

Pike's Mississippi Expedition

[Lieutenant Pike invariably overestimated the distance he traveled each day. The exact modern mileage above St. Louis is accordingly inserted in brackets, together with the correct spelling, or modern name of each geographic point mentioned in his journal that is definitely known to the editor.]

Sailed from my encampment, near St. Louis, at 4 p.m., on Friday, the 9th of August, 1805, with one sergeant, two corporals, and 17 privates, in a keel-boat 70 feet long, provisioned for four months. Water very rapid. Encamped on the east side of the river, at the head of an island.

Because of their late afternoon start Pike probably pitched camp at the head of Cabaret Island, nine miles above St. Louis. This was no small feat since the keelboat had ascended the difficult Chain of Rocks stretch of the Mississippi whose swift waters are augmented by those of the mighty Missouri, thus creating a current of tremendous velocity.

The following morning, on August 10th, Pike embarked early, breakfasting opposite the mouth of the Missouri, below Wood River, where Lewis and Clark camped in the winter of 1803-1804. The keelboat continued upstream until 5 p.m. when a storm came on from the westward forcing the boat

to lay-to. According to Pike: "Having gone out to march with two men behind a cluster of islands, one of my soldiers swam a channel in the night, to inform me that the boat had stopped during the storm. I remained on the beach all night."

Pike estimated his first full day travel at $28\frac{1}{2}$ miles but modern measurements would place it at $23\frac{1}{2}$ miles, since Portage des Sioux is 32.4 miles above St. Louis. In his journal next day Pike recorded:

11th August; Sunday — In the morning the boat came up and stopt opposite to the Portage De Sioux. We here spread out our baggage to dry; discharged our guns at a target, and scaled out our blunderbusses. Dined at the cave below the Illinois, at the mouth of which river, we remained some time. From the course of the Mississippi, the Illinois might be mistaken for a part of it. Encamped on the lower point of the island [Iowa Island?], about six miles above the Illinois; were much detained by passing the east side of some islands above the Illinois; and were obliged to get into the water and haul the boat through.

12th August; Monday — In the morning made several miles to breakfast; about 3 o'clock P.M. passed Buffaloe, or riviere au Boeuf, [Cuivre River — Mile 56.7] above which, about 5 miles, commences a beautiful cedar cliff [Cap Au Gris]. Having passed this, the river expands to nearly two miles in width, and has four islands, whose lowest points are nearly parallel; these we called the Four Brothers. Encamped on the point of the east one. It rained very hard all night. Caught one catfish. Distance $29\frac{3}{4}$ miles.

Once again Pike overestimates his distance,

which was actually 18.3 miles by modern measurements. Their camp on present Sarah Ann Island was 61.7 miles from St. Louis.

13th August; Tuesday — Late before we sailed, passed a vast number of islands; left one of our dogs on shore; were much detained by sand bars, and were obliged to haul our boat over several of them; observed several [Indian] encampments which had been lately occupied: Rained all day. Distance 27 miles.

14th August; Wednesday — Hard rain in the morning, but a fine wind springing up, we put off at 1-2 past six o'clock; Passed a camp of Sacs, consisting of three men, with their families: they were employed in spearing and scaffolding a fish, about three feet in length, with a long flat snout; they pointed out the channel, and prevented us from taking the wrong one: I gave them a small quantity of whiskey and biscuit; and they in return, presented me with some fish. Sailed on through a continuation of islands, for nearly twenty miles; met a young gentlemen, (Mr. Robedoux) by whom I sent a letter to St. Louis; encamped on an island; caught 1375 small fish; rained all day. Distance 28 miles.

15th August; Thursday — Still raining in the morning. From the continued series of wet weather, the men were quite galled and sore. Met a Mr. Kettletas of N. Y. who gave me a line to Mr. Fisher of the Prairie Des Chein [du Chien]; Passed a small river, to the W. with a sand bar at its entrance; also, passed Salt river [Mile 104.2 — one mile above Louisiana, Mo.] which, I do not recollect having seen on any chart: it is a considerable stream, and at high water is navigable, for at least 200 miles; left another dog. Distance 26 miles.

16th August; Friday — Embarked early, but were so unfortunate, as to get fast on a log; and did not extricate

ourselves, until past eleven o'clock, having to saw off a log under the water. At 3 o'clock P.M. arrived at the house of a Frenchman, situate on the W. side of the river, opposite to Hurricane Island. His cattle appeared to be in fine order; but his corn in a bad state of cultivation. About one mile above his house, on the W. shore, is a very handsome hill [Hannibal — Mile 129.2], which he informed me was level on the top, with a gradual descent on either side, and a fountain of fine water. This man likewise told me that two men had been killed on the Big Bay, or Three Brothers; and desired to be informed what measures had been taken in consequence thereof; caught three cat-fish and one perch; encamped 4 miles above the house. Distance 18 miles. [Armstrong Island — Mile 133.9]

17th August; Saturday — Embarked and came on remarkably well; at 10 o'clock stopt for breakfast, and in order to arrange our sail; when the wind served, we put off and continued under easy sail all day. Passed three batteaux. Distance 39 miles. [La Grange, Mo. — Mile 156]

18th August; Sunday — Embarked early; about 11 o'clock passed an Indian camp, on the E. side. They fired several guns; but we passed without stopping. Very hard head winds part of the day. Caught six fish. — Distance 23 miles. [Gregory, Mo. — Mile 173]

19th August; Monday — Embarked early and made fine way; but at 9 o'clock in turning the point of a sand bar, our boat struck a sawyer; at the moment we did not know it had injured her; but in a short time after, discovered her to be sinking, however, by thrusting oakum into the leak and bailing, we got her to shore on a bar, where, after entirely unloading, we with great difficulty keeled her sufficiently to cut out the plank and put in a new one. This at the time I conceived to be a great misfortune; but upon

examination we discovered that the injury resulting from it was greater than we were at first induced to believe; for upon inspection, we found our provisions and cloathing considerably damaged. The day was usefully and necessarily employed in assorting, suning, and airing those articles. One of my hunters (Sparks) having gone on shore to hunt, swam the river about seven miles above and killed a deer; but finding we did not come on, he returned down the river, and joined us by swimming. Whilst we were at work at our boat on the sand beach, three canoes with Indians, passed on the opposite shore. They cried, "How do you do," wishing us to give them an invitation to come over; but receiving no answer they passed on. We then put our baggage on board and put off, designing to go where the young man had killed the deer; but after dark we became entangled among the sand bars, and were obliged to stop and encamp on the point of a beach. Caught two fish. Distance 14 miles. [Below mouth of Des Moines River — Mile 181.4]

The total distance traveled by Pike when he reached the mouth of the Des Moines River was 182 miles whereas he estimated it at 252 miles. Since there has been virtually no shortening of the river between St. Louis and Keokuk the modern measurements can be taken as correct and the error attributed to incorrect computations and the backbreaking work of rowing, poling, bushwhacking, and warping the keelboat upstream. The average distance traveled was 18.2 miles per day and there were relatively few delays. Pike had made a late start from St. Louis and carried only four months supplies. Since he would be traveling

steadily northward his supplies would last him only until December 9, after which he would have to forage on wild game shot during the dead of winter. He might hope to replenish his supplies at Prairie du Chien but otherwise he would have to rely on trading with the Indians. Because of these dangers the young army lieutenant determined to lose no time as he continued upstream along the eastern border of Iowa. His journal of August 20th gives us his first glimpse of Iowaland.

20th August; Tuesday — Arrived at the foot of the rapids De Moyen [Keokuk — Mile 184] at 7 o'clock; and, although no soul on board had passed them, we commenced ascending them, immediately. Our boat, being large and moderately loaded, we found great difficulty. The river all the way through is from 3-4 to a mile wide. The rapids are 11 miles long, with successive ridges and shoals extending from shore to shore. The first has the greatest fall and is the most difficult to ascend. The channel (a bad one) is on the east side in passing the two first bars, then passes under the edge of the third; crosses to the west, and ascends on that side, all the way to the Sac Village [Montrose — Mile 194]. The shoals continue the whole distance. We had passed the first and most difficult shoal, when we were met by Mr. Wm. Ewing, (who I understand is an agent, appointed to reside with the Sacs, to teach them the science of agriculture) with a French interpreter, 4 chiefs and 15 men of the Sac nation, in their canoes; bearing a flag of the United States. They came down to assist me up the rapids; and took out 13 of my heaviest barrels, and put two of their men in the barge to pilot us up. Arrived at the house of Mr. Ewing, opposite the village, at dusk. The land on both sides of the rapids

is hilly, but a rich soil. Distance 16 miles.

21st August; Wednesday — All the chief men of the village came over to my encampment; where I spoke to them to the following purport:

"That their great father, the president of the United States, wishing to be more intimately acquainted with the situation, wants, &c. of the different nations of the red people, in our newly acquired territory of Louisiana, had ordered the general to send a number of his young warriors, in different directions, to take them by the hand, and make such enquiries as might afford the satisfaction required. Also, that I was authorised to choose situations for their trading establishments; and wished them to inform me if that place would be considered by them as central.

"That I was sorry to hear of the murder, which had been committed on the river below; but, in consideration of their assurances, that it was none of their nation, and the anxiety exhibited by them on the occasion, I had written to the general and informed him of what they had said on the subject.

"That in their treaty, they engaged to apprehend all traders who came amongst them without license; for that time, I could not examine their traders on this subject; but, that on my return, I would make a particular examination.

"That if they thought proper, they might send a young man in my boat, to inform the other villages of my mission, &c."

I then presented them with some tobacco, knives, and whiskey. They replied to the following purport:

"That they thanked me for the good opinion I had of their nation, and for what I had written the general. That themselves, their young warriors, and the whole nation was glad to see me amongst them.

"That as for the situation of the trading houses, they could not determine, being but a part of the nation. With

respect to sending a young man along, that, if I would wait until to-morrow, they would choose one out. And finally, thanked me for my tobacco, knives, and whiskey."

Not wishing to loose any time, after writing to the general and my friends, I embarked and made six miles above the village. Encamped on a sand bar. [Below present-day Fort Madison — Mile 200]. One canoe of savages passed.

Pike's anxiety to be off is indicated by his precipitate departure without waiting for the Sauks to select a young man to serve as interpreter. Before he left Pike dispatched the following letter to General Wilkinson summarizing the trip to the Sauk village on the present site of Montrose, Iowa.

Head of the rapids de Moyen, Aug. 20, 1805.

Dear General,

I arrived here this day, after what I have considered as rather an unfortunate voyage, having had a series of rainy weather for the first six days, by which means all our biscuit was more or less damaged, they being in very bad and open barrels, and having got twice so fast on forked sawyers or old trees, as to oblige me partly to unload, and staving in a plank in another, which nearly sunk our boat before we got on shore, and detained us one whole day. These all occasioned unavoidable detentions of two days, and the innumerable islands and sand bars (which, without exaggeration, exceeds the river below the Ohio) has been the cause of much unexpected delay: but I calculate on getting to Prairie de Chien in at least the same time I was coming here. We were met yesterday on the Rapids by a Mr. William Ewing, who is sent here by the government of the United States to teach the savages agriculture; and I perceive in governor Harrison's instructions is termed an agent of the United States, under the instruc-

tions of P. Choteau (and, he says), with a salary of 500 dollars per annum. I conceived you did not know of this functionary, or that you would have mentioned him to me. He was accompanied by a Monsieur Louis Tisson Houire [Louis Honore Tesson], who informed me he had calculated on going with me as my interpreter, and that you had spoken to him on the occasion, and appeared much disappointed when I told him I had no instructions to that effect, he said he had promised to discover mines, &c. which no person knew but himself, but, as I conceive him much of a hypocrite, and possessing great gasconism, I am happy he was not chosen for my voyage. They brought with them three perogues of Indians, who lightened my barge and assisted me up the Rapids. They expressed great regret at the news of two men having been killed on the river below (which I believe to be a fact, as I have it from various channels), and was very apprehensive they would be censured by our government as the author, which from every enquiry, they conceive not to be the case, and seem to ascribe the murder to the Kickapoos, and strongly requested I would hear what they had to say on the subject: this, with an idea that this place would be a central position for a trading establishment, for the Sacs, Reynolds, Iowas of the de Moyen, the Sioux from the head of said river and Paunte of the riviere de Roche, has induced me to halt part of the day to-morrow. I should say more relative to Messrs. Ewings and Houire, only that they propose visiting you with the Indians who descend (as I understand by your request) in about 30 days, when your penetration will give you le tout ensemble of their characters. I have taken the liberty of inclosing a letter to Mrs. Pike to your care.

My compliments to lieutenant Wilkinson, and the ten-

der of my highest respects for your lady, with the best wishes for your health and prosperity,

I am, general,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) Z. M. Pike

22d August; Thursday — Embarked at 5 o'clock A.M. Hard head winds. Passed a great number of islands. The river very wide and full of sand bars. Distance 23 miles.

23d August; Friday — Cool morning; came on 5 1-4 miles, where, on the west shore, there is a very handsome situation for a garrison. The channel of the river passes under the hill, which is about 60 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 continues about two miles, and has five springs bursting from it in that distance. Met four Indians and two squaws; landed with them; gave them one quart of *made* whiskey, a few biscuit, and some salt. I requested some venison of them, they pretended they could not understand me; but after we had left them, they held up two hams, and hallooed and laughed at us in derision. Passed nine horses on shore, and saw many signs of Indians. Passed a handsome prairie on the east side, and encamped at its head. Three batteaux from Michilimackinac; stopped at our camp, we were told they were the property of Mr. Myers Michals; we were also informed, that the

largest Sac village was about 2 1-2 miles out on the prairie; and that this prairie was called half way to the prairie Des Cheins from St. Louis.

24th August; Saturday — In the morning passed a number of islands. Before dinner, Corporal Bradley and myself took our guns and went on shore; we got behind a savannah, by following a stream we conceived to have been a branch of the river, but which led us at least two leagues from it. My two favorite dogs, having gone out with us, gave out in the prairie, owing to the heat, high grass, and want of water; but thinking they would come on, we continued our march. We heard the report of a gun, and supposing it to be from our boat, answered it; shortly after, however, we passed an Indian trail, which appeared as if the persons had been hurried, I presume at the report of our guns; for with this people, all strangers are enemies. Shortly after we struck the river, and the boat appeared in view; stayed some time for my dogs; two of my men volunteered to go in search of them. Encamped on the west shore, nearly opposite to a chalk bank. My two men had not yet returned, and it was extraordinary, as they knew my boat never waited for any person on shore; they endeavored to strike the Mississippi ahead of us. We fired a blunderbuss at three different times, to let them know where we lay. Distance 23 1-2 miles.

25th August; Sunday — Stopt on the sand bank prairie on the E. side [Oquawka, or Yellow Banks, Mile 235], from which you have a beautiful prospect of at least 40 miles down the river, bearing S. 38° E. Discovered that our boat leaked very fast; but we secured her inside so completely with oakum and tallow, as nearly to prevent the leak. Fired a blunderbuss every hour, all day, as signals for our men. Passed the river Iowa. [Mile 253] Encamped at night on the prairie, marked *Grant's prairie*. The men had not yet arrived. Distance 28 miles.

26th August; Monday — Rain, with a very hard head wind. Towed our boat about nine miles, to where the river Hills joins the Mississippi. Here I expected to find the two men I had lost, but was disappointed. The mercury in Reamur at 13° ; whereas yesterday, it was 26° . Met two pirogues full of Indians, who commenced hollowing "How do you do," &c. They then put to shore and beckoned us to do so likewise, but we continued our course. This day very severe on the men. Distance 28 1-2 miles.

27th August; Tuesday — Embarked early; cold North wind; mercury 10° ; the wind so hard ahead, that we were obliged to tow the boat all day. Passed one pirogue of Indians; also the Riviere De Roche [Rock River — Mile 299], late in the day. Some Indians who were encamped there, embarked in their canoes and ascended the river before us. The wind so very strong, that, although down the stream, they were near sinking. Encamped about four miles above the Riviere De Roche, on the W. shore. [Davenport — Mile 303] This day passed a pole on a prairie on which five dogs were hanging. Distance 22 miles.

28th August; Wednesday — About an hour after we had embarked, we arrived at the camp of Mr. James Aird, a Scotch gentleman of Michilimackinac. He had encamped, with some goods, on the beach; and was repairing his boat, which had been injured in crossing the rapids of the Riviere De Roche (at the foot of which we now were.) He had sent three boats back for the goods left behind. Breakfasted with him and obtained considerable information. Commenced ascending the rapids. . . . Carried away our rudder in the first; but after getting it repaired, the wind raised, and we hoisted sail; and although entire strangers, we sailed through them with a perfect gale blowing all the time; when, had we struck a rock, in all probability we would have bilged and sunk. But we were so fortunate as to pass without touching. Met Mr. Aird's

boats (which had pilots) fast on the rocks. Those shoals are a continued chain of rocks, extending in some places from shore to shore, about 18 miles in length. [Le Claire, Iowa — Mile 317] They afford more water than those of De Moyen, but are much more rapid.

29th August; Thursday — Breakfasted at the Reynard village, above the rapids; this is the first village of the Reynards. I expected to have found my two men here, but was disappointed. Finding they had not passed, I lay by until four o'clock P.M. the wind fair all the time. The chief informed me, by signs, that in four days they could march to Prairie Des Cheins; and promised to furnish them with mockinsons [moccasins], and put them on their route. Set sail and made at least four knots an hour. I was disposed to sail all night, but the wind lulling, we encamped on the point of an island, on the W. shore. [Beaver Island below Clinton — Mile 332] Distance 20 miles.

30th August; Friday — Embarked at five o'clock; wind fair, but not very high. Sailed all day. Passed four peroques of Indians. Distance 43 miles. [Mile 361 near Lainsville, Iowa]

31st August; Saturday — Embarked early. Passed one peroque of Indians; also, two encampments; one on a beautiful eminence, on the W. side of the river. This place had the appearance of an old town. [Near Bellevue, Iowa — Mile 376] Sailed almost all day. Distance 31 1-2 miles.

1st Sept.; Sunday — Embarked early; wind fair; arrived at the lead mines at twelve o'clock. [Catfish Creek below Dubuque — Mile 398] A dysentery with which I had been afflicted several days, was suddenly checked this morning; which, I believe to have been the occasion of a very violent attack of fever about eleven o'clock. Notwithstanding it was very severe, I dressed myself, with an intention to execute the orders of the general relative to this

place. We were saluted with a field piece, and received with every mark of attention, by Monsieur [Julien] 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.

QUERIES

Proposed to Mr. Dubuque — with his answers.

1. *What is the date of your grant of the mines from the savages?*

Answer. The copy of the grant is in Mr. Soulard'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 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 he makes, as he neither manufactures bar, sheet-lead, nor shot.

8. *If mixed with any other mineral?*

Ans. We have seen some copper, but having no person sufficiently acquainted with chymistry to make the experiment properly, I cannot say as to the proportion it bears to the lead.

(Signed) Dubuque

Lead mines, Sept. 1, 1805.

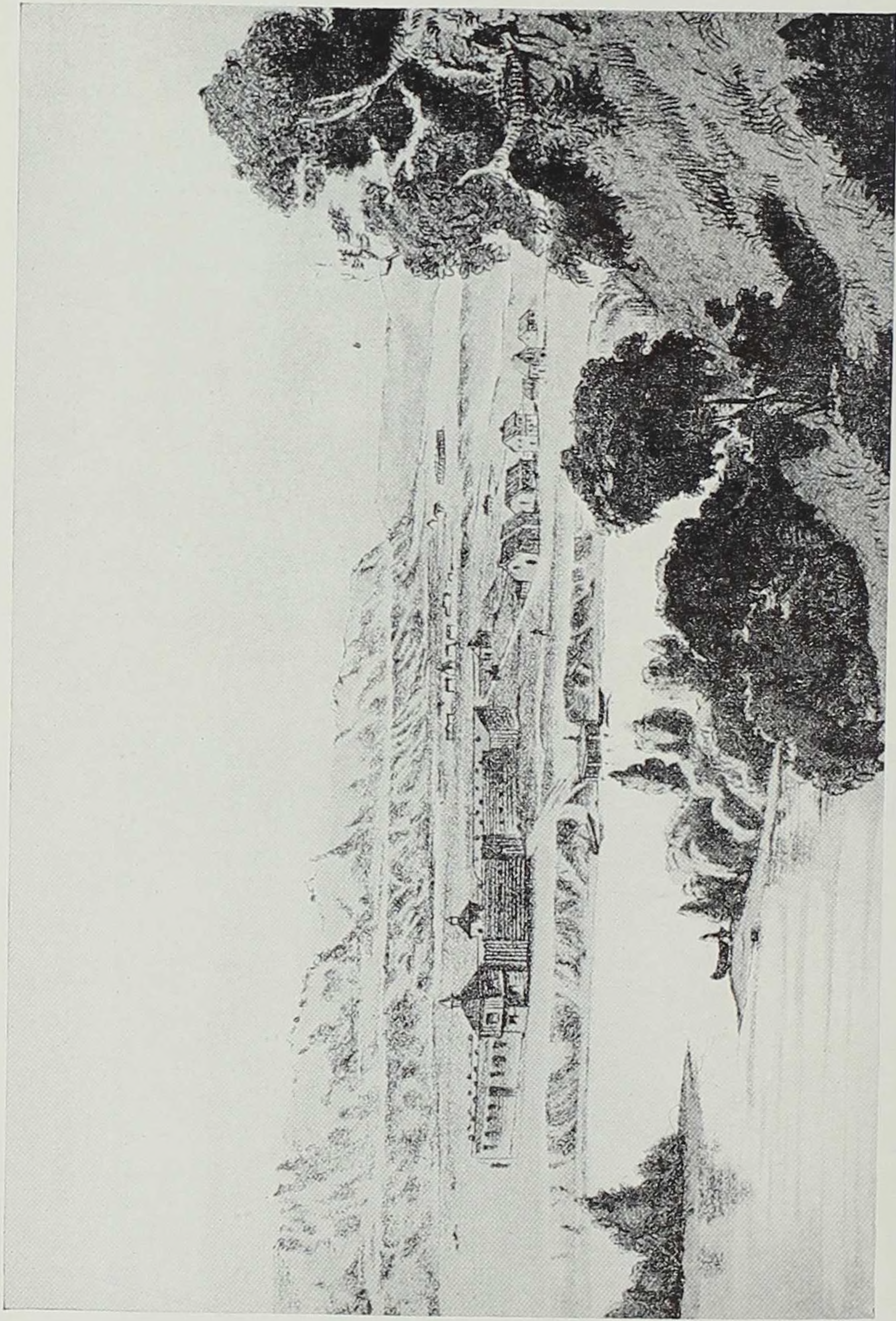
(Signed) Z. M. Pike.



Portrait by Gilbert Stuart
MAJOR-GENERAL JAMES WILKINSON



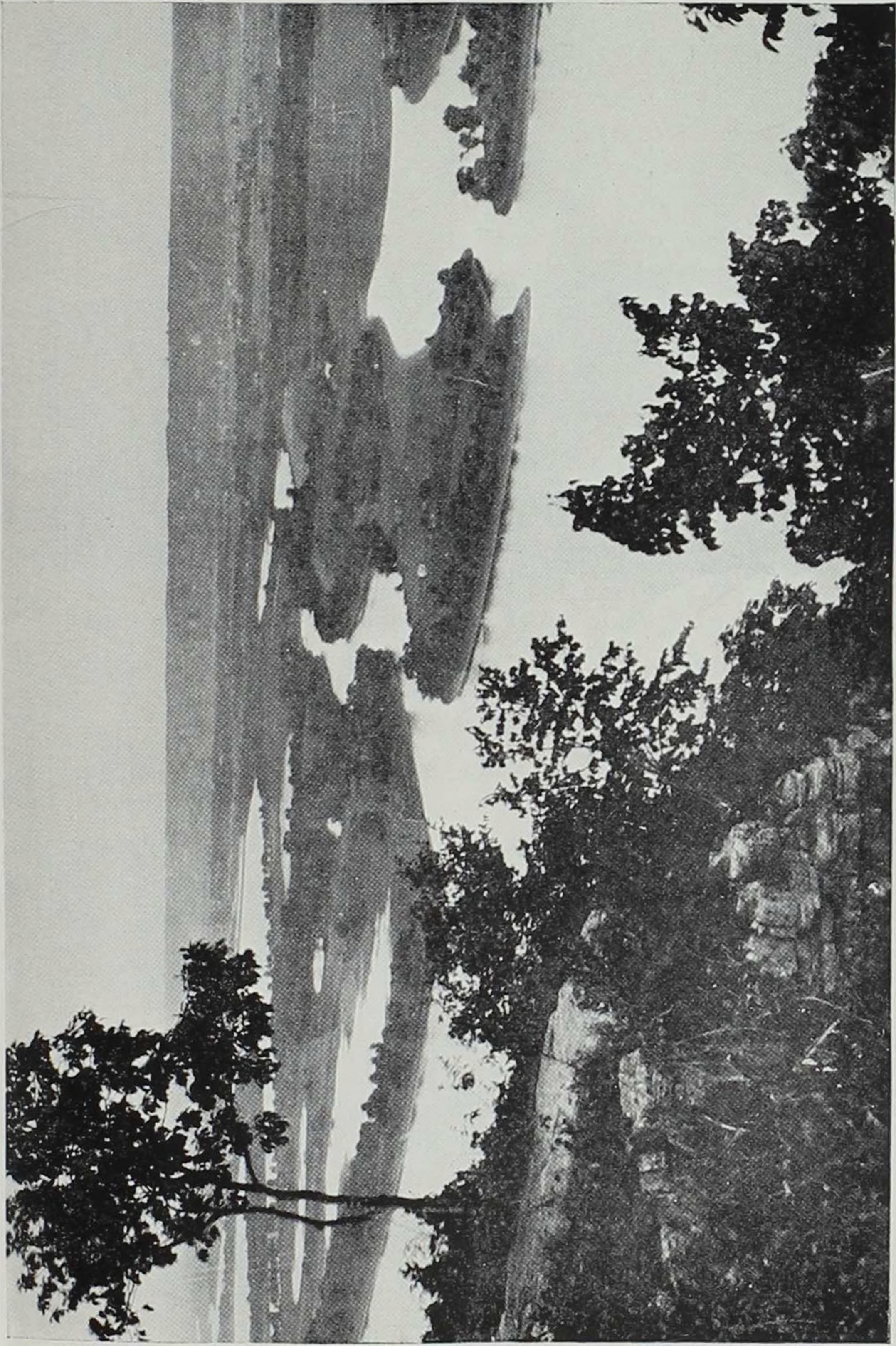
From W. E. Hollon's *The Lost Pathfinder*
ZEBULON MONTGOMERY PIKE



Painting by Henry Lewis

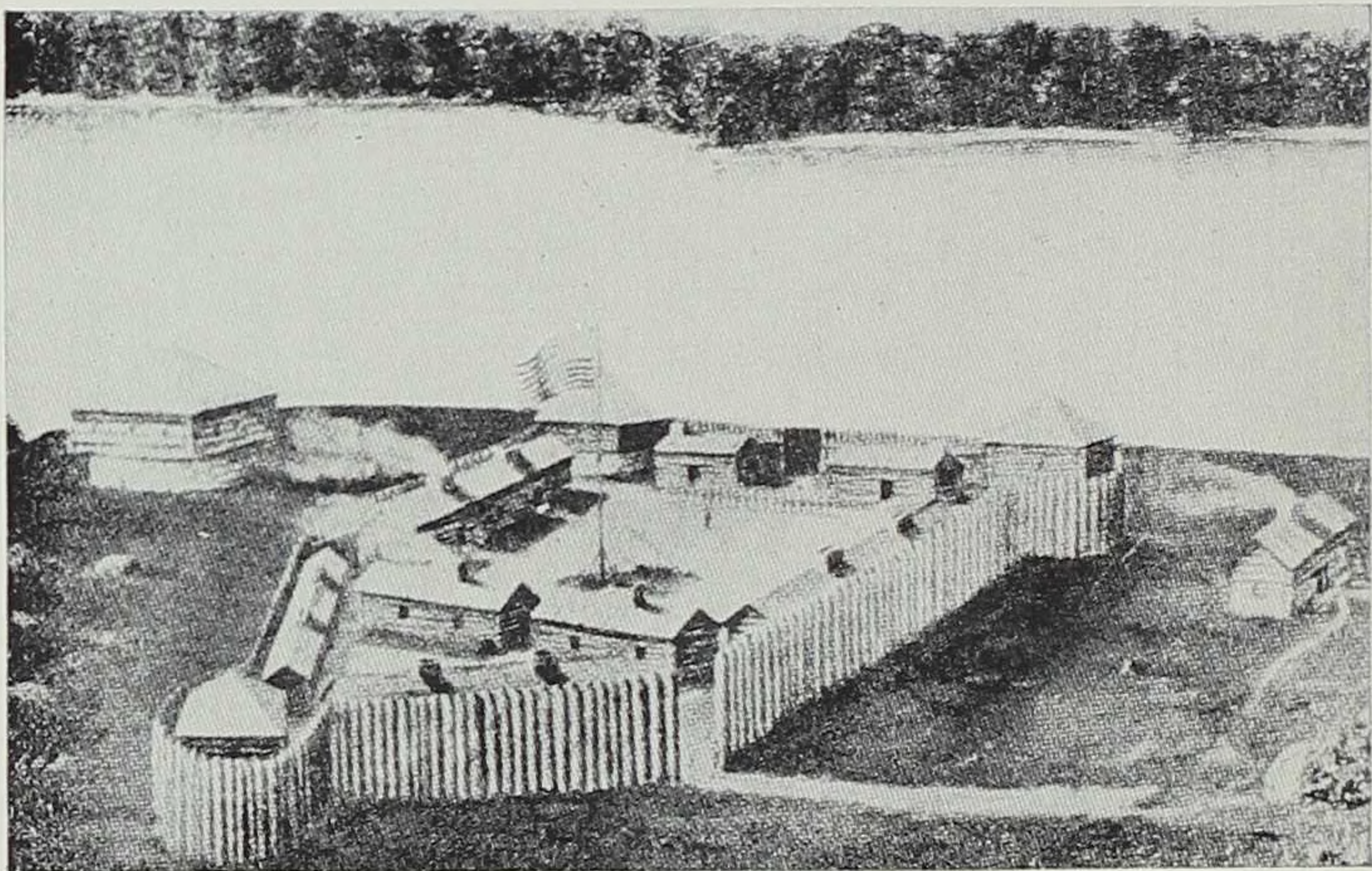
Fort Crawford at Prairie du Chien

"Arrived at the Prairie Des Chiens . . . received by crowds on the bank. . . . Held a council with the Puant chiefs. . . . they had a great game of the cross on the prairie, between the Sioux on the one side, and the Puants and Reynards on the other. . . . left the prairie, at the lower end of it was saluted by 17 lodges of the Puants."

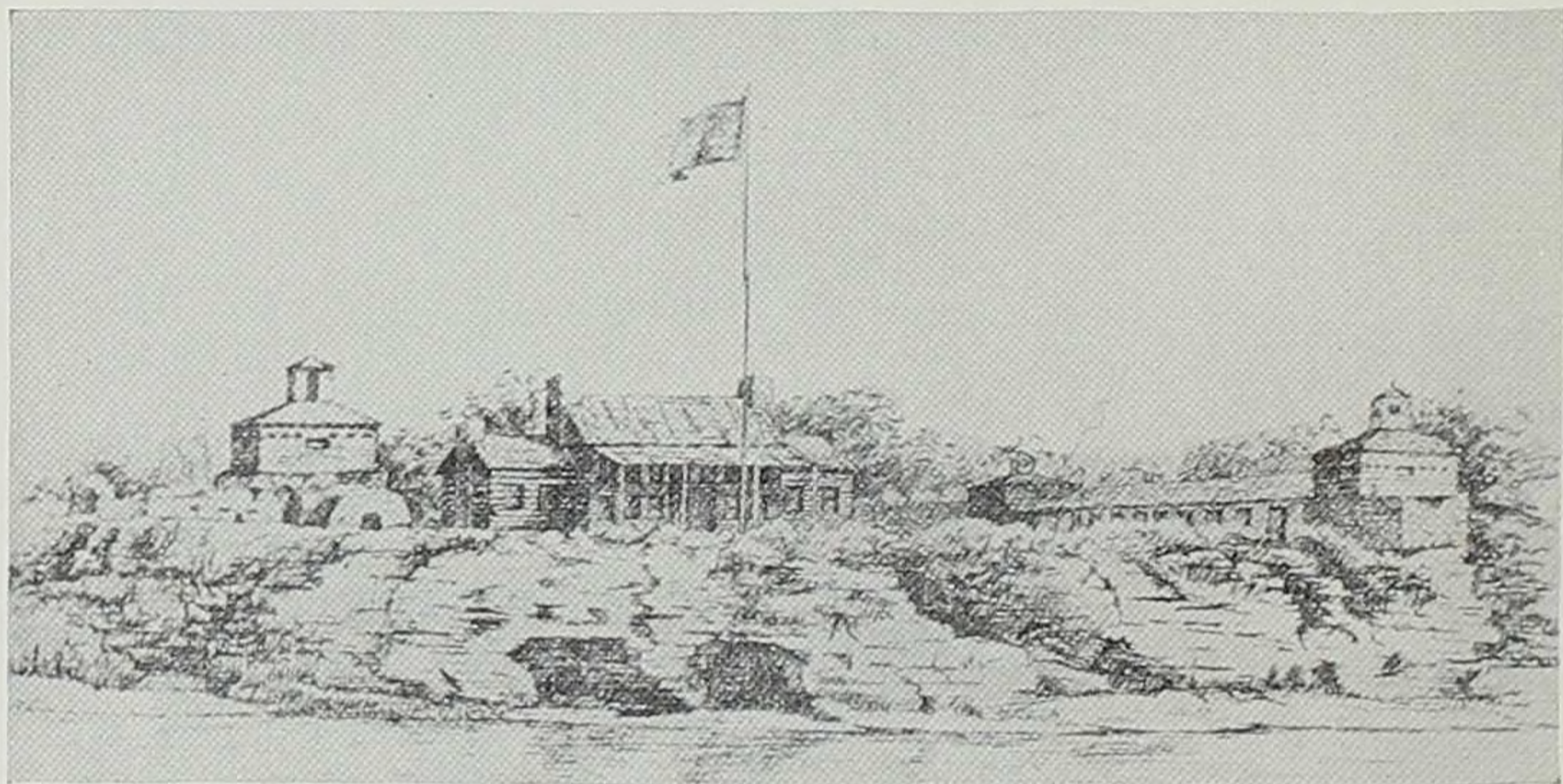


The Mississippi River from Pike's Peak below McGregor

"We ascended the hill on the west side of the Mississippi; and made choice of a spot which I thought most eligible, being level on the top, having a spring in the rear, and commanding a view of the country around."



Old Fert Madison in Iowa



Old Fort Armstrong on Rock Island

Dined with Mr. D. who informed me that the Sioux and Sauteurs were as warmly engaged in opposition as ever; that not long since, the former killed 15 Sauteurs, who on the 10th August in return killed 10 Sioux, at the entrance of the St. Peters; and that a war party, composed of Sacs, Reynards, and Puants, of 200 warriors, had embarked on an expedition against the Sauteurs, but that they had heard, that the chief having had an unfavorable dream, persuaded the party to return, and that I would meet them on my voyage. At this place I was introduced to a chief, called the Raven of the Reynards. 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 pirogue arrived, in which they were, with a Mr. Blondeau, and two Indians, whom that gentleman had engaged above the rapids of Stony river. The two soldiers had been six days without any thing to eat, except muscles; 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 Reynard village, where they met with Mr. B. The Indian chief furnished them with corn and shoes, and shewed his friendship by every possible attention. I immediately discharged the hire of the Indians, and gave Mr. Blondeau a passage to the Prairie des Cheins. Left the lead mines at four o'clock. Distance 25 miles.

When Pike and his men reached Dubuque they had toiled 403 miles above St. Louis. They had traveled 219 miles from the present-day Keokuk Lock and Dam at the foot of the Des Moines Rapids to what is now Zebulon Pike Lock and Dam No. 11 at Eagle Point Park above Dubuque. This

meant an average of almost seventeen miles per day from modern Keokuk, which included time lost in ascending the Des Moines and Rock Island rapids, and the conferences held with William Ewing and the Sauk Indians in the Montrose-Nauvoo area and with Julien Dubuque at Catfish Creek. Pike usually started out at the crack of dawn and continued upstream until sunset, taking advantage of every favorable breeze. He continued to overestimate by about one-fourth the distance he had traveled, which probably was due to a combination of lame muscles from poling their craft upstream and wishful thinking on the part of Pike and his men. Failure to estimate the retarding force of the current, both when sailing and poling, may have been another factor in overestimating distances.

2d Sept.; Monday — After making two short reaches, we commenced one, which is 30 miles in length, the wind serving, we just made it; and encamped on the E. side opposite to the mouth of Turkey river. [Cassville, Wisconsin — Mile 427] In the course of the day, we landed to shoot at pigeons; the moment a gun was fired, some Indians, who were on the shore above us, ran down and put off in their pirogues 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, and much for war, and also very brave. This information I used as prudence suggested. We stopt at an encampment, about three miles below the town, where they gave us some excellent plums. They

despatched a pirogue to the village, to give notice, as I supposed, of our arrival. It commenced raining about dusk, and rained all night. Distance 40 miles.

3d Sept.; Tuesday — Embarked at a pretty early hour. Cloudy. Met two pirogues of family Indians; they at first asked Mr. Blondeau, "if we were for war, or if going to war?" I now experienced the good effect of having some person on board, who could speak their language; for they presented me with three pair of ducks, and a quantity of venison, sufficient for all our crew, one day; in return, I made them some trifling presents. Afterwards met two pirogues, carrying some of the warriors spoken of on the 2d. inst. They kept at a great distance, until spoken to by Mr. B. when they informed him that their party had proceeded up as high as Lake Pepin without effecting any thing. It is surprizing what a dread the Indians, in this quarter, have of the Americans: I have often seen them go round islands, to avoid meeting my boat. It appears to me evident, that the traders have taken great pains, to impress upon the minds of the savages, the idea of our being a very vindictive, ferocious, and warlike people. This impression was perhaps made with no good intention; but when they find that our conduct towards them, is guided by magnanimity and justice; instead of operating in an injurious manner, it will have the effect to make them reverence at the same time they fear us. Distance 25 miles. [Clayton, Iowa — Mile 445]

4th Sept.; Wednesday — Breakfasted just below the Ouisconsin [Wisconsin River — Mile 451 Wyalusing, Wis.] Arrived at the Prairie Des Cheins [Prairie du Chien — Mile 454.9] about eleven o'clock; took quarters at capt. Fisher's, and were politely received by him and Mr. Frazer.

5th Sept.; Thursday — Embarked about half past ten o'clock in a Schenectady boat, to go to the mouth of the

Ouiscousing, in order to take the latitude, and look at the situation of the adjacent hills for a post. Was accompanied by judge Fisher, Mr. Frazer, and Mr. Woods. We ascended the hill on the west side of the Mississippi; and made choice of a spot [Pike's Peak at McGregor] which I thought most eligible, being level on the top, having a spring in the rear, and commanding a view of the country around. A shower of rain came on which completely wet us; and we returned to the village without having ascended the Ouiscousing as we intended. Marked four trees with A. B. C. D. and squared the sides of one in the centre. Wrote to the general.

Prairie du Chien, Sept. 5, 1805.

Dear General,

I arrived here the day before yesterday, and found my interpreter gone in the employ of Mr. Dickson. I then endeavored to gain information relative to crossing the falls; and amidst the ignorance of the Canadians, and all the contradiction in the world, I have learned it is impossible to carry my large barge round the shoot, I have therefore hired two Schenectady barges, in which I shall embark the day after to-morrow, with some expectation and hope of seeing the head of the Mississippi and the town of Saint Louis yet this winter.

I have chosen three places for military establishments; the first on a hill about 40 miles above the river de Moyen rapids, on the W. side of the river, in about $41^{\circ} 2'$ N. latitude [Burlington, Iowa]. The channel of the river runs on that shore; the hill in front is about 60 feet perpendicular, nearly level on the top. 400 yards in the rear is a small prairie fit for gardening, and over on the E. side of the river you have an elegant view on an immense prairie, as far as the eye can extend, now and then interrupted by clumps of trees, and to crown all, immediately under the

hill is a limestone spring, sufficient for the consumption of a regiment. The landing is good and bold, and at the point of the hill a road could be made for a waggon in half a day. This place I conceive to be the best to answer the general's instructions relative to the intermediate post between Prairie de Chien and St. Louis; but if its being on the W. bank is a material objection, about 30 miles above the second Sac village at the third yellow bank on the E. side [Oquawka, Illinois], is a commanding place, on a prairie, and most elegantly situated, but is scarce of timber, and no water but that of the Mississippi. When thinking on the post to be established at the Ouiscousing, I did not look at the general's instructions. I therefore picked on a spot on the top of the hill on the W. side of the Mississippi, which is — feet high, level on the top, and completely commands both rivers, the Mississippi being only one half mile wide and the Ouiscousing about 900 yards when full. 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 [Gres] on the Ouiscousing, which I visited and marked the next day. This latter position is three miles up the Ouiscousing on a prairie hill, on the W. side, where we should be obliged to get our timber from the other side of the river, and our water out of it; there is likewise a small channel which runs on the opposite side, navigable in high water, which could not be commanded by the guns of the fort, and a hill about three quarters of a mile, in the rear from which it could be cannonaded. These two positions I have marked by blazing trees, &c. A Mr. Fisher of this place, will direct any officer who may be sent to occupy them. I found the confluence of the Ouiscousing and Mississippi to be in lat. N. 43° 28' 8".

The day of my arrival at the lead mines, I was taken with a fever, which, with Monsieur Dubuque having no horses about his house, obliged me to content myself with proposing to him the inclosed queries; the answers seem to carry with them the semblance of equivocation.

Messrs. Dubuque and Dickson were about sending a number of chiefs to St. Louis, but the former confessing he was not authorized, I have stopped them without in the least dissatisfying the Indians.

Dickson is at Michilimackinac. I cannot say I have experienced much spirit of accommodation from his clerks, when in their power to oblige me; but I beg leave to recommend to your attention a Mr. James Aird, who is now in your country, as a gentleman to whose humanity and politeness I am much indebted; also a Mr. Fisher of this place, the captain of militia and justice of the peace. A band of Sioux between here and the Missouri have applied for two medals, in order that they may have their chiefs distinguished as friends of the Americans; if the general thinks proper to send them here to the care of Mr. Fisher, with any other commands, they may possibly meet me here, or at the falls of St. Anthony on my return.

* * * * *

The above suggestion would only be acceptable under the idea of our differences with Spain being compromised; as should there be war, the field of action is the sphere for young men, where they hope, and at least aspire, to gather laurels or renown, to smooth the decline of age; or a glorious death. You see, my dear general, I write to you like a person addressing a father: at the same time I hope you will consider me not only in a professional, but a personal view, one who holds you in the highest respect and esteem.

My compliments to lieutenant Wilkinson, and my highest respects to your lady.

*I am, general,
Your obedient servant,
(Signed) Z. M. Pike, Lt.*

General Wilkinson.

6th Sept.; Friday — Had a small council with the Puants [Winnebago], and a chief of the lower band of the Sioux. Visited and laid out a position for a post, on a hill called the *Petit Gris*, on the Ouisconsin, three miles above its mouth. Mr. Fisher who accompanied me, was taken very sick, in consequence of drinking some water out of the Ouisconsin. The Puants never have any white interpreters, nor have the Fols Avoine [Folle Avoine or Menominee] nation. In my council, I spoke to a Frenchman, he to a Sioux, who interpreted to some of the Puants.

7th Sept.; Saturday — My men beat all the villagers jumping and hopping. Began to load my new boats.

8th Sept.; Sunday — Embarked at half past eleven o'clock in two batteaux. The wind fair and fresh. I found myself very much embarrassed and cramped in my new boats, with provision and baggage. I embarked two interpreters, one to perform the whole voyage, whose name was Pierre Rosseau [Rousseau]; and the other named Joseph Reinulle [Reinville], paid by Mr. Frazer to accompany me as high as the falls of St. Anthony. Mr. Frazer is a young gentleman, clerk to Mr. Blakely, of Montreal: he was born in Vermont, but has latterly resided in Canada. To the attention of this gentleman, I am much indebted; he procured for me every thing in his power that I stood in need of, despatched his bark canoes, and remained himself to go on with me. His design was to winter with some of the Sioux bands. We sailed well, came 18 miles and encamped on the W. bank. [Above Harpers Ferry, Iowa, at Mile 468, around Lock & Dam #9] I must not omit here

to bear testimony to the politeness of all the principal inhabitants of the village. There is however a material distinction to be made in the nature of those attentions: The kindness of Messrs Fisher, Frazer, and Woods, (all Americans) seemed to be the spontaneous effusions of good will: and partiality to their countrymen; it extended to the accommodation, convenience, exercises, and pastimes of my men; and whenever they proved superior to the French, openly shewed their pleasure. But the French Canadians appeared attentive, rather from their natural good manners, than sincere friendship; however, it produced from them the same effect that natural good will did in the others.

9th Sept. Monday — Embarked early. Dined at Cape Garlic [Capoli Bluff — Mile 478] or at Garlic river; after which we came on to an island on the E, side, about five miles below the river Iowa [Upper Iowa], and encamped. [Mile 487 below De Soto, Wisconsin] Rained before sun set. Distance 28 miles.

10th Sept. Tuesday — Rain still continuing, we remained at our camp. Having shot at some pigeons, the report was heard at the Sioux lodges; when La Fieulle [Wabasha] sent down six of his young men to inform me, "that he had waited three days with meat, &c. but that last night they had began to drink, and, that on the next day he would receive me with his people sober." I returned him for answer, "that the season was advanced, that time was pressing, and that if the rain ceased I must go on." Mr. Frazer and the interpreter went home with the Indians. We embarked about one o'clock. Frazer returning, informed me that the chief acquiesced in my reasons for pressing forward, but that he had prepared a pipe (by way of letter) to present me, to shew to all the Sioux above; with a message to inform them, that I was a chief of their new fathers, and that he wished me to be treated

with friendship and respect. On our arrival opposite to 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 my men who were going up with me, I caused to leave 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. After smoking, the chief spoke to the following purport: "That, notwithstanding he had seen me at the Prairie, he was happy to take me by the hand amongst his own people, and there to shew his young men the respect due to their *new father* [President Jefferson]; That, when at St. Louis in the spring, his father [General Wilkinson] had told him, that if he looked down the river, he would see one of his young warriors [Pike] coming up. He now found it true, and he was happy to see me, who knew the Great Spirit was the father of all; both the white and the red people; and if one died, the other could not live long. That he had never been at war with their *new father*, and hoped, always to preserve, the same good understanding that now existed. That he now presented me with a pipe, to shew to the upper bands, as a token of our good understanding; and that they might see his work,

and imitate his conduct. That he had gone to St. Louis, on a shameful visit, to carry a murderer; but, that we had given the man his life, and he thanked us for it. That he had provided something to eat, but he supposed I could not eat it, and if not, to give it to my young men." I replied: "That, although I had told him at the Prairie, my business up the Mississippi, I would again relate it to him. I then mentioned the different objects I had in view; with regard to the savages, who had fallen under our protection, by our late purchase from the Spaniards. The different posts to be established. The objects of these posts as related to them; supplying them with necessaries; having officers and agents of government near them, to attend to their business; and above all, to endeavor to make peace with between the Sioux and Sauteurs. That it was possible on my return I should bring some of the Sauteurs down with me, and take with me some of the Sioux chiefs to St. Louis; there to settle the long and bloody war, which had existed between the two nations. That I accepted his pipe with pleasure, as the gift of a great man, and a brother. That it should be used as he desired." I then eat of the dinner he had provided. It was very grateful. It was wild rye and venison, of which I sent four bowls to my men. I afterwards went to a dance, the performance of which, was attended with many curious maneuvers. Men and women danced indiscriminately. They were all dressed in the gayest manner; each had in their hand, a small skin of some description, and would frequently run up, point their skin, and give a puff with their breath; when the person blown at, whether man or woman, would fall, and appear to be almost lifeless, or in great agony; but would recover slowly, rise, and join in the dance. This they called their great medicine; or as I understood the word, dance of religion. The Indians believing, that they actually puffed something into each others bodies which occasioned the

falling, &c. It is not every person who is admitted; persons wishing to join them, must first make valuable presents to the society, to the amount of \$40 or \$50, give a feast, and then are admitted with great ceremony. Mr. Frazer informed me, that he was once in the lodge with some young men, who did not belong to the club; when one of the dancers came in, they immediately threw their blankets over him, and forced him out of the lodge: he laughed, and the young Indians called him a fool, and said "he did not know what the dancer might blow into his body." I returned to my boat; sent for the chief and presented him with two carrots of tobacco, four knives, half a pound of vermillion, and one quart of salt. Mr. Frazer asked liberty to present them some rum; we made them up a keg between us, of eight gallons. Mr. Frazer informed the chief that he dare not give them any without my permission. The chief thanked me for all my presents, and said "they must come free, as he did not ask for them." I replied, "that, to those who did not ask for anything, I gave freely; but to those who asked for much, I gave only a little or none." We embarked about half past three o'clock; came three miles, and encamped on the W. side. Mr. Frazer we left behind, but he came up with his two peroques about dusk. It commenced raining very hard. In the night a peroque arrived from the lodges at his camp. During our stay at their camp, there were soldiers appointed to keep the croud from my boats; who executed their duty with vigilance and rigor; driving men, women, and children back, whenever they came near my boats. At my departure, their soldiers said, "As I had shaken hands with their chief, they must shake hands with my soldiers." In which request I willingly indulged them.

Leaving Chief Wabasha and his band of Sioux

Indians behind, Pike continued upstream past what is now the northern boundary of Iowa, pitching camp on the Minnesota side almost opposite the mouth of Bad Axe River. They had now gone 495 miles above St. Louis of which 313 miles had been along the eastern border of Iowa between August 20 and September 10. Although Pike had expressed hope that he might reach the source of the Mississippi and return to St. Louis before winter set in, seven months of hardship were to pass before the expedition returned to Iowa on its way downstream to St. Louis.

On September 23rd, Pike reached the Sioux Indian village located at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers where Fort Snelling now stands. Aided by his pipe of peace, Pike presented the Sioux with gifts valued at around \$200 for which he received a grant of some 100,000 acres of land for the United States. In his report to General Wilkinson, he valued the land at \$100,000. Pike, it may be added, "cleared the Indians' throats" after the council with some sixty gallons of well-watered whiskey.

Leaving the Sioux behind, Pike continued upstream past the Falls of St. Anthony and on to where Little Falls, Minnesota, is now located. Here, the season being late and many of his men ill, Pike established winter quarters. In his journal he wrote:

These unhappy circumstances . . . convinced me that

if I had no regard for my own health and constitution, I should have some for those poor fellows, who were killing themselves to obey my orders.

Accordingly, Pike erected a few huts and block-houses which would serve as shelter for the sick men and for those otherwise unable to continue the heavy labor of the journey. He saw abundance of game in the vicinity and relied upon that fact to provide those he was leaving behind with food. On October 17th Pike killed four bears and his hunters bagged three deer. He also directed that they make provision of food for the return journey.

His boats, obtained at Prairie du Chien, proved still too heavy and he had three light canoes constructed. One of them, loaded with powder and other supplies, soon sank. In the process of drying out the powder, it was exploded by a spark and nearly blew up a tent with two or three men in it. These misfortunes seem to have depressed Pike for he wrote:

It appears to me that the wealth of nations would not induce me to remain secluded from the society of civilized mankind, surrounded by a savage and unproductive wilderness, without books or other sources of intellectual enjoyment, or being blessed with the cultivated and feeling mind, of a civilized fair [one].

On December 9th, Pike left his camp and doggedly pushed on upstream in search of the source of the Mississippi. The freezing and thawing of the river made it necessary for him to abandon all

but one canoe, so the provisions and baggage were loaded onto sleds and pulled along by two men abreast. This was hard work, Pike explained:

Never did I undergo more fatigue, performing the duties of hunter, spy, guide, commanding officer etc., sometimes in front, sometimes in the rear, frequently in advance of my party 10 or 15 miles. At night I was scarcely able to make my notes intelligible.

Of this means of transport, he wrote on December 26th: "Broke four sleds, broke into the river four times, and had four carrying-places." At first, this overland progress was limited to but three or four miles a day but as the winter grew stronger, traveling became better and soon the party could do as much as twenty miles a day.

Early in January, 1806, Pike fell in with a few Chippewa Indians. He had been warned that they would be hostile, but they were friendly and Pike also found with them an English fur-trader, named Grant, who led Pike and his party to a British trading post, where for several days the weary Americans rested and were refreshed. This was but the first of several visits which he made to posts of the Northwest Fur Company, about whose activities he had been directed to report. Pike recognized the fact that the British had a right to trade in United States territory, but he charged that the United States was being defrauded of annual duties to the amount of \$26,000, and he suggested that the government should take

steps to establish a custom house at the mouth of the St. Louis River to collect these duties. Pike also warned that the British were winning the support of the Indians and pointed out that this would be bad in case of war between the two countries, since the trading posts could serve both as forts and as supply bases for armies sent to invade the Mississippi Valley from the north.

On January 20th, Pike resumed his weary trip northward and, reaching the junction of Leech Lake with the main stream of the Mississippi on the 31st, the young lieutenant was convinced that he had at long last reached the source of the Mississippi; actually he did not find any of the several sources now considered as the head of the river.

After talking with the Chippewa, persuading them to give up most of their British flags and medals, and urging them to give over their traditional hostility to the Sioux, Pike started back south on February 18th, 1806, amid "acclamations and shouts" from the assembled tribesmen. Abandoning familiar means of travel, Pike and his men donned snow-shoes the Indians had made for them and with the aid of these they retraced their steps twice as fast as they had toiled northward. The snow-shoes, however, were not all that they should be, for Pike wrote on February 24th: "The pressure of my racket-strings brought the blood through my socks and mockinsons, from which the pain I marched in may be imagined."

March 5th brought him to the blockhouse where he had left his sick men and to his anger he found that the sergeant in charge, instead of living frugally as directed, had been very lavish. Nothing had been accumulated by way of provisions for the homeward trip and the sergeant had given away to the Indians practically all the whiskey stored in his custody. Included was a keg which Pike had saved for his own private use!

The party rested at the post until April 7th and then, taking to the canoes again, descended the river rapidly, reaching the soil of Iowa once more on April 16th. The remainder of the journey was uneventful, two weeks being passed in leisurely drifting downstream over a route which had taken more than one month of arduous toil to ascend. On April 18th they reached Prairie du Chien.

Some of the incidents related by Pike on this return trip along Iowa's eastern border follow:

20th April, Sunday. — Held a council with the Puant chiefs, and demanded of them the murderers of their nation; they required till to-morrow to consider of it; this afternoon they had a great game of the cross on the prairie, between the Sioux on the one side, and the Puants and Reynards on the other. The ball is made of some hard substance and covered with leather, the cross sticks are round and net work, with handles of three feet long. The parties being ready, and bets agreed upon, (sometimes to the amount of some thousand dollars) the goals are set up on the prairie at the distance of half a mile. The ball is thrown up in the middle, and each party strives to drive it

to the opposite goal; and when either party gains the first rubber, which is driving it quick round the post, the ball is again taken to the centre, the ground changed, and the contest renewed; and this is continued until one side gains four times, which decides the bet. It is an interesting sight to see two or three hundred naked savages contending on the plain who shall bear off the palm of victory; as he who drives the ball round the goal is much shouted at by his companions. It sometimes happens that one catches the ball in his racket, and depending on his speed endeavors to carry it to the goal, and when he finds himself too closely pursued, he hurls it with great force and dexterity to an amazing distance, where there are always flankers of both parties ready to receive it; it seldom touches the ground, but is sometimes kept in the air for hours before either party can gain the victory. In the game which I witnessed, the Sioux were victorious, more I believe, from the superiority of their skill in throwing the ball, than by their swiftness, for I thought the Puants and Reynards the swiftest runners.

21st April, Monday — Was sent for by La Feuille, and had a long and interesting conversation with him, in which he spoke of the general jealousy of his nation towards their chiefs; and that although he knew it might occasion some of the Sioux displeasure, he did not hesitate to declare that he looked on the Nez Corbeau, as the man of most sense in their nation; and that he believed it would be generally acceptable if he was reinstated in his rank.

22d April, Tuesday. — Held a council with the Sioux and Puants, the latter of whom delivered up their medals and flags. Prepared to depart tomorrow.

23d April, Wednesday. — After closing my accounts, &c. at half past 12 o'clock left the prairie, at the lower end of it was saluted by 17 lodges of the Puants. Met a barge, by which I received a letter from my lady. Further on,

met one batteaux and one canoe of traders. Passed one trader's camp. Arrived at Mr. Dubuque's at 10 o'clock at night, found some traders encamped at the entrance with 40 or 50 Indians, obtained some information from Mr. D. and requested him to write me on certain points. After we had boiled our victuals, I divided my men into four watches and put off, wind a-head. Observed for the first time the half formed leaves on the trees.

24th April, Thursday. — In the morning used our oars until 10 o'clock, and then floated while breakfasting. At this time two barges, one bark, and two wooden, canoes passed us under full sail; by one of which I sent back a letter to Mr. Dubuque, that I had forgotten to deliver.

25th April, Friday. — Obligated to unship our mast to prevent its rolling overboard with the swell. Passed the first Reynard village at 12 o'clock, counted 18 lodges. Stopped at the prairie in descending on the left, about the middle of the rapids, where there is a beautiful cove or harbor. There were three lodges of Indians here, but none of them came near us. Shortly after we had left this, observed a barge under sail, with the United States flag, which upon our being seen put to shore on the Big Island, about three miles above Stony river, where I also landed; it proved to be capt. Many of the artillerists, who was in search of some Osage prisoners amongst the Sacs and Reynards.

27th April, Sunday. — It cleared off during the night. We embarked early and came from eight or ten leagues above the river Iowa, to the establishment at the lower Sac village, by sundown, a distance of nearly 48 leagues. Here I met with Messrs. Maxwell and Blondeau; took the deposition of the former, on the subject of the Indian's intoxication at this place, for they were all drunk. They had stolen a horse from the establishment, and offered to bring him back for liquor, but laughed at them when offered a

blanket and powder. Passed two canoes and two barges. At the establishment received two letters from Mrs. Pike.

On April 30, 1806, Pike arrived at St. Louis, "after an absence of eight months and twenty two days" and without the loss of a single man.

Pike's descriptions of Iowaland, as recorded in his journal and letters, added much to our knowledge of this region and helped shape American policy regarding the Indian, the fur trader, and the soldier on our western frontier. Within a decade after his return four military posts — Fort Madison (1808), Fort Edwards (1815), Fort Armstrong (1816), and Fort Crawford (1816), had been established on the Upper Mississippi between the mouth of the Des Moines River and Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. Although these were not located on the exact sites recommended by Pike they were in the immediate vicinity of points he felt were strategic. They clearly reveal the importance of the Iowa country on the Upper Mississippi military frontier.

For his accomplishment, Pike received no special compensation, except his army pay. At various times attempts were made in Congress to obtain special compensation for Pike and his men, all soldiers, but in vain. Indeed, on July 3, 1812, Pike petitioned Congress for compensation for services rendered "in exploring the interior parts of North America," but even this petition was tabled and nothing was ever done about it.

The results of Pike's travels were well worth extra payment. He gathered new and valuable information regarding the country traversed. His investigation of the activities of the British fur traders in American territory resulted in the United States taking protective measures. Not only did he add to the knowledge of the Indian tribes but he managed to establish a friendly attitude among the Indians towards the government of the United States. Finally, his survey pointed out the better locations for military posts and trading establishments.

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN