

## EARLY HISTORY OF LEAD MINING IN THE IOWA COUNTRY

One of the first results of the intercourse between French traders and native tribesmen in the Middle West was the Indian hunter's loss of independence. To obtain the merchandise of the European the simple native had to pay the price in furs, and to get a sufficient quantity of this form of money he had to procure a gun and ammunition. Thus it happened that the Indians became dependent upon the French for their supply of goods and guns, powder and shot.

### THE MINES OF NICHOLAS PERROT

Among the earliest traders in the Upper Mississippi Valley was an experienced bush-ranger, Nicholas Perrot, French Commandant of the West. Some time during the year 1690 a party of Miami Indians came to him with a request that he set up a trading-post in their country south of the Wisconsin River, and they made presents of beaver skins and "a piece of ore which came from a very rich Lead Mine . . . . on the bank of a stream which empties into the Mississippi". Perrot promised to comply with their wishes within twenty days.

Deposits of lead then existed on both sides of the Great River. Opinion differs on the question whether Perrot built a post upon Catfish Creek in the Iowa country or upon the Galena River in Illinois. One fact, however, seems certain in the absence of available records to the contrary: Perrot was the first European who mined lead in this region. On his journey up the Mississippi from the Gulf of Mexico in 1700 with about twenty-five companions Le Sueur took note of lead mines upon both sides of the river: "the Mines of



Nicolas Perrot, which is the name of the man who discovered them." The name, "Perrot's Mines", lingered long after the discoverer's departure from the West. Such was the beginning of lead mining in the Upper Mississippi Valley. Whether dug by the Indians or the French lead not only came to be another medium of exchange for French goods, but also returned to the Indian hunters in the shape of bullets or shot for their guns.<sup>1</sup>

THE IOWA COUNTRY FROM 1700 TO 1788

The existence of the lead mines became common knowledge among French traders: it was even recorded upon French maps in Europe. But during the first half of the eighteenth century actual mining operations by Frenchmen in this region could not have been considerable on account of the Fox wars: the allied Sacs and Foxes were a menace to all French traders and the enemy of all the Indian tribes of the upper country. In 1760 the French régime west of the Mississippi ended and two years later Spain obtained nominal possession of the Iowa wilderness and its lead mines; while England wrung from France all the vast territory east of the Mississippi. Such were the fruits of a mighty victory for English trade, another milestone in the expansion of English territory.

From that date began the second phase of the struggle for the control of the Indian trade upon the American continent, and Spain and England were the combatants. Spanish subjects in Louisiana (mostly Frenchmen) were now to be pitted against English subjects who came from Canada.

<sup>1</sup> See the writer's article in *THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, Vol. XII, pp. 336-338; Thwaites's account of lead-mining in the *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, Vol. XIII, pp. 271-292; Keyes's article in the *Annals of Iowa* (Third Series), Vol. X, pp. 539-546.

For an account of fur trade operations in the Iowa country from the earliest time until 1833, the reader is referred to *THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, Vol. XII, pp. 323-372, 479-567.



and the Atlantic seaboard colonies. All of them were interested in the vast American wilderness which offered abundant commercial opportunities. The commercial rivalry among the nations of this day and age is no keener than it was a century or two ago. The Mississippi River region and its native inhabitants appealed to the speculative business men of that day as a field worthy of vigorous exploitation. And so life in the upper portion of the Great Valley became little more than a contest between traders, some of whom conveyed furs eastward to Montreal and New York, while others floated their packs southward to St. Louis and New Orleans before final shipment for manufacture and sale in the markets of Europe.

Then followed the rebellion of the thirteen American colonies against economic restrictions imposed by the mother country. At the conclusion of hostilities England surrendered all claims to land east of the Mississippi, but carefully stipulated that although English trading-posts were to be abandoned, trade privileges in American territory were not to be denied to English subjects. Thus under the protection of the terms of the treaty English and French-Canadians continued the fur traffic on an equal footing with American citizens who cared to embark upon the same business. West of the Great River, including the Iowa country, Spain adopted the policy of keeping the trade in furs and peltries in the hands of her own subjects.

Such were the main features of western economic life in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The great Central West was little less than a huge market-place to which came French-Canadians with their wares from the valley of the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes, a few Anglo-American traders from the Atlantic seacoast, and French and Spanish merchants from the South and West. The spirit of commercial enterprise was in the air: the furs and the



skins of the wild game animals of forest, river, and prairie meant big profits for those who were bold and energetic enough to visit the haunts of the Indians. The native inhabitants of the Great Valley, once content to hunt with bows and flint-tipped arrows and thus procure such food and skins as they needed for personal comfort and adornment, had gradually become the white man's tools, helping to satisfy the white man's lust for wealth and getting in return such articles as appealed to their childlike fancy. To aid in this general transformation of the Indian character the traders had long supplied the Indians with guns and ammunition, all sorts of merchandise, and last but not least, with liquor.

#### JULIEN DUBUQUE AND THE MINES OF SPAIN

During the latter third of the eighteenth century, lead from the mines in Spanish Missouri ranked next to peltries as the most important and profitable export of the Valley, "for without bullets the firearms of the white men were of small avail" in Indian hands.<sup>2</sup> The lead mines of the Galena River in what is now northern Illinois were also well known. In the year 1780, when Spain and the American colonies were both at war with England, a British officer wrote that the Indians had brought from the mines "seventeen Spanish & Rebel Prisoners, & Stopp'd Fifty Tonns of Lead ore and from both they obtained a good supply of Provisions"; and that several Indians of various tribes were going to watch the lead mines and give no quarter to persons who could not produce a British passport. An Anglo-Indian expedition against St. Louis in the summer of 1780 failed, largely because two French-Canadian traders, Calvé and Ducharme, caused the desertion of the Sac In-

<sup>2</sup> Thwaites's *Wisconsin*, p. 157.



dians from whose lead mines they had for some time derived great profit.<sup>3</sup>

It seems, therefore, that although the lead mines of Nicholas Perrot in the Iowa wilderness may have lain forgotten or unused for a long time, they were operated by the Spanish in 1780. Indeed, in that year a rich mine was discovered and opened by the Fox Indians who had but recently transferred their village life from Wisconsin to the Iowa country. Then, on the twenty-second day of September, 1788, there occurred at the frontier trading village of Prairie du Chien an incident of unusual significance: in the presence of several witnesses, Julien Dubuque, a French-Canadian, at a full council of ten Fox chiefs and braves received written permission to operate the lead mines in their territory.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, Vol. XI, pp. 151, 152, 154, 156, Vol. XIII, p. 280; *THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, Vol. XII, p. 362.

<sup>4</sup> A literal translation of the French document in *American State Papers, Public Lands*, Vol. III, p. 678, deserves a place here:

“Transaction of the council, held by the Foxes, that is to say the chiefs and the braves of the five villages, with the approbation of the rest of their tribe interpreted by Mr. Quinantotaye, delegated by them, in their presence and in ours undersigned, namely, that the Foxes permit Julien Dubuque, called by them The Little Night, to work the mine until it should please them to retire from it and then without any restriction. Besides they sell to him, and release to him the whole bluff, and the contents of the mine discovered by the wife of Peosta to which no white man nor savages can lay claim without the consent of M. Julien Dubuque, and in case he finds nothing in it, he shall be empowered to seek wherever he may like and work quietly without anyone's being able to harm him nor to cause him damage in his work. Thus we the chiefs and the braves by the votes of all our villages, have agreed with Julien Dubuque, selling and delivering to him from this day on as it is mentioned above in the presence of Frenchmen who are listening to us and are the witnesses of this act.

At Prairie du Chien, in full council, September 1788.

BAPT. PIERRE, his X mark.

A LA AUSTIN, his X mark.

BLONDEAU DE QUIENAN, his X mark.

ANTAGNA

JOSEPH FONTIGNY, witness.

This document can also be found in the *United States Supreme Court Reports*, 16 Howard, 222.



Dubuque was not more than twenty-six years of age at this time, having come to the West from Canada about five years before.<sup>5</sup> Like most French frontiersmen of his day he traveled and traded among the wild inhabitants of forest and prairie. How well he succeeded can not be determined with certainty, but be that as it may, he so won his way into the hearts of the simple natives as to obtain their everlasting admiration and good-will. He made himself familiar with all their superstitions and "by means of ingenious artifices and magic conjurations he became to them a veritable idol". From his appearance the Foxes called him "La Petite Nuit" (The Little Night).<sup>6</sup>

In winning the friendship of the savages, however, Dubuque gained more than this remarkable ascendancy over

It is a noteworthy fact that the only real aboriginal Americans in Iowa to-day are a remnant of the once mighty Fox and Sac tribes. In accordance with the treaty of 1842 they crossed the Missouri River to a reservation in Kansas. Poor crops, however, and a feverish climate made them unhappy in their new home: they trailed back to Iowa. "The story of how they outwitted secretaries and turned the policy of the Government from active hostility to toleration and finally to favor, and reestablished themselves in Iowa on a patch of the very soil they ceded to the Government in 1842, is unique in the annals of our Indian history."—*Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. XVII, p. 330.

<sup>5</sup> Dubuque was of Norman descent and first saw the light of day on January 10, 1762, in the village of St. Pierre les Becquets in the district of Three Rivers. See Tassé's *Les Canadiens de L'Ouest*, Vol. I, p. 240. He is mentioned as the founder of the present city of Prairie du Chien, sharing the honor with Basil Giard and Pierre Antaya. See Coues's *The Expeditions of Zebulon M. Pike*, Vol. I, p. 303.

In *Senate Documents*, 1st Session, 29th Congress, No. 256, p. 3, the statement is made that Dubuque, "a mineralogist", settled among the Sacs and Foxes "sometime in the year 1774", but this is obviously an error.

Most of the history of the Dubuque mines is to be found in documents submitted to Congress and the United States Supreme Court by St. Louis persons who sought to establish their title to the lead-mining region after Dubuque's death in 1810. Under such circumstances the claimants could not be expected to make any admissions against their interest.

<sup>6</sup> Once, tradition tells us, when the Foxes were unwilling to accede to his demands, Dubuque threatened to set fire to the creek which flowed by their wigwams. Shortly after the departure of some of his companions up the stream, he carried out his threat, and the Indians, struck dumb with amazement, saw



their minds. He came into possession of certain facts which were destined to shape his whole career: he learned of the lead mines in the territory of the Fox Indians. The possibilities of exploiting so vast a tract of mineral land, comprising the bluffs and ravines near the city which bears his name to-day, must have appealed strongly to Dubuque's desire for adventure and personal aggrandizement. The Indians had guarded the secrecy of their lead discoveries and had obstinately resisted the white invasion. Why then did the Foxes see fit to make an exception in Dubuque's favor? Chiefly because Frenchmen were more popular among them than Englishmen or Americans. The French had settled among them "for the purposes of trade and sociability, and their interests, like those of the Indians, lay in the direction of keeping the fur preserves intact", while the English or American borderer indicated that he was "the herald of a relentless system of conquest."<sup>7</sup>

Having obtained sole permission to work the mines, a monopoly which would prevent other traders from securing the rich opportunities of the mining region, Dubuque soon removed from Prairie du Chien with ten French-Canadian laborers. Extensive improvements were made at once upon the site of his new labors: a farm was cleared, a trading-house, horse-mill, and smelting furnace were constructed, and mining commenced. Nor does Dubuque appear to have been restricted to the west side of the river while working in the interests of his traffic. It is believed that his prospectors and miners, who enjoyed the full sympathy of the

the water in a mass of flames. To be sure it was only the burning of some oil which had been poured upon the current of the stream above the village, but the wishes of Dubuque were soon satisfied. For such traditions of his life in the Iowa country see Tassé's *Les Canadiens de L'Ouest*, Vol. I, p. 240; *Annals of Iowa* (Third Series), Vol. II, p. 334; Beltrami's *A Pilgrimage in Europe and America*, Vol. II, p. 165.

<sup>7</sup> *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, Vol. XIII, pp. 279, 280, 283, 284; Tassé's *Les Canadiens de L'Ouest*, Vol. I, p. 242.



Sacs and the Foxes, roved about at will on both sides of the Mississippi.<sup>8</sup>

In exploiting the mines Dubuque seems to have employed his Indian friends to do the mining and smelting and Canadians and half-breeds to prove the claims which the Indians discovered. The only improved tools available at that early day were obtained from the traders: hoes and shovels, pick-axes and crowbars. Crude ore was brought to the surface in tough deer skins hoisted or dragged up inclined planes by means of long strips of hide. Thus for eight years Dubuque worked industriously at the mines in the Iowa country. Realizing that the grant of the Indians might not fully establish him upon the land, he applied to the Spanish Governor-General in 1796 for a formal recognition and confirmation of his rights to the property. His petition, translated from the French, reads as follows:

To his excellency the Baron de Carondelet:

Your excellency's very humble petitioner, named Julien Dubuque, having made a settlement on the frontiers of your government, in the midst of the Indian nations, who are the inhabitants of the country, has bought a tract of land from these Indians, with the mines it contains, and by his perseverance has surmounted all the obstacles, as expensive as they were dangerous, and, after many voyages, has come to be the peaceable possessor of a tract of land on the western bank of the Mississippi, to which he has given the name of the "Mines d'Espagne," in memory of the government to which he belonged. As the place of settlement is but a point, and the different mines which he works are apart, and at a distance of more than three leagues from each other, the very humble petitioner prays your Excellency to have the goodness to assure him the margin of the waters of the little river Maquanquitois to the margin of the Mesquabysnonques<sup>9</sup> which forms about seven leagues on the west bank of the Mississippi, by three leagues in depth, and to grant him the full proprietorship [Peaceable possession] thereof, which the

<sup>8</sup> *United States Supreme Court Reports*, 16 Howard, 221.

<sup>9</sup> The Maquoketa and the Tête des Morts are referred to.



very humble petitioner ventures to hope that your goodness will be pleased to grant him his request. I beseech that same goodness which makes the happiness of so many subjects, to pardon me my style, and be pleased to accept the pure simplicity of my heart in default of my eloquence. I pray Heaven, with all my power, that it preserve you, and that it load you with all its benefits; and I am, and shall be all my life, your Excellency's very humble, and very obedient, and very submissive servant.

J. DUBUQUE.

Upon the receipt of this memorial<sup>10</sup> the Governor-General turned for information to the merchant, Don Andreas Todd, an Irishman who had obtained from the King of Spain a monopoly of the Indian trade in Upper Louisiana. This individual replied that so far as he was concerned, he saw no reason why his excellency should not grant the request, provided "that the grantee shall observe the provisions of his Majesty relating to the trade with the Indians; and that this be absolutely prohibited to him, unless he shall have my consent in writing." The grant was accordingly made to Dubuque subject to these restrictions.<sup>11</sup>

On the first day of October, 1800, the vast expanse of territory west of the Mississippi was by Spain ceded back to France which was then under the sway of Napoleon Bonaparte and his government. At the moment, however, when almost all of Europe was mobilizing troops against

<sup>10</sup> This document may be found translated in *American State Papers, Public Lands*, Vol. III, p. 678; *Senate Documents*, 1st Session, 29th Congress, No. 256, pp. 17, 18.

<sup>11</sup> *United States Supreme Court Reports*, 16 Howard, 224.

"Don Andrew, however, does not seem to have been able to hamper Dubuque, and the latter's establishment grew with time. His friendship with the Indians, and their dislike of the Spanish, were a sufficient safeguard against interference from Don Andrew, although he appears to have met with no small opposition on the east side of the river from wandering representatives of the American Fur Company at Mackinaw, who are said to have obtained considerable supplies of lead from the crafty Foxes and indeed to have themselves smelted some ore." No authority is cited for this statement in *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, Vol. XIII, p. 283.



him, the First Consul, feeling the urgent need of concentrating his forces, abandoned his scheme of reviving a great colonial empire; and so, in April, 1803, he sold to the United States government for a few million dollars the rich fur-bearing and lead-mining province of Louisiana. The "Mines of Spain" were thus incorporated into the American Republic.<sup>12</sup>

#### THE SAC AND FOX TREATY OF 1804

Beginning with the year 1804 the United States government turned its attention to the unknown trans-Mississippi region acquired from France. The new purchase was divided into the Territory of Orleans and the District of Louisiana, the latter or northern part being attached for a short time to Indiana Territory under the governorship of William Henry Harrison. Early in the spring of 1804 Lewis and Clark set out on the exploring expedition which had been contemplated for commercial reasons even before Napoleon parted with the shady title which France held to the country.

On the third day of November, 1804, Harrison effected at St. Louis, then but a good-sized town, a treaty with the Sac and Fox tribes whose seven tepee villages overlooked the Mississippi River in the Iowa-Illinois country. The allied tribes gave up their title but not their right to possession of the lands east of the river.<sup>13</sup> In sending this treaty to the Senate President Thomas Jefferson urged its adoption because of the importance of securing exclusive commercial relations with all the Indian nations west of the Great River. The expansion of American commerce, then, was the chief motive which dominated United States Senators when they ratified the treaty in January, 1805.

<sup>12</sup> Channing's *The Jeffersonian System*, pp. 58-72, fully presents the circumstances of this big deal in real estate.

<sup>13</sup> Kappler's *Indian Affairs*, Vol. II, p. 76.



## THE DUBUQUE-CHOUTEAU CLAIM TO THE LEAD DISTRICT

The richness of the lead mines in the Sac and Fox territory had already attracted the attention of the public and of Congress. Indeed, rumors had reached the government at Washington that Julien Dubuque "claimed the richest of them, and that speculators were trying to get from him an interest in them." A few days after Harrison's treaty with the Sacs and Foxes, Dubuque completed important negotiations at St. Louis: he parted with his title to the southern half of the land which he occupied, including "all the works, furnaces, buildings, clearings, &c.," for the sum of \$10,848.60. The purchaser was Auguste Chouteau, a merchant of St. Louis to whom Dubuque had become indebted for articles used in the Indian trade. Dubuque also sold "certain records" for \$32.79.

Did Dubuque believe that his title to the land was worthless and that he was getting money and goods under false pretenses, or did Chouteau enter into the deal as pure speculation and adventure? These are interesting questions in view of the fact that after Dubuque had received a grant of the privilege to work the mines, he had taken no step towards securing a full and valid title: he had kept certain papers in his possession but never undertook to get from the Spanish officials an order for the survey of the area which he occupied. Without an order or a survey no land grant could be complete according to Spanish law. Whatever Dubuque and Chouteau may have thought about this aspect of the case, they lost no time in filing their joint claims to the lead district with the United States Board of Land Commissioners, sitting at St. Louis in May, 1805, for the purpose of adjudicating questions arising out of the Spanish land policy in the Mississippi Valley.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *Annals of Iowa* (Third Series), Vol. III, p. 649; *United States Supreme Court Reports*, 16 Howard, 204, 234, 235.



## THE EASTERN IOWA COUNTRY IN 1805: ZEBULON M. PIKE AND JULIEN DUBUQUE

In the summer of 1805 the commander of the western army detailed one of his lieutenants, Zebulon M. Pike, to explore the Upper Mississippi and collect general information for military and legislative purposes and more definite knowledge of what were the boundaries of Louisiana. In a keel-boat seventy feet long, with a party of twenty men, Pike ascended the river and on the 20th of August encountered the first difficulty, in the "rapids De Moyen", a series of cascades near the mouth of the Des Moines River. Here, in the midst of treacherous shoals, the Americans were met by William Ewing, four chiefs, fifteen warriors, and an interpreter by the name of Louis Honoré Tesson, who in their canoes assisted the party up the rapids to Ewing's house on the Illinois side opposite a Sac village of thirteen lodges on the present site of Montrose, Iowa. Tesson, son of the man who had obtained a Spanish land grant in 1799, was considerably disappointed when Pike refused to engage him as interpreter on the journey: he promised to point out mines which no person knew but himself, but Pike considered him "much of a hypocrite, and possessing great gasconism".<sup>15</sup>

While the exploring party was resting opposite Tesson's Spanish land grant settlement most of the next day, Pike made a speech to the chiefs of the Sac village. Pike later encamped on a sand bar near the present city of Fort Madison and two days afterward went into raptures over the site of the present city of Burlington, "a very handsome situation for a garrison", of which he wrote:

The channel of the river passes under the hill, which is about 600

<sup>15</sup> William Ewing had just been stationed "at the River Desmoin, to teach the Indians the Arts of Agriculture . . . . He appears to be a young man of innocence, levity and simplicity — without experience or observation."— Coues's *The Expeditions of Zebulon M. Pike*, Vol. I, pp. 15, 221, 222, 291.



feet perpendicular, and level on the top; 400 yards in the rear there is a small prairie of 8 or 10 acres, which would be a convenient spot for gardens; and on the east side of the river there is a beautiful prospect over a large prairie, as far as the eye can extend, now and then interrupted by groves of trees. Directly under the rock is a limestone spring, which, after an hour's work, would afford water amply sufficient for the consumption of a regiment. The landing is bold and safe, and at the lower part of the hill a road may be made for a team in half an hour. Black and white oak timber in abundance. The mountain [no doubt later known as Flint Hill] continues about two miles, and has five springs bursting from it in that distance.

On the following day, August 24th, Pike lost not only his two favorite dogs on the Iowa side but also two men who volunteered to find them. The party then encamped somewhere in Louisa County. On the 25th the explorers fired a blunderbuss every hour of the day as a signal to the lost men, but to no avail, and camp was pitched on Grant's prairie above the mouth of the Iowa River, now known as Muscatine Island. Pike learned of a village of Ioways ten miles up the Iowa River, and declared its branch, the Red Cedar, "navigable for batteaux nearly 300 miles".<sup>16</sup>

The next two camping places were also on the Iowa side: Louisa County and the site of Davenport. On the 28th Pike breakfasted at the camp of Mr. James Aird, a Scotch gentleman from Mackinac, who had just injured his boat in descending the Rock Rapids of the Mississippi. That evening above the rapids Pike landed for the night on the later site of Le Claire, and next morning had breakfast at a Fox village of eighteen lodges near the site of the present town of Princeton. Beyond the "Wabisipinekan" River, after a camp near the site of Camanche, they made good headway, noting Leopold hill near Bellevue in Jackson County.

<sup>16</sup> Coates's *The Expeditions of Zebulon M. Pike*, Vol. I, pp. 21, 292. See also Miss Ethyl E. Martin's article in *THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, Vol. IX, pp. 335-358.



At twelve o'clock on Sunday, September 1st, Pike arrived at the lead mines and despite a violent fever he dressed himself "with an intention to execute the orders of the general [James Wilkinson] relative to this place." Twelve miles inland was the second Fox village. As to what happened let the entry in Pike's journal suffice:

We were saluted with a field-piece, and received with every mark of attention by Monsieur Dubuque, the proprietor. There were no horses at the house, and it was six miles to where the mines were worked; it was therefore impossible to make a report by actual inspection. I therefore proposed 10 queries, on the answers to which my report was founded.

Lieutenant Pike put the following questions to Dubuque, whose replies seemed "to carry with them the semblance of equivocation":<sup>17</sup>

1. What is the date of your grant of the mines from the savages?  
*Ans.* The copy of the grant is in Mr. [Antoine Pierre] Soulard's [Surveyor-general's] office at St. Louis.
2. What is the date of the confirmation by the Spaniards?  
*Ans.* The same as to query first.
3. What is the extent of your grant?  
*Ans.* The same as above.
4. What is the extent of the mines?  
*Ans.* Twenty-eight or twenty-seven leagues long, and from one to three broad.
5. Lead made per annum?  
*Ans.* From 20,000 to 40,000 pounds.
6. Quantity of lead per cwt. of mineral?  
*Ans.* Seventy-five per cent.
7. Quantity of lead in pigs?  
*Ans.* All we make, as we neither manufacture bar, sheet-lead, nor shot.
8. If mixed with any other mineral?  
*Ans.* We have seen some copper, but having no person sufficient-

<sup>17</sup> Coues's *The Expeditions of Zebulon M. Pike*, Vol. I, pp. 28-30, 225, 226, 294, 339.



ly acquainted with chemistry to make the experiment properly, cannot say as to the proportion it bears to the lead.

Dubuque's house then stood near the mouth of Catfish Creek close to the Mississippi. To quote again from Pike's interesting journal:

Dined with Mr. D., who informed me that the Sioux and Sauteurs were as warmly engaged in opposition as ever. . . . At this place I was introduced to a chief called Raven, of the Reynards [Foxes]. He made a very flowery speech on the occasion, which I answered in a few words, accompanied by a small present.

I had now given up all hopes of my two men, and was about to embark when a peroque [pirogue] arrived, in which they were, with a Mr. Blondeau, and two Indians whom that gentleman had engaged above the rapids of Stony [Rock] river. The two soldiers had been six days without anything to eat except muscles [mussels], when they met Mr. James Aird, by whose humanity and attention their strength and spirits were in a measure restored; and they were enabled to reach the [first] Reynard village, where they met Mr. B. The Indian chief furnished them with corn and shoes, and showed his friendship by every possible attention. I immediately discharged the hire of the Indians, and gave Mr. Blondeau a passage to the Prairie des Chiens. Left the lead mines at four o'clock. Distance 25 miles.

All along the west bank north of the Des Moines River Pike observed the possibilities of good deer-shooting. Opposite the mouth of the Turkey River the Americans landed to shoot pigeons. "The moment a gun was fired," writes Pike, "some Indians, who were on the shore above us, ran down and put off in their peroques with great precipitation; upon which Mr. Blondeau informed me that all the women and children were frightened at the very name of an American boat, and that the men held us in great respect, conceiving us very quarrelsome, much for war, and also very brave." The warriors who took to the water in such a hurry were Foxes from the third village half a league up the Turkey River, where they raised "sufficient corn to supply



all the permanent and transient inhabitants of the Prairie des Chiens."<sup>18</sup>

At this village Pike was entertained by some Americans, Captain Fisher and Mr. Frazer, and in company with them and Mr. Woods crossed over to the Iowa side on the 5th of September: they ascended the hill which now rises between McGregor and North McGregor and by blazing some trees Pike marked that spot as most suitable for the proposed United States military post. To General Wilkinson he wrote that the hill was "level on top, and completely commands both rivers, the Mississippi being only one-half mile wide and the Ouisconsin [Wisconsin] about 900 yards when full." Concerning the site he added the following statement:

There is plenty of timber in the rear and a spring at no great distance on the hill. If this position is to have in view the annoyance of any European power who might be induced to attack it with cannon, it has infinitely the preference to a position called the Petit Gris on the Ouisconsin, which I visited and marked the next day.

On the small stream then called Giard's River, the northern boundary of Basil Giard's Spanish land grant, Pike found three houses, which with others on the Wisconsin side numbered about thirty-seven in all, housing perhaps three hundred and seventy settlers upon this far western frontier. After a few days rest among the generous and hospitable people of Prairie du Chien the exploring crew, enlarged by the accession of Mr. Frazer and two interpreters, continued their journey past Yellow River (Jaune Rivière) and three miles farther observed a steep bluff now called Painted Rock, long known to the French as "Roche Peinte" or "Rochers Peints", in Allamakee County. Some ten miles beyond Pike again encamped on the Iowa side.

On the 10th of September he got word from Wabasha,

<sup>18</sup> Coues's *The Expeditions of Zebulon M. Pike*, Vol. I, pp. 32, 33, 294.



chief of a Sioux village just below the mouth of the Upper Iowa River, that he had been waiting three days with meat, that his warriors at last had started to drink, and that therefore he could not meet the Americans "with his people sober" until the next day. Pike nevertheless pushed on and could write afterwards:

On our arrival opposite the lodges, the men were paraded on the bank, with their guns in their hands. They saluted us with ball with what might be termed three rounds; which I returned with three rounds from each boat with my blunderbusses. This salute, although nothing to soldiers accustomed to fire, would not be so agreeable to many people; as the Indians had all been drinking, and as some of them even tried their dexterity, to see how near the boat they could strike. They may, indeed, be said to have struck on every side of us. When landed, I had my pistols in my belt and sword in hand. I was met on the bank by the chief, and invited to his lodge. As soon as my guards were formed and sentinels posted, I accompanied him. Some of their arms behind, as a mark of confidence. At the chief's lodge I found a clean mat and pillow for me to sit on, and the before-mentioned pipe on a pair of small crutches before me. The chief sat on my right hand, my interpreter and Mr. Frazer on my left.

The chief then made a speech to which Pike gave reply, explaining the objects of his expedition. This was followed by a medicine dance, and just before the Americans departed, Pike presented Wabasha with tobacco, knives, half a pound of vermilion, one quart of salt, and eight gallons of liquor, of which two were whisky and the remainder water. The chief thanked him, saying, "they must come free, as he did not ask for them"; and Pike answered that to those who did not ask for anything, he gave freely; but to those who asked for much, he gave only little or nothing.<sup>19</sup>

The expedition proceeded northward to the Minnesota country and the sources of the Mississippi, and after mak-

<sup>19</sup> Coues's *The Expeditions of Zebulon M. Pike*, Vol. I, pp. 41, 43-48.



ing some discoveries and important negotiations with the Sioux Indians Pike started on the return journey to St. Louis in the spring of 1806. He stopped one April day at Wabasha's village, left some powder and tobacco when the chief did not come back from a hunt, and received from the Sioux a kettle of boiled meat and a deer. On the 18th of April the crew took breakfast at the Painted Rock. After a few days well spent at Prairie du Chien, Pike went on, reaching Dubuque's place at 10 o'clock in the evening of April 23rd. There he found a camp of traders with forty or fifty Indians, got some information from "the polite and evasive Monsieur Dubuque", and requested him to write on certain points. After boiling some food the party put off once more in haste. They descended the river rapidly, reaching the agricultural establishment at the lowest Sac village on Sunday, April 27th, where Pike met Blondeau and found all the Indians drunk.

Such were some of the interesting facts noted by Zebulon M. Pike in a journal and letters which were soon to give the American public in the East the first detailed glimpse of the Upper Mississippi Valley. The Iowa wilderness he described with special reference to the native inhabitants, three villages of Foxes and two of Sacs upon the Mississippi shore, and excellent sites for military strongholds as above indicated. He found the Foxes hunting from the Iowa River to the Upper Iowa, while the Sacs roamed over the same country and as far south as the Illinois, and westward to the Missouri. Pike also noted the cause of a schism between these allies, the Foxes "not approving of the insolence and ill-will" which had marked the conduct of the Sacs toward the United States. Both tribes raised a great quantity of corn, beans, and melons. The Ioways, Pike said, lived in villages near the mouth of the Iowa River and upon the Des Moines, under special Sac and Fox protection,



away from the highroad of commerce and therefore "less civilized". Such a picture of eastern Iowa as then inhabited is complete if it includes Wabasha's village of Sioux Indians in the northeastern corner, with all the region north of Prairie du Chien on both sides of the Mississippi as their hunting-grounds.<sup>20</sup>

#### DUBUQUE'S BUSINESS CAREER IN THE IOWA WILDERNESS

Such was the wilderness of eastern Iowa in which Julien Dubuque dwelt from the time of settlement in 1788 until his death in 1810. He had remained in uninterrupted possession of the lead region, mined and smelted the ore, maintained several houses and a horse-mill, cultivated four plots, and traded with his Indian friends. He exercised great influence over the Indians on both sides of the river: Winnebagoes and Foxes were in the habit of consulting him upon their more important concerns.<sup>21</sup>

Twice a year, it is related, in the spring and autumn, Dubuque left the scenes of his labors with some of his French employees in charge of boat-loads of lead and furs. Accompanied sometimes by Fox chiefs and warriors they floated down the current of the Mississippi to St. Louis, the one emporium of the great Middle West. There his visits seem to have created a considerable sensation, for it is said balls were given in his honor, and the leading men showered attentions upon him. A clerk in the store of Auguste Chouteau, with whom Dubuque traded, described him as a man "below the usual stature, of black hair and eyes, wiry and well built, capable of great endurance, and remarkably courteous and polite, with all the suavity and grace of the

<sup>20</sup> Coues's *The Expeditions of Zebulon M. Pike*, Vol. I, pp. 337-339, 342, 348. Pike computed the probable number of Sacs at 2850, Foxes 1750, and Ioways 1400. See page 346.

<sup>21</sup> *Annals of Iowa* (Third Series), Vol. V, map opposite page 328; *United States Supreme Court Reports*, 16 Howard, 221, 222.



typical Frenchman." In exchange for lead and furs and deer-skins Dubuque obtained all sorts of articles for his Indian customers.<sup>22</sup>

But Dubuque was no financier: as was stated above, he fell under obligation to Auguste Chouteau of St. Louis, and to liquidate the indebtedness he sold part of the lead lands in 1804. Chouteau promised to pay a balance in Dubuque's favor in merchandise, taffetas, whisky, and other articles, during the next two years.<sup>23</sup> Despite the fact that the lead industry offered such unusual opportunities, Dubuque did not wax wealthy: not only St. Louis merchants but Mackinac traders as well held claims against him as the following letter, translated from the French, bears witness:<sup>24</sup>

DE LA PRERYE DA CHIENS 3 June 1807.

*Msrs Rochébleve & poollier & Coy*

SIRS — by Mr Brisebois you will receive twenty eight packs and four ditto for Mr. Berthelotte all together making thirty two packs whose invoice is enclosed, and which you will receive and send on to be sold on the account I owe you

I have drawn on you for the wages of only one man to whom is due 689lvs. the rest I have drawn for Mr. Brisebois which I suppose will only be to transfer it from one leaf to another of your books.

Probably you will be astonished at so small returns this year. It is true, but consider the circumstances which have caused this small result. For seeing the fine appearances of last autumn I arranged with 8 men to trap Beaver on the Missourye I had sent them An Outfit[?] to make their Entrance into the village and entrench it etc. When they had gone ten days journey or had camped ten times they met the Sioux of Des Moines river, and had a little Broil with them. They all gave up the enterprize and came to pass the winter opposite their village eating up their maize since they had no

<sup>22</sup> Tassé's *Les Canadiens de L'Ouest*, Vol. I, p. 253; *Annals of Iowa* (Third Series), Vol. II, p. 335; Sabin's *The Making of Iowa*, p. 90.

<sup>23</sup> *Annals of Iowa* (Third Series), Vol. III, pp. 649, 650; *Senate Documents*, 1st Session, 29th Congress, No. 256, pp. 2, 3, 9, 18-20.

<sup>24</sup> *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, Vol. XIX, pp. 318-320.



meat to eat. This spring they came to return to me what remained, their guns, traps and Kettles, and I refused to accept them only replying that the loss was total. I told them that these credits remained for another year, which they must make up. But this Misfortune makes me wish to give up trading and I will really quit it when affairs have become settled up.

I pray you not to be apprehensive for the Balance that remains against me — it is true that I am on the wrong side of the account But when I die I have funds that belong to me that will more than equal the Balance owing you. For all the small debts that I owe you I would much prefer to pay in peltry than to draw on you for money.

I inform you that I have waited in vain since I had the honor of receiving a letter from you last Autumn and for information of the inheritance that I charged you to recover. I do not know the result, but whatever it may Be I always await with Great impatience whatever you may have to tell me.

I had hoped to go to Mackinac this year but an alarm spread among the Savages renders my presence necessary in my locality and I must postpone my journey until next year.

As for the Accounting that you ask me for, I make it the same as to what I owe you as you and every one does. But there are some small differences in regard to the price made on sugar, rum, and powder; and after these are settled, I will adjust the Balance whenever you wish.

Since we have learned from you that I have had my lands confirmed [see page 24 below], I await a favorable opportunity to sell a portion of them to satisfy those that I owe, and to have left sufficient to live on the remainder.

I am, awaiting the honor of one of your letters, and the pleasure of seeing you afterwards, one who has the honor to be, Messieurs,  
Your very humble and very affectionate Servant

J. DUBUQUE

Such were the difficulties in which Dubuque became involved towards the end of his life. After the year 1806 he accumulated more debts at St. Louis, for the men who later laid claim to all his lands asserted that his influence with the Indians "had been much enhanced by the liberal pres-



ents he had made them." In 1809 he began to trade considerably with Jean Baptiste Faribault, then an independent trader at Prairie du Chien. But Dubuque could not prosper: he seems to have been too generous to his Indian friends. And so, when death overtook him, his Fox neighbors were thrown into the deepest grief, so unalterably had Dubuque won their affections. If we may believe tradition, the funeral ceremonies conducted by the natives were characterized by pomp and many were the eloquent speeches at the grave. Dubuque was buried upon a high bluff situated between Catfish Creek and the Mississippi.<sup>25</sup>

#### DUBUQUE'S CLAIM TO THE LEAD-MINING REGION

Meanwhile in 1806 the United States Land Commissioners with one dissenting voice had pronounced the Dubuque-Chouteau claim a complete and valid Spanish grant. Pierre Chouteau, Jr., who had already spent a couple of years at the lead mines,<sup>26</sup> set out from St. Louis in the spring of the year 1810 after repeated urgings by Dubuque and arrived a few weeks after the latter's death. According to the representations of the Chouteau claimants, Dubuque had often spoken to the Fox Indians of the expected arrival of his friend, and a short time before his death bade them to receive and treat him as a friend.

The Fox chiefs welcomed Chouteau "with every demonstration of respect and kindness, and informed him that it

<sup>25</sup> For such accounts see *Annals of Iowa* (Third Series), Vol. III, p. 343; Tassé's *Les Canadiens de L'Ouest*, p. 250; *Senate Documents*, 1st session, 29th Congress, No. 256, p. 12. For Dubuque's trade with Faribault see *Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society*, Vol. III, p. 174. In Catlin's *North American Indians* (Chatto and Windus), Vol. II, p. 130, there is a picture of Dubuque's grave on the bluff. In 1897 the citizens of Dubuque erected a thirty-eight-foot monument upon the spot.

<sup>26</sup> Thwaites's *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, Vol. V, p. 375. See also Chittenden's *The History of the American Fur Trade of the Far West*, Vol. I, p. 383.



was the request of Dubuque that he should take possession of his property and occupy his house." Although Pierre Chouteau did not stay upon the premises permanently after 1810, he continued to do business there until the commencement of the War of 1812, when he returned to St. Louis. By this time, however, much had happened to the status of the Dubuque-Chouteau title. In the year 1810 Albert Gallatin, Secretary of the Treasury, rendered a report hostile to the claim, and accordingly, in December, 1811, the Land Commissioners reversed their decision of 1806.

Not even this hard blow could dampen the ardor of the St. Louis merchants and traders who were interested in the lead-mine region. Auguste Chouteau, who had been waiting two years and more for an opportunity to qualify as Julien Dubuque's administrator, at last succeeded in getting the appointment under the following circumstances: the Territory of Orleans was admitted to the Union as the State of Louisiana in April, 1812, and the northern part of the Louisiana Purchase (which from 1805 to 1812 had constituted the Territory of Louisiana) was then organized into the Territory of Missouri, and all of the Iowa country became part of St. Charles County, Missouri. In defiance of the Land Commissioners' decision, Chouteau then obtained from the probate court of this county an order to sell Dubuque's interest in the mining lands for the payment of his debts. The land was accordingly divided into parcels and sold to John P. Cabanne, Pierre Chouteau, Jr., William Russell, and others.<sup>27</sup> Their claim to Dubuque's Mines became the most notorious case in and out of the halls of Congress for over forty years: pressure was brought to bear in many ways and not until the United States Supreme

<sup>27</sup> *Senate Documents*, 1st Session, 29th Congress, No. 256, p. 12; *United States Supreme Court Reports*, 16 Howard, 204, 205; *Annals of Iowa* (Third Series), Vol. V, pp. 327-330.



Court declared its opinion in 1853 were the St. Louis merchants forever silenced.

DUBUQUE'S MINES FROM 1810 TO 1815

Dubuque's removal by death did not end the exploitation of the lead mines, for the Fox villagers took things into their own hands. Down to September, 1811, they are said to have dug and smelted the lead ore with remarkable success, finding a market for their product at the government factory of old Fort Madison. Jean Baptiste Faribault of Prairie du Chien, who began trading with Dubuque in 1809, also bought from them, conveying his cargoes to St. Louis in keel-boats at a good profit. When the British captured Prairie du Chien in 1814, their Indian allies seized \$3000 worth of Faribault's lead at Dubuque's mines.

It was reported that the Sacs and Foxes produced four hundred thousand pounds of lead the year after Dubuque's death. They had largely abandoned the chase and were exchanging their lead for goods. The United States government was urged to induce the Indians to turn their attention permanently to mining in order to drive Canadian fur traders from the country. This advice by an Indian agent met with no response, and as a result British subjects were allowed to ply their traffic in the Iowa wilderness a number of years more.

The Sacs and Foxes had been operating Dubuque's mines for over a year when the United States factor of Fort Madison sent George Hunt, his sutler, with government goods to their neighborhood. This man arrived on the Illinois side of the river at a point known as Death's Head, a few miles below Dubuque, and there with the aid of a half-breed interpreter and two discharged soldiers, erected a store, lead-house, and fur-house. About the end of September he commenced trade in earnest: from ten to fifteen canoes of



lead came to his landing daily. Near by, Nathaniel Pryor, one of the four sergeants of the Lewis and Clark expedition, carried on a smelting furnace.

Hunt had transacted profitable business in lead and furs and had advanced a large quantity of goods to the Indians on credit when a party of Winnebagoes, returning from their defeat at the battle of Tippecanoe, came along, riddled Hunt's men with bullets, and then scalped and dissected them. Hunt himself was saved because he was taken for an Englishman. During the drunken orgy that followed their discovery of his barrel of whiskey Hunt and his interpreter took their departure southward to Fort Madison. On looking back as they made their escape in the darkness they saw the sky lit up by a raging fire and concluded that the Indians had set the torch to the buildings. When Hunt attempted to return for his lead in May, 1812, he and other passengers in a French boat from St. Louis found the Mississippi River blockaded by a force of Winnebagoes on Rock Island: French boats were required to pay tribute and all Americans were threatened with death. It was the beginning of the War of 1812 in the Upper Mississippi Valley: a war between British traders and their Indian allies on one side and American traders and troops on the other.<sup>28</sup>

What happened at the lead mines after hostilities were opened in this region? As English influence over the minds and commerce of the Black Hawk faction of the Sacs and Foxes reigned supreme for a while even after the conclusion of peace in 1815, trade in lead was no doubt practically ruined so far as Americans were concerned.

#### IMPORTANCE OF THE YEAR 1816 IN IOWA HISTORY

After the close of the War of 1812 the American government lost no time in making its strong arm felt in the upper

<sup>28</sup> For Hunt's account of trade near the lead mines see *THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, Vol. XI, pp. 525-534, 540. For operations at Du-



portion of the Mississippi Valley: north of Fort Edwards, which was constructed opposite the mouth of the Des Moines River, arose Fort Armstrong upon Rock Island, and at Prairie du Chien there appeared Fort Crawford, all three being erected in the year 1816. Henceforth, the United States troops garrisoned at these posts were to act as a police force to see that the government's trade and intercourse laws were observed by traders in the Indian country, and gradually American subjects gained a foothold in the region.

The sutler of the troops upon Rock Island, George Davenport, a native-born Englishman, soon turned to the Indian trade. He is credited with having shipped to St. Louis in 1816 the first flatboat of lead "ever avowedly emanating from the Fever River mines". It may be doubted whether Davenport obtained the ore as early as this, but that he visited the Sac and Fox Indians who operated the mines on both sides of the Mississippi in 1818 and that he obtained large quantities of lead from them practically every year thereafter is well authenticated.<sup>29</sup>

Another event of importance in 1816 was the survey and marking of the line which many years later came to be Iowa's southern boundary. By a treaty in 1808 the Osage Indians surrendered their rights to a considerable tract of land within the Louisiana Territory. On account of the War of 1812 the government did nothing to follow up the treaty until after peace was declared. Then John C. Sullivan was commissioned to mark the northern border of the Indian cession. With the aid of a few Osages he projected a line from a point one hundred miles north of the mouth of the Kansas River due east, as he supposed, to the Des

buque's mines from 1810 to 1814 see the writer's article on the fur trade in THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS, Vol. XII, pp. 503, 504.

<sup>29</sup> *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, Vol. XIII, p. 286; Wilkie's *Davenport Past and Present*, p. 155.



Moines River, driving stakes in the prairie and blazing trees in the timber.

For many years this Old Indian Boundary Line "lay undisturbed by the tread of the white man, while the grass grew over the stakes and mounds the surveyor left in his wake and time almost weathered away the blazed trail where the outstretched hand of civilization had sought to mark its line." Not until the State of Missouri almost twenty-five years later attempted to push its boundary some ten miles farther north, thus rousing the warlike spirit of the people of Iowa Territory, were steps taken to locate the position of Sullivan's boundary. The United States Supreme Court finally decided in favor of the contention that Sullivan's Line was the true State boundary.<sup>30</sup>

SOME VISITORS AT THE DUBUQUE MINES IN THE YEARS 1817,  
1818, AND 1819

American exploration of the northern portion of the Louisiana Purchase had been neglected for many years after Pike's important expedition, when Major Stephen H. Long, a topographical engineer of the United States Army, was despatched from Prairie du Chien in July, 1817, to sketch the course of the Upper Mississippi. In a six-oared skiff with a crew of seven men and two interpreters Long ascended the river to the Falls of St. Anthony. While passing the Iowa country he learned that the Yellow River was navigable for a distance of fifty miles for pirogues in time of high water. Three miles above the Upper Iowa River he and his party passed a Fox village of five or six lodges. Long soon returned to Fort Crawford, and then accompanied by five men he journeyed by water to St. Louis. Passing Dubuque's mines and noting the beautiful scenery upon the banks of the Great River he wrote:

<sup>30</sup> Parish's *Robert Lucas*, pp. 229-257.



But the idea that this beautiful tract has for ages unfolded its charms with none to admire, but unfeeling savages, instead of having delighted thousands that were capable of enjoying them, casts a gloom upon the scenery, which added to the solemn stillness that everywhere prevails in these solitary regions, robs the mind of half its pleasures.

On the 4th of August Long and his crew disembarked upon the Iowa shore to view the ruins of Fort Madison: nothing remained but old chimneys and a covert way with palisades, and a number of fruit trees in the old garden, among them "the peach, the nectarine and the apple tree." Farther on they stopped at Fort Edwards in Illinois near which were to be seen traces of a surveyor's work. On the 11th of August, Major Long and Dr. Lane ascended for some distance the "De Moyen" River, then in a low stage of water, with its narrow and crooked channel full of drift wood, snags, and sawyers. The principal part of the Ioway tribe resided about one hundred and twenty miles up. The explorers observed many fragments of coal of good quality upon the sand bars. Four days later Long arrived at Bellefontaine after an absence of seventy-six days.<sup>31</sup>

In 1818, the same year in which George Davenport began to purchase lead from the Indians, a man named John S. Miller with two companions is reported to have exchanged a boat-load of goods at the mines. Up to 1819 many Americans are said to have been killed in the attempt to go among the Indian miners to compete with the French Canadian traders. It was customary for the young Sac and Fox Indians to plant their corn in the spring and hunt for furs and skins in the summer, leaving the old men and most of the women to go up to the lead mines in canoes, dig mineral, and smelt it in log furnaces, returning to their village sometime in the autumn. Edward Tanner, a man who had

<sup>31</sup> *Minnesota Historical Society Collections*, Vol. II, pp. 10, 67, 68, 69, 75, 76, 80, 81; *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. XVI, pp. 163-172.



scoured the western country and visited all the native tribes in the search for a brother captured by the Indians many years before, wrote of "De Buke's" mine as very rich and productive, but he added: "So deeply rooted is the jealousy of the Indians, that they allow no trader to build his hut on the side of the river in the vicinity of these mines."<sup>32</sup>

In 1819 a general movement set in toward the Illinois lead region. Jesse W. Shull appeared at Dubuque's mines with goods for a Prairie du Chien firm. During the months of June and July Thomas Forsyth ascended the Mississippi from St. Louis with goods for the Sioux Indians north of Prairie du Chien. On this journey he and his men met several canoes laden with Sacs and Foxes, camped above the mouth of the Iowa River, and delivered Indian annuities at Fort Armstrong on Rock Island. Forsyth had with him G. Lucie, at one time Dubuque's interpreter, "a simple, harmless creature", who told of all the upper lead mines. Of those in the Iowa country he mentioned one "at a place called the Red Head's village, about six miles above the Grand Macouttely, . . . up a small creek on its left bank". This mine was declared non-productive, "as the ore appeared to be incorporated with some other hard substance, probably silver, and required too much labor to extract the lead, and was soon abandoned." Dubuque's mines were "too well known to require any description", while another mine six miles up the Little Maquoketa, fifteen miles farther north, was also referred to. The party rested at the Tete des Morts or Death's Head Creek during a storm, and at Prairie du Chien was increased into a force consisting of ninety-eight soldiers and twenty boatmen. At the Indian village just north of the Upper Iowa River a one-eyed Sioux chief and his band lined the bank to receive pres-

<sup>32</sup> *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, Vol. VIII, p. 288, and Vol. XIII, pp. 284, 286, 287.



ents of powder and "milk" (whisky). Forsyth went as far as Camp Cold Water which was later called Fort Snelling.<sup>33</sup>

ACCOUNTS OF THE MINES BY KEARNY AND SCHOOLCRAFT

Stephen Watts Kearny accompanied a military expedition from Camp Missouri across northern Iowa to Camp Cold Water, and in a very interesting journal told of his voyage down the Mississippi to St. Louis in August, 1820. At ten o'clock on the morning of the 5th of August, Kearny stopped his six-oared keel-boat "at a settlement of traders, (where we found Dr. Muir, late of the army, with his squaw & 2 children) opposite a 'Fox village' of 17 lodges, & 100 Inhabitants — On a high hill, at one end of the village, we saw a small building, covering the remains of Mr. Dubuque . . . . These mines are at present partially worked by 5 or 6 of the 'Fox Indians'." Kearny adds that he and his men were politely received by Dr. Muir and the traders.

Farther on Kearny stopped at a Fox village of nineteen lodges above the Rock Rapids, and later enjoyed a visit at Fort Armstrong. Having passed the "Ayauwa" and "Pole cat" rivers, Kearny noted a trader's house upon the Iowa shore some distance below and then canoed past the "Flint Hill", six miles long and one hundred feet high. The next stop was made at old Fort Madison "on the W. shore, where are the remains of nine chimneys, & some Picketts, & scattering stones, that indicate a military work once existed here." Fort Edwards, opposite the mouth of the Des Moines, had been abandoned for over a year and a half.<sup>34</sup>

Two days after Kearny's visit Henry R. Schoolcraft in a canoe manned by eight voyageurs and one guide landed at

Tanner's efforts were crowned with success a year later when he found the object of his search at Lord Selkirk's colony on the Red River.— See *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, Vol. XIV, pp. 47, 48.

<sup>33</sup> *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, Vol. VI, pp. 188, 194, 195, 196, 201, 202, 216.

<sup>34</sup> *Annals of Iowa* (Third Series), Vol. X, pp. 364-369.



Chief Kettle's village of nineteen lodges and two hundred and fifty souls. From the island he got Dr. Muir and an interpreter, and then went to the lodge of Aquoqua to obtain information respecting the location of the mines. Objections were raised at once: "since the death of Dubuque, . . . they had manifested great jealousy of the whites, were afraid they would encroach on their rights, denied all former grants, and did not make it a practice even to allow strangers to view their diggings."

Prepared for just such an emergency Schoolcraft gave the reluctant chiefs presents of tobacco and whisky, and soon got their assent and two guides. Pursuing "a path over undulating hills, exhibiting a half prairie and picturesque rural aspect", they came to the diggings where women and old men were working with hoes, shovels, pick-axes, and crow-bars purchased from the traders. Baskets of the crude ore were carried out of the pits to the Mississippi by the women and ferried over to the island where the traders paid two dollars for one hundred and twenty pounds and then smelted it in their furnaces. Formerly, it seems, the Indians had smelted the ore on log heaps, a method which caused a considerable quantity to be converted into lead ashes. These ashes were also collected by the Foxes and sold to the traders for one dollar per bushel.

Schoolcraft found a stone monument over Dubuque's grave at this time. He learned also that the Indians had burned down Dubuque's house and fences, and declared: "They have erased every vestige of civilized life, and revoked or at least denied the grant [to Dubuque], and appear to set a very high value on the mines." After a minute examination of the mines, the visitor and his party returned northward to Prairie du Chien, the boatmen "sometimes animating their labors with a song".<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Schoolcraft's *Expedition to the Sources of the Mississippi*, Chapter XV; *Iowa Historical Record*, Vol. XVI, pp. 100-106.



## THE IOWA COUNTRY KNOWN AS "SAVAGE LANDS"

Some time after this the Iowa country which had been a part of Missouri Territory was left without a local constitutional status by the admission of Missouri to the Union in 1821. Bounded by the uninhabited portion of the State of Illinois on the east and the sparsely settled State of Missouri on the south, the Iowa wilderness for thirteen years went by the name of "Savage Lands" or "Indian Territory": as yet the government had purchased none of it from the Indian inhabitants and only two tracts of a square mile each had been confirmed as valid Spanish land grants, namely Tesson's near the present town of Montrose in Lee County and Giard's in Clayton County.

In the year 1821 the government assumed the regulation and control of lead mines upon the public lands in northwestern Illinois. Henceforth the mines were leased to private adventurers: the lessees were enabled to work the land peaceably under government protection in return for one tenth of the net produce of lead. During the years 1821-1830 they extracted 40,000,000 pounds of ore.

The Fox Indians across the river in the Iowa country had religiously excluded whites from the site of Dubuque's mines, and up to the summer of 1833, with slight interruptions, they remained in virtual possession. George Davenport obtained perhaps the greatest portion of their output. In 1822 he established a trading-post upon the Galena River and kept Amos Farrar in charge of the trade in furs and lead for several years. A trader by the name of "Kentuck" Anderson purchased from the Foxes the waste about their crude furnaces, smelted the lead-ashes in his own furnace on the island opposite the Fox village at a very small cost, and landed a keel-boat load of the product at St. Louis in the spring of 1822.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Wilkie's *Davenport Past and Present*, p. 156; *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, Vol. XX, pp. 356, 357; *Senate Documents*, 2nd Session, 21st Congress, No. 1, p. 148.



Early in May, 1823, occurred an event which was said to be "an epoch in the history of navigation." The eastern Iowa wilderness, hitherto apparently accessible only to canoes and other light water craft on account of channel obstructions in the Mississippi known as the Des Moines Rapids, was now reached and passed for the first time by a steamboat, the "Virginia", a vessel one hundred and eighteen feet long and twenty-two feet wide. J. C. Beltrami, a former judge in the kingdom of Italy during the years 1805-1814, was the passenger who recorded the feat of the "Virginia" as "an enterprise of the boldest, of the most extraordinary nature; and probably unparalleled", for no steamboat had ever before made a voyage as far north as the Falls of St. Anthony in the Minnesota country. The ship's captain was declared to be "entitled to the admiration of mankind, to the gratitude of his fellow-citizens, and of his government."

Beltrami took special note of the chief features of the Iowa country which he called "Savage Lands". In this public domain under the jurisdiction of the national government Beltrami saw no traces of civilization other than a few scattered traders' huts and, north of a Sac village at the head of the rapids, the ruins of old Fort Madison. He noted the "Bête Puante" (Skunk) and "Yahowas" (Iowa) rivers, and described the Iowa bank of the Mississippi in the following lines:

The fields were beginning to resume their verdure; the meadows, groves, and forests were reviving at the return of spring. Never had I seen nature more beautiful, more majestic, than in this vast domain of silence and solitude. . . . Wooded islands disposed in beautiful order by the hand of nature, continually varied the picture: the course of the river, which had become calm and smooth, reflected the dazzling rays of the sun like glass: smiling hills formed a delightful contrast with the immense prairies, which are like oceans, and the monotony of which is relieved by isolated clusters



of thick and massy trees. These enchanting scenes lasted from the river Yahowa till we reached a place which presents a distant and exquisitely blended view of what is called Rocky Island. . . . Fort Armstrong, at this spot, is constructed upon a *plateau*, at an elevation of about fifty feet above the level of the river, and rewards the spectator who ascends it with the most magical variety of scenery. . . .

The eastern bank at the mouth of Rocky River was lined with an encampment of Indians, called Foxes. Their features, dress, weapons, customs, and language, are similar to those of the Saukis, whose allies they are in peace and war. On the western shore of the Mississippi, a semicircular hill, clothed with trees and underwood, encloses a fertile spot carefully cultivated by the garrison, and formed into fields and kitchen gardens. The fort saluted us on our arrival with four discharges of cannon, and the Indians paid us the same compliment with their muskets. The echo, which repeated them a thousand times, was most striking from its contrast with the deep repose of these deserts.

After a pleasant reception by the garrison at Fort Armstrong, Beltrami and his fellow-passengers proceeded over the Rock Rapids, passed a village of Foxes six miles beyond, the rivers "la Pomme" (Wapsipinicon) and "la Garde" (?), and a place called Death's Head, the site of an Indian battle. At the Galena River lead mines a Kentucky family disembarked "with their arms and baggage, cats and dogs, hens and turkeys", a feature of emigrant life about which the eminent foreigner observed:

The facility, the indifference with which the Americans undertake distant and difficult emigrations, are perfectly amazing. Their spirit of speculation would carry them to the infernal regions, if another Sybil led the way with a golden bough.

Beltrami also found the Foxes in exclusive possession of Dubuque's mines, and with such jealousy that he "was obliged to have recourse to the all-powerful whiskey to obtain permission to see them." The Indians melted the lead into holes in the rock and then carried it to the traders.



Notwithstanding these precautions, Beltrami believed the mines so valuable and the Americans so enterprising that the Foxes could not retain sole possession much longer. He also alluded to Dubuque's remains as reposing "in a leaden chest in a mausoleum of wood," on a bluff overlooking the Indian village and the Mississippi River.

Beyond Prairie du Chien on the western bank rose "the painted rock", red and yellow. Farther on, a little above the Turkey River stood an old village which the Foxes had deserted. Then one dark night, opposite the mouth of the Upper Iowa River, the traveler was treated to an immense prairie and forest fire for a distance of fifteen miles, resembling "the undulating lava of Vesuvius or Aetna", and showering large sparks upon the steamboat to the amusement and excitement of the passengers. Such were Beltrami's experiences upon the eastern Iowa border.<sup>37</sup>

#### TRADE AT THE LEAD MINES FROM 1823 TO 1828

David G. Bates and A. P. Vanmetre occupied the island opposite the Fox village during the winter of 1823 and 1824 and purchased of the Indians 100,000 pounds of mineral and lead-ashes. No whites were as yet permitted to come near Dubuque's old mines. In 1824 Amos Farrar was still posted on the Galena River in Illinois. George Davenport appeared at St. Louis in the spring of 1825 to protest against the grant of a government license to Etienne Dubois, a clerk of Joseph Rolette of the American Fur Company: he objected to this individual's trading with the Foxes between Dubuque's mines and Prairie du Chien. Perhaps Davenport's business in lead was suffering considerably from competition with the great American trust founded and directed by John Jacob Astor.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, Vol. VI, pp. 272, 277; Wilkie's *Davenport Past and Present*, p. 157; Beltrami's *A Pilgrimage in Europe and America*, Vol. II, pp. 127, 128, 131, 135, 136, 150-152, 160, 161, 162, 164, 175, 176-178.

<sup>38</sup> *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, Vol. XX, pp. 374, 375, 378, 379, 380.



In a full report on lead mines in the Mississippi Valley prepared for the government in 1826, Lieutenant Thomas referred to "Dubuke's celebrated mines", about fifteen miles from Galena River, "wrought for a short period of the year by the Sac and Fox Indians, who derive much benefit from them in trading the ore to the white smelters." Squaws were the principal miners and they also frequently smelted the ore in small temporary furnaces.<sup>39</sup>

In July, 1825, about one hundred miners were engaged upon the Galena River, and a year later the government was leasing mines to four hundred and fifty-three persons. So large were the shipments of lead to St. Louis that the government was urged to clear out the Rock and Des Moines rapids of the Mississippi. An officer estimated that for \$30,000, the equivalent of two years' rent for the mines, the channel obstructions could be removed. And one year later a Winnebago chief complained of "a great many Americans on our land, working it without our permission. I want to tell our great Father to stop it; to reach out his long arm and draw them back." He referred to the miners and the persons who were then allowed to locate on public lands between the Rock and Wisconsin rivers. Lewis Cass of Michigan Territory emphasized the injustice of this method of advancing the Illinois frontier.<sup>40</sup>

That the Foxes who operated the old Dubuque mines at this time did not dispose of all their mineral to licensed Indian traders in their vicinity may be gathered from the statement of George W. Jones, later one of the first two representatives of the State of Iowa in the United States Senate in 1848. In the summer of 1828 the Foxes came with

<sup>39</sup> *Senate Documents*, 1st Session, 19th Congress, No. 45, p. 17, and 2nd Session, 21st Congress, No. 1, p. 148; *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, Vol. VI, pp. 290, 296.

<sup>40</sup> *House Executive Documents*, 2nd Session, 19th Congress, No. 7, p. 8, and 1st Session, 20th Congress, No. 117, p. 6.



samples of lead ore to his store at Sinsinawa Mound (southwestern Wisconsin) where he had squatted the year before, built two log furnaces, and set to smelting lead hauled by his teamsters from the Menominee and Galena River mines. Jones accompanied the Indians to what is now East Dubuque, Illinois, where they unloaded several canoes. Next day Jones went to the place with ox-team and wagon and removed the ore. To quote from his reminiscences: "I then lashed two canoes together, forming a transport in which to cross my wagon and oxen to and from the other shore. I therefore made the first wagon tracks and the first ferry to Dubuque, if not to any part of the State of Iowa."<sup>41</sup>

#### ABANDONMENT OF DUBUQUE'S MINES BY THE FOX INDIANS

Caleb Atwater, journeying from Ohio to Prairie du Chien in 1829, visited Morgan, chief of the Foxes, at the mines, and noted "Dubuque's tomb on a high hill where the cross on his grave can be seen from the river." In the year 1829 James L. Langworthy is reported to have crossed the river and with the Indians' permission and two young Fox guides explored the region near the site of Dubuque and between the Maquoketa and Turkey rivers.<sup>42</sup> Soon afterward an event occurred which was the signal for him and his friends to take possession of the coveted mines.

The Fox Indians of Dubuque's mines had gotten into trouble with some Winnebagoes whose chiefs told Wynkoop Warner, sub-agent for the Sacs and Foxes stationed at Galena, that they were willing to patch up differences at a council to be held at Prairie du Chien. Warner carried the news to Dubuque's mines, found nearly all the Foxes drunk, and immediately recrossed the river. Hearing the object of his visit, they later sent a deputation to request him to wait

<sup>41</sup> Parish's *George Wallace Jones*, p. 95.

<sup>42</sup> Atwater's *Remarks Made on a Tour to Prairie du Chien*, p. 73; *Annals of Iowa*, Vol. III, pp. 514, 515.



until the next morning when they would all be sober and come to see him. They accordingly set April 24, 1830, as the day when they would proceed to the proposed council at Prairie du Chien.

When the appointed time arrived, their chief, Kettle, informed Warner that he and his party were not ready, and so the agent went alone to meet an engagement for April 28th. Meanwhile General Street, agent for the Winnebagoes, had sent Warner word that the Foxes had better not come as there was at Prairie du Chien a body of Menominee Indians who had refused to receive wampum from the Foxes. On his journey back by water to Galena, Warner must have passed the Foxes on their way to the council, for not many days later, on May 7th, he received the news of a battle between Menominees and Foxes in which the Fox chief, also called Piemansky, and several others were killed.<sup>43</sup>

#### RUSH OF WHITES TO THE DUBUQUE MINES IN 1830

On account of this bloody encounter the Foxes in alarm abandoned their village at Dubuque's mines and repaired to Rock Island under the protection of troops from Fort Armstrong. No sooner did the whites in the Galena country hear of the fact when they made a rush across the river to take possession of the mines. Wynkoop Warner sent the following letter<sup>44</sup> to his superior, Thomas Forsyth, the Indian agent at Fort Armstrong:

GALENA, *June 3, 1830*

DEAR SIR: Since writing you, I was disappointed in getting a

<sup>43</sup> *Senate Documents*, 1st Session, 23rd Congress, No. 512, Vol. VIII, pp. 62, 63, 74. Two pioneers of the region are authority for the statement that the Sioux and not the Menominee Indians attacked the Foxes at this time. See *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, Vol. II, p. 170, and Vol. V, p. 256; *THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, Vol. VIII, p. 370.

<sup>44</sup> *Senate Documents*, 1st Session, 23d Congress, No. 512, Vol. VIII, pp. 62, 64, 68.



horse, and have deferred going until morning. I have the promise of two men to take me up in a canoe. I have since understood, to a certainty, that there are at least one hundred men mining in the Indian country, and are determined to remain there. I will, on tomorrow, go and order them to leave there. I have hired a guide to show me where they are, but my belief is, from what I can hear, they will laugh at me. Rumor says, that Mr. Gratiot has gone over, with forty men, to take possession in the name of the claimants, John Smith,<sup>45</sup> and others, and that it has been a concerted plan to dispossess the Indians for that purpose; if, sir, they refuse to go, I shall send express to Col. Taylor, and inform him what your instructions are; for I think it a most flagrant outrage, and a breach, that we should *not* suffer imposed on the Indians. I would be very glad to hear from you as early as possible.

Very, &c.,

W. WARNER.

Among the first intruders upon the Fox lands in 1830 were the Langworthy brothers Lucius and James. In a lecture upon his early experiences, the former declared:<sup>46</sup>

We crossed over the Mississippi at this time, swimming our horses by the side of a canoe. It was the first flow, or the first tide of civilization on this western shore. . . . Where Dubuque now stands, corn fields stretched along the bluffs, up the ravines, and the Coule valley, and a thousand acres of level land skirting the shore, was covered with tall grass, as a field of waving grain. But the stalks of the corn were of the last year's growth, the ears had been plucked, and they withered and blighted, left standing alone MOURNFUL

<sup>45</sup> If we may believe another account, John Smith had attempted to work the mines before the Indians left in 1830. On p. 14 of *A Record of the Commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Settlement of Iowa*, appears the following statement:

"Soon after the death of Dubuque, Col. John Smith 'T' of Missouri, a gentleman of remarkable enterprise and bravery came from St. Louis in a keel-boat with sixty men to prosecute the business of mining and smelting. He, with others, had purchased an interest in the Dubuque claim when it like Tesson's was sold at St. Louis. The Musquakes (Foxes) however, formed under Chief Piamosky, in front of their village in hostile array, and successfully resisted the landing of Col. Smith and his men."

<sup>46</sup> See THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS, Vol. VIII, pp. 317, 321, 354, 371, 372.



REPRESENTATIVES of the VANISHED RACE. A large village was then standing at the mouth of Catfish Creek, silent, solitary, deserted — no one remained to greet us, but the mystic shadows of the past. About seventy buildings constructed with poles, and the bark of trees remained. . . . Their council house, though rude, was ample in its dimensions, and contained a great number of furnaces, in which kettles had been placed, to prepare the feasts of peace or war. But their council fires had gone out. On the inner surface of the bark there were paintings done with considerable artistic skill, representing the buffalo, elk, bear, panther, and other animals of the chase; also their wild sports on the prairie, and even their feats in wars.

Forsyth at once commanded Warner to prevent any persons from injuring the Indian bark-huts or working the mines, or else to call upon the commandant of Fort Crawford for assistance. On June 9th the Foxes had not yet heard of the white invasion of their mines: Forsyth declared that the Sacs and Foxes were already sufficiently soured against the whites because their people had been killed on the way to Prairie du Chien in answer to an invitation of the government agent, and should they then learn that whites were in possession of their mineral lands, blood would most certainly be shed and plans for a treaty of peace would be frustrated. Here was a fine opportunity, the psychological moment for the United States to prove its friendly disposition toward the Sacs and Foxes by punishing the whites for misconduct.<sup>47</sup>

On June 16th General William Clark of St. Louis called upon General Henry Atkinson for troops to remove the intruders. A few days later he received word from the Indian office relating to the removal of Forsyth and the appointment of Felix St. Vrain as Indian agent.<sup>48</sup> By this

<sup>47</sup> *Senate Documents*, 1st Session, 23d Congress, No. 512, Vol. VIII, pp. 63, 64, 65, 95.

<sup>48</sup> *Senate Documents*, 1st Session, 23d Congress, No. 512, Vol. VIII, pp. 62, 68, 71.



time the miners had gathered upon the forbidden soil in such numbers that they felt the necessity of formally expressing rules for future conduct in the new mining community. On the 17th of June they are said to have met beside a cottonwood log upon the Mississippi bank and prepared the following regulations — probably the first set of laws drawn up by whites within the limits of what is now the State of Iowa:

Dubuque Mines, June 17, 1830.

We, a committee, having been chosen to draft certain rules and regulations, by which we, as miners, will be governed; and, having duly considered the subject, do unanimously agree that we will be governed by the regulations on the east side of the Mississippi River, with the following exceptions, to wit:

ARTICLE I.— That each and every man shall hold two hundred yards square of ground by working said ground one day in six.

ARTICLE II.— We further agree, that there shall be chosen by the majority of miners present, a person who shall hold this article, and who shall grant letters of arbitration, on application being made, and that said letter [of] arbitration shall be obligatory on the parties concerned so applying.

To the above, we the undersigned subscribe:

J. L. LANGWORTHY,  
H. F. LANDER,  
JAMES MCPHEETERS,  
SAMUEL H. SCOLES,  
E. M. URN.

#### UNITED STATES TROOPS AT THE MINES

Having elected Dr. Francis Jarret to hold the instrument, the squatters were not destined to enjoy for long the fruits of their illegal enterprise. Lieutenant Colonel Zachary Taylor of the First Infantry at Fort Crawford warned them about the 4th of July, 1830, to depart within one week. He heard the miners' objections: "they had occupied a vacant country, had struck some valuable lodes, that the land would soon be purchased, and that they intended to



maintain possession;" to all of which he replied: "We shall see to that my boys." Anticipating the arrival of troops the miners speedily re-crossed the river, and later when soldiers disembarked from a steamer to enforce orders, they took only three miners prisoners.<sup>49</sup>

During the stay of soldiers in the mining region the Foxes ventured back, seized the lead which they found, mined the newly discovered lodes, and from one alone they are said to have obtained more than a million pounds of ore, with the assistance of traders and settlers along the river who gave them provisions, implements, and teams. During the next two or three years the American Fur Company had agents at the mines and also at an island opposite the mouth of the Little Maquoketa — here no doubt they exchanged merchandise for the lead mined by the Foxes.<sup>50</sup>

#### SALE OF THE LEAD DISTRICT TO THE UNITED STATES

General William Clark of St. Louis had entertained hopes during the summer of 1830 of buying the lead district from the Foxes. Thomas L. McKenney, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, wrote to him as follows on the 9th of June, 1830:<sup>51</sup>

There is no objection to your purchasing, subject to ratification, &c., as usual, the mineral country, called Dubuque's mines, as it will be the means, not only of possessing the country of those valuable mineral regions, upon which our people are constantly intruding, but of throwing the Sacs and Foxes back from the border of the Mississippi, and from the means of supplying themselves with whiskey, by their proximity to the whites, who go up & down the river.

<sup>49</sup> THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS, Vol. VIII, pp. 317, 318, 321, 378; *The History of Dubuque County, Iowa*, pp. 341, 342. C. Childs, writing for a Dubuque newspaper, in 1857, declared that Zachary Taylor came to the miners in person.

<sup>50</sup> THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS, Vol. VIII, p. 379, and Vol. XII, pp. 547, 556.

<sup>51</sup> *Senate Documents*, 1st Session, 23d Congress, No. 512, Vol. VIII, p. 14.



After effecting the treaty of peace of July, 1830, by which the United States obtained title to practically all of what is now western and northern Iowa, Clark explained that although he had determined to procure the sale also of the lead region held by the Foxes he had not urged the purchase because he had previously heard that their price would be "\$32,000 per annum for fifty or sixty years, with salt, tobacco, and the payment of about sixty thousand dollars towards the debts due their traders." Without advice from Washington he was not prepared to pay the price even though the Sac and Fox mines were much superior to those east of the Mississippi. He was commended for his action. He stated that he expected a deputation of Sacs and Foxes to come to St. Louis in October prepared to sell their lead district. Again his hopes of a purchase were blasted.<sup>52</sup>

In 1831 the Sacs and Foxes sent a war party against the Sioux, and fearing that this breach of the peace would bring upon them punishment by the United States government, they once more abandoned the lead mines. In the fall of the year Lieutenant Jefferson Davis received orders to watch the Indians and to prevent whites from trespassing upon Indian territory. He remained on duty in the Iowa country until the spring of 1832, making frequent reconnoissances into the country, sometimes as far as the Maquoketa River: then he was relieved by Lieutenant J. R. B. Gardenier, who remained until Black Hawk's hostilities commenced.<sup>53</sup>

At the time of the treaty of July, 1830, a trader made the statement that the Sacs and Foxes would sell all their Mississippi River country to the United States provided the government would pay off their debts to Farnham and Davenport, representatives of the American Fur Company.

<sup>52</sup> *Senate Documents*, 1st Session, 23d Congress, No. 512, Vol. VIII, pp. 23, 80.

<sup>53</sup> See Jefferson Davis's letter in *Annals of Iowa* (Third Series), Vol. IV, pp. 231, 232.



But not until September, 1832, after the close of the Black Hawk War and the defeat of a hostile band of Sacs and Foxes by troops in Illinois and Wisconsin, were the beliefs of 1830 verified. In February, 1832, George Davenport had appeared at Washington, D. C., to state the grievances of the Sacs and Foxes and lay their complaints before Congress and the President: the Indians protested against the trespasses of whites at their lead mines and the removal of thousands of dollars' worth of mineral; they acknowledged the services of United States troops in removing the intruders and in being stationed at the mines during the summer of 1831, but they feared the renewal of depredations as soon as the soldiers should be removed. To prevent all further difficulties in the future, therefore, Davenport announced their proposal to sell the mines and adjoining territory to the United States.<sup>54</sup>

Had the government at once acted upon this announcement, the expense and loss of life of the Black Hawk War two or three months later might perhaps have been avoided. Hence, in the annals of American Indian policy the acquisition of eastern Iowa from the Sacs and Foxes came to represent not an outright purchase but an indemnity — the title to western and northern Iowa passed into the hands of the United States by purchase, but the title to eastern Iowa was acquired by conquest after a trial of the fortunes of war. Nevertheless, the treaty of peace concluded in September, 1832, made the Sac and Fox tribes beneficiaries of the government's generosity to the extent of \$20,000 a year in specie for thirty years. The Indians also got assurance that if they pointed out to a United States agent the position of one or more mines supposed by them to contain metal more valuable than either lead or iron, a suitable present would be their reward.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> *Senate Documents*, 1st Session, 23d Congress, No. 512, Vol. IX, p. 223.

<sup>55</sup> Kappler's *Indian Affairs*, Vol. II, p. 350.



## SECOND RUSH OF WHITES TO THE MINES AND THEIR PEACEABLE DEPARTURE

While General Scott was negotiating with the Indians at the close of the Black Hawk War, Galena in Illinois was crowded with people: scores of adventurers lined the eastern shore of the Mississippi, "ready to seize upon the possession and pre-emption rights in the new territory as soon as they became perfect." But they acted almost before the ink of the treaty was dry. The fact that the government's agents effected a treaty in September, 1832, did not entitle the whites to enter the conquered country: not only was it necessary to wait for the United States Senate to ratify the treaty, but the treaty itself permitted the Sacs and Foxes to remain in possession until June 1, 1833. Government troops, the Mississippi River, or treaty provisions — none of these could check a fresh movement to the forbidden soil. Through ignorance of the law and by reason of the advice of bad counsellors and of their natural avarice, nearly one hundred and fifty miners and their families settled down at the old lead mines of Julien Dubuque.

On the 25th of October, Lewis Cass, Secretary of War, gave strict orders in a letter to Marmaduke S. Davenport, the new Indian agent at Fort Armstrong, to cause the removal of this new band of intruders. Owing to the absence of a regular mail line these instructions from Washington were not received at Rock Island until December the 7th. Soon afterward Davenport informed the miners of the government's wishes, and they began to depart at once. On account of the scarcity of teams ten days' time was allowed to men with families to remove. Great distress was predicted for many men as they had invested all their money in digging and raising lead without having realized any return. As a great majority of them had taken part in the Black Hawk War, Davenport promised to represent to the government their claims to the ground they had entered and



to ask that they be permitted to resume operations in the mines which they were now compelled to leave. They prepared and signed a petition to the Secretary of War and declared:

It is with regret we learn that the Government issued its order to have us *expelled* east of the Mississippi. We have made some improvement, such as built us cabins, &c., to shelter us from the inclemency of the winter, peculiar to this latitude. We have not come here as intruders. It is not our intention to wrong Government; for the mineral or ore that is now raising at these mines will not be manufactured into lead before next spring. And then we will hold ourselves in readiness to pay such rent as is, or may be, established by law, from time to time, on the upper Mississippi lead mines. We would also state, that, if the order of the department be promptly executed, it will leave us, (and some with large and helpless families,) in a suffering condition, houseless and penniless, in the dead of winter; penniless we say, not as yet having received our pay after a long and aggravated summer's war. And as for danger being apprehended by Government of a collision between the whites and Indians, we would say such apprehension is groundless, for there is not, nor has there been, any Indians within one hundred and fifty miles of this place, to our knowledge, since the treaty.<sup>56</sup>

#### SECOND REMOVAL OF WHITES FROM THE LEAD DISTRICT

By the 1st of January, 1833, the petitioners, many of them bearing Irish names, had peaceably left the mines. Then Marmaduke S. Davenport expressed a fear that still more difficulty might arise because the Chouteau and other powerful interests at St. Louis had sent an agent to Galena for the purpose of leasing the Dubuque mines to such persons as might be willing to work them. The Secretary of War on January 5th issued orders to General Atkinson to employ troops at Fort Armstrong or Fort Crawford to drive out all intruders. On the 22nd of February Davenport reported that just after he had left Rock Island to demand the mur-

<sup>56</sup> *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, Vol. II, p. 81; *Senate Documents*, 1st Session, 23d Congress, No. 512, Vol. IX, pp. 558-560.



derers of a white man named Martin he was overtaken by an express from S. D. Carpenter of Galena with news that "from eighty to one hundred persons had gone over to Dubuque's mines, and were there engaged in mining, smelting, etc", and that unless a small military force were placed at the mines, white settlers could not be kept out.<sup>57</sup>

The St. Louis claimants, tracing their title back to the old Spanish grant to Dubuque, had taken possession of the land and erected houses upon it. Believing they would not be disturbed by the government until their title was adjudged invalid by the courts, they experienced "the extraordinary spectacle . . . of an *ejection by military force* under an order of the Secretary of War." Thrust from the land at the point of the bayonet, they could not resort to a tribunal to test their title or restore them to possession, "for they could not institute any proceedings against the United States for quieting the title; nor could they sue the armed men who ejected them, to recover the possession, as no court had jurisdiction at that spot for those purposes."

From various reports it would appear that the miners were removed several times during the early months of 1833. Lucius H. Langworthy afterward said:<sup>58</sup>

Many fine lodes and prospects were discovered and considerable lead manufactured up to about January twenty-fifth, 1833. . . . But in January the troops were again sent down from Prairie Du Chien, and removed the settlers the second time, merely because the treaty by which the land was acquired, had not been ratified by the

<sup>57</sup> *Senate Documents*, 1st Session, 23d Congress, No. 512, Vol. X, pp. 2, 70, 110; *Senate Documents*, 1st Session, 28th Congress, No. 350, p. 28.

<sup>58</sup> *Senate Documents*, 1st Session, 29th Congress, No. 256, pp. 12, 13; *THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, Vol. VIII, pp. 342, 381; *United States Supreme Court Reports*, 16 Howard, 205. At his wits' end, the agent of the St. Louis claimants went to Galena and sued for some of the lead mined west of the river, but being unable to identify the ore, he was nonsuited. Then he went to Washington, D. C., and petitioned for redress at nearly every session of Congress until the United States Supreme Court rendered an adverse decision.



United States Senate,<sup>59</sup> a formal act that every one knew would take place at the earliest opportunity. This was a foolish policy on the part of the Government, and operated peculiarly hard on the new settlers, who were thus obliged to leave their cabins in the cold winter of 1832-3, and their business until spring. Many re-crossed the river and did not return. We repaired to the Island, and there erected temporary buildings to await the ratification of the treaty. Having about three hundred thousand pounds of lead on hand, and being uncertain what would be the orders of the military regarding this kind of property taken from land not yet fully owned by Government, we removed it also to our island home, and remained by it until spring, the soldiers meantime occupying our warm and comfortable dwellings at the mines.

Several cabins were torn down, and some wagons that were conveying mineral away during the winter were cut to pieces and destroyed, by the orders of Lieutenant Covington, the officer in command, he being clothed with a little brief authority. But on complaint to Col. Taylor, at Prairie Du Chien, he was removed, and Lieutenant George Wilson, brother of Judge Wilson, sent in his place, a man of more mild and amiable disposition.

From this one may judge that after his arrival Lieutenant Wilson winked at the operations of certain miners in the Dubuque region.<sup>60</sup> He seems to have reported, however, that despite all his efforts the miners kept crossing the river and he was accordingly relieved by a larger force of troops under Lieutenants John J. Abercrombie and Jefferson Davis. So cold was the weather that they marched all the way from Prairie du Chien to the mines upon the ice of the Mississippi. Lieutenant Davis had known many of the

<sup>59</sup> On the 25th of October, 1832, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs had notified Joseph M. Street, Indian agent at Prairie du Chien, that the commandant at Fort Crawford would furnish troops to expel the intruders at the mines. See *Senate Documents*, 1st Session, 23d Congress, No. 512, Vol. VIII, p. 943.

<sup>60</sup> It has been stated that Lieutenant Wilson refused to obey the command of the War Department that he burn the miners' cabins. On the 1st of April, 1833, he obtained a furlough for three months, which may have been "a mild punishment for his disobedience of orders" which he believed to be cruel and inhuman. See the *Annals of Iowa* (Third Series), Vol. II, p. 243.



miners when they lived on the east side of the river, and as he later wrote, upon him devolved the task of inducing them to retire. He "went to their residences, explained the entire absence of any power on our part to modify, or delay the execution of our orders; and being an intimate friend of Capt. Legate, the superintendent of the [Galena] lead mines, volunteered my services to secure through him to every man, the lead or prospect then held; if, and as soon as, the treaty should be ratified, to extinguish the Indian title." Davis in later life recalled with much pleasure how he removed the miners without resort to force and how each miner afterwards "in due time came to his own."<sup>61</sup>

In pursuance of its policy of leasing mines upon the public lands, the United States government authorized John P. Sheldon, assistant superintendent of the lead mines at Galena, to issue licenses to work at the Dubuque mines in return for six percent of all the lead produced. After June 6, 1833, Sheldon granted permits to scores of persons to mine and smelt, build cabins, make gardens, and enclose and cultivate fields to raise grain for their teams.<sup>62</sup> All other persons found upon the Black Hawk Purchase without authority under the laws and regulations for leasing mines upon government lands were to be reported to the Indian agents at Rock Island and Prairie du Chien.

Once more the St. Louis claimants appeared upon the scene: on June 20th of this year George W. Harrison was reported to be surveying land under their authority.<sup>63</sup> As matters then stood, however, the paper title to Julien Dubuque's mining district was worthless in the eyes of government officials. Thus, armed with United States licenses,

<sup>61</sup> *Annals of Iowa* (Third Series), Vol. IV, pp. 231, 232.

<sup>62</sup> Oldt's *History of Dubuque County, Iowa*, pp. 20, 40; Child's historical account in the *Dubuque Daily Republican*, 1859.

<sup>63</sup> *Senate Documents*, 1st Session, 23d Congress, No. 512, Vol. X, p. 457; *THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, Vol. VIII, pp. 382, 383.



miners began to transform this lonely but coveted section of the Iowa wilderness into a prosperous frontier community and thus one of the first permanent settlements in Iowa took root.

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