongoing destruction of burial sites along the Missouri Valley in the 2004 film *Mni Sose*.[13]

Beyond physical sites in the river valley, damming and channelization disrupted cultural and religious traditions. Mandans had relied on the April and June rises to schedule plantings in the river valley. By 1950 a dam above Fort Berthold—the Fort Peck Dam—had disrupted the flow of the Missouri River through the reservation. In that year, a Mandan-Hidatsa man named Carl Sylvester informed the anthropologist John Peabody Harrington that the Fort Peck Dam, which was the first dam built on the upper Missouri River, "destroy[ed] . . . the natural rises of the Mo. River" and that "the Mo. River is no longer predictable like it used to be."[14]

In 2002 Tex Hall, the chairman at Fort Berthold, described the destruction of channelization in even more forceful terms. He told Corps representatives that damming had led to the "slow death of our ancient 'holy grandfather,' the Missouri River":

> "To us, the Missouri River is a holy being, one we approach and regard with reverence and respect. Since time out of mind, we have looked to out Mysterious or Holy Grandfather, as we call the river, for the continuity of all life. We have sought shelter in the timbers which once lined his shorelines, planted our abundant gardens on the rich alluvial terraces, and traded our produce with other Nations traveling his waters and shorelines. Our entire identity as indigenous peoples is so closely tied with our Grandfather that we could not conceive of a time when we did not live in his protective embrace. . . .We still conduct ancient ceremonies by the waters of our Grandfather, the purpose of which ensures the continuity and survival of our Peoples."

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[13] Mni Sose Inter-Tribal Water Rights Coalition, "Comments for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers," 17 June 1999, Army Corps of Engineers, *Missouri River Master Water Control Manual*, appendix, pt. 1:421 ("ancestors"), 432. For NAGPRA, see Lawson, *Dammed Indians*, 246, 248, 251-53. For the Burns Documentary, see Reel Exposure," 16 April 2007, accessed on lawrence.com; Stephanie J. Lawrence, *Native Women and Land: Narratives of Dispossession and Resurgence* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 2015), 86.

[14] "Missouri River" notes, 1950/1951, John Peabody Harrington Collection, Smithsonian Institute, accessed online at www.collections.si.edu. Sylvester informed Harrington that "Fort Peck Dam has changed all these risings of the Mo. River, destroying . . . the natural rises of the Mo. River," and "it puts an end to all our natural . . . ." (Harrington did not record end of statement).

Hall testified that damming had made it difficult to conduct ceremonies properly. Elders had to travel a long ways to find places where the river "still flows freely, as required" for ceremonies, and they occasionally faced gunfire from landowners.[15] Other members of Mni Sose appealed to the Corps to recognize indigenous ways of valuing the river. In 1999 representatives of the Lower Brulés informed the Corps that "water is sacred to the Lakota people," and that tribes "need to maintain the sacred status of the river—the whole river, start to finish."[16]

The Three Affiliated Tribes, Lower Brulés, and other nations in the river basin continue to work with state and federal agencies to protect resources in the Missouri River valley and pursue just compensation for losses sustained during the implementation of the Pick-Sloan Plan. As recently as 2006, representatives from the Lower Brule and Crow Creek Reservations appealed directly to the Senate Indian Committee for equitable compensation for flood losses. Although they forfeited more acres than any other tribes except for the Three Affiliated Tribes, they received a lower compensation rate than other claimants. In the same year, the Bureau of Indian Affairs eliminated funding for the Mni Sose Intertribal Water Rights Coalition.[17]

[15] "Revised Draft Environmental Impact Study, United States Army Corps of Engineers Master Manual, Public Comments submitted by Tex. G. Hall, Chairman, Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation," 28 February 2002, in Army Corps of Engineers, *Missouri River Master Water Control Manual*, appendix, pt. 2, p. 506.
[16] Army Corps of Engineers Consultation, Rapid City, SD, 23-24 February 1999, in Army Corps of Engineers, *Missouri River Master Water Control Manual*, appendix, pt. 1, 383 ("sacred").
[17] Lawson, *Dammed Indians*, 287-88; U.S. Senate, *Hearings Before the Committee on Appropriations: Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies*, 1st session, H.R. 2361 (Washington: GPO, 2006), 139.

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