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Historic Sites Archeology on the Upper Missouri  
By MERRILL J. MATTES

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# HISTORIC SITES ARCHEOLOGY ON THE UPPER MISSOURI <sup>1</sup>

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By MERRILL J. MATTES <sup>2</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

The Flood Control Act of 1944 laid the groundwork for a comprehensive water-control plan for the Missouri River Basin, involving the survey of over 100 potential reservoir sites, and the early creation of several of these reservoirs by the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation. The construction of large dams, inundating extensive river valleys, posed a grave threat to important historical and archeological values quickly recognized by two other Government agencies which have primary responsibilities in these fields—the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior, and the Smithsonian Institution. Under the aggressive leadership of chief historian R. F. Lee and assistant chief historian Herbert E. Kahler, of the National Park Service, and Dr. Frank H. H. Roberts, Jr., of the Bureau of American Ethnology, a program was launched for the survey and salvage of archeological sites threatened or doomed by the prospect of inundation (Corbett, 1949; Johnson, 1951; Mattes, 1947; Roberts, 1952).

Conceived in 1945, the program was actually implemented in 1946 when a field office of the Smithsonian Institution was set up at the Laboratory of Anthropology of the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, and the positions of historian and liaison archeologist were set up by the National Park Service at its Region Two Office in Omaha (Wedel, 1947). Field surveys were started in 1946, while comprehensive excavation projects were started in 1949 (Wedel, 1949). From the standpoints of available funds and the intensity of fieldwork, the program reached its climax in the summers of 1951 and 1952 when 16 separate survey or excavation parties were operating (B.A.E. Ann. Repts.). A drastic reduction in funds beginning in the fiscal year 1953 resulted in a sharply curtailed program, there being only six field parties during that summer. In 1954 the program continued on this limited basis (U.S. Dept. Int., 1952 a). The need for continuing intensive salvage

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has not abated, particularly in the huge Fort Randall, Garrison, and Oahe Reservoir areas on the "main stem" of the Missouri River in the Dakotas; but the prospects now are that many important sites will be unsurveyed, certainly unexcavated, because of the inadequacy of funds (U.S. Dept. Int., 1953).<sup>3</sup>

The primary concern has been the excavation of prehistoric Indian sites, and most of the funds have gone for this purpose because it has been realized that the only primary sources of information that exist in the field of prehistory lie underground. However, National Park Service officials have been conscious of the need, also, to conduct researches to ascertain what historic sites were threatened by the water-development program, to locate such sites as precisely as possible by analysis of documentary records and field surface reconnaissance, and to recover valuable historical data by excavation.

The principle of utilizing the technique of archeology as a research weapon in the field of history, while long recognized in Europe, has not received wide acceptance in the United States until the past two decades. Beginning in the WPA project days of the 1930's, there has been an increasing number of sites, significant in some phase of early American history, which have been excavated with profitable, sometimes spectacular, results. There has also developed a small but respected number of archeologists who, becoming fascinated by the possibilities in this field, have made a specialty of "historic sites archeology." The National Park Service, several of the State historical societies, and certain private foundations have been leaders in this field (Anon., 1951 and 1953; Harrington, 1952).

Since a historic site by its very definition presumes some preknowledge of underground data, the need for excavating such a site must be carefully assessed beforehand, for such a project may involve a sizable outlay of funds (Harrington, 1953). Obviously, costly excavation of a site concerning which practically all architectural and cultural details are already known would not be justified. Archeological excavation of a historic site is justified primarily to fill important gaps in documentary or archival research. It may yield structural evidence that has been partly or entirely lacking, or correct the misinformation that contemporary historians and diarists some-

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<sup>3</sup> There was an even greater reduction in funds and fieldwork in the fiscal year 1954-55. Beginning in 1955-56 and continuing through 1957-58, marked increases in appropriations made possible an expansion of the investigations. In 1955-56 there were 8 field parties from the River Basin Surveys, Smithsonian Institution, and 6 parties from State institutions working under agreements with the National Park Service. During 1956-57 the Smithsonian sent out 16 parties, while cooperating institutions were represented by 9 parties. In 1957-58 there were 19 Smithsonian parties and 11 from cooperating institutions working in the Missouri Basin. The situation again took a downward trend in 1958-59 and it was necessary to reduce the Smithsonian parties to 10 and those of the cooperating institutions to 6. Conditions continue to be as critical as described by Mr. Mattes and are further complicated by the activation of the Big Bend Reservoir project between Fort Randall and Oahe.—EDITOR.

times make. A second and oftentimes quite important justification for this type of project is the collection of historical objects that help to throw light on living conditions of the period and place, or that may illuminate specific problems. Museums, deluged with random items of dubious authenticity, appreciate receiving collections that have been scientifically assembled by excavation, the plans guided and the results interpreted by qualified technicians.

## THE MISSOURI BASIN

The Missouri Basin, occupying approximately one-sixth of the land surface of the continental United States but comprising less than one-twentieth of the population, is the heartland of the traditional frontier American West. The seemingly interminable Great Plains, rising imperceptibly to the sudden crescendo of the Rocky Mountains, was the last major region in the United States to settle down to a peaceful domestic routine. Long after territories east of the Mississippi had been well populated and methodically "civilized," the wild empire of the buffalo, the Sioux Indian, and the bighorn sheep attracted only the more rugged citizens—traders, trappers, soldiers, freighters, prospectors, missionaries, and Indian fighters—typical frontiersmen all (Briggs, 1950).

There is, of course, no official date for the end of the "trans-Mississippi frontier," but the carnage at Wounded Knee Creek, in late December 1890, the last important clash between red man and white on the American continent, makes an excellent milestone (Mooney, 1896). It is more difficult to determine when this frontier began. Presumably this was whenever the first white man reached its easternmost limits. True, Lewis and Clark were the first recorded white men to ascend the Missouri to its uppermost reaches, cross the Continental Divide, and reach the Pacific Ocean by land route, but many white men preceded them in the exploration of the Great Plains (Lewis and Clark, 1904; Coues, 1893). Just how far west the La Vérendrye brothers traveled in 1742-43 is an unsettled point, but it is certain that for decades prior to Lewis and Clark traders of French, Spanish, and British origin or auspices did invade the Plains (Nasatir, 1952). We know that Coronado entered the southern limits of the basin in 1541 and the conquistadores who succeeded him penetrated the basin many times. The Villasur party, victims of Pawnee treachery, reached the forks of the Platte in 1720 (Bolton, 1949, App., pp. 282-304; Folmer, 1953, pp. 280-284).

The Platte-North Platte-Sweetwater route to South Pass was discovered in 1812 by Robert Stuart and his Returning Astorians, and in 1824 it was first utilized by trappers and traders of the Rocky Mountain Fur Co. as a route to the settlements (Rollins, 1935; Dale,

1941). In 1841 the first bona fide emigrants ascended this covered-wagon route; in 1849 the emigration became a flood, spilling toward the California gold fields (Ghent, 1929; Hafen and Rister, 1953, pp. 315-330).

The Platte or Oregon Trail route, precursor of the first transcontinental railroad, completed in 1869, demonstrated the virtues of the Central Route overland to the Pacific Coast. However, for many decades it was rivaled by the Missouri River as a major transcontinental route. From the time of Lewis and Clark until the completion of other railroad bridges in Dakota Territory in the 1880's, the "Big Muddy" was traveled by thousands of pioneers and hardy adventurers, its tortuous banks becoming the setting of many small but vigorous communities.

To frontiersmen pushing out onto the prairies, accustomed to river travel, the wide Missouri River rather than the shallow unnavigable Platte was the obvious way west, and the fact that it made a decided northward swing about 200 miles west of St. Louis was not a deterrent. This mighty stream was not only the key to the mysterious and long-sought Western Sea, it was the royal road to riches through the lucrative fur trade. After 1806 its role as a major transcontinental thoroughfare was insured, and soon trading posts began to spring up near every Indian village (Chittenden, 1936, pp. 75-602). Among the earliest of these was Bijou's (or Bisonette's) trading post below the mouth of White River, set up by Manuel Lisa in 1812 while en route to the Arikara (Drumm, 1920, pp. 56-59). In 1822 two major establishments appeared farther upstream, just below the S-shaped reverse called Big Bend, between present Chamberlain and Pierre—the American Fur Co.'s Fort Recovery, and Fort Kiowa alias Fort Lookout, a rival post of the Columbia Fur Co. In 1828 the great trading post of Fort Union was erected by the American Fur Co. near the mouth of the Yellowstone River, while rival posts were erected in the vicinity by Kipp, Campbell, and Sublette. About 1830 Fort Clark appeared at Knife River, and Fort Pierre and Fort Laframboise were erected at Bad River near present Pierre (Wilson and De Land, 1902; Abel, 1932). In 1845 the American Fur Co. established Fort Berthold at the great bend at the Mandan Villages where the Missouri River makes its final swing westward.

There were a few occasions when officials launched expeditions upriver to subjugate or parley with the Indians—notably the Leavenworth expedition of 1823 and the Atkinson-O'Fallon expedition of 1825—but fur traders dominated the scene until the 1850's, when Indian troubles on the Plains brought the United States Army into the picture.

In 1855 General Harney, after chastising Sioux Indians on the Platte, led his cavalry overland from Fort Laramie and took over

Fort Pierre from the traders, making it the first military post on the Upper Missouri. This was shortly succeeded by Fort Lookout and Fort Randall downstream (Meyers, 1914, pp. 71-108). Indian uprising during the 1860's prompted the addition of fortified points and garrisons at Fort Rice and Fort Stevenson while Whetstone, Lower Brulé, Grand River, and Fort Berthold Indian agencies, among others, came into being as steps toward pacifying and civilizing the bewildered aborigines (Comm. Ind. Aff., 1865-70).

Meanwhile, pirogues, canoes, flatboats, bullboats, and steamboats plied upriver to these primitive or warlike establishments or beyond into Montana country, where the fur trade was replaced during the 1860's by the lure of gold. Steamboat landings, woodyards, saloon towns, and little communities of assorted description appeared along the river to fulfill the needs of the rough and dangerous times.

Until 1849 the Missouri River rivaled the Platte route as a major line of approach to the Far West. After that date it became the line of demarcation between the eastern settlements and the western wilderness, with Indians, Indian agents, and United States Cavalry playing out the last act of interracial violence.

### THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE AND THE MISSOURI BASIN

Planned construction of the several giant dams along the Missouri River in the Dakotas unavoidably doomed many of these sites, highly significant to American frontier history. For the first time in the known history of river impoundment, the nature of the calamity about to befall the cause of historical conservation was fully understood. Further, machinery was on hand to do something about it.

The National Park Service, by authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935, is the Federal agency primarily responsible for the conservation of historic sites. This responsibility extends first of all to sites that happen to be, accidentally or by design, in Federal ownership, such sites comprising the bulk of the present 180 national parks, national monuments, national memorials, national historical parks, etc., in the National Park System (Lee, 1951). Secondly, however, the Service is charged by this Act to make necessary surveys of historic as well as prehistoric sites throughout the United States, to assess their national significance, and to cooperate with other agencies, State or Federal, in the preservation and interpretation of such sites. When the National Park Service as an Interior Department agency became involved in the Missouri River Basin program, it became readily apparent that it shouldered a dual responsibility—to undertake recreational planning for reservoir areas, and to initiate a program for the conservation of historic and archeologic sites threatened by these reservoirs (Mattes, 1947, 1952 a).

The historical phase of the Missouri River Basin program began with the employment of a full-time historian for the task in the summer of 1946. The work involved intensive library and archival studies at various repositories, notably the National Archives, and files of the various State historical societies. This was followed by field reconnaissance to identify historic sites, structures, or other features to be inundated, to evaluate their significance, and to recommend steps to be taken to "salvage" data or materials wherever possible. Salvage alternatives included comprehensive photography, mapping, measured drawings, and relocation of structures, and archeology of extinct sites—that is, the recovery of surviving historical objects and structural evidence underground.

During the period 1946 to 1952 over 80 proposed reservoir areas were surveyed by Service historians. Although the results of most of these surveys did not appear as separate reports, but were incorporated in official reports on recreational planning, a few areas contained historical values of such magnitude that separate reports were deemed essential. Of these, the four principal reports are those relating to the Gavins Point, Fort Randall, Oahe, and Garrison Reservoirs, all on the "main stem" of the Missouri River in South and North Dakota (Mattes, 1949; Mattison, 1951, 1953 a, b).

In addition to summary reports on reservoir areas, there has also been a series of reports on individual sites, designed primarily to provide orientation for archeologists and others engaged in actual salvage work. Several of these have found publication (Mattes, 1952 b; Mattison, 1951; Hoekman, 1952). Some of these reports have been contributed by graduate students of colleges or universities, enlisted through the cooperation of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association (Dick, 1950).

The data compiled by the Missouri River Basin historical survey have not been limited to those found in published material. Inevitably, the broad scope of this survey has enabled the historians to sweep up in their net an imposing array of new data, derived from interviews and unexploited documents, which have not only expanded the historical horizon but have compelled scholars to revise many long-cherished misconceptions. The survey has provided fish, so to speak, for many years of historical frying. Several "byproducts" of this research are now in manuscript form; a few have found their way into print (Mattison, 1954 a, b, and c; Mattes, 1953; Morgan, 1953, pp. 376-377).

With the assistance of a staff photographer, over 1,500 record photographs have been made of historic sites and features that would otherwise have gone unrecorded. These pictures are on file in the Region Two Office of the National Park Service in Omaha, with copies in the files of the State historical societies most directly con-

cerned (U.S. Dept. Int., 1952 b). With funds largely provided by the Missouri River Basin Project, the National Park Service supervised a project for obtaining measured drawings of 12 structures in the Missouri River Reservoir areas, which drawings and accompanying notes and photographs have been prepared and are filed in the Library of Congress in accordance with standards set forth by the Historic American Buildings Survey.<sup>4</sup>

The principal salvage effort in the historical field, however, has been the archeological search and excavation of sites of importance in early Missouri River history, with the object of ascertaining or verifying structural data and obtaining objects, for eventual museum use and study, which might throw new light on everyday conditions during the frontier period. The Smithsonian Institution, which had already assumed responsibility for the survey and excavation of Indian sites, agreed to undertake the historic sites fieldwork required. After several unsuccessful efforts to obtain appropriations for this particular type of archeology, funds were finally made available in the fiscal year 1950. Actual fieldwork in historic sites on the Upper Missouri was conducted for three summers, 1950 to 1952 inclusive, and again in 1954, all in the Fort Randall and Garrison Reservoirs, where dams were under construction and where impoundment, at the date of writing this report, has actually covered many of the critical sites described. (Although field reconnaissance by Service historians included rather thorough coverage of the Oahe and Gavins Point Reservoirs, dam construction in those instances has been scheduled somewhat later and consequently salvage measures have been less imperative. It is hoped that work can yet be accomplished there, or archeological losses—both historic and prehistoric—will be extensive.)

The Fort Randall report listed 120 historic sites and features, including 15 Lewis and Clark camp sites, 3 military posts, 4 trading posts, and 13 abandoned communities of other types (Mattes, 1949). The Garrison report described 77 historic features, including 15 identifiable Lewis and Clark sites, 1 military post, 4 trading posts, and 9 abandoned communities of other types (Mattison, 1951).

What factors determined which sites would be most eligible for archeological investigation, in view of the limitation placed on funds available for that purpose? Three such factors appeared in weighing any given site or in weighing one against another—the degree of historical significance, the extent of available knowledge, and the accuracy of orientation data. Thus, theoretically, the most eligible site would be associated with some important event in American

<sup>4</sup>The measured structures are: in Gavins Point Reservoir, Episcopal and Congregational Missions, Santee Indian Reservation, and the Hutterite Mill near Tabor; in Fort Randall Reservoir, the Fort Randall Chapel; in the Oahe Reservoir, the Oahe Chapel, St. Johns Episcopal Church and Chapel at Cheyenne River Agency, blacksmith shop at Fort Bennett; in Garrison Reservoir, the Fort Berthold Congregational Mission, Indian dance hall at Elbowoods, the powder magazine and officers' quarters at Fort Buford.

history. We would know precisely where to find it, yet we would lack important data which we might reasonably expect to be revealed by excavation.

The Lewis and Clark expedition was unquestionably of epic importance, hence the explorers' camp sites satisfy the first requirement. However, it would be difficult to make a case for archeological work at such sites since they would be virtually impossible to pinpoint—if indeed they still survived over 150 years of channel shifting—hence the returns would be extremely meager, if not entirely negative. Steamboat landings, villages, missions, and other communities of fairly recent origin might bear such similarity to still-existent communities that archeological findings might not be rewarding. Three classes of sites, representative of significant frontier eras, offered the greatest promise. These were the trading posts, the military posts, and the early Indian agencies.

Sites finally selected for exploration and for excavation were, in order of their appearance, going upriver: Fort Randall (first phase), Fort Randall steamboat landing, Whetstone Indian Agency, Bijou's trading post, Fort Recovery, Lower Brulé Indian Agency (first phase), Fort Lower Brulé, Fort Lookout (four phases), Fort Hale, all in the Fort Randall Reservoir area, in Gregory, Charles Mix, Lyman, Brulé, Buffalo, and Hughes Counties, S. Dak.; and Fort Stevenson, Fort Berthold (three phases), and Kipp's Post, all in the Garrison Reservoir, in Mercer, McLean, Mountrail, Dunn, McKenzie, and Williams Counties, N. Dak.

Any success achieved by the archeological search for historical data in the Missouri River Reservoir areas is due in large measure to the close and continuing cooperation between the Lincoln field office of the Smithsonian Institution and the Omaha office of the National Park Service, despite a succession of personnel in key positions at both establishments. While under the continuing general direction of Dr. Frank H. H. Roberts, Jr., Bureau of American Ethnology, the Missouri Basin Project of the Smithsonian Institution has been under the successive leaderships of Waldo R. Wedel, Paul L. Cooper, Ralph D. Brown, and Robert L. Stephenson. The post of liaison archeologist for the National Park Service has been filled successively by Jesse D. Jennings, Gordon C. Baldwin, and Paul L. Beaubien. However, as regional historian the writer has been identified with the project continuously since 1946. Until 1949 he was historian for the Missouri River Basin Project; thereafter, in his present capacity, he assumed general technical direction of all historical and archeological programs in Region Two of the National Park Service. In 1950 Ray H. Mattison and Harry B. Robinson were appointed historians for the Missouri River Basin.

## HISTORIC SITES INVESTIGATIONS

In the spring of 1950 funds for the historical phase of the salvage program were assured, and Thomas R. Garth was employed as archeologist in this field. In July he accompanied Cooper and the writer on a trip to initiate the program in the Fort Randall Reservoir.

The first problem requiring attention was the exact location of early Fort Randall, a military post of commanding importance in the Dakotas from 1856 to 1892 (Mattes, 1952 b). In 1871 the crude log structures at this post had been replaced by large frame buildings. Contemporary pictorial evidence suggested that the rebuilt fort was somewhat removed from the original. It was suspected that the early site was on the point of land once known as Handy's Point, which would be entirely covered by the giant Fort Randall Dam (Mattes, 1949, pp. 482-483; Chittenden, 1936, p. 927). The area was searched rather thoroughly but surface evidence, at least, was negative. It was the consensus that, despite certain contrary evidence suggested in the meager pictorial data, the early fort must have been laid out substantially within the area of the identifiable later Fort Randall. Since this site would be just below the downstream toe of the dam, and precautions had been taken that it would not be disturbed by construction activities, it was determined to forsake Fort Randall for the moment and to take the party upriver where important known values would be destroyed.

The Fort Randall Reservoir area extends from the site of old Fort Randall, just above the Nebraska-South Dakota line, to the curious reverse in the Missouri River known as Big Bend, just above Fort Thompson, agency for the Crow Creek and Lower Brulé Indian Reservations. This is a distance of nearly 140 miles. However, the heaviest concentration of sites, both historic and prehistoric, falls within a relatively short section of about 20 miles in the upper reservoir, between American Crow Creek and Campbell Creek, in the general vicinity of Chamberlain, S. Dak. An unusual abundance of tributary streams and wide bottomland in this section apparently account for its popularity with explorers, fur traders, military commanders, and Indian agents. Here on the "Oacoma Bench" was the Camp Pleasant of Lewis and Clark, where the Captains spent several days in October 1804 to rest and overhaul their gear (Lewis and Clark, 1904, pp. 149-155). Here, beginning in 1812 or earlier, was located a whole succession of trading posts which also served as outposts of the expanding American Territory, strongly influencing the course of western history for four decades. This section was also the locale of three military posts and as many Indian agencies during the pre-

carious period when the cantankerous Sioux tribes were making their first sullen efforts to become civilized.

Most important of the trading posts in this group was Fort Recovery, reputedly on American Island, originally Cedar Island. It was supposedly so named as the successor of the 1812 Fort aux Cedres of the Missouri Fur Co.; however—much to the confusion of historians—it enjoyed several aliases, among them Cedar Fort, Fort Brasseaux, and Pilcher's Post (Chittenden, 1936, pp. 141, 922; Wilson and De Land, 1902, p. 326). Whatever one chooses to call it, research strongly suggests that, contrary to a widespread but careless assumption, this post was not on American Island but on the right bank of a creek near the foot of the island (Mattes, 1949, pp. 533-543). Established in 1822, this fort achieved distinction in 1823 as the base for the historic Ashley-Leavenworth campaign against the unruly Arikara, and was described in that year by Duke Paul of Württemberg (Württemberg, 1938, p. 432). Ten years later its passing was noted by another European traveler, Prince Maximilian of Wied (Wied-Neuwied, 1906, pp. 302-305).

Well fortified with documentary data, the Garth party searched intensively for signs of Fort Recovery, making numerous test squares and trenches in an ever-widening arc from the point hypothesized in the Mattes report. The negative results despite exhaustiveness of the search led to two possible conclusions: (1) that Fort Recovery had never been destroyed by fire but that the remains were painstakingly dismantled by the traders themselves, by Indians, or by steamboat crews, leaving no trace; or (2) that the actual site had succumbed to the Missouri River. Since the total disappearance of evidence at a site busily occupied for several years is scarcely conceivable, the second alternative is the more acceptable one.

Fort Lookout now engaged the attention of the historical-archeological reconnaissance party. Here the outlook was more hopeful since Fort Lookout remains were reported by local informants to be definitely in evidence. The only difficulty here was that this evidence was to be found in three different places. A partial explanation of this quandary was offered by a hypothesis in the basic report: despite the common historical assumption, the Fort Lookout trading post (1822-?) and the later Fort Lookout military post (1856) were two quite different establishments, probably at two different locations.

Fort Lookout military post was established on order of Gen. William S. Harney in 1856 and was built under the direction of Capt. Nathaniel Lyon. It was abandoned the following year (Meyers, 1914). It proved to be exactly where the records indicated it to be, on the south boundary of the present Lower Brulé Indian Reservation, at the lower end of a wide meadow now called the "Fort Hale

Bottoms." There was virtually no surface evidence of this post, which had been laid out on a rather ambitious scale, only to be completely dismantled upon its abandonment, and the materials used at Fort Randall, 100 miles downstream. After careful search, however, Garth located a concentration of military debris and accouterments on a slope about 200 yards back from the river bank, which was probably a dump. The fact that the military post site proved to be a few feet above maximum reservoir pool level, coupled with the multiplicity of other problems, led to the abandonment of this particular effort.

Research indicated that Fort Lookout trading post had a disconcertingly checkered career. It was established by the Columbia Fur Co. in 1822 and the following year it figured in the historic Ashley-Leavenworth expedition against the Arikara (Wilson and De Land, 1902; Chittenden, 1936, pp. 325-329; Frost, 1945, p. 37; Morgan, 1953, pp. 59-77). In 1825 it was the scene of a grand parley between the Sioux and members of the Atkinson-O'Fallon diplomatic expedition (Reid and Gannon, 1929, pp. 21-23). About this same time Fort Lookout (which, contrary to another common assumption, is identifiable with the "Fort Kiowa" of the fur traders) was taken over by the American Fur Co. In 1833 it appears in the journals of Prince Maximilian as an adjunct of the Upper Missouri or Sioux Indian Agency; at this same time Maximilian describes a second Fort Lookout or "French Post" a few miles downriver (Wied-Neuwied, 1906, p. 303). During the 1840's a "Fort Lookout" was occupied in desultory fashion by La Barge and other latter-day, small-time traders (Chittenden, 1903, p. 59; Mattes, 1949, pp. 540-541.)

Garth's explorations settled two things: first, that there was a trading post site on the river bank nearby, but not coincident with, the Fort Lookout military post; second, that the dimensions of this trading post were too small to identify it as the historic Fort Lookout-Fort Kiowa of 1825, hence it was the "French Post" Fort Lookout of 1833, or La Barge's Fort Lookout of the 1840's.

What happened to the famous Fort Lookout of 1825? After a most intensive reconnaissance of the Fort Hale Bottoms, coupled with a careful analysis of river meanders, Garth concluded that the Fort Lookout site of 1825 had been destroyed by river action. If Maximilian's Fort Lookout (alias Sioux Agency) of 1833 were identical with the fort of 1825, then it too had disappeared. Subsequent investigations were to substantiate this finding.

To minimize the confusion, the writer now holds to this solution of the Fort Lookout tangle:

- Fort Lookout I-----Alias Fort Kiowa, the post of 1823-25, apparently destroyed by river action.
- Fort Lookout II-----Maximilian's "French Post" of 1833, probably identical with La Barge's post of the 1840's, discovered by Garth in 1950.

Fort Lookout III-----	Maximilian's "Sioux Agency" of 1833, probably, but not certainly, identical with Fort Lookout I, in any event also destroyed by river action.
Fort Lookout IV-----	The military post of 1856 adjoining Fort Lookout, location confirmed by Garth in 1950.

One other important discovery was made in 1950. An unidentified historic site on the right bank, near Chamberlain, had been reported by a Smithsonian reconnaissance party; one local informant had mistakenly identified this as Fort Lookout military post. Excavation here revealed the hitherto unidentified remains of an establishment tentatively identified as Fort Lower Brulé, predecessor of Fort Hale, a military post established in 1870 to police the newly relocated Lower Brulé (U.S. Surg. Gen. Off., 1870, p. 410).

Garth also reconnoitered and confirmed the site of Lower Brulé Indian Agency, 1868-90, below the mouth of American Crow Creek (Andreas, 1884, p. 94); the site of Fort Hale, 1870-84, opposite the mouth of Crow Creek (U.S. Surg. Gen. Off., 1875; Hackett, 1916), nine-tenths of which had already been claimed by the Missouri River; and the site of Whetstone Agency, 1868-72, just above the mouth of the creek of the same name (Comm. Ind. Aff., 1868-84; Robinson, 1916, p. 99; Kingsbury, 1915, p. 808; Poole, 1881). An intensive search of the area around the mouth of White River failed to disclose the remains of anything resembling a trading post, thus tending to confirm the writer's belief that the historical concept of a Fort Brasseaux at White River was erroneous.

In 1951 Carl Miller intensively excavated the site of Fort Lookout II, finding two historic levels that fit the variable descriptions of Maximilian's "French Post" and La Barge's Fort Lookout, both establishments of modest proportions in comparison with the historic Fort Lookout I of the 1820's. Debris from this site, while scantier than anticipated, will aid in studies of the material and crude architecture of the little-known commercial outposts of the Upper Missouri.

During this same season, G. Hubert Smith conducted limited excavations at the site of Fort Stevenson (1867-83), destined to lie under 200 feet of water behind the gigantic Garrison Dam (Mattison, 1951; Kane, 1951). Although less than 25 percent of this site was excavated, no further work here was deemed necessary. Findings confirmed the general accuracy of building plans preserved in the National Archives; and an excellent collection of objects of the military period was made, insuring the salvage of authentic remains for the information of future students. This project was complicated by the fact that Fort Stevenson was taken over by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and used as an Indian boarding school until 1893. The debris of this latter episode was liberally intermixed with the military.

In 1951 Smith, accompanied by historians Mattes and Mattison, also reconnoitered the site of Like-a-Fishhook Village of the Mandan-Hidatsa-Arikara alliance, the locale of Fort Berthold I (1845-62) and II (1858-ca. 1885) (Comm. Ind. Aff., 1868-94; Kane, 1951; Taylor, 1932; Mattison, MS.) In 1950 Glenn Kleinsasser of the North Dakota Historical Society conducted limited excavations in the remains of the Indian village. In 1951 James H. Howard, his successor, did likewise.

Smith also reconnoitered the alleged site of Kipp's trading post of 1828, at the mouth of White Earth River, and confirmed the location of this little-known post (Chittenden, 1936, p. 957; Will and Hecker, 1944, pp. 8-12).

In 1952 Smith returned to tackle the excavation of one of the principal historic features of Garrison Reservoir, Fort Berthold II—trading post, Indian agency, military post, and focal point of the great village that was the final refuge of the Three Tribes from the assaults of smallpox and the Sioux.

While Smith and Howard were entrenched at Fort Berthold, John E. Mills instituted mopping-up operations (as far as historic sites were concerned) in the Fort Randall area. Mills carefully reviewed the work of Garth and Miller at Fort Recovery, Fort Lower Brulé, Fort Lookout II and IV, and Fort Hale, and contributed supplementary data. He confirmed the negative findings at the mouth of White River, and made a fruitless search for any evidence of Bijou's, or Bisonette's, trading post of 1812, opposite old Rosebud Landing. Since the Fort Recovery-Fort Lookout area seemed to have yielded all the information it had to offer, he then moved back downriver.

Whetstone Creek was the locale of Whetstone Indian Agency and a stockaded Fort Whetstone, outpost of Fort Randall. The only thing left in sight to go on was the creek itself, plus one or two suspicious depressions in a wheatfield. Ground plans from the National Archives and historical sources indicated a rather extensive village with cottonwood log construction dominant. Mills reconnoitered the area and tested it intensively, at first with disappointing results. It was several weeks before the outline of a stockade was encountered; this proved to be the post corral. The fort itself was not in evidence and there was relatively little else that could be linked to Spotted Tail's occupancy. This was bottomland, and alternating sheet-erosion and siltation seems to have effectively obliterated the bulk of the remains.

From Whetstone, Mills moved to the immediate vicinity of old Fort Randall itself. He took up quarters in a building, condemned by the Corps of Engineers, which proved to be the remnant of an officers' quarters. The main area of the fort, a mere stone's throw

from the downstream toe of the rising Fort Randall Dam, contained the rather well-defined outlines of the structures that once graced the perimeter of the parade ground. There was no mystery as to the whereabouts of the buildings, and the site would not be destroyed by reservoir or outlet works. The only part of the fort in jeopardy was a piece of bottomland that would be covered by a rock apron for channel stabilization. In 1950 Mattes and Garth had found surface debris here that clearly indicated some kind of occupancy, although no features were clearly identified here on any available ground plans. However, in 1952 only one structure was located in this area. This proved to be a brickkiln, probably of the boom construction period of the early 1870's.

In 1953 no historical salvage work was accomplished, this being a casualty of a further decreased budget. In 1954, however, archeologists returned to Like-a-Fishhook Village, the Fort Berthold area, under rather dramatic circumstances. It was long recognized that there was an exceptional concentration of archeological values here, a grand intermixture of late Upper Plains Indian and frontier white cultures. Several seasons of excavations had exposed numerous earth-lodge sites, and a portion of Fort Berthold II; but several unsolved problems remained regarding the latter post. Furthermore, no trace had yet been found of the primary site, Fort Berthold I.

It was with dismay, therefore, that the salvaging agencies learned in the early spring of 1954 that the level of waters impounded behind Garrison Dam was steadily approaching the 1,750-foot mark, where sat doomed Fort Berthold. Two steps were taken immediately: to concentrate all possible available funds and resources as early as possible in an effort to complete vital archeological research at the site, and to request the Corps of Engineers to slow down the Garrison rise long enough to achieve this goal. Through excellent four-way cooperation, this operation met with complete success.

After mature consideration of the delicate issues involved, representatives of the Division Engineer, Missouri River Division, Corps of Engineers, agreed with the National Park Service to a plan to divert a larger volume of the spring rise to the Fort Randall Reservoir, and retain more water in Fort Peck Reservoir than normally planned, in order to slow down the Garrison's rise by at least 10 days, or until July 1. Meanwhile the Smithsonian Institution and the State Historical Society of North Dakota, cooperating with funds supplied by contract through the National Park Service, pooled their manpower, equipment, and camping facilities for a "last chance" attack upon Fort Berthold.

Archeologists G. Hubert Smith and Alan R. Woolworth, of these respective institutions, made excellent headway, assisted by reserva-

tion Indians (descendants of the Like-a-Fishhook Villagers) and a power scraper rented out by the Corps of Engineers. The net result was additional information concerning Fort Berthold II, and the triumphant discovery of the remains of Fort Berthold I, as well as the rambling village stockade. All this was spurred on by knowledge that approaches to the site (as well as dry exits therefrom) would be flooded before the trading-post area itself went under water.

After the Fort Berthold finale Woolworth, accompanied by W. Raymond Wood, went 90 miles upriver to the site of Kipp's trading post, which Smith's reconnaissance party had positively identified in 1952. Here again a bulldozer was summoned, the site leveled, charred stockade walls exposed, and substantial data were recovered.

That completes the historic sites salvage picture to date.<sup>5</sup> If sufficient funds are forthcoming for additional work in this department before the impoundment of waters in Oahe Reservoir, there are several major sites there that should be tackled. Notable among these are the site of Fort Manuel Lisa, on Hunkpapa Creek just below the south boundary of North Dakota, abandoned because of frontier hostilities during the War of 1812, and the probable burial place of Sacagawea of Lewis and Clark fame (Mattison, 1953 b; Drumm, 1920; Robinson, 1924); the site of the second Fort Sully, 1866-84, on a high bench not far above the Oahe Dam, among the major military posts of the Dakotas (Hoekman, 1952; U.S. Surg. Gen. Off., 1875); the closely related sites of Cheyenne River Indian Agency Post I and Fort Bennett I and II, on Agency Creek, about 7 miles upstream from Fort Sully, 1870-91 (Mattison, 1953 b; U.S. Surg. Gen. Off., 1875; Comm. Ind. Aff., 1870-92); Grand River Agency, 1865-73, predecessor of the Standing Rock Reservation Agency at Fort Yates, just above the Grand River, near Mobridge (U.S. Surg. Gen. Off., 1875, pp. 408-409; Comm. Ind. Aff., 1868-73); and the nearby sites related to the hostilities of 1823 between Arikara Indians and the forces under Colonel Leavenworth, General Ashley, and Sioux allies, an encounter that forced the fur traders to explore overland routes to the Rocky Mountains, changing "the course of empire" (Mattison, 1953 b; Morgan, 1953, pp. 42-77; Robinson, 1902).

By this joint program of the Smithsonian Institution and the National Park Service, involving a combination of historical and archeological scholarship, new light is being thrown upon the early, much-obscured history of the Upper Missouri River, the first great route across the American continent.

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<sup>5</sup> The excavations at Fort Pierre II, Paper No. 18, this bulletin, were carried on and completed after the present paper was written.

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