

# FORT UNION TRADING POST

## HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT



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# **FORT UNION TRADING POST**

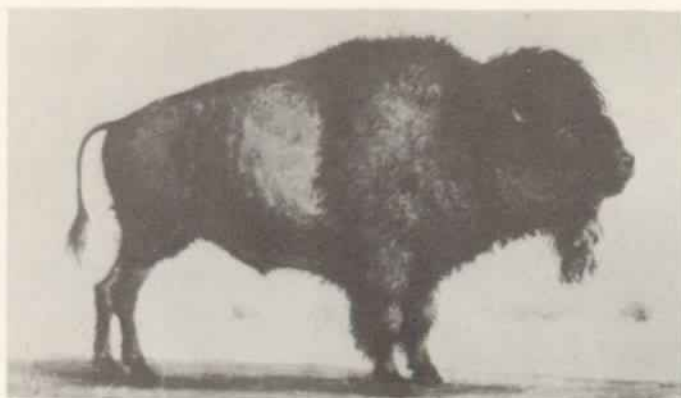
## **HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT**

### **Part II**

### **Historical Data Section**

By

ERWIN N. THOMPSON



**DIVISION OF HISTORY**

Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

September 30, 1968

National Park Service

Washington, D.C.

U.S. Department of the Interior

On Christman Eve 1968

Wilda Kuzio passed away

She worked diligently and faithfully on  
this manuscript during its preparation

This report is dedicated to her memory



## PREFACE

This study of the history of Fort Union Trading Post, with its emphasis on structural history, has been prepared in accordance with the Historical Resource Study Proposal, Fort Union Trading Post-H-2 (Historic Structures Report, Part II).

Because a detailed general history of the post has not hitherto been prepared, the first part of this report is written with a chronological history in mind. The second part of the report is a lengthy list of objects that were at the post. While such a compilation is not usually found in a Historic Structures Report, it seemed worthwhile to include such a listing here. The first summer of archeology has just been completed; at least one additional season is planned. The objects, be they trade goods or furnishings, may be of use to archeologists as an orientation of expectations.

The third and last part of the report summarizes the history of each structure. This has been arranged in a manner that architects may use the material on each structure separately in preparing their portions of the structures reports.

Quotations have been faithfully copied from the original materials. Rarely, minor punctuation has been added to assist in reading, but only when the original writer's intent has not been interfered with. "Sic" has been used sparingly.





### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the beginning, Fort Union appeared to be the most challenging report I had yet undertaken. It has proven to be the most exciting. It could not have been written, nor could the illustrations have been collected, had it not been for the tremendous support received from my associates in the Division of History. This encouragement, including that of Branch Chief Roy E. Appleman, led to the delight of several important discoveries, in the field of Western art especially, that add greatly to our understanding of this important Upper Missouri post.

The trip to the site of Fort Union was a great experience. To stand on that wind-swept prairie, to see the same scene as did Catlin and Kurz was sheer excitement. This visit was enhanced by the generous assistance of Superintendent Art Sullivan and Historian Al Schulmeir, Theodore Roosevelt NHP, who introduced me to both the site and the citizens of Williston and North Dakota.

Two gentlemen, who have had much to do with Fort Union's becoming a unit of the National Park System, also are due thanks for their assistance: Ray Mattison, now Superintendent of the North Dakota Historical Society; and Historian Merrill Mattes, SSC, who led me to the exciting Kurz sketch at the Jesuit Archives, St. Louis University.

John C. Ewers, the Smithsonian scholar on Western art, gave valuable assistance in analyzing the sketches and paintings of Fort Union, in evaluating the artists, and in putting me on the trail of several sketches. His enthusiasm on the subject is contagious.

Miss Frances Nugent, Midwest Region, whose knowledge of the contents of the Region's historical files is unmatched, and Archeologist Jackson Moore, Division of Archeology, OAHF, were most helpful on my first visit to the Midwest Region Office. Also at Omaha, Miss Mildred Goosman, Western Collections Curator, Joslyn Art Museum, was both patient and generous in allowing me access to the collections--and who has had to endure my endless correspondence ever since.

The staffs at the Wisconsin Historical Society; Detroit Public Library; Ontario Provincial Archives, Toronto; Royal Ontario Museum, Ontario; Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa; Baker Library, Harvard Business School; Wilder Library, Harvard College; and the New York (City) Historical Society, all freely allowed me to make use of their collections on the American Fur Company and the fur trade in general.



Miss Lucile M. Kane, Archivist, Minnesota Historical Society, and her staff were extremely helpful in making available much important material, especially the diaries of Charles Larpenteur. Since my first visit to the Society, Miss Kane has patiently searched the collections and responded to the many questions I asked, especially on Larpenteur. The Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, became almost a second home, and it put up with me for days on end as I examined its rich collections on the American Fur Company, transportation of the Missouri, and the wondrous Chouteau family. My thanks go to Mrs. Stadler, Manuscripts Librarian, and Mrs. Harrington, Librarian, and their competent staffs.

A number of persons and institutions kindly cooperated either through my visits or through correspondence. These include the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California at Los Angeles; Miss Catherine Weidler, Rare Books Librarian, and Reverend E. R. Vollmar, S. J., Archivist, St. Louis University; Earl Connette, Archivist, Washington State University, Pullman; Miss Mary K. Dempsey, Librarian, Montana Historical Society; Superintendent N. Mac Queen, Lower Fort Garry NHP, Man.; W. E. Ireland, Provincial Librarian and Archivist, Victoria, B. C.; Barry Hyman, Assistant Archivist, Provincial Library of Manitoba; Miss Nan Shipley, Winnipeg, Man.; Derek Bedson, Clerk of the Executive Council, Province of Manitoba; Mrs. Shirley A. Smith, Librarian, Hudson's Bay Company, Winnipeg, Man.; Miss Dorothy W. Bridgwater, Yale University Library, Conn.; Mr. James E. Belliveau, Bibliographer, Library of the Boston Athenaeum, Mass.

Mr. Isaac Sprague, Jr., grandson of the artist, Isaac Sprague, generously gave his permission to publish a sketch of Fort Union, by his grandfather, which he owns, and made available his biography of his grandfather. The National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, made available Catlin's painting of the fort. The Newberry Library, Chicago, gave permission to use a Bodmer sketch. The Thomas Gilcrease Institute, Tulsa, allowed the use of several valuable Kurz sketches. The Glenbow Foundation, Calgary, Alta., made available, in color, Hays' detailed painting of Fort Union. Mrs. Ruth Pizzinato, Bernisches Historisches Museum, Berne, Switzerland, supplied information pertaining to Kurz' work.

Historian Frank B. Sarles, Jr., Branch of Park History Studies, read the manuscript and caught many errors of fact and style. Mrs. Wilda Kuzio, working from a scrawl of a manuscript, performed extraordinary deeds in typing the report in its final form.

One might assume that with this wealth of support, the report would be nearly perfect. Such is not true; and I am responsible for all the errors it contains.

E. N. T.



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PART I

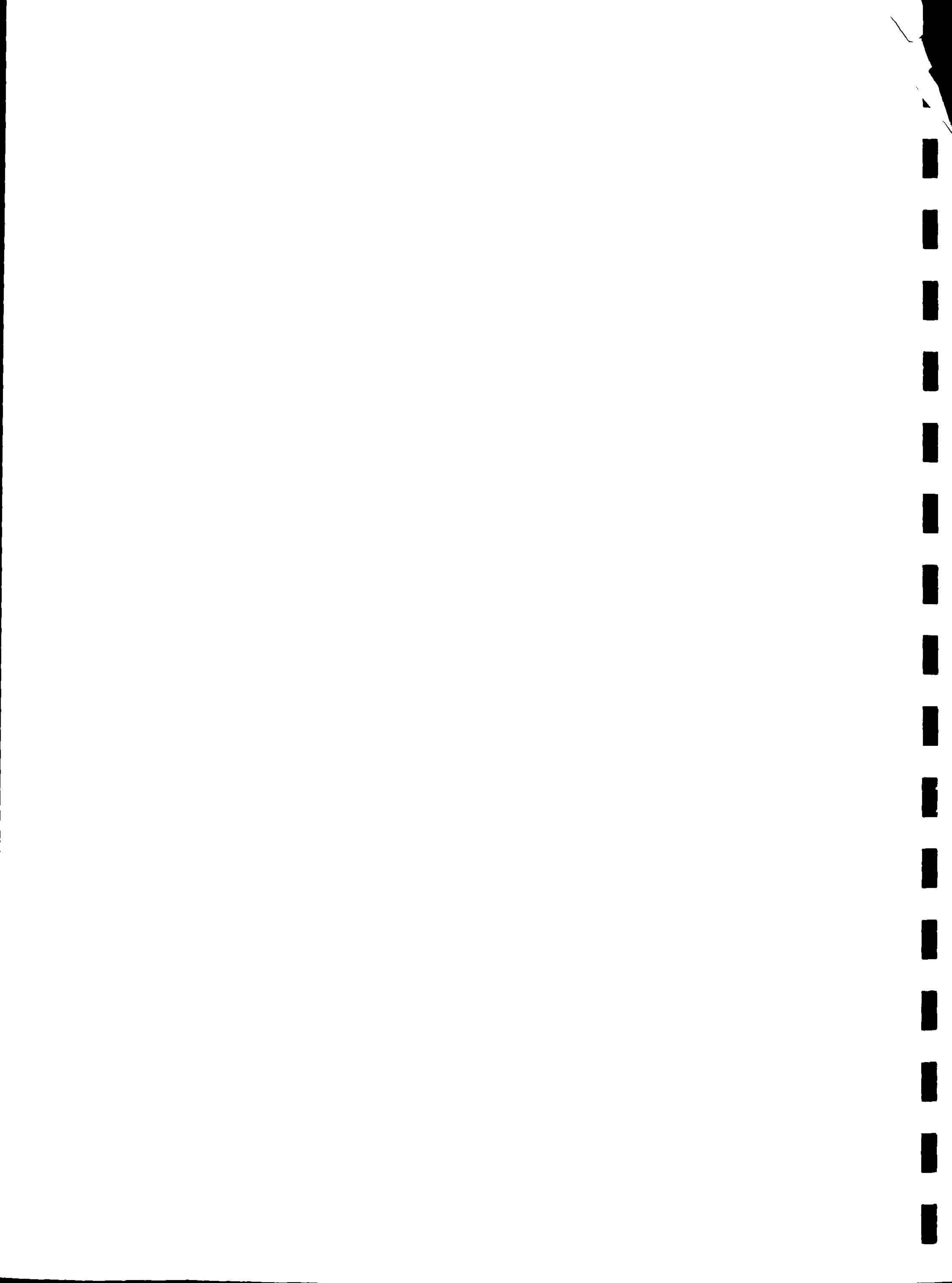
A Chronological Structural History

of

Fort Union Trading Post

1829 - 1867





## PART I

### CHAPTER 1

#### Men, Furs, and Empires

The upper Missouri did not quickly reveal its mysteries to the hunters and traders of the French colonies. For the century after two Quebeçois, Louis Jolliet, a coeur de bois, and Father Jacques Marquette, a Jesuit, discovered the river's mouth in 1673, geographers could but guess about the Missouri's headwaters. By the 1770's, however, British traders were pushing westward and southward from Hudson Bay and Lake Winnipeg. The French and Spanish at the village of St. Louis reacted to this pressure by expanding their trade up the river onto the lands of the northern plains Indians.

The 1804-06 journey of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to the Pacific dramatized the change of ownership of Louisiana from Spain to the United States. These American explorers described with accuracy the tributaries of the upper Missouri, such as the Yellowstone, and brought the news that the western mountains were rich in furs, particularly beaver.

Two years after Lewis and Clark completed their journey, John Jacob Astor, a sober German immigrant who had already acquired a small fortune in the fur trade and in trade with China, wrote New York State's most powerful politician, De Witt Clinton, then

mayor of New York City. From his personal knowledge of the fur trade and from studying the operations of the British companies in Canada, Astor had developed some ideas "for carrying on the furr trade in the united states in A manner even more extensive that it is Done by the comaneys in canada." He admitted his plan would require four or five years in order to get control of "the whole of the furr trade & to extend it to the weastern ocean." His transportation routes would be from both New York and New Orleans, "up the Missicppie and to have a range of Posts or trading houses on the rout made by Captn Lewis to the Sea."<sup>1</sup>

Astor pursued his dream and, in the spring of 1808, the American Fur Company came into existence. The organizational growth of the company during the next 26 years would be a major study in itself, yet it is necessary to note certain stages, subsidiary companies, and personalities along the way. One such name is that of Ramsay Crooks.

Born in Scotland, Crooks had come to Canada while still a teen-ager. After working briefly for fur traders based in Montreal, he appeared in St. Louis where he joined Astor's Pacific Fur Company when this subsidiary was formed in 1811. Crooks climbed rapidly and, by 1817, was a member of the exclusive top management of the American Fur Company.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Astor Papers, Baker Library, Harvard University, Vol. 44, copy of letter from John Jacob Astor, N.Y., January 1808, to De Witt Clinton.

2. Chittenden, The American Fur Trade of the Far West (2 vols. New York, 1935), 1, 380-81.

Although the Pacific Fur Company lost out to British traders on the Pacific coast during the War of 1812, Astor solidified his position at the same time in the Great Lakes area through another subsidiary, the South West Company (i.e., southwest of Montreal).<sup>3</sup> In the spring of 1821, Astor acknowledged Crooks' contributions to this period of the firm's growth by increasing Ramsay's share in the company to one-fifth of the whole.<sup>4</sup> The two men now felt ready to take on the opposition for control of the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountain trade.

Later that year, Crooks sent an agent to St. Louis to negotiate with fur companies based there. At first, this agent met with stubborn resistance as the pride of St. Louis turned a deaf ear to the upstarts from the East. But, by 1823, the American Fur Company succeeded in establishing its presence in St. Louis when Stone, Bostwick, and Company agreed to serve as its agent.<sup>5</sup>

At this time the Company underwent still another reorganization. The Great Lakes area was renamed the Northern Department; while the

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3. Porter, 2, 750; Le Roy R. Hafen, editor, The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West (5 vols. Glendale, 1965 on), 1, 105. Astor joined the Michilimackinac Company, a subsidiary of the North West Company (Canadian), to form the South West Company, 1811. In 1816, a bill was enacted excluding foreigners from control of the fur trade in the United States. This law encouraged the Canadian members of the company to sell out to Astor in 1817.

4. John Jacob Astor Papers, New York Public Library, Photostat of letter from J. J. Astor, Paris, to Ramsay Crooks, March 27, 1821.

5. Phillips, 2, 402.



hoped-for but as yet unrealized developments out of St. Louis were named the Western Department. Ramsay Crooks took over the management of both departments.<sup>6</sup>

Astor, though spending an increasing amount of time in Europe now, continued to fret about the slowness of the Western Department's expansion, especially up the Missouri River. Two opposition companies, Bernard Pratte and Company and the Columbia Fur Company, were particularly successful in keeping Astor's men restricted pretty much to the role of buyers at St. Louis.<sup>7</sup>

At this time, four St. Louis men of French descent composed the firm of Bernard Pratte and Company: Pratte himself, Pierre Chouteau, Jr., John P. Cabanne, and B. Berthold, all members of important families. Mrs. Pratte and Pierre Chouteau, Jr., were first cousins. They were also the grandchildren of Laclède Liquest, the founder of St. Louis. These two cousins demonstrated both the feudalistic organization of French society in St. Louis and the problem that Astor faced in trying to break into this society.<sup>8</sup>

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6. Phillips, 2, 402; Porter, 2, 750; Hafen, 1, 105.

7. Phillips, 2, 404-05.

8. The Chouteau family tree is unbelievably confused. Perhaps it is enough to note at this point that the original Chouteau in St. Louis was Rene Auguste who not only helped Laclède Liquest found the city but lost his wife to Laclède. Mrs. Chouteau had at least one child by her husband before going to Laclède, by whom she had several more, including Pierre Chouteau, Sr. (Pierre Jr.'s father) and the mother of Mrs. Pratte. However, she called all her children Chouteau and so they are known to history. It is ironic that all the Chouteaus involved with Fort Union actually had not a drop of Chouteau blood in them. He who would unravel this amazing family further should see Harriette Johnson Westbrook,

So spirited was the competition offered by Pratte's company that, in 1827, Astor gave up trying to break it and came to terms with it. A contract was arranged finally by which Bernard Pratte and Company assumed control of the Western Department.<sup>9</sup> Further cementing the ties between the two companies was Ramsay Crooks' marriage two years earlier to Bernard Pratte's daughter.<sup>10</sup>

Crooks next turned his attention to the Columbia Fur Company. This dynamic, cocky organization was composed mostly of ex-employees of the North West Company who had migrated to St. Louis after that company merged with the Hudson's Bay Company in the early 1820's. To overcome the law restricting foreigners in the fur trade, an American named Tilton became the head of the company. But he was just a figurehead; the real leader was Kenneth McKenzie.<sup>11</sup>

Like Crooks, McKenzie had been born in Scotland. He migrated to Canada before he was twenty and became a clerk in the North West

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"The Chouteaus and Their Commercial Enterprises," Chronicles of Oklahoma, 11 (1933), 786-97 and 942-66; Chittenden, 1, 113n; and William Hyde and Howard L. Conard, editors, Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis (New York, 1899).

9. Chittenden, 1, 331; Phillips, 2, 405-06.

10. Chittenden, 1, 380-81. Although Crooks became Pratte's son-in-law, this did not lessen a dislike for Pratte that Astor developed.

11. At this time McKenzie signed his name in this manner. Later in life he changed it to Mackenzie. See Annie Heloise Abel, Chardon's Journal at Fort Clark, 1834-1839 (Pierre, S.D., 1932), p. 273, note 267.



Company. After he arrived in St. Louis in 1822, he applied for American citizenship, which he eventually acquired. Beyond anyone's doubt he was the ablest member of the Columbia Fur Company. A ruthless, proud man, his ambitions were matched by his abilities to realize them.<sup>12</sup>

Crooks began his courtship of the Columbia Fur Company as early as the summer of 1826. McKenzie reacted by setting up conditions that the American Fur Company could not accept. Undiscouraged, Crooks wrote McKenzie, "I am still disposed to arrange for the future provided you are inclined to be moderate in your expectations." Crooks saw the futility of trying to reach agreement by writing letters and proposed that the two Scotsmen meet at Fort Snelling "next April or perhaps even earlier."<sup>13</sup>

In May 1827, Crooks reported to Astor, then in New York, that he had met with McKenzie twice (though not at Fort Snelling) and "I must say he was as frank as a prudent man ought to be." Moreover, "to secure even Mr. McKenzie would be very desirable for he is certainly the soul of his concern." Astor learned in this letter that McKenzie would not come over to the American Fur Company unless some of his associates came with him.<sup>14</sup> This demand was easily

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12. Phillips, 2, 407-09. Other members of the Columbia Fur Company were William Laidlaw, James Kipp, Joseph Renville, Honoré Picotte, and Daniel Lamont.

13. Ramsay Crooks Papers, Detroit Public Library, Photostat of letter from Ramsay Crooks to Kenneth McKenzie, Aug. 30, 1826.

14. Ibid, Crooks to Astor, May 24, 1827.



accommodated, for McKenzie wished to include only the more competent of his associates.

Negotiations continued in St. Louis throughout June. Crooks realized he was up against a hard bargainer; however, on July 6, he informed Astor "that after an almost endless negociation [sic] I have at last succeeded in agreeing on preliminaries with the Columbia Fur Company to give up their trade entirely and take a share with us in that of the Upper Missouri."<sup>15</sup>

The structure of the American Fur Company was now virtually complete; only the Rocky Mountain trade still lay outside its grasp. Astor and Crooks oversaw the whole operation, with Crooks actively concerned with the management of both the Northern and Western Departments. The Northern Department held a near monopoly in its area of operations, while the Western Department, now with both Chouteau and McKenzie in its folds, was ready to take control of the upper Missouri and to challenge any and all who dared to compete. McKenzie was placed in charge of the upper river and his organization's name was changed from Columbia Fur Company to Upper Missouri Outfit, abbreviated in correspondence and seals to UMO. Never subservient -- indeed as independent as before--the Upper Missouri Outfit worked with Bernard Pratte and Company and the American Fur Company in the manner of an associate rather than as a subordinate. But as far as the general public and the opposition

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15. Ibid, Crooks to Astor, July 6, 1827.

traders were concerned, the whole organization was known as the American Fur Company.<sup>16</sup>

The agreement was not the end of Crooks' work in St. Louis that summer. Pierre Chouteau, Jr.'s health was very poor for the moment and he was not up to supervising the preparation of outfits for the upper Missouri. Besides that, Crooks concluded, Pierre needed a little more training in the methods employed by the American Fur Company. Thus Crooks remained in the humid city overseeing the departure of the outfits for the newly-acquired empire.<sup>17</sup>

Crooks was soon to learn that he did not have to worry about Chouteau's stamina. Known in his family as Cadet, Pierre was soon to prove himself as the most dynamic leader in the St. Louis fur industry. Born in the city in 1789, he had become a clerk for his father, Pierre, Sr., when 15 years old. He had traveled up the Missouri as early as 1809 and, as the years passed, added to his knowledge and experience of handling men and furs. In the next few years, his increasing stature would show itself in the name-changes of his company, first to Pratte, Chouteau & Company; then, with Pratte's retirement in 1838, to Pierre Chouteau, Jr., & Company.

Chouteau, described by De Voto as a financier with an "empire-building mind, hard, brilliant, daring, speculative, and ruthless,"

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16. The organization and the relationships between the posts is fully discussed in Phillips, 2, 417-19; and Chittenden, 1, 327-28.

17. Crooks Papers, Detroit Public Library, Crooks to Astor, Aug. 10, 1827.

recovered his strength and assumed his responsibilities. Soon he would be advising his associates, "eracez toute opposition," and employing every stratagem necessary to that end.<sup>18</sup>

The inventories of the former posts of the Columbia Fur Company were completed by 1828. Crooks wrote to Chouteau, "I am rejoiced to find our new ally Mr. McKenzie was so reasonable in adjusting the matters connected with the Inventories."<sup>19</sup> By the fall of 1828, McKenzie was ready to build the citadel from which he would rule the upper Missouri. He would be called King by both enemy and friend; the seat of his kingdom would be called Fort Union.

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18. Westbrook, Chronicles of Oklahoma, 11, 790-95; Hyde, Encyclopedia, 1, 363-65; Chittenden, 1, 366-67 and 381-82; De Voto, p. 69.

19. Chouteau Collections, Missouri Historical Society, Envelope for Aug.-Dec., 1865, letter, Crooks to Chouteau, Sep. 14, 1828; see also Chittenden, 1, 328, who gives the last inventory date as Dec. 5, 1827.



## CHAPTER 2

### A FORT IS NEEDED

Between the time Capt. Meriwether Lewis had camped nearby in the spring of 1805 and the arrival of Kenneth McKenzie in the area, the junction of the Missouri and the Yellowstone had witnessed the fires of many whites. In the fall of 1822, Andrew Henry and William H. Ashley, considered to be the innovators of the annual rendezvous system in the Rockies, built a small post at the meeting point of the two streams. However, Henry found this location to be farther from the beaver country than he liked, and he soon moved his establishment up the Yellowstone.<sup>1</sup>

Three years later, 1825, Gen. Henry Atkinson led a considerable number of troops to the junction, which a diarist described as "the most beautiful spot we have seen on the river." The soldiers found the ruins of Henry's fort, and somewhere near it set up a temporary camp they called Barbour. A portion of the troops remained here while the rest escorted the Indian agent, Benjamin O'Fallon, up the Missouri to meet with the less than friendly Blackfeet. The entire command soon descended the river again for the benefits of civilization.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Phillips, 2, 396-97.

2. Russell Reid and Clell G. Gannon, editors, "Journal of the Atkinson-O'Fallon Expedition", North Dakota Historical Quarterly, 4 (1929), 41 and 41n; and Phillips, 2, 398.

About this same time, James Kipp, an associate of Kenneth McKenzie in the Columbia Fur Company, founded a post at the junction of the Missouri and White Earth rivers, among the Assiniboin. While this post was some distance below the mouth of the Yellowstone, it was closer than any other and provided Kipp, McKenzie, and the others a location from which to become better acquainted with the trade potential of the upper country.<sup>3</sup>

McKenzie, now in charge of the Upper Missouri Outfit, decided to build a post near the mouth of the Yellowstone. Here he could trade with the Assiniboin, who wandered the prairies toward the north; with the Crows, located up the Yellowstone; and perhaps with the Blackfeet, farther up the Missouri. From here also expeditions could be organized for the Rocky Mountains (he had wanted to get involved more directly with the mountain trade, but Pierre Chouteau, Jr., had persuaded him that the upper Missouri would be more profitable). If the post was efficient enough, it could also attract the trade of the free, or unassociated, trappers throughout the country.

Only one or two historians have, over the years, offered documented evidence as to the date McKenzie started his new fort. One

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3. James Kipp was one of the associates who remained with McKenzie in the Upper Missouri Outfit. He was born in Montreal, P.Q. His first experience in the fur trade was in the Red River area. By 1818, he was on the Missouri. He had a long career on the Missouri, not retiring until 1865. He was well liked by the various Indians, and he developed the reputation of fort builder. See Ray H. Mattison, "James Kipp," in *Hafen*, pp. 201-05; and Abel, p. 225, note 80.



such was Hiram Chittenden who quoted from a letter, now lost, that McKenzie had established a fort near the mouth of the Yellowstone at least as early as December 1828, and that this post was called Fort Floyd.<sup>4</sup>

Chittenden also quoted, in French, from a letter written by Pierre Chouteau, Jr., to William Astor, John Jacob's son. The present whereabouts of this letter, dated April 19, 1830, is also unknown. The translation reads:

On my arrival here (St. Louis) on the 16th [April, 1830], I found a letter from Mr. McKenzie of 28 December, 1829, and ones dated 2 and 20 January [1830], 200 miles above the Yellow Stone. The mountain hunters were not as successful in the fall hunt as he had hoped, but he hopes for more success in the spring. It is his opinion that there will be many more robes this year than is the usual case; that is to say in the three upper posts, at the Mandans, at the mouth of the Yellow Stone, and Fort Union 200 miles above, and he says that the upper country is very rich in beaver and robes.<sup>5</sup>

This is the earliest known reference to a Fort Union, even though this Fort Union was or was to be 200 miles above the junction. The letter is not at all clear as to whether this Fort Union was built or still in the planning stage. As far as it may be otherwise determined, the Upper Missouri Outfit did not have any forts that far up the river at that time. The letter does imply, of course, that McKenzie was 200 miles up the Missouri beyond the junction for a good part of January 1830.

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4. Chittenden, 2, 933, quoting from a letter written by McKenzie at Fort Tecumseh, March 15, 1829: "Your favor of the 5th of December [1828] reached me on the 25th ult., the date of my arrival from Fort Floyd near the Yellowstone."

5. Chittenden, 2, 933. This translation is by the writer.

Considering both sources, one must assume there was a Fort Floyd. But it is not shown that this Fort Floyd was at the same location as Fort Union is known to have been, nor is it shown that the upriver Fort Union mentioned by Chouteau was ever built.

Two letters by William Laidlaw, another ex-Columbia man, now at Fort Tecumseh, tell us that McKenzie was on the upper Missouri in 1829. One of them, dated August 13, said that "McKenzie left here about 25 days ago for the Upper Country he was able to take with him a tolerable apartment of goods." Two months later, on October 26, Laidlaw wrote, "The last news from Mr McKensie [sic] he was at white earth river waiting for the summer boat, after her arrival he was to proceed up to the mouth of Yellow Stone river and winter there."<sup>6</sup>

Did McKenzie return to the Fort Floyd he mentioned the previous December? If so, did this fort evolve into Fort Union? The available evidence answers with a resounding silence. Prince Maximilian, a visitor to Fort Union in 1833, learned that "the erection of Fort Union was commenced in the autumn of 1829, by Mr. McKenzie."<sup>7</sup> Since

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6. Chouteau Collections, Missouri Historical Society (hereafter cited as Chouteau Coll., Mo. HS), Folder 1829, Aug.-Sep., William Laidlaw, Ft. Tecumseh, Aug. 13 and Oct. 26, 1829, to Pierre Chouteau, Jr. Chittenden described William Laidlaw as a severe man with a tyrannical temper, but, who was, next to McKenzie, the best trader in the old Columbia Fur Co. He was in charge of Ft. Tecumseh, later rebuilt and rechristened as Ft. Pierre. Chittenden, 1, 385-86.

7. Reuben Gold Thwaites, editor, Early Western Travels, 1748-1846, 22, "Maximilian," p. 376.



the prince undoubtedly got this information directly from his good friend, McKenzie, it should not be ignored. Edwin T. Denig, who knew the fort well, made a similar statement in 1843, "The fort itself was begun in the fall of 1829, under the superintendence of Kenneth McKenzie."<sup>8</sup>

Despite Chittenden's belief that Fort Union grew out of Fort Floyd and thus its founding date was 1828, this report will assume that Fort Union was founded in the fall of 1829, when McKenzie went up to the junction of the two rivers from Fort Tecumseh. And it will assume that Fort Union did not evolve out of Fort Floyd, a post of some nature that is found in the documents by name but once.

The earliest mention of the name Union, as applied to the known historic site, was in a letter that Kenneth McKenzie sent to the "Gentleman in charge of Fort Tecumseh," which he dated Fort Union, May 5, 1830, less than three weeks after Chouteau applied the name to a site 200 miles upstream.<sup>9</sup> In this letter, McKenzie asked that various supplies be sent up. From the list, one may determine that both trade (beaver traps, shirts) and construction (pitsaw files) were actively

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8. Maria R. Audubon, Audubon and His Journals (2 vols., New York, 1960), 2, 181.

9. Chouteau Coll., Mo. HS, Folder Jan.-May, 1830, K. McKenzie, Ft. Union, to "Gentleman in charge of Fort Tecumseh," May 5, 1830. The first time the name Fort Union has been found in the account books of the American Fur Co. was under the date of Aug. 7, 1830, in an account for the UMO. See Mo. HS, American Fur Co. Account Book "R," April 1829-Nov. 1832, p. 211, UMO, 1830.

under way. He also wanted sent up his "gray mare & her colt and John Dougherty's little mare." McKenzie was planning to stay.

He had reason to believe that the fort was well located. One would have looked up and down the Missouri vainly for a better location in this general area. Rather than locate the post right at the junction, where the land was level but low, McKenzie picked a high spot on the north bank of the Missouri about five miles by water above the junction.<sup>10</sup> There was a considerable growth of trees on points immediately above and below this site, trees which would supply both building timbers and firewood. The site was at least 20 feet above the river, high enough to be safe from the annual floods. The ground here was a level prairie that stretched away to the north for a mile or so, thus providing ample space for the Indian camps at trading time. Farther off to the northeast was a sizeable canyon that led down from the high prairies beyond the skyline; this canyon would provide an avenue of approach to the fort for the Assiniboin. And, perhaps most important, the river ran close to this bank, thus allowing boats to tie up near the fort and reducing the portage of cargo to but a few feet.<sup>11</sup>

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10. Five miles is an arbitrary distance. Most visitors in the early days gave a figure in that vicinity, often as not at 6 miles. Today, the distance is only about 3 miles. This variation is still, and was moreso then, caused by the meanders of both streams within their valleys.

11. The Missouri then, and still, wandered freely from one side of the "bottoms" to the other. However, it apparently was fairly stable in the vicinity of Fort Union. The records mention only one time when boats had to tie up at some distance from the fort. Today, the river is about 400 yards to the south.

This was the country of the big sky, the immense herds of buffalo, the high plains, and the Indians of the tipi. But it was not entirely a paradise. Nearly always, strong winds tore across the prairies, mosquitoes plagued man and beast in the spring, and the winters were long and bitterly cold. One employee wrote that the post was "exposed to every wind that blows from any point of the compass, is said to be the coldest place of all the posts belonging to this company--even as cold as those situated on Hudson Bay."<sup>12</sup> The fort would have to be firmly built.

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12. Rudolph Friederich Kurz, Journal of Rudolph Friederich Kurz, translated by Myrtis Jarrell, edited by J. N. B. Hewitt (Washington, 1937), p. 168



## CHAPTER 3

### Palisades and Princes

The letter books of the period do not describe the beginning of construction of Fort Union. Chittenden, noting James Kipp's experience at fort building, has suggested that most likely he was the supervisor of the work. Another writer has stated that métis laborers did the actual work.<sup>1</sup> While there may have been some métis employed at the fort, it is more probable that the skilled workmen (carpenters, masons) came from St. Louis and that the large majority of the laborers were French Canadian engagés, out from Quebec. The American Fur Company regularly had a recruiter in Quebec, and a new batch of 43 mangeurs du lard had arrived at Fort Tecumseh in August 1829.<sup>2</sup>

The first task involved the cutting and hewing of suitable timber and hauling it to the site. A stout palisade of vertical logs soon enclosed a quadrangle 220 by 240 feet. The long axis of the fort ran almost due north and south; while the shorter sides

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1. Chittenden, 1, 329; Michael S. Kennedy, ed., The Red Man's West.... (New York, 1965), p. 92.

2. Chouteau Papers, Wisconsin Hist. Soc., photostat of letter, Laidlaw to Chouteau, Aug. 13, 1829. Métis--a mixed blood, in this case usually of French Canadian and Indian descent; engagé--a laborer under contract. (Ramsay Crooks firmly believed that the best engagés were French Canadians); mangeur du lard--pork eater, anyone new in the fur trade on western waters.

paralleled the river. The apartments of the employees occupied a long building on the western side of the interior. A similar building containing the storerooms and the retail store stood opposite, on the east side. At the north end stood the bourgeois' house and, behind it, a kitchen. In the western half of the north end was a large but simple gate that led out on to the prairie. On the front, or southern end, were the main gate, a reception room for Indians, and shops for various trades such as the blacksmith and the tinner. Other, smaller structures stood here and there around the perimeter. At the northeast and southwest corners stood imposing, 2-story, stone bastions. In the center of the court a tall flag staff reached for the sky.

Each and all of these structures will be discussed individually and in detail in other sections of this report. However, the above general description will provide a stage for the incidents and events that were to befall the occupants for the next 35 years.

The first international visitor to Fort Union arrived in May 1830, when Prince Paul, or Duke Paul Wilhelm of Württemberg, a southern German state, arrived on his second trip to the United States. Although a major general in the army of Frederick II of Prussia, and related to most of the reigning monarchs of Europe, Prince Paul was interested in neither the military nor court life.



Instead, he dedicated himself to exploring the far corners of the world; at this time, Fort Union qualified as a far corner.

His biographer states that Prince Paul was a "fine sketch artist." However, no results of his pen have been found. There is an unsubstantiated, and hopefully erroneous, rumor that his work was destroyed during the air raids of World War II.<sup>3</sup>

While no written account by Prince Paul seems to have survived, there is a record of his purchases at Fort Union.<sup>4</sup> They show him to have been rather an easy spender. Between May 17 and August 2, he ran up a bill of \$714.75. This sum can be broken down to show expenditures in buying trade goods, necessary supplies such as powder and ball, specimens of Indian handicraft, liquor, and pay for servants supplied by the company.<sup>5</sup> Although he seems to have paid his bill in full at Fort Union, Prince Paul returned to Germany owing money to Pratte, Chouteau, and Co. Later, in 1833, John Jacob Astor wrote

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3. Louis C. Butscher, "A Brief Biography of Prince Paul Wilhelm of Württemberg (1797-1860), New Mexico Historical Review, 17 (July 1942), 181-93; and in the same publication, "An Account of Adventures . . .," 193-216, continued in volume 17 (October 1942), 294-344. Prince Paul was a nephew of King Frederick I of Württemberg, Paul I of Russia, and (by marriage) Jerome Bonaparte; cousin to Nicholas I and Alexander I of Russia, and Queen Victoria of England, and others. He made four trips to the United States, of which his one visit to Fort Union occurred during the second trip.

4. Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Folder 1830, Jan.-May, "Paul, Prince of Wirtembergh in Ac. with Fort Union."

5. Ibid.

his son from Europe that Prince Paul "has neither money nor credit, but he hopes to get the amount of your [Chouteau's] claim in the course of a few months.<sup>6</sup>

Another prince who visited Fort Union in 1830 was Tchatka, an Assiniboin. For most of the time that Fort Union was in existence, there was little danger of an attack by the Assiniboins, or anyone else. However, in this year, Tchatka, or le Gaucher, offered a very real threat. Having lost face among his followers when he suffered a defeat at the hands of the Blackfeet, le Gaucher attempted to regain his lost prestige by offering his 200 followers a scheme whereby to capture the fort. Arriving at the post, he persuaded McKenzie to believe that his men were on their way to attack Minnitarees and he asked for powder.

Despite the stout palisades, it was often the custom at Fort Union to allow trusted Indians to sleep inside the fort; on this occasion, McKenzie gave such permission. At bedtime, le Gaucher's men retired to the various rooms to which they had been assigned. According to the plan, they were to await a signal from le Gaucher, at which time they would attack their white roommates.

One of the white employees had an Assiniboin wife whose brother, one of the attackers, warned her of the plan. She, in turn, passed the warning on. McKenzie acted as if he knew nothing. During the night, he summoned the 80-odd employees then at the fort to come

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6. Ibid., Folder 1833, March-April, William Backhouse Astor (quoting his father) to Pierre Chouteau, Jr., March 30, 1833.



to the main house, a few at a time. He armed his men and had them occupy the stone bastions and other strategic points. When his men were ready, McKenzie had le Gaucher brought to his room. He informed the chief of his awareness of the attack, and gave him the opportunity to leave peacefully before the whites opened fire. The Assiniboin left.<sup>7</sup>

McKenzie traveled down the river in the summer of 1830. When he returned to Fort Union, he found there a trapper by the name of Berger. This old-timer had learned the Blackfoot language when working for the British. Until now, nearly every effort by Americans to trade with the Blackfeet or to hunt in their territory, which lay above Fort Union, had ended in an attack by the Indians. McKenzie persuaded Berger to visit the upper tributaries and to talk the Blackfeet into sending a delegation to Fort Union. Berger was successful in this effort in 1831, and the Blackfeet agreed to let McKenzie send James Kipp up to trade. This resulted in the eventual establishment of Fort McKenzie near the mouth of Marias River. McKenzie's success with the Blackfeet, where other American traders had failed, increased his stature as king of the upper Missouri.

Later, he turned his attention to the Crows on the Yellowstone and, in 1832, established Fort Cass at the mouth of the Big Horn

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7. Pierre Jean De Smet, S. J., Life, Letters and Travels . . . 1801-1873, ed. by H. M. Chittenden and A. T. Richardson, 3, 1132. De Smet was not at Ft. Union at this time; he heard the story from E. T. Denig and an engage.

River. This made Fort Union the pivot point for the upper reaches of both rivers; its storerooms supplied the trade goods and stored the furs and robes.<sup>8</sup>

A few months before the establishment of Fort Cass, McKenzie almost lost Fort Union to fire. In the middle of the night, February 3, 1832, shouts of "Fire!" woke him up. He ran from his house to find blazing "the range of buildings forming the west quadrangle of the fort (120 ft. by 24 ft.) and occupied by the clerks, interpreters, mechanics, and engagees, with their families, of squalling children not a few."

In describing the origins and results of the fire, McKenzie made mention of some structural details. The fire began in François Chardon's room, "originating beneath the floor, and there being . . . a free communication under the whole range, and much rubbish . . . it was almost simultaneous in every department." Among the items destroyed were trunks of clothing, a year's collection of buffalo tongues, rifles, pistols, and rare white beaver skins. McKenzie described both a loft and a cellar. The loft contained nearly 1,000 planks, stored there to season and which had taken two men six months to saw. The cellar was full of small kegs. Today, there is a depression in the ground about where the northwest room of this "range" should be.

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8. Chittenden, 1, 331-36.

The meat house was also threatened by the fire, but it survived. Also of great worry to McKenzie was a supply of gunpowder kept in the storeroom on the east side. By four a. m., however, the fire was under control. Besides the line of quarters, most of the west wall also burned. Quarters were found for the homeless, and repairs of the wall began immediately. The men cut 170 trees on the next day and five days later had replaced all the burnt pickets. McKenzie wrote that it would be "months before the buildings can be reinstated. In our wooden houses I fear we are all too little cautious."<sup>9</sup> By early summer, most of the fire scars had disappeared and it was time for the boats from St. Louis.

Until 1832, the principal craft on the upper Missouri for hauling supplies upstream was the keelboat. A crew of 20 to 40 men pulled this craft against the current by means of a line, or cordelle. Occasionally the wind would be strong enough to use sails; from time to time conditions of the water or the banks would force the crew to pole or to row. All the time, getting a cargo the 2,000 miles from St. Louis to Fort Union was desperately hard work.<sup>10</sup>

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9. Chouteau Coll., Mo. H. S., Folder 1832, Jan.-Feb., McKenzie to D. D. Mitchell, Feb. 4, 1832. McKenzie wrote that the fire occurred on the "3rd Inst." thus implying February 3. However, later in the letter he mentioned five days following the fire. Either the fire was in January or McKenzie took more than five days to write the letter that he dated Feb. 4.

10. Chittenden, 1, 103-09. Two thousand miles is a round figure. A U. S. Engineers Survey in 1890 found the distance then to be 1,792 miles. It was probably longer in the 1830's because of more bends in the river. See Bernard DeVoto, Across the Wide Missouri (Boston, 1947), p. 429.



McKenzie believed that the transportation problem could be greatly reduced by employing a properly-designed steamboat on the Missouri. Snags, boiler explosions, mechanical breakdowns would be dangers, but danger awaited all kinds of craft when the river was in a rage. McKenzie finally persuaded Pierre Chouteau, Jr., to invest in the building of a shallow-draft steamboat. In 1831, the Yellow Stone puffed as far as Fort Tecumseh, about two-thirds of the way to Fort Union.

Writing from Paris in the summer of 1832, John Jacob Astor asked, "How did the Yellow Stone behave, and what said the Indians about her?" He soon got the answer. McKenzie's idea was a success; the Yellow Stone reached Fort Union about the middle of June.<sup>11</sup>

Aboard was Pierre Chouteau, Jr., himself, who had had a fine time coming up, including a stopover to christen the rebuilt fort at Tecumseh as Fort Pierre. John F. Sanford, sub-Indian agent and who married Pierre's daughter, Emilie, was also a passenger.<sup>12</sup> But the passenger destined to become more widely known than they was George Catlin, America's first artist on the upper Missouri. Scorned by artists who later visited Fort Union, Catlin has survived the passing decades and his portraits of far-western Indians are today

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11. This is another of the several frustrations in dating major events at Fort Union. George Catlin said the boat arrived June 26; Chittenden has shown that it was earlier by at least a few days. Chittenden, 1, 339.

12. John Sanford was the technical owner of Dred Scott at the time of the latter's famous court case in 1856.

recognized as a substantial contribution to art and to ethnology.<sup>13</sup>

However, Catlin's two sketches of Fort Union leave much to be desired by the historian. One of these is a mere scribble, possibly done aboard the steamboat approaching the post.<sup>14</sup> The other is a finished painting that Catlin displayed in his European exhibits. This is not a great drawing of the distant fort either, although it does catch the appearance of the country. On the other hand, the drawing is not as bad as its critics have maintained.<sup>15</sup>

In the end, Catlin earned a reputation of hastiness and awkwardness. John C. Ewers points out, however, that during the 86 days Catlin spent on the Missouri, he produced more than 135 pictures, a very large output for so short a time.<sup>16</sup>

Of greater interest than his painting are Catlin's comments on Fort Union. The post struck him as "a very substantial Fort . . .

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13. Audubon sprinkled his diary with criticisms of Catlin. Kurz said that Catlin was a "Yankee humbug," whose drawings were in bad taste.

14. Thomas Donaldson, The George Catlin Indian Gallery in the U. S. National Museum . . . . (Washington, 1887), plate 5, p. 8.

15. George Catlin, A Descriptive Catalogue of Catlin's Indian Gallery . . . (London, 1840), p. 36. No. 388 shows the post. The original is today in the Catlin Collection, Smithsonian Institution. In this same source, p. 6, is a testimonial by Kenneth McKenzie as to the accuracy of Catlin's work.

16. John C. Ewers, "George Catlin, Painter of Indians and the West," Annual Report . . . of the Smithsonian Institution, 1955 (Washington, 1956), p. 493.



with bastions armed with ordnance, and our approach to it under the continued roar of cannon for half an hour, and the shrill yells of the half-affrighted savages who lined the shores, presented a scene of the most thrilling appearance." Catlin noted that Union was "the largest and best-built establishment of the kind on the river, being the great or principal head-quarters and depot of the Fur Company's business in this region."

During the next few days, he learned other details of the post "which contains some eight or ten log-houses and stores, and has generally forty or fifty men." Among the buildings already in use was the all-important and "spacious" ice-house, used for preserving meat and cooling drinks. He noted, too, that McKenzie had a scow for crossing to the south bank, a boat large enough to ferry one-horse carts. Catlin did not say where he slept, but he reported using one of the bastions as a painting room, "My easel stands before me, and the cool breech of a twelve-pounder makes me a comfortable seat, whilst her muzzle is looking out at one of the port-holes."

Indians were allowed into the fort to watch Catlin paint. He observed that when they entered they had to place their weapons in the "arsenal." He was the only one to use this term; it is difficult to determine what room was used for this purpose.

Catlin was as much impressed with McKenzie as he was with the post. He described the king as "a kind-hearted and high-minded Scotsman," who "lives in good and comfortable style." McKenzie's table "groans under the luxuries of the country; with buffalo meat

and tongues, with beavers' tails and marrow-fat; but," strangely enough, "sans coffee, sans bread and butter. Good cheer and good living we get at it however, and good wine also, for a bottle of Madeira and one of excellent Port are set in a pail of ice every day, and exhausted at dinner."

The artist also met James Archdale Hamilton, another of the unusual characters at Fort Union. Hamilton was an Englishman of exceptionally good education. His associates believed him to be a nobleman whose real name was Archibald Palmer. Considered to be a good host, but an eccentric man, Hamilton hated Indians, a rather odd attitude considering his environment. The French Canadian employees were said to hold him in awe because he took a bath and put on a clean shirt every day.<sup>17</sup> Catlin described Hamilton as a gentleman who was "a complete store-house of ancient and modern literature and art."

Besides the Assiniboin, Catlin had the opportunity to study both Blackfeet and Crees, when a band of each came in at the same time. To keep them from fighting, McKenzie had them camp on opposite sides of the fort, out on the prairie, and he disarmed them for the duration of their stay. That he could enforce such acts was an acknowledgement of his great power. According to Catlin, there was no trouble until the Crees broke camp. At the last minute, one of

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17. Charles Larpenteur, Forty Years a Fur Trader on the Upper Missouri . . . 1833-1872. (2 vols. in 1, Minneapolis, 1962), pp. 84n and 85n; Chittenden, 1, 387.



them poked "the muzzle of his gun through between the piquets [sic] and fatally wounded a Blackfoot inside the fort".<sup>18</sup>

The Indians would call the steamboats the "Fire Boats that walked on the waters;" and the successful trip of the Yellow Stone introduced the beginning of a new period of travel on the upper Missouri. Fort Union was already on its way to being the most handsome of posts; now, with the ease of transportation, McKenzie and his successors would turn it into an establishment almost luxurious in nature. News of the boat's success was carried by newspapers in both America and Europe. Astor wrote from France, "your voyage in the yellow stone attracted much attention in Europe & has been noticed in all the Papers here." Crooks wrote Chouteau, "I congratulate you most cordially on your perseverance and ultimate success in reaching the Yellow Stone by steam, and the future Historian of Missouri will preserve for you the honorable and enviable distinction of having accomplished an object of immense importance."<sup>19</sup>

For the moment, the American Fur Company had complete control over the upper Missouri and its tributaries. But it had not yet

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18. George Catlin, Letters and Notes on the . . . North American Indians (2 vols., London, 1842), 1, 14 and 21-38. Later visitors supported Catlin's observations of the fort's operations, except for the 12-pounder. Denig reported in 1843 that the northeast bastion had one 3-pounder and one swivel gun; while the southwest bastion had but one swivel gun. Audubon, 2, 181-82.

19. Astor Papers, Baker Library, Harvard, vol. 44, copy of letter, Astor, Bellevue, France, to Pierre Chouteau, Jr., Sep. 28, 1832; Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Folder 1832, Sep.-Dec., Crooks to Chouteau, Nov. 16, 1832.

control over the Rocky Mountain trade; now, from that region, came the threat of opposition. Robert Campbell had left Northern Ireland in 1824 and had migrated to St. Louis because of poor health. Before long, he entered the fur trade wherein he met up with William Sublette, one of several brothers who collectively were known throughout the length and breadth of the far west. At the end of 1832, the two formed a partnership and planned to challenge the American Fur Company by erecting a competing fort next to every company post along the Missouri.

In the summer of 1833, Campbell led a group of traders overland to the mouth of the Yellowstone where he met Sublette, who had come up the Missouri by steamboat with supplies and trade goods. Near the junction, on the same side of the river as Fort Union, and about 2-1/2 miles below as the crow flew, the partners began building the wooden establishment, Fort William, named for Sublette.<sup>20</sup>

One of their employees, Charles Larpenteur, described the fort as being 150 by 130 feet, located 200 yards from the Missouri, precisely where Fort Buford's sawmill would stand in the 1870's. The 15-foot stockade was made of cottonwood, with an additional three feet planted in the ground. The bourgeois' house was a cabin of two rooms separated by a breezeway. In addition, there were two rooms for men's quarters, a combination store and warehouse, ice and meat houses, various shops, "and two splendid bastions." The entire

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20. Phillips, 2, 424.



complex was finished by Christmas, an indication of its inferiority to Fort Union which took over four years to complete.<sup>21</sup>

Sublette, sick ever since he arrived, went back to St. Louis after three weeks. His departure would mean trouble for Kenneth McKenzie as will be later noted. Campbell, supplied with a large quantity of illicit liquor set out to capture the Indian trade from McKenzie.<sup>22</sup> McKenzie, also well supplied with alcohol, was determined to destroy Fort William economically. By the end of the year, Campbell would learn just how ruthless McKenzie could be.

The irritations began in the fall. When Campbell made an offer to sell out, McKenzie turned him down. He would rather force Campbell out than buy him out. A few days later, Campbell learned that two men had found a packet of beaver that he had lost the past summer and had sold the beaver to McKenzie. Campbell went up to Fort Union to argue that the furs were his, but without success. Next, he discovered that François Dechamps, an employee, was actually a spy for McKenzie.

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21. Larpenteur, p. 60; George R. Brooks, ed., "The Private Journal of Robert Campbell," The Bulletin, Missouri Historical Society, 20 (1963), 6-24 and 107-18. In this brief but valuable journal, Campbell gives many construction details. The pickets, rafted down the river, were 18 feet long, hewn on one side, and averaging 10 to 12 inches in diameter. Rock for the chimneys was found 3 miles from the fort. The roofs were covered with dirt. A rock-lined well, about 25 feet deep was dug inside the stockade. This well was a necessity because of the long distance to the river; Fort Union, on the other hand, got its water directly from the Missouri.

22. Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Folder 1833, July-Aug., Hamilton to Chouteau, Aug. 31, 1833.

Worst of all, "McKenzie gives as much whisky as the Indians can drink for nothing. Barrel after Barrel he sends all around amongst the Indians and those will not trade otherwise."<sup>23</sup>

On New Year's Eve, Campbell was wholly discouraged, "I can safely say as unhappy a time as this I have never before passed during my life. What is worst our prospects are not good for McKenzie has hired our interpreters and bribed them whilst they were here to betray us."<sup>24</sup>

McKenzie was almost enjoying his destruction of the opposition. In January 1834, he wrote, "although on their first start here, they made a great show and promise to the Indians and although among the men nothing was talked about but the new company, they live now at the sign of 'The case is altered.' Their interpreters have . . . left them and are now working hard for me." He concluded, "the new company is in bad odor and must sink."<sup>25</sup>

Then, in April 1834, just when McKenzie was sure of driving out Sublette and Campbell, Chouteau wrote him that he had bought out the opposition.<sup>26</sup> McKenzie was disappointed, and not at all convinced that it had been necessary to have spent the money. His method

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23. Brooks, pp. 22, 107, 108, and 115.

24. Ibid., p. 118.

25. Phillips, 2, 425, quoting McKenzie to D. D. Mitchell, Jan. 31, 1834. See also Chouteau Coll., Ft. Union Letter Book, McKenzie to Kipp, Dec. 13, 1833.

26. Phillips, 2, 428-29, quoting Chouteau to McKenzie, Apr. 8, 1834.



would have been cheaper.

Before leaving Campbell and his fort, a further look at his journal is necessary. Several times in 1833 he was a guest at Fort Union, and his diary entries add to our information. In September he went up to visit Hamilton who had been ill. Being the gentleman, Hamilton showed Campbell "the buildings even to the Ice House and Stables and every convenience of the fort. The Ice House serves for Lumber having a door in the floor and a descent by rope ladder to the Ice." Assuming his description to be accurate, there should be traces of the ice house cellar today.<sup>27</sup>

On December 15, Campbell made an entry in his journal of a disaster at Fort Union: Last night two sides of McKenzies new fort was leveled with the ground" because of a strong wind. "He had built a stone and lime foundation and raised his pickets thereon but it appears something more substantial is required in this country to brave the winds."<sup>28</sup> Fort Union's carpenters solved this problem when they rebuilt the walls. Denig described the new construction: "This space is enclosed by pickets . . . twenty feet high, made of hewn cottonwood, and founded upon stone. The pickets are fitted into an open framework in the inside, of sufficient strength to counterbalance their weight, and sustained by braces in the form of an X, which reaches in the inside from the pickets to the frame, so

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27. Brooks, p. 8.

28. Ibid., p. 111.

as to make the whole completely solid and secure, from either storm or attack."<sup>29</sup> These braces may be seen in at least two of the sketches made of Fort Union's interior.

Campbell was also a visitor to Fort Union on the occasion of a dinner for Prince Maximilian of Wied, the second German prince to visit Fort Union. On October 2, Campbell wrote, "I received a note from Mr. Hamilton inviting me to dine and to be made acquaint[ed] with the Baron Bransburgh [Braunsberg, which Maximilian liked to call himself] or Prince of Newyd [Neuwied]." Campbell went up "and passed a pleasant evening in this society."<sup>30</sup>

The prince had arrived at Fort Union with McKenzie on June 24. Travelling with him was a Swiss artist, Charles Bodmer, and a secretary, Mr. Drydopple. After a few weeks at Union, the party traveled up to Fort McKenzie. When the prince returned to Fort Union that fall, he learned that McKenzie was again temporarily down the river. The prince remained for a few weeks as a guest of Hamilton then went down to spend the winter at Fort Clark. Alexander Culbertson met Maximilian and thought he looked like anything but a prince--unostentatious, toothless, greasy trousers, and a worn black coat. Maximilian had had considerable experience as a Prussian soldier, having been made a prisoner-of-war at Jena, and, like Prince Paul, a major general. In 1813 he had been in the allied army that had

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29. Audubon, 2, 181.

30. Brooks, p. 8.

occupied Paris.<sup>31</sup> Now he was an explorer-scientist and committed to a simple manner of living.

Maximilian's journal gives an intimate look at Fort Union, beginning with his first view of the post late in the evening of June 24, 1833: "Fort Union, on a verdant plain, with the handsome American flag, gilded by the last rays of evening, floating in an azure sky, while a herd of horses grazing animated the peaceful scene." As the steamer approached, the fort's cannon fired a welcome salute. Hamilton came forth to greet the visitors, while the employees, "Americans, Englishmen, Germans, Frenchmen, Russians, Spaniards, and Italians, about 100 in number, with many Indians, and half-breed women and children" welcomed the season's steamboat.

In describing the fort, Maximilian said that the river was only 50 to 60 feet from the front of the fort. To him the pickets seemed to be 15 or 16 feet high, "squared, and placed close to each other, and surmounted by chevaux-de-frise," or a barrier of spikes. He noted the large, folding gate at the front entrance, on the river side. Facing the gate stood the bourgeois' house, "one story high, and has four handsome glass windows on each side of the door. The roof is spacious, and contains a large, light loft. This house is very commodious, and, like all the buildings of the inner quadrangle, constructed of poplar wood [cottonwood?], the staple wood for building

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31. O. A. Stevens, "Maximilian in North Dakota, 1833-34," North Dakota History, 28 (1961), 163-64; Abel, p. 235, n. 110.



in this neighborhood." This is the earliest clear statement that in the beginning the main house was only one story high, a height that Bodmer's painting seems to confirm.

Maximilian also noted that several half-breed hunters had erected their tipis around the flagpole and that "a cannon was also placed here, with its mouth towards the principal entrance." Besides its personnel, the fort contained "about fifty or sixty horses, some mules, and an inconsiderable number of cattle, swine, goats, fowls, and domestic animals." He saw that the horses were taken out on the prairie during the day, under guard, but were brought back inside each night. This was not too happy a situation, for it kept the yard very dirty, especially when it was wet. McKenzie was concerned about this and was planning a separate enclosure for the horses.

During the next few weeks, Maximilian's busy pen made notes on the fort, Indians, and the fur trade. In summing up the trade at Fort Union he observed that buffalo hides (40,000-50,000) surpassed the number of beaver (25,000) skins. Other skins collected included otter, weasel, marten, lynx, red fox, cross fox, silver fox, mink, muskrat, and deer. The personnel of the fort, by themselves, consumed from 600 to 800 buffalo annually. He mentioned that corn was bought from neighboring tribes. He did not say that McKenzie used this corn in his still, but that is another story.

He learned that vegetables did not thrive, but that mosquitoes did. He listed the birds and animals he saw, and attempted to give a census of the Assiniboin, deciding there were 28,000, of whom

7,000 were warriors, and that they lived in 3,000 tipis. A few "wretchedly poor" Indians were at the fort when the prince arrived. He wrote that "several apartments in the fort were assigned to these visitors, where they cooked and slept."

As for himself and his companions, they had "a comfortable lodging" in McKenzie's house, "and we lived here very pleasantly, in a plain style, suitable to the resources of so remote a place." The prince did better than Catlin in that he had coffee as well as wine every day, along with buffalo flesh and bread.

Very shortly after Maximilian arrived, a large number of Assiniboin came in, impressing the Europeans greatly:

Towards the northwest, the whole prairie was covered with scattered Indians, whose numerous dogs drew the sledges with the baggage; a close body of warriors, about 250 or 300 in number, had formed themselves in the center, in the manner of two bodies of infantry, and advanced in quick time towards the fort. The Indian warriors marched in close ranks, three or four men deep, not keeping their file very regularly, yet in pretty good order, and formed a considerable line. Before the center . . . three or four chiefs advanced, arm in arm, and from the ranks . . . loud musket-shots were heard. The whole troop of these warriors now commenced their original song . . . many abrupt, broken tones . . . . The loaded dogs, guided by women and children, surrounded the nucleus of warriors . . . .

They advanced to within about sixty paces, then halted at a fosse [a ditch, or small ravine] running from the Missouri past the fort, and waited, the chief standing in front, for our welcome.

Maximilian realized that he was witnessing an event, a way of life, that would disappear from the American scene as fast as man could destroy it. His vivid description fixes permanently the image of that way of life.



Bodmer was the artist of the expedition, but the prince himself drew a general plan of the fort on which he labeled the various structures. Although this plan is known to exist still, it is not at this time available for publication. While the plan would illuminate this report, optimism suggests that it will be available in time to be of value to any potential restoration.

When Maximilian left, July 6, for Fort McKenzie among the Blackfeet, McKenzie had a fireworks display set off along the bank of the river, hoisted the American flag, and fired several guns. No prince, German or otherwise, could ever complain about the hospitality.

When he returned in the autumn, the prince found "the whole prairie . . . naked, dry, and withered." Instead of hundreds of Assiniboins, there was but one tent, inhabited by a half-Blackfoot. The Missouri itself was "shallow, narrow, and full of sand banks." McKenzie had gone; there were only fifty persons at the fort under the control of Mr. Hamilton.

During the absence of the prince, several improvements had occurred at the fort. Referring to the fire of 1832, he noted that "a handsome solid powder magazine, of hewn stone, which was capable of containing 50,000 lbs. of powder, was completed." He noted too that a rail fence, which had to be renovated, was almost finished. Another fence, the one around McKenzie's house, "was



damaged by a horse chewing on it even though it had been painted reddish brown."

Maximilian had gathered a large number of specimens and souvenirs by this time and, to his great pleasure, Hamilton gave him the "spacious loft" in the bourgeois' house where he could take everything out of the boxes and barrels to dry and air. Bodmer also was given "a good clear room" in which to paint. Out of his efforts came a number of superb paintings which were later reproduced and made famous. The most important to the purposes here was one of Fort Union from the north. It was the first detailed illustration known to have been done.

As their time for departure neared, the visitors went on a buffalo hunt. Among the post employees to accompany them was McKenzie's Negro slave. Maximilian noted other persons he met at the fort, such as Robert Campbell, the bourgeois at Fort William, who came up to Union for dinner with the prince. He recorded too those cool fall evenings, when he visited Hamilton in his apartment and sat by the fireplace enjoying good punch and good conversation.

When Maximilian decided to spend the winter at Fort Clark, both McKenzie and Hamilton were disappointed for they were losing a good companion who would have helped wile away the long blizzards of winter. The party left Fort Union on October 31. The boat stopped briefly at Fort William where Campbell gave them a parting gift of cigars. The long summer sojourn would not be Maximilian's last

contact with the American Fur Company. The very next year, he would entertain Kenneth McKenzie at his German estates.<sup>32</sup>

McKenzie's sudden decision to visit Europe seems to have been based partly on a scandal of his making, a scandal that threatened the operations of the American Fur Company. In the summer of 1832, the U. S. Government tightened the laws that prohibited liquor in the Indian country. Long a staple of trade, liquor had always found its way to the traders who felt it to be essential in order to attract the Indians away from competitors, including the British who did not prohibit it. In the fall of 1832, Crooks wrote a worried letter regretting "truly the blindness of the Government in refusing liquor . . . in the vicinity of the Hudson's Bay Posts."<sup>33</sup>

McKenzie was so alarmed by the prohibition that he made a personal visit to Washington in January 1833. When that failed, he cast about for some other means--in addition to the time-honored but risky smuggling that all traders had and would continue to carry out. By spring, he had concluded that while the laws prohibited the transportation of liquor they did not prohibit its manufacture in the Indian country. On the same steamboat that carried Prince

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32. Reuben Gold Thwaites, Early Western Travels (Vols. 22-25, Cleveland, 1906). Volumes 22-24 contain Maximilian, Prince of Wied's Travels in the Interior of North America, 1832-1834; volume 25 comprises the series of paintings done by Charles Bodmer on these travels. For this account, see 22, 373-88; 23, 11-27 and 188-207; and 24, 317; Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Ft. Union Letter Book, Hamilton to Kipp, Oct. 29, 1833.

33. Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Folder 1832, Sep.-Dec., Crooks to Chouteau, Nov. 16, 1832.



Maximilian to Fort Union that summer rode McKenzie's brand new distillery.<sup>34</sup> Also on board was a supply of alcohol, but it was taken off when the boat was searched on the way up the river.<sup>35</sup>

McKenzie wrote Crooks in December 1833 telling him that Campbell and Sublette had succeeded in smuggling an abundance of alcohol. However, Crooks need not be alarmed, "For this post I have established a manufactory of strong water, it succeeds admirably. I have a good corn with a very respectable distillery and can produce as fine liquor as need be drank: I believe no law of the U. S. is hereby broken though perhaps one may be made to break up my distillery but liquor I must have or quit."<sup>36</sup>

Unknown to McKenzie, news of his still had already reached a rather wide circle of government officials and others. When McKenzie finally did learn that the secret was out, he blamed Nathaniel Wyeth.

Back in August, Wyeth, returning to the East overland after attempting to establish his own fur empire in the Pacific Northwest, stopped at Fort Union for three days. Wyeth was highly impressed with McKenzie, "all possible hospitality and politeness," by Hamilton, "a man of superior education and an Englishman," and by Fort Union, "better furnished inside than any British fort I have ever seen [including Fort Vancouver] at Table we have flour Bread

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34. Phillips, 2, 426.

35. Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Ft. Union Letter Book, McKenzie to W. B. Astor, Dec. 16, 1833.

36. Ibid. See also, McKenzie to Joshua Pilcher, bourgeois, Council Bluffs, Dec. 16, 1833.



Bacon Cheese Butter      they live well."

Wyeth went on to say that "Fort Union is pleasantly situated on the N. bank of the Missouri . . . . I am told that there is not enough moisture here to raise vegetables potatoes grass ect." As he inspected the post, he saw "a small sturgeon but they are very rare      Cat fish are good and plenty      they have cows and bulls milk etc. I saw lime burning also [char]coal." He also saw the still, "here they are beginning to distil spirits from corn traded from the Inds. below. This owing to some restrictions on the introduction of the article into the country."<sup>37</sup> Later, on November 11, back in Cambridge, Mass., Wyeth wrote a letter to the editor of a paper naming the many people who had treated him well on his expedition. Among the names was Kenneth McKenzie's.<sup>38</sup>

Nowhere in Wyeth's accounts can one find even a hint of his being displeased about his treatment while at Fort Union, or of his deliberately reporting McKenzie's still to the authorities. Yet, McKenzie blamed him, "in return for my civilities & furnishing him with a boat . . . on his arrival at Cant n. Leavenworth I hear he made some tremendous strong affidavits about my new manufactory."<sup>39</sup>

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37. F. G. Young, editor, "The Correspondence and Journals of Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth, 1831-6," Sources of the History of Oregon (Vol. 1, Parts 3-6, Eugene, 1899), p. 212, entry for Aug. 24, 1833.

38. Ibid., p. 79.

39. Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Ft. Union Letter Book, McKenzie to Mitchell, Jan. 21, 1834.

Charles Larpenteur, who was to work for McKenzie, also thought it was Wyeth who told, as revenge for the exorbitant prices McKenzie charged him for supplies.<sup>40</sup>

However, Wyeth may have been blamed for something he did not do, or did not do alone. Travelling down the Missouri with him was none other than McKenzie's arch-rival, William Sublette.<sup>41</sup> The Indian Commissioner in Washington learned about the distillery from Henry L. Ellsworth, agent at Fort Leavenworth.<sup>42</sup> According to Ellsworth, he learned about the still from "a mountain trapper on his way down the Missouri." He went on, "Mr. Sublitz of St. Louis just from there [Fort Union], says, he tasted the whiskey made there, and found it an excellent quality."<sup>43</sup>

Federal officials gave serious thought to suspending the UMO's trading license. Pierre Chouteau, Jr., argued that the distillery

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40. Larpenteur, p. 74.

41. While Chittenden, 1, 446, says this was Milton Sublette, William's brother, it would seem that it was William, who went down about this time because of illness. I have found no record of Milton being in the area.

42. Ellsworth went on to become the first U.S. Commissioner of Patents and is called the "father" of the Department of Agriculture. Allen Johnson, ed., Dictionary of American Biography (20 vols., New York, 1943), 6, 110-11. Hereafter cited as DAB.

43. Indians Coll., Mo. H.S., Copy of letter, Henry L. Ellsworth, Ft. Leavenworth, to E. Herring, Indian Commissioner, Washington, D. C., Nov. 8, 1833

was intended only "to promote the course of Botany." While the license was not suspended, Ramsay Crooks did not think the excuse to be very funny, "prenez-y-garde--Don't presume too much on your recent escape from an accusation, which might have been attended with serious consequences."<sup>44</sup>

Meanwhile, from the isolation of Fort Union, McKenzie, unaware that he had been experimenting in botany, came up with his own excuse, "An old acquaintance of mine in Red River Mr. J. P. Bourke addressed me last spring . . . in consequence whereof I purchased a still in St. Louis, & brought it hitherto & last fall he apprised me of his intention to come or send for it in April next." He again accused Wyeth of telling.<sup>45</sup>

The incident finally blew over. The friends of the American Fur Company, some of whom held high office, such as Secretary of War Lewis Cass, came to its assistance both in this and other incidents involving McKenzie and his associates.<sup>46</sup>

The location of the still in the fort cannot be established; however, Larpenteur mentioned the existence of a distillery house. This, of course, was not the end of the liquor trade; the company continued to smuggle alcohol in quantity. Larpenteur, the teetotalling bartender, recounted, "The liquor business, which was

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44. Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Folder 1834, Jan.-March, Crooks to Chouteau, Feb. 23, 1834.

45. Ibid., Ft. Union Letter Book, McKenzie to Chouteau, March 18, 1834.

46. Porter, 2, 769-70.



always done at night, sometimes kept me up all night turning out drunken Indians, often by dragging them out by arms and legs."<sup>47</sup> As for McKenzie, upset by the buying out of Campbell and Sublette and the business of the still, 1834 seemed like a good time to leave the upper Missouri for a time and to visit Europe.

A few miscellaneous entries in the records of the early 1830's add some detail to our understanding of the post. At the end of 1833, McKenzie noted that "the tin Smith arrived here Nov. 29. he is a good workman. I shall find him a most useful artisan."<sup>48</sup> There undoubtedly was some work for the tinsmith to do with regard to the fort itself; however, his most important job was making trade items such as bracelets, rings, and pots.

After McKenzie left on his vacation in 1834, Hamilton became the acting bourgeois. In September, he advised McKenzie by letter that one bastion was roofed, shingled, and pointed, and the other was built up as high as the pickets. This rather obscure news implies that either the two stone bastions were being rebuilt or Catlin and Bodmer had chosen to depict the fort as it would look, rather than as it did when they made their sketches.<sup>49</sup>

Hamilton continued his news by saying that Luteman (the head carpenter) had "made his arrangements for the kitchen," and had

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<sup>47</sup>. Larpenteur, 1, 74-76.

<sup>48</sup>. Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Ft Union Letter Book, (McKenzie?) to H. Picott, Dec. 15, 1833; and McKenzie to M. Belhumeur, Dec. 10, 1835, ordering a soldering iron for the tinsmith.

<sup>49</sup>. Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Ft. Union Letter Book, Hamilton to McKenzie, Sep. 17, 1834.

"erected and shingled five compartments, under the intended gallery." These compartments should not be confused with the range of apartments in which the clerks, interpreters, etc., lived; they were additional rooms built against the pickets and under a gallery that would eventually extend around the fort. He noted also the production of charcoal, "Michel has got 300 barrels of coal housed & his last kiln is now ready to draw."<sup>50</sup>

Three weeks later, Hamilton reported that (the stone mason?) "Miller has finished the bastions & starts today for St. Louis." Hamilton tried to get Miller to stay, but the latter asked for too much money and, besides, "his work is inferior in finish to Pow[der] Mag[azine]."<sup>51</sup>

After Pratte, Chouteau, and Company bought out Campbell and Sublette, McKenzie and Hamilton had Fort William on their hands. They moved all or part of the stockade from William to Union to make the long-wanted corral for the horse herd. Larpenteur referred to this by writing, "Fort William was to be rebuilt within 150 yards of Union." The foreman for this project proved so incompetent, according to Larpenteur, that "the pickets were set in crooked, some too high, some too low." Larpenteur was then given the job of superintendent and he had the men take everything down, straighten

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50. Ibid.

51. Ibid., Oct. 9, 1834.

and level the trench, and start again. He succeeded in building a respectable compound; at least he thought so.<sup>52</sup>

Although the pickets were moved up to Fort Union, the buildings at Fort William remained where they were. In October 1834, Larpenteur was selling drinks to a number of half-breeds, when a violent argument broke out. During the fight, one of the Deschamps killed another man. Larpenteur was able to quiet things only by putting laudanum (opium) in their whiskey. When the drunks recovered, they "went home to Fort William, where all those families were kept, as were also some of the Company's men who had squaws, and the horse guard with the horses."<sup>53</sup>

As early as August 1832, John Jacob Astor had written that he feared "Beaver will not sell well very soon unless very fine, it . . . appears that they make hats of silk in place of Beaver."<sup>54</sup> This letter was Astor's admission that the heyday of the beaver trade (and the fabled mountain man) was drawing to a close. Silk was in fashion and, also, the beaver was fairly well trapped out. Beaver would continue to be an acceptable fur, along with all the others, but as far as Fort Union was concerned, the buffalo, already

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52. Larpenteur, 72-73; and "Journals," 1, 1834-37. In 1837, he noted that Indians "got over the pickets of the old fort" in an attempt to steal the horses.

53. Ibid., pp. 77-78.

54. Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Folder 1832, June-Aug., Astor, Paris, to Chouteau, August 1832.



important, would play an increasing role in the returns. McKenzie, in advice to one of his subordinates in January 1834, recognized this moment in the fur trade, "I am so burdened with Apichemons [?], pieces of lodge & mean wolf skins, I must restrict you in the trade of those articles." Moreover, "dressed Cow skins should be traded only on very low terms. I have some thousand by me. Elk skins, Beaver skins & robes you cannot get too much of."<sup>55</sup>

The increasing importance of buffalo robes is pointed up by the references to them in the company correspondence. For example, Kipp wrote McKenzie in September 1834, without mentioning any other furs or skins, "Expect to get as many buffalo robes as last year."<sup>56</sup>

John Jacob Astor, no longer a young man, felt no excitement in the change in emphasis from beaver to buffalo. As early as 1828, Pierre Chouteau, Jr., learned that Astor was contemplating selling his controlling interest in the American Fur Company.<sup>57</sup> The old man held out for six more years before retiring on June 1, 1834. Ramsay Crooks took over the Northern Department. Pratte, Chouteau, and Company brought out the Western Department. As far as the public was concerned, the term American Fur Company still applied to both. Crooks and Chouteau remained close business friends, and the extensive correspondence between them continued unabated. The UMO retained

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55. Ibid., Ft. Union Letter Book, McKenzie to Sam Tulloch, Jan. 8, 1834.

56. Ibid., Folder 1834, Sep.-Dec., Ft. McKenzie, to McKenzie, Ft. Union, Sep. 5, 1834.

57. Ibid., Folder 1828, Aug.-Dec., Crooks to Chouteau, Nov. 18, 1828.

its special relationship to the St. Louis company and, when he got back from his European jaunt, McKenzie returned up the Missouri to take charge of his empire.<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, the future would be different than the past. Beaver was no longer king. Astor had grown old and had quit. There would be an exciting future for Fort Union, but it would reflect the changes taking place on the upper Missouri. As Tennyson would have it,

The old order changeth  
Yielding place to new.

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58. Ibid., Folder 1834, Sep.-Dec., W. B. Astor to Chouteau, Dec. 31, 1834; Chittenden, 1, 365.

## CHAPTER 4

### From Beaver to Buffalo

Charles Larpenteur's self-righteous sobriety undoubtedly brought him into conflict with his fellow employees from time to time. Nevertheless, he is more valuable historically than most of the other men at the fort, for he kept a diary rather than get drunk. His detailed journal shows that while Fort Union was six years old in 1835, it was by no means "finished."

Larpenteur held McKenzie in considerable awe, which feeling was increased the first time he entered the dining room. He discovered that clerks, who ate at the head table, had to wear their coats to meals. Moreover, no one could eat until McKenzie was seated; since McKenzie was a late riser this meant that breakfast was not eaten until nine o'clock. Still, it was worth the wait:

On entering the eating hall, I found a splendidly set table with a very white tablecloth, and two waiters, one a negro. Mr. McKenzie was sitting at the head of the table, extremely well dressed. The victuals consisted of fine fat buffalo meat, with plenty of good fresh butter, cream, and milk . . . but I saw that only two biscuits were allowed to each one, as these were placed at each plate. I soon discovered, by the manner in which the clerks took their seats, that mine would come very near the end of the table, for it appeared to go by grade.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Larpenteur, pp. 70-71.



He did not say whether or not Hamilton modified the dining ritual during McKenzie's absence in Europe. By going abroad, McKenzie missed the very wet summer of 1835, "The quantity of rain which has fallen here this season I should think is almost without precedent." The woods became swamps, grass grew abundantly everywhere, the interior of the fort became a lake, and the mosquitoes came in clouds, making "the men cry out terribly and not without cause."<sup>2</sup>

Back in September 1834, McKenzie had noted that the bastions were well along toward completion. Hamilton confirmed this in March 1835 by writing, "The Bastions are completed with the exception of laying down the floors but the planks are all tongue and grooved." Other construction activities at this time were mentioned in the rather cryptic note, "Laucier was employed untill Christmas in finishing the attics." Also, timber had been got out for new storerooms, the existing ones being only temporary in nature.<sup>3</sup>

Luteman started work on the framing for the "stores and warehouses" on May 1. From time to time his assistants were called away to other jobs but he worked steadily on this job. On May 15 and 25, the drivers hauled rocks for the building's foundation; other men were kept busy sawing timber. Work slowed down when the rains came, such as the afternoon, "about three o'clock a heavy

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2. Abel, p. 300, note 371, quoting Hamilton, July 17, 1835.

3. Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Ft. Union Letter Book, Hamilton to McKenzie, March 29, 1835.

thunder storm . . . the fort yard like a lake."

On May 28, Luteman reached the point where he had to pull the old building down to make room for the new. For the next three days the men moved the supplies from the old structure. The goods in the storerooms were carried to the bastions, while those in the retail store were moved to "the Northwest end room of Mr. McKenzie's Dwelling house." In order to speed up the work, "the Drivers made a Bridge across a ravine to enable them to make four loads of rocks per day instead of three." This ravine may have been "Garden Coulee," one-half mile east of the fort.

By June 2, the carpenter had finished the framing, which work had been done to one side. The next day, nine workmen "commenced pulling down the [old] store & ware houses." Meanwhile, a second carpenter began constructing the door and window frames, and four men were "sawing planks for sheeting the new buildings." Four days later the old buildings were out of the way, as was a "part of the stables which was in the way of the new buildings." (From Denig's description a few years later, these stables were probably located against the palisade.) At this point, the old sills were hauled away and "Holmes and Kieffer digging the foundations for the new building."

For the next few days a variety of jobs were carried on: framing rafters, constructing the foundations, hauling in lime and sand and hauling out earth, making shingles, and hauling in the new sills. Finally, on June 19, all hands "commenced raising the buildings."

In four days the framing was complete. To celebrate, the men "tied a [posey?] on the top of one of the rafters and fired [a] few guns towards it with the view of gitting [a treat?] which is commonly done in such occasions and was administered to them to their satisfaction." Luteman, "who is the boss carpenter received a bottle . . . which induced him to get in a spree." He was still sick the next day, and the work was temporarily reduced to two men straightening the edges of shingles.

The next steps were to sheet the roof and to put five men to work digging the cellar. At the same time rock quarrying was renewed for lining the cellar walls. The earth removed from the cellar was spread on the fort yard in an attempt to give it a gradual slope toward the river so that it would drain. On July 1, Luteman finished sheeting the building and commenced shingling the roof. Hamilton wrote McKenzie that "the new stores are in part shingled and have a very imposing appearance. We are short of 10 dy and 12 dy cut nails.<sup>4</sup> A week later, Holmes finished digging the cellar and began its stone wall, while another man started putting in the window and door frames. Two men worked at putting tongues and grooves in the floor boards. The only things remaining to be done were weatherboarding the walls and planking the floor.

In early September, Larpenteur was able to record that the supplies in the bastions were being put in the new warehouses and

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4. Ibid., Hamilton to McKenzie, July 4, 1835.



that the men were storing potatoes in the new cellar. On September 24, two men were directed to paint the roof red; however, they ran out of paint with only one-quarter of the roof covered.<sup>5</sup>

To complement Larpenteur's description of the construction of the building was Edwin Denig's description of it that he prepared in 1843:

On the east side of the fort, extending north and south, is a building, or range, all under one roof, 127 ft. long by 25 ft. deep, and used for the following purposes. A small room at the north end for stores and luggage; then the retail store . . . where all white persons buy or sell. \* \* \* \*  
Adjoining this is the wholesale warehouse, in which is kept the principal stock of goods intended for the extensive trade; this room is 57 ft. in length. Next is a small room for the storage of meat and other supplies. At the end is the press room, where all robes, furs, and peltries are stored. The dimensions [of this room] extend to the top of the roof inside, which roof is perfectly waterproof. It will contain from 2800 to 3000 packs of Buffalo robes [10 robes to the pack]. All this range is very strongly put together, weather-boarded outside, and lined with plank within. It has also cellar and garet.<sup>6</sup>

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5. This description, except where noted, is from Charles Larpenteur, Journals, Vol. 1, 1834-37, Minnesota Historical Society.

6. Audubon, 2, 183-84. At that time, 1835-43, the fort had a screw-type fur press. A press of this type could well have been inside the press room. In later years, see illustrations, Fort Union had a very large robe press outside its walls. Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Ft. Union Letter Book, unsigned letter to Pierre Chouteau, Jr., & Co., Dec. 10, 1835: "If you have an Iron Screw with fixings not in use that could be made serviceable here for preparing Robes, please to send it."

The cellar depression may still be seen, but nothing else of this structure remains above ground. Still, it would seem that Luteman deserved his bottle--and perhaps a second--for a job well done.

A multitude of other projects were completed that muddy summer. Larpenteur's journal for May and June does not indicate clearly if the milk house underwent a renovation or was brand new. At any rate, men worked on its underpinning, "paved" its interior, shingled the roof, made a new window and a new door frame and door, and plastered and whitened its interior walls. The kitchen, located behind the bourgeois' house, also had its floor paved. The Indian house, located west of the main (south) gate also underwent repairs. Some iron that was stored in it was removed to the southwest bastion, and the room was cleaned up so that the men could store packs of robes in it. The roof of the Indian house was covered at this time with lodge skins, which in turn were covered with earth. Larpenteur wrote that the workmen "dried the lodges which covered the Indian house and recovered it again to remain untill the Packs are taken out."

Minor jobs around the fort included "sawing old logs about the Fort for fire wood;" "working at the May Pole to hoist the Flag," which pole was not raised until May 3; "hauling rails and shingle wood from the other Fort [William] for Baptiste Marcham to make shingles of;" repairing the chimneys over at Fort William, where some of the fort families were living; "hauling lime and sand to



plaster the Clerks room;" "hauling sawlogs to the saw pit;" constructing a calf pen with the puncheons removed from the old warehouse; making a calf shed; repairing the earthen roof of the ice house; rendering tallow; "haulling earth to fille up the yard before the ice house;" removing all the robe packs out of "the room next to the Clerks in order to have it clear for the free [not under contract] trappers;" manufacturing a wheel barrow and an axel tree; bailing the water out of the just-completed milk house; and hauling gravel into the fort's yard.

Still other jobs included hauling wood to the charcoal pit; "pointing the under pining of the sills around the outside of the Fort;" planting four cedar posts on the river bank for tying the boats to; "John Prill raking the [buffalo?] chips off the bank on front of the Fort into the river, then graduating the river bank and making steps leading down to the water;" mowing and hauling hay; "splighting the fire wood smaller and piling it between the kitchen and the Dwelling house;" making an inclosure for a stockyard with timbers from the old warehouse; underpinning the gallery sills; repairing the chimneys; making and bundling up shingles for future use; making oars; cutting timber suitable for making ax handles; making a new saw pit on the south side of the river; building a canoe (hollowing out a log?); building new stables under the galleries; and putting in an upper floor in the men's apartments. Another undertaking of interest involved the inside of the office, where a workman put rocks "next to the weather boarding between the studing in order to be plaistered over."



In contrast to earlier attempts, a garden thrived in the rains of 1835. The first seeds planted, on May 11, included potatoes, corn, peas, red onions, radishes, lettuce, parsnips, carrots, yellow French radishes, celery, curled parsley, oyster plant, "and a mixture of seeds supposed to be turnip seed." Larpenteur, who apparently had some responsibility for the garden, mentioned two growing areas: a vegetable garden in or near to Garden Coulee and a field of sorts across the river. He was quite specific about the planting of corn, squash, pumpkin, watermelon, and beets on the south bank. Also planted in one or the other of the sites were onions, cabbages, cucumbers, dwarf beans and pole beans.

A fence was erected around the garden and a "walk" laid. By June 5, the first radishes were "fit to eat;" a few days later John Prill began "cutting pea sticks." A small, third area was planted on June 12 when Larpenteur "sowed radishes and Tongue grass in the Distilling house yard." A particularly bad rain on June 19 washed away eight "panels" of the garden fence and it took two men a day to repair it. Another emergency occurred on August 26 when a number of Indians arrived: "Imployed all hands in digging the Potatoes . . . and was obliged . . . to pull the corn green . . . for at the rate the indians were gathering it they would not have left one ear by morning."

Nevertheless, 1835's gardening was a success. Hamilton, in a burst of optimism, sent a substantial order for seeds to St. Louis

for the following year.<sup>7</sup> That fall, after the last vegetable had been gathered, the Indians began burning the fence rails. Larpenteur was forced to have two carters haul all the fencing to the protection of the fort.

He did not write much about the domestic animals at Fort Union, except for the hogs. Several adventures happened to the pigs, such as the terse entry, "Killed seven dogs for having torn the hogs to pieces." The herd was reinforced later when "John Prill brought in a sow from the woods with five young pigs." This increase was diminished when "one of the old sows choked her self with a piece of meat."

McKenzie was not at Fort Union during the summer when the deeds of the Deschamps family finally caught up with the father and sons. Exiles from the Red River Settlement, they had drifted toward the upper Missouri where Campbell had hired them at Fort William. When Campbell discovered that François Deschamps, Jr., was secretly a spy for McKenzie, François deserted to Fort Union where he was employed as an interpreter. Both he and his father, François, Sr., tried the temper of their fellow employees many times. A particularly strong feud developed between them and Baptiste Gardepied, whose life they repeatedly threatened. Baptiste finally demanded a showdown. The result took place in Larpenteur's room when Baptiste

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7. Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Ft. Union Letter Book, Hamilton to Daniel Lamont, July 17, 1835.



wounded François, Jr., and killed the old man. For a while there-  
after the surviving Deschamps caused very little trouble for anyone.<sup>8</sup>

Another moment of excitement that Larpenteur said happened involved the arrival of a number of Indians who were allowed to stay in the fort. Possibly because of liquor, the Indians became so unruly that Hamilton became concerned. He directed Larpenteur to carry muskets from a bastion to the dining room and to put a small cannon in the hallway of the bourgeois' house. Then, "the window blinds of the dining room were opened, and there could be seen by the three candles the bright muskets, plenty of cartridges . . . and four men ready for action. The piece of artillery was rolled back and forward in the passage, making a tremendous noise, and two men mounted guard with muskets and fixed bayonets." This display of power quieted the visitors; and a very pleased Hamilton sent Larpenteur to the cellar to draw a bottle of Madeira for a celebration.<sup>9</sup>

Another Indian whose name entered the history of Fort Union in 1835 was La Main, an Assiniboin who had had several disputes with

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8. Larpenteur, pp.87-90; Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Folder 1835, Jan.-Dec., Hamilton to Laidlaw, Aug. 25, 1835. A year or so later, a one-day civil war broke out between the Deschamps family on one side and most of the employees of Fort Union on the other. The Deschamps holed up in the old buildings at Fort William. McKenzie, on demand, let his men take a small cannon for their attack. By the end of the day, all the Deschamps were dead, from either bullets or fire, and several of Fort William's buildings lay in ashes.

9. Larpenteur, pp. 83-84. No other reference to this, in the Chouteau Collection or elsewhere, has been found.



his own people and who was thought of as an outlaw. In the early 1830's, he had killed his half-brother, Broken Cloud, at the fort, and, now, another half-brother got revenge by shooting La Main and leaving his body to tumble into the fort when the gates were opened the next morning.<sup>10</sup>

All in all, 1835 was a busy, exciting year, so busy that on July 4, Larpenteur wrote, "hollow day but had very little time to enjoy it." Yet there were times when the men relaxed a little. In the cool of the evenings, especially, there was time to promenade on the gallery that ran around the fort. From here one could see the prairie, the river, and the fiery sunsets, and dream a little about home or the mountains.

Back in May, Hamilton had hoisted the flag and fired the guns to honor the departure of McKenzie. That fall, word arrived that McKenzie was planning to remain in St. Louis. It was a premature rumor. He returned in late fall to renew his control over the fur trade of the upper Missouri. From Fort Union he wrote Prince Maximilian thanking him for the hospitality on the Rhine. He also mentioned the bad news that the steamboat that had carried the prince's collection of mammal and bird specimens had sunk with the loss of all the cargo. As for McKenzie's own trip, it had been a good one, with a side visit to Niagara Falls on the way home. The

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10. De Smet, 3, 1183. De Smet was led to believe that a double gate existed at this time. Actually, it was not constructed until 1837.

river was already frozen; but McKenzie looked forward to the winter. There was still Hamilton for company. Still, he asked, would the prince kindly think of Fort Union from time to time.<sup>11</sup>

The year 1836 was, perhaps, the quietest year Fort Union had yet experienced. The trade in robes was steady. Liquor was smuggled in. The Indians came and went. The next year started out just as quietly. Edwin Denig wrote in March 1837 to Fort Pierre, sending his thanks for the letters and papers that had just arrived, "we were beginning to get mere drones for the want of news." He said that nearly everyone at the fort had been sick with something like influenza, from which one child had died. On the other hand, trade had been superior, "We now have 900 packs in the warehouse and at least 250 more to be traded, and all of the very best kind of robes." He exulted, "if we make 2500 Packs Hurray for Upper Missouri Outfit against the world!!"

Despite the influenza, morale was high, "We are all in good humor . . . every man attends his business well and Mr. McKenzie is kind and obliging to all." As for himself, Denig said he "would rather be ostler here than bookkeeper general at F[ort] P[ierre] and though to oblige and obey Mr. McKenzie I would go any place, yet should I leave here it would be with great regret."<sup>12</sup>

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11. Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Ft Union Letter Book, McKenzie to Prince Maximilian, Dec. 10, 1835.

12. Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Folder 1837, June-July, Denig to Jacob Halsey, Mar. 25, 1837.



However, McKenzie left Fort Union in 1837 to take up residency in St. Louis. Three months after Denig wrote his letter, Fort Union's high spirits were replaced by the darkest gloom. The steamer St. Peters brought the smallpox with it. The first person to take ill was the acting bourgeois, Jacob Halsey. Within a few days, 27 people lay sick within the fort, of whom four died. Larpenteur described the desperation felt, "Doctor Thomas Medical Book was brought down from the Library and the treatment of small Pox vaccination inoculation was read over and over." The Assiniboin kept coming in to trade even though efforts were made to stop them. Like a wild fire, the pox spread through the tribe, and most of the other tribes of the upper Missouri. The Indians had no resistance to the disease. Halsey estimated that about 10 out of 12 Indians who caught the disease would die.<sup>13</sup>

The loss was terrible. The Mandan Indians were almost completely killed off. D. D. Mitchell, at Fort Union, estimated that four-fifths of the Assiniboin and the Blackfeet had died.<sup>14</sup> Buffalo were plentiful that year, but there were few Indians to hunt them. The American Fur Company worried that the Indians would blame the company for the disaster and attack the forts. Indeed, one Assiniboin leader, Le Vieux Gauche, vowed his vengeance on Union. Halsey took the threat seriously and had a double gate put in at the main entrance. The

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13. Abel, pp. 394-96; Larpenteur, pp. 183-87; Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Folder 1837, Halsey, "Report on Small-Pox Epidemic," for Pratte, Chouteau & Co., Nov. 2, 1837.

14. Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Folder 1837, July-Dec., Mitchell to Papin, Dec. 1, 1837.



outside gates could then be opened, the Indians could come through them, and enter the Indian house; providing the inner gates were closed, the Indians could not come into the main part of the fort. As a further precaution, a wicket was added to the wall. Larpenteur used it when selling liquor to visiting Indians. He said a few shots were fired through it from time to time, but these were caused by the liquor, not by a desire for revenge.<sup>15</sup>

Hamilton, who had gone down to St. Louis with McKenzie, compiled the "melancholy details" from the upper forts and passed the dire news on to Pierre Chouteau, Jr., then in Washington. He confirmed most of Halsey's reports; he also noted that Halsey had done a poor job at Fort Union that summer. The new acting bourgeois, D. D. Mitchell, had written asking that Chouteau himself come up to settle a number of unnamed problems; he also gave "a woeful picture of poor Halsey's conduct during the summer."<sup>16</sup>

Despite the tragedy, the robe trade continued, slowly for a time but gradually increasing in volume again.<sup>17</sup> Fort Union continued

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15. Abel, p. 396; Larpenteur, p. 135.

16. Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Folder 1838, Jan.-Feb., Hamilton to Pierre Chouteau, Jr., Feb. 25, 1838. This letter also contains a description of the effects of the smallpox on the various tribes and bands on the upper Missouri. According to Chittenden, 1, 391, poor Halsey got drunk on a visit to Liberty, Mo., in 1842, and set out for a fast horseback ride through the woods. A tree branch hit him on the head and he died instantly.

17. Pratte, Chouteau, and Co. became Pierre Chouteau, Jr., and Company in 1838. The reorganized company, finding the robe trade a profitable replacement for the greatly reduced beaver trade, expanded

to witness small excitements among its inhabitants. In 1840, one George Sumpter robbed the retail store and got away, only to be found working at Fort Pierre two years later. He was promptly "set adrift." The Deschamps were replaced in character by Alexander Harvey, a capable person possessed by a violent temper. He was fired in 1839, then rehired a year later. He returned to Fort Union where he had a showdown with an old enemy, Isadore Sandoval, in the same store that Sumpter robbed. In the manner of the upper Missouri, Harvey shot and killed Sandoval and dared anyone to do anything about it.<sup>18</sup>

In counterpoise to this violence, Peter De Smet, the Jesuit missionary, made this year the first of many visits to Fort Union.<sup>19</sup> Like other travelers, he was impressed with "the vastest and finest of the forts that the Fur Company has upon the Missouri." True to company policy, James Kipp, the new bourgeois, and his employees "overwhelmed us with civilities . . . supplied all our wants . . . I shall be most thankful to them all my life." He performed no marriages, but "regenerated sundry half-breed children in the

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its operations on the upper Missouri. Between 1839 and 1842 its capital investment on the upper river rose from \$30,000 to \$60,000; its trading force increased from 90 to 130 men; and the number of posts from 14 to 18. See John E. Sunder, The Fur Trade on the Upper Missouri, 1840-65 (Norman, 1965), p. 31.

18. Sunder, p. 88.

19. De Smet was at Fort Union in 1840, 1841, 1851, 1859, 1862, 1863, and 1867.



holy waters of baptism" before pushing on down the Missouri.<sup>20</sup>

When De Smet made his next visit, in 1842, Fort Union had neighbors again. A new competitor, called both the Union Fur Company and Fox, Livingston and Company, established a post at or near the site of old Fort William. Although officially called Fort Mortimer by its owners, the old name "William" remained popular. The new post was first built of wood, including its walls. Later, either under Fox, Livingston and Company or under still another competitor it was rebuilt with adobe, the first time such material was used that far up the Missouri.

The new fort got off to a poor start. In 1843, a sudden and very high rise in the Yellowstone river cut into the north bank of the junction. Even as the occupants watched, the bank collapsed right up to the fort's walls. Working desperately, they succeeded in moving the front wall and the buildings nearest the water bank so that "the back buildings of the Fort as it was before the rise now are the Front ones."<sup>21</sup>

Like Campbell and Sublette, the Union Fur Company found it impossible to compete profitably with Fort Union. While Kenneth McKenzie was not on the river, his successor as chief agent, Alexander Culbertson, was a most worthy heir. Fort Mortimer held

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20. De Smet, 1, 244; Reuben Gold Thwaites, Early Western Travels, 1748-1846, Vol. 27, De Smet's Letters and Sketches, 1841-1842 (Cleveland, 1906), p. 149.

21. John Francis McDermott, ed., Up the Missouri With Audubon, The Journal of Edward Harris (Norman, 1951), p. 113.



out against him for three years but, in 1845, the Union Fur Company gave up and sold its few holdings to Pierre Chouteau, Jr., and Company.<sup>22</sup>

Master Captain Joseph A. Sire could not bring his steamboat, the Omega, quite up to the landing at Fort Union in 1843. A sandbar lay in the way. He could take satisfaction however that he had made the fastest trip yet--St. Louis to Fort Union in 48 days and 7 hours.<sup>23</sup> His passengers were quite impressed. On board was a party of five men led by John James Audubon, then about sixty years old. With him was his long-time friend and amateur ornithologist, wealthy Edward Harris, John G. Bell, Lewis M. Squires, and Isaac Sprague, a 32-year-old artist whose job it was to draw plants and backgrounds for Audubon's fauna.<sup>24</sup> From this group came a number of letters, at least three diaries, and two paintings of Fort Union. From this wealth of material came a detailed picture of life at the 14-year-old fort that summer.<sup>25</sup>

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22. Chittenden, Fur Trade, 1, 369.

23. Joseph A. Sire, Log Book, 1843. The Mo. H.S. has Captain Sire's log books for every year between 1841 and 1847. See also Audubon, 2, 29.

24. O.A. Stevens, "Audubon's Journey Up the Missouri River, 1843," North Dakota Historical Society, 10 (Jan. 1943-Oct. 1943), 74-75; John Francis McDermott, ed., Audubon in the West (Norman, 1965), pp. 10 and 10n.

25. Audubon's and Harris' diaries have already been cited. Isaac Sprague's diary is today in the Library of the Boston Athenaeum. Mr. Isaac Sprague, Jr., today owns one of his grandfather's pen and wash sketches of Fort Union. Audubon's letters appear in McDermott, Audubon in the West.

Fort and steamboat exchanged salutes, firing six guns for the occasion. To welcome the visitors, "the gentlemen of the fort came down on horseback, and appeared quite a cavalcade." The guests met Culbertson, then walked to the fort where they "drank some first-rate port wine." They returned to the steamboat for the night, and not until the next day was their luggage "taken to the landing of the fort in a large keel boat."<sup>26</sup>

Audubon was quite disappointed at the small, dark, dirty room, about 12 by 14 feet, with only one window, on the west side, that was given to the party, now increased to six.<sup>27</sup> When he learned that this was the room that Maximilian had used, he could hardly believe it. However, he was but a guest and decided not to complain. The six men turned in early that first night, hoping to get a good rest. No sooner had they gone to bed, when a drunk in the room above them began cursing loudly. All lay awake, hoping the drunk would fall asleep, but now "clarionets, fiddles, and a drum were heard in the dining room," next door to their room. This new noise caused the drunk to renew his swearing "as if quite fresh."

When an invitation to join the party arrived, Squires jumped out of bed, investigated, and returned with the information that a

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26. Audubon, 2, 28 and 29.

27. At Fort Union, Audubon hired Etienne Provost as a guide. Provost had been in the fur country for more than thirty years and was one of the claimants for the discovery of South Pass. McDermott, Harris, pp. 98 and 98n.



ball was in progress. The rest got up to attend the dance:

Several squaws, attired in their best, were present, with all their guests, engages, clerks, etc. Mr. Culbertson played the fiddle very fairly; Mr. Guèpe the clarionet, and Mr. Chouteau [probably Pierre Chouteau, Jr.'s half-breed nephew] the drum . . . . Cotillions and reels were danced . . . and the company dispersed about one o'clock. We retired for the second time, and now occurred a dispute between the drunkard and another man; but . . . I was so wearied that I fell asleep.

Audubon still did not complain about the quarters. However, the strain must have showed on his face. The next day Culbertson offered them a larger and quieter room upstairs in the bourgeois' house.<sup>28</sup>

As they became acquainted with the fort and its surroundings, Audubon and his friends made a number of references to various structures and landmarks. No attempt is made to weave these into a chronological narrative. Audubon was favorably impressed with the dining room fare, "We have bread only twice a day, morning and evening, but we have very excellent Milk, and Butter, and probably the best Catfish found in the World." He noticed the "pig's trough, which is immediately under the side of the fort," but made it no clearer whether the pigs were housed inside or outside the palisades. He made reference to a bell ringing at sunrise; it was the signal to open the gate. However, Sprague's sketches do not show the bell

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28. Audubon, 2, 34-35; McDermott, Harris, p. 101. Harris listed the musicians as: Culbertson on violin, Denig on clarinet, and Chardon on drum.



tower that appears in paintings done several years later.

One day, 14 braves arrived, their faces painted black to show that they were a war party. They were allowed to stay in the Indian house just inside the front gate. However, Culbertson took their drum away because of the noise. Later, another group of Assiniboin were allowed to spend the night in the space between the outer and inner gates. During the night they built a large fire in that small space; Audubon thought it "a wonder that the whole establishment was not destroyed by fire."

Sprague's drawings indicate that the bourgeois' house was still only one and one-half stories high. However, Denig's description of that year stated there was a porch. Audubon confirmed this by saying, "It was so hot I am going to sleep on the gallery again." Also, Denig made reference to Audubon and Squires sleeping on the porch.

When Larpenteur described the building of the new storerooms in 1835, he made many references to the carters hauling rock. Audubon mentioned planning to go to the quarry "from which the stones for the powder magazine were brought." This quarry probably was the one for which a bridge was built back in the 1830's to allow the carters to speed their operations.

Audubon also confirmed that the fort still operated a "ferry flat" large enough to carry a cart across the river. On one occasion, he went across with a cart and drove on "an old abandoned road, filled with fallen timber and bushes" on the south side. The reference to fallen timber supports Catlin's painting which shows a great deal of

timber on the south shore, an area that is open, cultivated land today.

Both Audubon and Sprague referred to six-pounders at the fort firing salutes to departing mackinaws and keel boats. Denig at this time mentioned only three-pounders. Audubon further complicated this matter when he described the departure of Chardon for the Black-foot country, "The flag of Fort Union was hoisted, the four pounder run out of the front gate . . . . The keel boat had a brass swivel on her bows, and fired first, then off went the larger gun."

Also contradictory were Audubon's references to the garden. As it had been in the lush summer of 1835, the garden was located in the coulee one-half mile east of the fort. In this year, the gardeners had much trouble from stealing by the employees of Fort Mortimer. Audubon said this stealing became so bad the garden was abandoned. But, later, he told of Crees pulling up squash vines and turnips and tearing down the pickets around the garden. Apparently there were some vegetables left, for "we all turned to, and picked a quantity of peas, which with a fine roast pig, made us a capital dinner."

One day, Audubon and some companions went for a walk in the hills just north of the fort: "From the top of the hills we saw a grand panorama of a most extensive wilderness, with Fort Union beneath us and far away, as well as the Yellowstone River, and the lake across the river. The hills across the Missouri appeared quite low, and we could see the high prairie beyond, forming the background." The

view is very much the same today.<sup>29</sup>

One adventure of Audubon's at Fort Union badly misfired. He was desirous of acquiring an Indian's skull and persuaded Edwin Denig to help him remove one from an Indian scaffold burial. The two of them set off on the morning of July 2 "with a bag and instruments, to take off the head of a three-years-dead Indian chief." They succeeded in removing the head, but they could not get the coffin back up in the tree. Somewhat shaken, they buried everything.<sup>30</sup>

Turning to Harris' journal we find still more descriptive material. When he first saw the fort, he wrote that it was "constructed on a plan similar to the others, excepting that the logs which, in others, are planted in the ground are here framed, on a stone foundation, as to form a gallery from which a besieged party may fire over the ramparts at the enemy. The building and appointments throughout are," he thought, "of a description superior to any Fort we have seen on the river."

Nearly all the forts along the Missouri had a chantier, or boatyard, usually located in a suitable growth of timber. Here the workmen built mackinaws, skiffs, and canoes for river transportation. The chantier at Fort Union seems to have changed from time to time as suitable timber was exhausted at any one point. In 1843, it

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29. Audubon, 2, 22, 31, 38, 40-41, 57, 77, 108-10, 137, and 182; McDermott, Audubon, 119; and Sprague, "Diary."

30. Audubon, 2, 72.



appears that the boats (a mackinaw and a skiff were under construction) were built right at Fort Union. The timber came from the woods across the river. This arrangement came to light when Harris described the mysterious disappearance of the scow used for crossing the river.

"This is a serious loss," he wrote, "particularly at this time as they are very busy in building and fitting out the Mackinaw boat for Mr. Kipp to ascend the Yellowstone to the Crow establishment . . . they also have a skiff building for our use, and the men have to cross the river two or three times a day to work out the timber in the woods." Also crossing the river daily were men who were burning charcoal on the south side for the blacksmith.

Harris took a great interest in the condition of the competitor, Fort Mortimer. When a Mr. Collins there became ill, Harris visited him regularly acting the role of "doctor." On one occasion he took Audubon with him, the two of them riding down in Fort Union's carryall. Conditions at Mortimer were miserable after the flooding of the Yellowstone. The rain beat into the shanty where Collins was trying to recover, and the fort had virtually run out of food.

He also spent much of his time exploring the countryside. Once, when riding in the vicinity of "Garden river," he spotted a wolf. He also visited "Wormwood Prairie," 1-1/2 miles above the fort to the west, where in good years (such as 1843), the men mowed hay, "It is a beautiful bottom prairie [sic] covered with a sort of blue-stemmed grass said to be of the best quality." Harris and Bell spent July 4 deer hunting in a ravine leading off from this prairie to the north.

On another occasion, Larpenteur took Harris and Audubon on a wagon trip to some sandstone hills about two miles north of the fort. They spent some time looking for fossils, but without success.<sup>31</sup>

Of the three diarists, Isaac Sprague was easily the most enthusiastic about the strange and wonderful way of life of the fur traders. although, worried about his health, he held back from full participation in it. He had barely arrived when Culbertson performed a dramatic pursuit. When someone spotted a wolf running across the prairie, Culbertson "immediately mounted his horse and proceeded in pursuit of him. In a very short time he came up with him and shot him while running at full speed, and in less than 20 minutes the wolf was brought into the fort."

Another feat that impressed Sprague was a demonstration by the better riders and shots of the fort: "Several of them rode out about 3/4 of a mile from the fort starting from thence with unloaded guns, and while running that short distance at full speed they managed to load and fire from 9 to 11 times." With admiration, he wrote, "The horses are guided by inclining the body to either side, the reins being thrown loose upon the neck, leaving both hands free to use the gun."

His respect for Culbertson no doubt increased when the bourgeois presented the painter with "a beautiful Indian dress consisting of a

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31. McDermott, Harris, pp. 98, 98n, 101, 102, 113, 117, 121, 125, 127, 131, 142, 151, and 169.

Shirt Leggins and Mantle all of which are made of skins of various animals and highly ornamented with porcupine quills pieces of shells etc." He noted that July 4 passed without a celebration, a situation that appears to have occurred more often than not at Fort Union.

A few days later, he visited the place about one mile from the fort where the Assiniboina placed their dead on scaffolds. After that, he crossed the river to sketch his views of Fort Union from the south side.

At least once more during the summer, Culbertson showed off for his visitors' pleasure. One afternoon, he, Owen McKenzie (the half-breed son of Kenneth McKenzie), and none other than Squires, "arranged in Indian Costume, accompanied by two Blackfeet squaws in native dress made a grand display on horseback. They performed a number of evolutions on the prairie, and rode to the hills where they espied a wolf to which they gave chase and shot--and after returned to the fort at full speed." What a time to live! What a place to be!

Sprague was fascinated by the sight of Indians eating buffalo; they "eat the brain, the inner coat of the nostrils, etc. raw!" They also ate raw the liver and the stomach lining, or tripe. Sprague tried the latter, "but did not relish it much. Though I could eat it about as well as any tripe."

As his days at Fort Union grew short in number, Sprague became philosophical. Concerning the fort's employees, "Here far from civilization, the traders pass the best of their days--some from a Love of adventure some for gain--and others for crime are



driven from civilized society." He doubted if he would ever meet any of them again.<sup>32</sup>

Before he left Fort Union, Audubon persuaded the post's bookkeeper, Edwin Thompson Denig, to write a description of the establishment. Denig put down in 2,000 words the most complete description of the post known to exist. Although several important changes occurred in the fort's appearance after 1843, Denig's description remains a basic document. Several quotations from this description have already appeared in this report. The entire article is included as an appendix; elsewhere its contents appear in the separate structural descriptions. Audubon possibly agreed with Denig's thought that the fur traders did indeed "enjoy at least the semblance of living like their more quiet, though not more useful brothers in the United States."<sup>33</sup>

Kenneth McKenzie returned to Fort Union in the autumn of 1844. It was not a pleasure trip nor a journey of reminiscences. Persuaded by Pierre Chouteau, Jr., that affairs on the upper Missouri were so bad, because of mismanagement (particularly because of Francis Chardon's firing a cannon at a group of Indians who had come in to Fort McKenzie to trade), as to need his attention, McKenzie had reluctantly agreed to leave his wife and business to spend the winter of 1844-45 on the upper Missouri. Unfortunately, no record

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32. Sprague, "Diary;" Isaac Sprague, Jr., "Isaac Sprague, 1811-1895," 8 pp., a biography of his grandfather.

33. Audubon, 2, 180-88.

of his stop at Fort Union has been uncovered. He wrote his wife from Fort Pierre, October 27, that "in a few days . . . we will start again for Fort Union at the mouth of the Yellow Stone River." Later, in an effort to settle his accounts with the company, he stated that "at great inconvenience, & loss to his private affairs, [he] . . . visited the trading posts . . . for the purpose of examining into the Company's affairs there, and of pacifying the Indians." He had no doubts about the success of his trip, "after spending some seven months there so occupied, he left the country in a peaceable state, and the trade revived & prosperous." For this task, McKenzie asked reimbursement to the tune of ten thousand dollars. He was no longer the king of the upper Missouri, but there was still a good deal about him that was princely in nature.<sup>34</sup>

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34. McKenzie Papers, Mo. H.S., K. McKenzie to his wife, Oct. 8 and 27, 1844; and petition of K. McKenzie for his share in Pierre Chouteau, Jr., & Co., St. Louis, Circuit Court, Co. of St. Louis. Perhaps more of this trip would be known had not McKenzie's house burned and destroyed nearly all his personal papers.

## CHAPTER 5

### Travelers and Artists

The late 1840's saw an increase in the number of visitors at Fort Union. Mountain man, priest, scientist, and artist found their way to its hospitable table. None other than Jim Bridger, the tallest tale-teller in the West, arrived with a group of trappers to spend the winter of 1844-45. Beaver trapping was down to a trickle now; Bridger had already opened his own trading post on the Oregon Trail. But he and his friends would spend this winter in the company of real fur men. William Laidlaw, in charge of the fort that winter, offered Bridger every assistance. However, Laidlaw did not think that Bridger was "a man calculated to manage men, and in my opinion will never succeed in making profitable returns." Indian in habit and deed, these trappers pitched their tipis on the prairie about one-half mile from the fort. There would be plenty of visiting back and forth.<sup>1</sup>

Among the employees at Fort Union at this time was a young Scotsman, Alexander Hunter Murray, who had joined the American Fur Company almost as soon as he came to America. He would work on the upper Missouri from 1844 to 1846 then move to Canada to

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1. Larpenteur p. 211; Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Folder 1844, Laidlaw to P. Chouteau Jr. & Co., Dec. 18, 1844.



work for the Hudson's Bay Company. In later years, he was the builder of Fort Yukon in Russia's Alaska and the factor at Lower Fort Garry in Manitoba.

Murray probably would have escaped notice at Fort Union had he not been a talented artist. He sketched the fort as well as several others on the Missouri, including nearby Fort Mortimer. His original sketches have not been found and, since Murray was so painstaking with detail, history is much the poorer. Second-rate copies of his sketches have been preserved; these, with their limitations, provide still another source of information about the fort.<sup>2</sup>

In 1847, the same year the Protestant medical-missionary, Marcus Whitman was to be killed by the Cayuses, Father Nicholas Point, a Jesuit who had first entered the Pacific Northwest mission field with Father De Smet, went down the Missouri river for the last time. From Fort Lewis he traveled down to Fort Union by barge; there he caught the steamer Martha for St. Louis. While at the post he made two of his small sketches. Like Catlin, Point was better at portraits than at architectural detail. Nevertheless, his sketches also add to the body of knowledge of Fort Union. From St. Louis, Point went to Canada where he died at Quebec City in 1868.<sup>3</sup>

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2. Forest and Stream, (1908), p. 49, and (1908), p. 212; Alexander Hunter Murray, Journal of the Yukon, 1847-48, ed. by L. J. Burpee, Publications of the Canadian Archives--No. 4 (Ottawa, 1910), pp. 1-5.

3. Nicholas Point, S.J., Wilderness Kingdom, Indian Life in the Rocky Mountains: 1840-1847 . . . Translated by Joseph P. Donnelly, S.J. (New York, 1967), p. 8.

A few months after Point boarded the Martha, an adventurer arrived at Fort Union with a new twist. John Palliser, a footloose tourist, decided that he would like to winter at Fort Union. The only other travelers to have done that were Maximilian's party who stayed at Fort Clark during the winter of 1833-34. From Palliser's account we catch a flash of the fort during the long months of cold and quiet.

Old Man Kipp himself was bourgeois of Fort Union that winter and had, in fact, arrived with Palliser on October 27.<sup>4</sup> Kipp, with his many years of experience, was a favorite of the Indians, and two bands came in to welcome him back to the upper river. Palliser spent the shortening fall days hunting buffalo and exploring the wild country.

About Christmas a violent snowstorm brought a temporary stop to hunting and, as Palliser put it, made them prisoners of the fort. To celebrate the holiday, Kipp had a prime, small-boned heifer butchered. The company sat down to Christmas dinner with anticipation. However, one by one, they turned from their heifer steaks to get themselves some real meat--buffalo.

About that time, too, an epidemic swept through the fort. No one knew what it was, except that it was "a sort of cold that affected the throat like mumps." Denig was the acting doctor at the time and did what he could, until he too came down with it. That left Palliser,

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4. At this time, Honore Picotte was in charge of the Upper Missouri Outfit; he had his headquarters at the larger Ft. Pierre rather than at the better built Ft. Union.

alone, responsible for a time to go hunting for meat for the tables.

He recounted that during the times they were snowbound, they led a very routine sort of life. Bells regulated their day: one to rise by, one for dinner, and one for supper. A cheerful fire brightened the dining room where "our mulatto cook served breakfast, consisting of fried buffalo and venison, round breakfast cakes of wheaten flour . . . and excellent flour, with the luxuries of cream and butter." The noon meal was similar except that there was no coffee with it.

During the winter, some Sioux came into the vicinity of Fort Union. Ordinarily they lived farther down the river where Fort Pierre was the center of their trade. In the future, however, there would be an increasing number of notices concerning Sioux in the vicinity of Fort Union. Their visits were not always welcomed with pleasure. On this occasion they killed several of the fort's milk cows. They also shot the post's purebred bull. In the best tradition, the wounded animal staggered into the fort and died at the foot of the flagstaff. It was a serious blow; the cattle could not be replaced until the next summer.

Palliser went back down to St. Louis in 1848. While in the city he visited Kenneth McKenzie. Undoubtedly he shared his winter's adventures with the ex-bourgeois.<sup>5</sup>

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5. John Palliser, The Solitary Hunter, or, Sporting Adventures in the Prairies (London, 1856), pp. 79-99, 149, and 207-10.



The trade in robes and the company's fortunes held up well in the mid-1840's, despite a few unexpected setbacks. At the end of 1845, Picotte wrote from Fort Pierre that Kipp could "rely that a sufficiency of grog will be brought up "to Fort Union. Meanwhile, Kipp was to promise alcohol so that the Indians would make their hunt.<sup>6</sup>

However, 1846 was the driest year yet on the upper Missouri. The company became embroiled in a serious lawsuit concerning its liquor operations, and Chouteau ordered a temporary stop to smuggling on the Missouri.

Nevertheless, Fort Union succeeded in at least keeping its whistle wet. H. H. Sibley advised the company that in the Red River Settlement there were "several private stills, and where it is probable the article might be procured and transported in carts to some points high up on the Missouri." He recommended as dependable Messrs. McDermot and Sinclair. The next mention of these gentlemen's names was notice that they had been paid \$1,774.31 for "skins purchased."<sup>7</sup>

The year 1846 also brought Fort Union its third competitor when Harvey and Primeau and Company occupied Fort Mortimer, which

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6. Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Ft. Pierre Letter Book, 1845-46. Picotte to Kipp, Dec. 18, 1846. Picotte also noted that the UMO's return for the past year was 32,000 robes.

7. Chouteau Coll., Folder 1846, H.H. Sibley, Mendota, to P. Chouteau, Jr. and Co., Feb. 23, and July 6, 1846; Sunder, p. 113.

again was called Fort William.<sup>8</sup> There was not much to compete for at the junction of the rivers two years later. Pierre Chouteau, Jr., wrote in 1848, "The Trade appears to continue as good as ever except at Fort Union where Buff o has disappeared all at once." Edwin Denig, now promoted to bourgeois at Fort Union, felt the effect of this. The bustling scenes that Maximilian had witnessed in 1833 were no more. Where one hundred men had milled about the fort, Denig's staff was down to less than ten by the summer of 1849. The number increased in the wintertime as various small outfits came in from the outposts.<sup>9</sup>

Denig may have been short-handed but he did not intend to sit around and let the fort fall down upon him. Indeed, under his management, Fort Union reached a new high in elegance. New objects began to appear such as an office water jar and a new clock. Still enjoying his music, Denig also ordered a new "clarinett" and a few reeds for it. He told Culbertson that although he had few men he was going to "put the fort in such a position that the property & people will be secure." If he could find a man who knew how, he would have a lime kiln burned.<sup>10</sup>

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8. Sunder, pp. 87-95. This was Alexander Harvey who had shot and killed a man in the retail store at Fort Union in 1840. Harvey was one of those who were active in getting the liquor suits pressed against Chouteau.

9. Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Folder 1849, Ft. Pierre Letter Book, 1849-50, letter, unsigned and undated. The initials AC appear, possibly Alexander Culbertson. The letter appears in the midst of others dated in August: "Fort Union is left just as it should be with 5 or 6 men which is sufficient to do all necessary work."

10. Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Folder 1849, Denig to Culbertson, Dec. 1, 1849.

In 1850, Alexander Culbertson brought his brother Thaddeus up to Fort Pierre for a visit. Thaddeus, interested in fossils and seeking to improve his health, explored the Badlands then took the steamboat up to Fort Union. He was as impressed by the handsome setting as all those who preceded him. In his journal he recorded only one structural detail that no one else had mentioned--the dimensions of Larpenteur's wicket: "A room also is built against the wall by the gate, in which they used to trade through a small hole about one foot square in the wall."<sup>11</sup>

Thaddeus struck it off well with Denig, who gave him a "very fine bow with a valuable quiver and arrows, which I will keep as a memento of this trip." He did not have much time to enjoy it. He left Fort Union in June and in August died at home, 27 years old, of bilious dysentery.<sup>12</sup>

The next year, 1851, was a landmark of sorts. When Capt. Joseph La Barge tied up the St. Ange at Fort Union's landing, the first white woman ever to see the fort was aboard--Mrs. La Barge. Uncharacteristically, Denig did not make note of this event; we do not know if he entertained Mrs. La Barge or even if she stepped ashore.<sup>13</sup>

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11. Thaddeus A. Culbertson, Journal of an Expedition to the Mauvaises Terres and the Upper Missouri in 1850, edited by John Francis McDermott, Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 147 (Washington, 1952), p. 105.

12. Ibid., pp. 2 and 12-13.

13. Sunder, p. 138.



Thoroughly documented is the arrival of Rudolph F. Kurz, a 28-year-old Swiss who had traveled to America to capture the wild West on canvas. To support himself, he had signed on with the American Fur Company. He had left St. Louis on the same boat as Mrs. La Barge, but had disembarked at Fort Berthold, his first assignment. That September he traveled by horse to Fort Union to report to Denig for work. Arriving at the post, Kurz mentioned seeing the "white bastions" from a distance.

Kurz was not overly impressed with his new boss on first meeting him, "a small, hard-featured man wearing a straw hat, the brim of which was turned up in the back." He decided too that Denig was "a rather prosy fellow." However, as soon as Kurz saw the dinner that Denig had had prepared, he changed his mind "at once concerning this new chief; a hard niggardly person could not have reconciled himself to such a hospitable reception in behalf of a subordinate who was a total stranger to him." Kurz dove into the chocolate, milk, butter, omelet, fresh meat, and hot bread--"What a magnificent spread!"

Kurz' first assignment was to paint the bourgeois' house. Although this was rather far from his kind of painting, he wanted to do a good job because of Denig's kindness to him. "Every evening he sits with me, either in my room or in front of the gate, and relates experiences of his earlier life." Denig told Kurz he had been at Fort Union 19 years (since about 1832). Kurz was especially struck, however, with the fact that Denig had two wives, referred to as the

younger one and the older.<sup>14</sup>

In his conversations with Denig, Kurz learned how Pierre Chouteau, Jr., and Company had organized the trade on the Missouri and Platte as of 1851:

Mr. Culbertson is agent for the upper Missouri outfit and has supervision of three posts: Fort Union, Fort Benton, and Fort Alexander. Mr. W. Picotte is agent for the lower Missouri outfit, which includes . . . Fort Pierre, Fort Lookout, Fort Vermilion, Fort Clarke, and Fort Berthold. Mr. Papin is agent on the Platte, having charge of Fort Hall and Fort Laramie. A bourgeois or head clerk is stationed at each post. He receives a fixed salary of \$1,000 and a stated percentage on sales.

The less a bourgeois has to pay for the upkeep of fort, in salaries for employees, and for skins and furs, the greater will be his profit . . . . Clerks and engagees are paid on an average the wage they receive in the United States, but they are required to buy everything from the trading post . . . .

A craftsman or workman receives \$250 a year; a workman's assistant is never paid more than \$120; a hunter receives \$400, together with the hides and horns of the animals he kills; an interpreter without other employment, which is seldom, gets \$500. Clerks and traders who have mastered [Indian languages] . . . may demand from \$800 to \$1,000 without interest. All employees are furnished board and lodging free of charge.<sup>15</sup>

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14. Rudolph Friederich Kurz, Journal of Rudolph Friederich Kurz . . ., translated by Myrtis Jarrell, edited by J.N.B. Hewitt, Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 115 (Washington, 1937) pp. 120, 122, 126, and 210; Edwin Thompson Denig, Five Indian Tribes of the Upper Missouri, ed. by John C. Ewers (Norman, 1961), xxiv-xxv In 1847, Father Point had reproached Denig for having two wives. At that point, Denig had put a quick stop to Point's hitherto unfettered efforts to instill his sense of morality. However, in 1856, Denig formally married his younger wife, and she went to Canada with him when he retired in 1858.

15. Kurz, pp. 234-36.



Kurz quickly learned too that a post had a rigid social organization that could be seen most clearly in the dining room, "Hunters and workmen eat at the second table, i.e., meat, biscuit, and black coffee with sugar." The clerks ate at the bourgeois' table: "We have meat, well selected, bread, frequently soup and pie on Sundays." But everyone, from top to bottom, had to supply his own bedding; "however, one may borrow two buffalo robes from the storeroom."<sup>16</sup>

Kurz described the palisades in much the same manner as others; his remarks showed too that the walls were beginning to show their old age and that repairs were necessary: "The palisades . . . are fitted into heavy beams that rest upon a foundation of limestone." They "are further secured by supports of crossed beams on the inside." While he was at Fort Union, the wall on the west side, "where the supports were badly decayed," blew down before new beams were ready. To Kurz, the job of cutting trees and preparing the timbers for the palisades seemed a most "laborious and difficult task."<sup>17</sup>

Both the north and south gates were still in operation at this time. Kurz told about an Indian on horseback chasing his wife out on the prairie. She reached the fort and banged on the south gate "and before I could let her in . . . the man was already pounding

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16. Ibid, p. 236.

17. Ibid, pp. 122n and 124.



at the opposite gate."

The pressroom that Denig had described in 1843 still served its original purpose. Kurz paid it a visit one day to list all the different kinds of furs in it. He found over twenty species, ranging from mouse to grizzly bear. The ice house also was still in use, "Our only occupation at the moment is the storing of ice in the ice house." He described how some men cut the ice and carry it to the river bank, others load the blocks into a cart, and still others take the cart to the ice house, "and I have to count the number of loads delivered." In mentioning how valuable the ice was in summer, he mentioned that the fort's water supply still came from the river.<sup>18</sup>

On his first night at Fort Union and at a later time, Kurz described the interpreters' room in the western range. It was "rather like an Indian's habitation. On the floor near me were three beds [of buffalo robes] for three couples of half-Indians and their full-blooded wives." On the second occasion, a group of gamblers and on-lookers were in this room, "dimly lighted by the open fire and one candle." The crowd consisted of Indians, whites, and half-breeds; "eight Herantsa and seven Assiniboin sat opposite one another on the floor, encircled about a pile of bows, quivers, knives, calico, etc."

Kurz did not say where his own room was, but it was near enough to the interpreters' that the noise of their gambling kept him awake.

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18. Kurz, pp. 224, 239, 302 & 329.

On another occasion, he mentioned that his room was near the dining room. Thus it would seem he was in the west end of the main house across the yard from the range containing the interpreters. Except for a leaky roof his room was a comfortable one, "furnished with bedstead, two chairs, and a large table." Later on, he acquired an Indian wife, whose few possessions were added to the scene.<sup>19</sup>

Kurz' painting chores at Fort Union were the subject of many a diary entry. Denig directed him to first paint the front of the bourgeois' house, then to decorate the "reception room" with pictures. Next, he was to paint a life-size portrait of Denig "that is to hang in the office where it will strike the Indians with awe."

The artist gathered his materials from "the principal building, in the warehouse, in garret and cellar." He found "many oil colors (neither very good nor complete)," a marble slab with a grinder, and five measures of oil. Two clerks, Owen McKenzie and Packinaud, came to help him and, on September 6, he began painting the balcony and the reception room. By 1851, the balcony was a two-storied affair, and the central dormer windows upstairs had given away to a full second floor. A gallery, or widow's walk, crowned the top of the house.

Kurz worked very hard on the house and apparently had it finished, as well as the picket fence in front, well before the end of

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19. Ibid., pp. 120-21, 137, 200, and 243.

September. Meanwhile, he had other tasks, "Mr. Denig expressed the wish that I paint also a sideboard in the mess hall; it was not sufficiently glary when finished, so he decided to improve its appearance himself." Kurz disliked that kind of painting, so he took care to praise Denig's work highly, "in order to be rid of it once and for all."

Next Kurz undertook portraits of Denig and of Natch, Denig's favorite dog. The bourgeois gave him permission to do also a watercolor of the bourgeois at Fort William, Joseph Picotte. Although Denig liked only life-sized oil portraits, Kurz undertook to make his boss a copy of a pen and wash sketch he had done of the interior of the fort.<sup>20</sup> In February 1852, Kurz did two more sketches of the interior of the fort from the southwest bastion. All three sketches have survived, all are excellent in their details, and together they tell more about the fort than any number of words.<sup>21</sup>

The next painting project was to reproduce the likeness of the company's president, Pierre Chouteau, Jr., on the gable above the second-floor porch at the front of the house. Denig gave Kurz a trade medal that had Chouteau's profile on it. Kurz took only two days to do the portrait, but he "had to work in a most uncomfortable position on an unsafe scaffold." Kurz did not mention a painting

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20. This sketch, dated Sep. 19, 1851, was located in the collection of Nicholas Point sketches at St. Louis University. Apparently sometime later Denig or someone had given this sketch to Father De Smet who took it back to St. Louis. There it got mixed in with Father Point's work and has been filed with his ever since.

21. Kurz, pp. 121-22, 127-30, 133, 137, 141, and 292.



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that many years earlier another clerk, J. B. Moncrevier, had done for the top of the main gate--a treaty of peace between Indians and whites.<sup>22</sup>

One day Denig discovered a nude figure that Kurz had sketched. Denig wanted to hang it in the reception room, but he was so unwise as to make some crude jokes about it. Kurz became angry. He probably refused to let go of this particular picture; he wrote later that "for the sake of keeping on good terms with my bourgeois I began to paint another female figure, but not entirely in the nude."<sup>23</sup>

On his next visit to the fort, Alexander Culbertson was so impressed with the oil of Denig that he wanted one of himself. Kurz was troubled by the lack of proper materials, "ceruse, black, vermilion, Prussian blue, yellow ochre, and chrome yellow are the only colors I have, while my brushes are those used, in general, for the beard and for flat painting." He finished the portrait however and it was hung in the reception room where Indian women and children soon damaged it.<sup>24</sup>

Still other assignments came Kurz' way. He had to paint the bourgeois' 3-dog sleigh (a cariole) red and black. About this time Denig hit upon the idea of Kurz' undertaking the painting of 15-foot flags, each having an eagle in the center on stripes of red and

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22. Ibid., pp. 156 and 159; Audubon, 2, 185.

23. Kurz, pp. 166-67.

24. Ibid, pp. 223-24.



white. Denig would use these as gifts for Indian leaders or would trade them for "the handsome price of 20 robes apiece." One of these eagle flags joined the portrait in Denig's office. Kurz attended a meeting in this office between Denig and Le Tout Pique, a Cree chief. His busy pen sketched this scene, including the flag and the oil.<sup>25</sup>

Ever since the first cannon arrived at Fort Union, it was the practice to fire a salute for every arriving and departing boat and distinguished visitor. On January 2, 1852, Kurz acquired the job of firing a three-gun salute for a band of Absarokas approaching the fort. It was not an easy task:

I fired three times with our 4-pounder that stands on the gallery above the river gate. As there were neither cartridges nor match cord at the fort I had to wrap a load of powder in paper and thrust it into the barrel, then ram it with shreds and rags of leather, clear out the vent with an iron pin, put powder on the pan and touch it off with a burning brand. And all by myself. It was in loading the gun after this clumsy fashion that old Gareau . . . lost an arm. He thought it unnecessary, after having fired, to stop the vent while reloading.<sup>26</sup>

The painting projects out of the way, Kurz was appointed to the more responsible position of clerk. His duties included opening the gates every morning, closing them in the evenings, opening them during the night if visitors came, reporting all strangers found outside the fort, keeping an eye on the two bastions and their contents, in charge

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25. Ibid., pp. 134, 243, and 247-48; John C. Ewers, Artists of the Old West (New York, 1965), p. 144.

26. Kurz, p. 256.

of the press room, supervising the meat supply, assisting at saddling and unsaddling horses, and looking after the tools.

It was this last assignment that vexed Kurz. He found tools everywhere--in the saddle room, meat house, storeroom, outhouses, bastions, even thrust under beds. What was so aggravating to him was Denig's expectation that Kurz knew where everything was at any given moment. In a fit of temper, Kurz wrote, "Mr. Denig would be supremely happy to be put in command of at least 10,000 men . . . . To command is his greatest pleasure; desire to command his most characteristic trait."

Part of the problem was that Kurz received his position as clerk at the same time Denig and Culbertson were sitting down to some serious drinking, as was the wont of just about everyone in the fur industry except Charles Larpenteur. Kurz recalled that neither man was sober enough to give him instructions, and that someone gave him "a bunch of ten keys" with no instructions as to what they were for. Still, Kurz had to admit that he had learned a lot lately, including the differences between tallow and lard, between tender and tough meat, and between ox steaks and cow steaks. "It is quite a while," he wrote, "before one knows all the various terms for fresh meat, cured meat, lard, corn, water, 'open the door,' etc., in seven different languages." Denig might get cross when the young clerk forgot to feed the pigeons or failed to praise the younger Mrs. Denig's new ball gown; yet there were more days when Kurz liked Denig than there were days he did not.<sup>27</sup>

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27. Ibid., pp. 223, 226, and 240-41.



There were times for fun too, such as the dance the engagés gave, at their own expense, in the dining room. Or the ball that Denig gave to which he invited all the men and their families from the opposition fort. "We decorated the room as brilliantly as we could with mirrors, candles, precious fur skins, and Indian ornaments," described Kurz. As for Denig, he had to play the fiddle all night, there being no one else who knew how. Kurz, since he did not dance, "beat the tattoo on the drum" and played a tambourine. Fort William returned the favor within the week, which ball was the occasion for another excellent sketch of Fort Union by Kurz.

Then there was the day of the Indian attack. One evening, a horse guard, Joe Delores, galloped up to the gate screaming, "Blackfeet!" Everyone poured out to help get the horse herd into the fort before the Blackfeet stole them. The rumor flashed that the Blackfeet were in the Garden Coulee, east of the fort. "With great trouble," reported Kurz, "the men got all the horses together just as a man emerged from the spot where the enemy was suspected. Who should it be but our negro, Auguste! He had been looking for berries."<sup>28</sup>

However, there were Indians at Fort Union that winter. Back in November, Kurz had written that there were so many Indians around that Denig was planning to have an Indian lodge built. As it was, the visitors were crowded "into at least five rooms already occupied."

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28. Ibid, pp. 121, 124, and 126.



An Indian village of thirty tipis stood on the south bank of the Missouri. Kurz thought the view was most romantic with the tipis in relief against the forest, the bare trees laden with snow. At the same time, on the north bank, set on the gleaming, snow-covered prairie, stood

a group of gaily colored tents with their attendant poles from which are suspended trophies, such as scalps, buffalo beards, strips of red cloth, etc. . . . men walking about . . . youths at their games, girls carrying water, women trudging in with wood, cleaning and scraping hides; horses grazing or tethered near their owners' tents . . . a multitude of dogs.<sup>29</sup>

Besides the various structural details of the post itself, Kurz' diary mentions various places and activities outside the fort with which earlier visitors had become acquainted. Like Audubon, he climbed the hills to the north in order to enjoy the view of the Yellowstone and beyond. He dropped down the east side of the hills into the upper part of Garden Coulee; "I was forcing my way through . . . (the deep bed of a dried-up stream thickly overgrown with coppices and bushes, over against which lies our potato garden)." He jumped "across the now insignificant brook and was proceeding with rapid strides toward the horse pasture when I heard a rustling of dry leaves behind me and someone laughed." Fortunately, the noise came from two friendly Assiniboin.

When Kurz was at Fort Union, the timber yard apparently was up

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29. Ibid., pp. 226 and 244.

the river a short distance. In October, when some Indians left, he wrote, "They were to be put across the river near the timber yard because that's the place where the boats are kept." On another occasion, he noted that someone had gone to "the 'Chantier,' a place in the forest up the river where workmen and laborers . . . are getting beams ready for the palisades." In his third mention of the timber yard he said simply, "workmen set out for the timber yard to get lumber ready to build the new Indian lodge at the fort."<sup>30</sup>

Maximilian commented on the new powder magazine in the fall of 1833, but did not mention its location. Kurz described it as being to the rear of the warehouse. While such a description could mean to the north or to the east, recent archeological excavations indicate that it was at the north end of the store range.<sup>31</sup>

Kurz' stay at Fort Union lasted only seven months. In the spring of 1852, he got ready to go down the river, taking his precious sketches home to Switzerland. Did he later think back much on his days at Fort Union? Did he ever recall the cold winter day when there was no firewood except in Denig's quarters? Kurz' diary told of the bourgeois sitting there "quite comfortable in his large arm-chair, smoking his short-stem pipe beside his iron stove that glows with a rousing fire. The instant I . . . hold my hands over the

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30. Ibid., pp. 122, 124, 159, 201, 293, and 305.

31. Ibid., p. 202

delectable base burner . . . the bourgeois invariably finds a new task that takes me into the cold." And did he ever think again of his fellow workers, the French Canadians? He did not like them at Fort Union because they boasted too much about their homeland. He recorded the derisive little song

Je suis du Canada  
Je me font de ça  
J'ai des pommes de terre  
Pour passer l'hiverre.

(I am from Canada  
I am a part of it  
I have potatoes  
Enough to pass the winter.)<sup>32</sup>

But the time had come to go. On April 18, Kurz wrote, "Fare thee well, Fort Union! Mr. Culbertson arrived by boat yesterday. He will take Morgan and me."<sup>33</sup> Another actor passed from Fort Union's stage.

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32. Ibid., pp. 110, 123, and 229.

33. Ibid., p. 329.



## CHAPTER 6

### Sioux and Soldiers

As Fort Union approached its 25th birthday, there were signs of coming change on the upper Missouri. There were still immense herds of buffalo, but white men's civilization was beginning to encroach on the homelands of the plains Indians. In 1853 Fort Union played host to a group of explorers surveying for a railroad route.

The arrival of Isaac I. Stevens' party almost rivaled in show the parades of the Assiniboin in former days:

During the march in, the governor took his horse, the first time in several days, and rode at the head of the Column. An American flag, made on the way, to the manufacture of which I contributed a red flannel, was carried in the foreward rank, and flags, with appropriate devices, representing the parties carrying them, were respectively carried by the various corps. The Engineer party, a long locomotive running down a buffalo, with the motto 'Westward Ho!' Our meteorological party--the Rocky Mountain, with a barometer mounted . . . with inscription 'Excelsior.' The astronomical party had a device representing the azure field dotted with stars, the half-moon and a telescope. . . . Teamsters, packmen, hunters, and etc., also carried their insignia. . . .

Stevens' description of the fort was a hurried one and does not deserve very much emphasis. For example, he described the bastions as being at the northwest and southeast corners of the fort, the north side as being the front, and the size as being "probably 250 feet square." Of more interest is Stevens' impression of Alexander Culbertson, "a man of great energy, intelligence, and fidelity, and

possesses the entire confidence of the Indians." Mrs. Culbertson, "a full-blood Indian of the Blood band of the Blackfoot tribe, is also held in high estimation. Though she appears to have made little or no progress in our language, she has acquired the manners . . . of the white race with singular facility.<sup>1</sup>

With Stevens was John Mix Stanley, the principal artist of the trip. Not only did Stanley sketch the fort and the Assiniboins receiving their annuities, he made the first daguerreotypes of the fort and area. Stevens noted that "the Indians were greatly pleased with their daguerreotypes." Unfortunately, these pictures are not known to exist today. They possibly were destroyed in the 1865 Smithsonian fire that consumed over 200 of Stanley's western paintings.<sup>2</sup>

Another group of Army explorers arrived at Fort Union in 1856 aboard the St. Mary. Along with Lt. G. K. Warren and his 17 enlisted men of the 2d Infantry was F. V. Hayden, who later would become famous for his western explorations. Warren did not have very much to do while at Union; he did set up a 16-inch transit and took observations "during a whole lunation; but owing to the cloudy condition of the nights during the time, and the shortness of the nights themselves, only two sets of observations were obtained on the moon and stars." He did record the longitude of the fort as being  $104^{\circ} 02'$ ,

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1. House Documents, 36th Cong., 1st Sess., Ex. Doc. No. 56, v. 12, 70-71; Kennedy, p. 216. The description of the party's arrival is from Robert Taft, Artists and Illustrators of the Old West, 1850-1900 (New York, 1953), pp. 17-18. Taft believes the author of the description to have been Elwood Evans.

2. Taft, pp. 8 and 20.



with a limit of error of about 10'. This measurement is of interest for, nearly 100 years later, there was still confusion as to whether the fort site was in North Dakota or Montana.<sup>3</sup> Hayden made estimates as to the size of the various bands of Assiniboin. The results of the smallpox were still evident; his estimation of the entire population came to a little over 2,000.<sup>4</sup>

Hayden did not mention if he met Indian Agent Edwin A. C. Hatch who was waiting at Fort Union for the St. Mary to take him up river. Hatch, who appears to have been utterly bored with his job, did mention one or two incidents of that summer. About a month before the boat arrived, two men went out to hunt for stolen horses, "Mr. Chambers returned clothed in a silk handkerchief--Shucette in pants and shirt--they were surprised by a war party and Shucette lost my horse and Chambers the one he rode."

Later, Hatch met Jim Bridger, "the old guide and mountain trapper" himself. Bridger was on the upper river that year with Lord George Gore, who was a few days behind at this time. Hatch had an opportunity to visit with Bridger (who apparently stopped at Fort William rather than at Union) and "was much amused with some of his tales

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3. Lt. G. K. Warren, Preliminary Report of Explorations in Nebraska and Dakota . . . 1855--'56--'57 (Washington, 1875), pp. 15-16.

4. F.V. Hayden, Contributions to the Ethnography and Philology of the Indian Tribes of the Missouri Valley (Philadelphia, 1862), p. 387: Gens du Gauche, 100 lodges; Gens du Lac, 60 lodges; Gens des Roches, 50 lodges; Gens des Filles, 60 lodges; Gens des Canots, 220 lodges; Gens du Nord, 30-50 lodges. Each lodge represented 4 persons.



of mountain life."<sup>5</sup>

This was the same summer that Edwin Denig decided to retire. He was still a relatively young man, but he had been on the upper Missouri almost a quarter of a century. He, Culbertson, Larpenteur, and a few others were among the last of those who had memories of the early Upper Missouri Outfit. Besides running the fort, discussing art and religion with men like Kurz, and writing detailed descriptions of the fort for Audubon, Denig had spent considerable time compiling all he knew about the Indian tribes of the upper Missouri. These documents later came to have a very great importance to ethnologists, among whom Denig may be ranked with the best.

Another contribution of Denig's was his painstaking efforts to assist scientists to collect and prepare specimens for study. The Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., received during these years a considerable number of skins and skulls of the mammals and birds found on the upper Missouri that Denig had prepared.

Now it was time to say goodbye to old friends like Culbertson. John Ewers suspects it was Culbertson who, on a visit to his Pennsylvania home in 1832, persuaded his neighbor, Denig, to join the American Fur Company. Denig himself had almost no family to return to; he and his Indian wife would move to Canada.<sup>6</sup>

Denig picked a good year to leave. A few months later, in

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5. Edwin Hatch Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minn.

6. John C. Ewers, "Literate Fur Trader, Edwin Thompson Denig," Montana Magazine of History 4 (Spring 1954), 1-9.

January 1857, his replacement, James Kipp, again, wrote to St. Louis to describe the renewed horror of a smallpox epidemic. The opposition's steamboat had brought the pox up to Fort William, "instead of putting their sick ashore" farther down. The disease had begun to spread among the Assiniboin in November; "the loss up to time of writing is estimated at 300 souls." Also, the Crows, who had escaped the 1837 epidemic, were suffering greatly. The Indians scattered far and wide in an effort to escape. The result would be, thought Kipp, a reduction in trade by about one half.

In addition to the smallpox, another trouble had arrived in the form of 400 Sioux. On December 1, 1856, they "stole all our horses, wounded one of our people . . . killed an Assiniboine back of the fort;--they also killed a free white man, trapping on the Yellow Stone, about 8 miles from this place."<sup>7</sup>

As troublesome as the Sioux were becoming, there was from time to time more violence among the employees themselves. Larpenteur described the three-day Christmas party of 1858 when he, as usual, was the sober bartender:

At the height of the spree the tailor and one of the carpenters had a fight in the shop, while others took theirs outside, and toward evening I was informed that Marseillais, our hunter, had been killed and thrown into the fireplace. We immediately ran in, and, sure enough, there he was, badly burned and senseless, but not dead yet.

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7. Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Folder 1858-59; Kipp to P. Chouteau, Jr. and Co., Jan. 29, 1857.

The bourgeois had the tailor and a carpenter arrested and placed in irons. Later, they received a "trial by jury," were found guilty, and administered 39 lashes each.<sup>8</sup>

Carl Wimar, a German immigrant living in St. Louis, came up the river in 1858, but too early for the Christmas party. He published an account of his journey in a German newspaper; however, it did not describe the fort in any detail. More importantly, Wimar was a very good artist and he sketched six of the company's Missouri river forts. The original sketches have not been found; fortunately they were printed in Chittenden's work on Peter De Smet.<sup>9</sup>

Still another artist followed Wimar to Fort Union, in 1860. This was William Jacob Hays of New York who traveled on the Spread Eagle that summer. Like Wimar, he left no written descriptions of importance, but he did execute at least one sketch and one very fine oil of the fort, both included in this report.<sup>10</sup>

The Army made a brief appearance at Fort Union in the summer of 1860 when Capt. William F. Reynolds and 1st Lt. Henry E. Maynadier

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8. Larpenteur, pp. 158-60.

9. James B. Musick, "Three Sketch Books of Carl Weimar," [sic] Bulletin of the City Art Museum of St. Louis, 27 (1942), 10-14; William R. Hodges, Carl Wimar, A Biography (Galveston, 1908), pp. 11, 17, and 21-23; Wimar Sketch Books and Sketches, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Mo.; Taft, p. 42.

10. Taft, pp. 36-40.



of the Yellowstone Expedition camped for two weeks near the junction of the two rivers. The troops called their site Camp Humphreys," in honor of the distinguished officer in charge of the Bureau of Explorations and Surveys."

The officers visited Bourgeois Robert Meldrum at the fort and purchased such supplies as flour, sugar, and coffee. Since they were to go down the river on boats, Reynolds sold his forty horses to Fort Union at \$5 each. Lieutenant Maynadier was surprised at the good order of life at the fort, especially on the evening of August 4 when he attended a ball; "Although the ladies were the daughters of the forest, they were attired in the fashionable style of the States, with hoops and crinoline." The troops left on August 15, "As soon as the bow of the boat swung round the flag was unfurled, which was the signal for a salute. The flag on the fort was run up and guns fired as long as we were in sight."<sup>11</sup>

The number of boats on the upper Missouri increased considerably as the United States became more deeply involved with the Civil War. A number of citizens of Missouri with Confederate sympathies, or, perhaps more correctly, who did not have strong Union sympathies, undertook to migrate to the Pacific Slope. The discovery of gold in Idaho and western Montana gave further stimulus to travel. Besides the Oregon Trail, travelers could reach the Pacific Northwest

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<sup>11</sup>. Senate Documents, 40th Cong., 1st Sess., Ex. Doc. No. 77, pp. 114, 145-47.

with increasing ease by taking a steamboat all the way to Fort Benton then continuing on Mullan's Road to their destination. For these travelers, Fort Union became but a way stop. Still, it was an impressive place; and a number of descriptions appeared in the journals and letters of the time.

One such visitor in 1861 was John Mason Brown who traveled up river on the Spread Eagle. As they slipped by Fort William, the passengers noted that it had finally been abandoned; the last of the opposition had given up. Then came Fort Union; "Salutes passed between boat and Fort. No Indians in the neighborhood who should be here to receive annuities, viz Crows & Assiniboins. Sioux lurking about."

Brown met the bourgeois, Robert Meldrum, whom he thought to be a pleasant man. Meldrum showed Brown his "snow machine," but Brown did not explain what it was. He did not think much of the fort's defenses, "The two bastions utterly unfit for the 4 pounders which they contain. " He misjudged the size of the fort considerably (100 x 200 yards) but allowed it was well arranged. He was very much "Amused at a tame Grizzly Bear kept at the Fort who diverted himself by boxing the pigs and frightening the horses of a few Assinaboins who came in last evening."

The fur trade interested him somewhat, and Brown found that "the trade of this post has been steadily declining for some years, the Indians finding it more convenient to traffic higher up the river." The Chippewa, a shallow-draft steamboat, arrived to take passengers



and supplies up the river; the Spread Eagle took on 24,000 robes "principally from Fort Benton brought down in Mackinac boats"<sup>12</sup> and left for St. Louis.

Another visitor who saw the "pet" grizzly in 1861, before she got away, was W. H. Schieffelin. He and two companions, W. M. Cary and an E.N. Lawrence, all from New York City, were on a travel adventure that eventually took them to the Pacific coast then home by way of Panama. Cary sketched the sights they saw, while Schieffelin wrote of their experiences. They had meant to remain at Fort Union only long enough for the Chippewa to load. They left on schedule, but the Chippewa exploded and sank destroying 80 of Cary's sketches. The adventurers returned to Fort Union for another six weeks waiting for other means to continue their trip.

They spent the six weeks hunting, riding, and becoming acquainted with Indians. At one time a large band of Assiniboin came in and camped. The whites witnessed the Indian dances and horse races. The troublesome Sioux were still in the area. On one occasion, a party of haymakers came across three wounded white trappers, only a few miles from the fort. At another time, unidentified Indians successfully stole six horses from the fort's herd.

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12. John Mason Brown, "A Trip to the Northwest in 1861," The Wilson History Quarterly, 24 (1950), 128 and 219. The Chippewa exploded before reaching Fort Benton. Sister Dolorita Marie Dougherty, "A History of Fort Union (North Dakota), 1829-1867," pp. 154-56, describes Meldrum as a white man who was in the fur trade 36 years and eventually became a "long hair." He died at Fort Union in 1865.



Before leaving, the young men invested \$10 in a party for the entire fort staff. "The orchestra consisted of one old fiddle and a fife, played by several volunteers. . . . The old trappers and their squaws seemed to enjoy the dancing more than [the visitors] . . . there was no round dancing, or German." Schieffelin described the scene, "The dancers all wore solemn faces, and worked as if earning wages. They jumped, stamped, slapped their thighs and clapped their hands. . . . In fact, the dance was a sort of mixture of negro breakdown and Irish jig." The sponsors were told that the party was a complete success, "inasmuch as it ended in a fight and a stabbing affray."<sup>13</sup>

Later that year, the Sioux approached Fort Union with aggression in mind. This time about 250 of them "killed 25 head of cattle, burnt all the out houses & 280 Tons of Hay and two Mac Kinaw Boats." According to the report, they attempted to set fire to the fort itself, but left when one of them was killed and two others wounded. The damage would have been more extensive had not 65 cattle and 27 horses been dispatched to Fort Benton just two days earlier.<sup>14</sup>

James Harkness, a member of the firm of La Barge, Harkness & Co., stopped at Fort Union in June 1862. He reported that the past winter had been extremely cold and that the Indians had suffered a loss of

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13. Taft, p. 52; W.H. Schieffelin, "Crossing the Rockies in 61," Recreation, 3 (1895), 14-17; George Bird Grinnell, "Recollections of the Old West, Appreciation of . . . William de la Montagne Cary," The American Museum Journal, 17 (1917), 333-34.

14. Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Folder 1860-65, P. Chouteau & Co. to Chas. Primeau, Feb. 6, 1861.

500 horses because of the storms. It was his opinion that the "fort is on a good site, but fast going to decay." He too noted the increasing menace of the Sioux, saying that the fort personnel no longer went outside the walls without being fully armed.<sup>15</sup>

Henry A. Boller, who had been at Fort Union in 1858, returned for a visit in 1863. In contrast to John Mason Brown, Boller thought the fort was very strong, "The bastions were of stone, and the massive and substantial pickets were braced and secured in the strongest manner." He referred to the bourgeois' house as an "ornamental" building, and recalled with pleasure that "around its hospitable board and on its balcony, during the pleasant summer evenings, was gathered a social circle." His own quarters were in one of the bastions, "which commanded a most extensive and delightful view." This was the first notice of a guest being put up in the bastion. Sometime between 1853 and 1858, the roof of the southwest bastion had been raised and a wooden-walled room, in effect a third story, added. Perhaps this was the room given Boller.

He commented on the state of trade, confirming the opinions of other recent travelers; "Fort Union, in 1863, was (and had been for several years past) simply a Post for the Assiniboine Indians, and as they are notoriously poor robe-makers, its trade had fallen

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15. James Harkness, "Diary of James Harkness, of the Firm of La Barge, Harkness and Company," Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana 2 (1896), 343 and 347.



away very considerably." Then, too, there were the Sioux, who staged a raid while Boller was present.

One September morning he was in the bastion cleaning his weapons and resting. Suddenly, he realized that some half-breed children, who had been playing outside, were all crying. "In a half-hesitating manner I stepped out upon the gallery. What a sight met my gaze! The whole sandbar seemed literally alive with naked savages, who . . . were making directly for the Fort!"

The cook and his Indian wife had gone down to the river to get kettles of water. The Sioux chased the poor couple, but they apparently escaped when Boller fired into the leading warriors wounding two. Also endangered were the wood-choppers and a few men who had gone upstream to hunt and fish. All managed to get back to the fort safely. It was not really an attack, but a very good scare.

Raids of this type had become so frequent, Boller noted, that Fort Union no longer bothered to keep milk cows and had abandoned the garden completely. The time was close when a few soldiers would be most welcome.<sup>16</sup>

Gen. John Pope, in 1863, directed campaigns against the Sioux farther downstream, in retaliation for their violent attacks on Minnesota settlements in 1862. Although meeting with some success, Pope decided that he would have to mount new campaigns in 1864. Part of his plan was to establish additional army forts along the Missouri.

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16. Henry A. Boller, Among the Indians, Eight Years in the Far West, 1858-1866 (Philadelphia, 1868), pp. 369-86.



Indian Agent Samuel Lotta thought this an excellent idea. He recommended Fort Union as an ideal place for a military post. From there, the troops could keep a watch on British traders and on any Southern sympathizers that might be at Union, as well as protect the area from the Sioux.<sup>17</sup>

Gen. Alfred Sully led between two and three thousand men across the Little Missouri Badlands toward the Yellowstone river in the summer of 1864. His intentions were to defeat any Sioux encountered, then to build a permanent post on the Yellowstone. Meanwhile, supplies came up the Missouri by boat and were stored at Fort Union.

The overland march was exhausting; dysentery appeared in the command. By the time the troops reached the Yellowstone on August 12, they were worn, hungry, and dispirited. Two steamers were waiting for them, which raised morale greatly. Sully decided not to build a fort that season but to move down the Yellowstone to its mouth, and then continue home.<sup>18</sup>

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17. Robert G. Athearn, Forts of the Upper Missouri (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1967), p. 89; Raymond L. Welty, "The Frontier Army on the Missouri River, 1860-1870," North Dakota Historical Quarterly 2 (1927-28), 88-89.

18. Robert M. Utley, Frontiersmen in Blue, The United States Army and the Indian, 1848-1865 (New York, 1967), pp. 274-78; Robert H. Jones The Civil War in the Northwest (Norman, 1960), p. 75; Joseph Mills Hanson, The Conquest of the Missouri, Being the Story of the Life and Exploits of Captain Grant Marsh (Chicago, 1909), pp. 55-60; Athearn, pp. 140-43.

Company I, 30th Wisconsin Infantry, had arrived at Fort Union in June to guard the military supplies until Sully arrived. When Sully did appear, he was not at all impressed with Fort Union as a potential site for a permanent army post. To him, it was too far run down and not at the best location. At the junction of the rivers, on the sites of old Forts William and Mortimer, he picked out an area that he thought would be more suitable on which to build. It was here that the Army built Fort Buford two years later.<sup>19</sup>

At least two men in Sully's command recorded their impressions of Fort Union. Amos R. Cherry, Company B, 14th Iowa Infantry, wrote on August 18, "Crossed [Missouri] River. Arms and Equipment carried over in 'Yawl.' Horses swim across river. All pass safely. Fort Union is very pretty place indeed nice painted in fine style." Two days later Volunteer Overholt took a look around Fort Union, "it is an old French fort and was built for an Indian mission in eighteen thirty." However Overholt did not give an opinion as to whether he thought it dilapidated as did his general, or pretty as did Cherry.<sup>20</sup>

Sully's command moved on down the Missouri, while Company I remained behind to guard the supplies that had been meant for the

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19. Utley, p. 279; Athearn, p. 143. Although some accounts have the Wisconsin Volunteers arriving at Ft. Union as early as April, Larpenteur's journal indicates clearly they arrived in June aboard the Yellowstone.

20. "Iowa Troops in the Sully Campaigns," The Iowa Journal of History and Politics, 20 (1922), 427; Overholt Papers, 1863-1864, Minnesota Historical Society.



fort that was not built. Thirty years earlier, Charles Larpenteur had kept a detailed diary during a very active period at Fort Union; now he was back and again he would log the daily events for the next year--a year in which fur trader and soldier tried to live side by side. Larpenteur was a clerk on that earlier occasion, now he was bourgeois; however, Fort Union was not quite the establishment it had been in McKenzie's day. When Larpenteur arrived at Union early in the morning of May 31, 1864, he found "not a single horse nor ox team to haul up the freight and but very few men about the Fort," and most of them drunk. He was driven to getting the squaws to help him.

June started off in a grand order. The Assiniboin arrived on June 4 for trade and, like in the old days, "very fine dances given in the fort to the whites." Meanwhile, the Indians camped below the garden ravine, where Larpenteur was able to gather some asparagus. Indian Agent Mahlon Wilkinson issued the annual annuities at a council on June 11.

Then, on June 13, the Yellowstone arrived and Larpenteur described the sudden blossoming of "two fine rows of tents . . . in the Center of the Fort." Company I, 30th Wisconsin Infantry, had arrived. The government's and the company's supplies were stored in the supply rooms, and Larpenteur sat back to watch the troops, more of whom arrived on the Well Come on July 17. Two days later, the traders witnessed "a dress parade and inspection." Larpenteur thought "the drill was very well preformed and the Indians were quite pleased."



Twenty-nine years earlier, Larpenteur had witnessed the construction of the storerooms. Now, in the afternoon of June 30, "a great crash was heard in the Stores." When he investigated, he discovered "that the principal Beam which supported the Joists had given away which occasioned all the Joists to break off in the middle." However, except for boxes of soap and candles, the damage was not as bad as it had first seemed. Within a few days the broken joists were removed and props were placed under the main beam.

Over the years, July 4 had often passed unobserved at Fort Union. In the heyday of the fur trade, the fort's personnel were usually too busy to take more than note of the holiday. The Army's policy was somewhat different. On the morning of July 4, Larpenteur was awakened "very early by the firing of Six Cannons which broke several pains of glass in the Fort." That was but the beginning. After dark that evening, the "Captain had two Shells fired;" these were followed by "fire balls." As late as July 7, the sober bourgeois noted that there was still considerable drinking going on.

Despite the presence of the soldiers, Larpenteur tried to arrange his business as it had always been done at the post. He directed his men (sometimes helped by soldiers) to clean out the interior of the post, had some haul wood, others to prepare and fire charcoal pits, and he took an inventory of the supplies. During the inventory, he discovered "that Something like fifty vials of Strychnac had been stolen out of the Medisene cupboard."

On July 14, he noted that the second (of about four) editions of the Frontier Scout was published by Robert Winegar and Ira F. Goodwin of Company I. Larpenteur regretted there was not more news at Fort Union to encourage them to publish more often.<sup>21</sup>

A band of 25 Sioux upset the equilibrium of the post at dawn, July 23. They rushed the horse guard and captured all 17 horses, "passing them within one hundred yards of the Fort." Two detachments of soldiers gave chase later but they accomplished nothing. At least it would make some news for the paper.

Larpenteur had noted that the river was changing its course--closer toward the fort he hoped. But on July 25, when there were no fewer than five steamboats at Union--Bell Peoria, Chippewa Falls, Alone, General Grant, and the Benton--the men were "obliged to make half loads [of the cargoes] in order to cross over the bar in front of the Fort."

Three weeks later, he noted the arrival of Sully's army, surely the largest number of men to pass by Fort Union in many a year. It was Larpenteur's opinion that Sully had "done but little or nothing with the Sioux." On the other hand, he learned that nine men drowned trying to cross the Yellowstone, and one more lost his life crossing

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21. Athearn, p. 144; Douglas C. McMurtrie, "Pioneer Printing in North Dakota," North Dakota Historical Quarterly, 6 (1931-1932), 222-26 and 222n. The first edition of the Frontier Scout complained about the awful smells at Ft. Union and asked Larpenteur to improve the sanitation.

the Missouri to Fort Union. Soon, the troops were gone and "none but Company I and the Fort Union men on hand."

Larpenteur made note of the several construction projects undertaken by the troops. They erected their own store rooms "next to the pickets," set up a sawmill, built "another root house or an underground Store room," and made hay. At the same time, Larpenteur's own men made hay, built a roof for the hay mow, and put a new covering of earth on the stables. On September 7, he "employed the Carpenter at making a flight of Stairs to go up to the uper Story [of the bourgeois house] without going in to the main entrense." These steps appeared in the only known photograph of the house, taken two years later.

Around the middle of September, the Crows came in and a second annuity council was held. Larpenteur then commenced trading. He procured enough robes that the Army cleared its supplies out of the company's warehouse so that the robes could be stored. About this time, the blacksmith left the post, "not being willing to do as he was required to do."

As the cooler days of autumn approached, the soldiers turned to building themselves winter quarters. They rafted logs down the river, worked very hard at putting up the buildings, and had their houses finished by October 1, except for the bunks. They then turned to the construction of wooden quarters for the officers, a blacksmith shop, an ice house, and the weatherboarding of their "flour and stuff stored under the Fort gallery."



Larpenteur's own men undertook a multitude of tasks at this time: hauling firewood, drawing coals, building a trough to "turn the rain from the Store roof off of the hay," weatherboarding the stores, moving the cooking utensils from the kitchen building to the dining room for the winter, rendering grease, repairing the window blinds on the bourgeois' house, daubing the old kitchen, repairing its roof, and whitewashing it. The carpenter went over the main house making repairs, and the tops of the paling fence in front were painted.

Still other jobs involved whitewashing the outside of the men's quarters, hauling seven logs for repairing the ice house, enlarging "the space of the counter" (in the retail store?), constructing a pig pen, daubing the blacksmith shop and the ice house, whitewashing the latter, and butchering a hog. The soldiers kept pace by rebuilding the gallery around the fort so that they could walk from one bastion to the other on their guard mounts. They also prepared a room to be used as a hospital.

On November 22, a group of miners arrived from Montana on their way back to the States. Larpenteur wrote that they were "a poor looking sett of broken down gold seakers we cannot give them much room." These miners called themselves the Idaho Company and were a great trial to Larpenteur over the winter. In March, he got construction started on a boat for them and, on April 17, was able to say, "Great and Glorious, the Idaho Company have started at last under a salute of two of shots of the largest guns of Fort Union . . . their boat went full sail." Immediately he had his men clean out the rooms the miners had rented.

Before leaving the winter of 1864-65, notice must be made of the troops. On February 4, Larpenteur noted that scurvy had appeared among the soldiers. During a warm spell, he observed that those sick from scurvy were brought out to sun. Then, on March 17, "One of the soldiers died at half past 10 oclock last night it is said of the scurvy." He made a similar entry on April 4, April 6, April 24, and May 7.

By April 1865, however, spring was on its way. All the stoves came down on the 19th. The kitchen was whitewashed and the cook moved back to it. However, he took sick about this time and, nine days later, died.

On April 27, three soldiers went down to the point below the fort to hunt. About 25 Sioux attacked them. One soldier "was shot through and killed on the spot but all with arrows he had eleven wounds all with arrows and was scalped and entirely strip of his clothing." One of his companions was severely wounded, but the surgeon thought he might recover. The third man was not hit and he managed to kill one Sioux. After they had buried their dead companion the next day, the soldiers went out and hanged the body of the dead Sioux.

Whether or not it was the fever of spring, Larpenteur spent May 1865 having the fort spruced up. The "big house" got all its doors and chair boards painted. The carpenter constructed a "plank way" from the kitchen to the main house, to overcome the eternal mud. For several days the men whitewashed and painted here and there.



Then, on May 19, the season's first steamboat, the Yellow Stone arrived. It brought replacements for Company I--Company B, 1st U.S. Volunteer Infantry Regiment. Company B was composed largely of captured Confederate soldiers who had agreed to serve on the frontier, rather than rot in prisoner-of-war camps. Their regiment was under the command of Col. Charles A. R. Dimon, all of 23 years old and wholly inexperienced. According to Chittenden, Fort Union was already acquainted with this regiment, 17 of its members having deserted from Dimon's cruelty and walked all the way from Fort Pierre to Fort Union.<sup>22</sup>

On June 17, another steamboat arrived with the news that Pierre Chouteau, Jr., and Company had finally sold Fort Union. This news did not for the moment make any difference to Larpenteur. The fort's routine kept going. The 261 packs of robes and the elk skins had been shipped down the river. He watched the replacements practice skirmishing. In contrast to the last July 4, there were no celebrations this year "except two drahms given to the soldiers." He ordered new shelves for the retail store, where he used to clerk so long ago. Whitewashing took a lot of time. And soon it was time to build this year's hay rack.

On August 13, an overland express arrived ordering Company B to go down the river. They left immediately, leaving a lieutenant,

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22. H.M. Chittenden, History of Early Steamboat Navigation on the Missouri River . . . . (2 vols., New York, 1903), 2, 264; D. Alexander Brown, The Galvanized Yankees (Urbana, 1963), pp. 73, 91, and 109.



a doctor, and 18 soldiers to look after the government stores. To Larpenteur, "the Fort looks quite large and apparently desolate." The next day, things still looked strange to him without the soldiers around. A week later, a steamboat took even the detail away leaving only the lieutenant and one or two aides, and "leaving Larpenteur in charge of Fort Union, with Mr. Herrick Clerk, six working men, and Mr. Chas Conkle making in all ten men."<sup>23</sup>

Larpenteur set about putting the fort in order for the new owners. The Blackfoot annuities were stored "in the far end of the store," the pork and beef went into the root house, as did the salt. No less than 420 sacks of flour were stored in "the big ware house." He fenced in the area between the men's houses and the pickets and hung a door between the gable end of the men's houses and the Indian house, thus effectively boarding up the extreme western part of the fort where "the baggage [Army's?] is entirely locked up." He put the molasses "in one stall and boarded it up nailed the door, moved all the carpenter tools into the old carpenter shop, and swept up the fort good."

On September 17, the Hattie May brought "all the honorable members of the N.W. Fur Co." Suddenly unemployed, Larpenteur boarded the steamboat and sailed away. The boat stopped at the site of Fort William, and Larpenteur took advantage of the delay to walk back to Fort Union to take care of some papers he had forgotten. When

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23. The lieutenant and his men left on August 30.

he got to the fort, where he had been the bourgeois, he found the gates locked. He went to a small cabin, where a man named Campbell lived, 100 yards distant, and took care of his business there. Larpenteur never explained his sudden departure from Fort Union, but his diary holds at least a trace of bitterness. But he would be back one day.<sup>24</sup>

Charles Chouteau, Pierre Jr.'s son, had taken over the day-to-day operations of the company these past few years. By the end of 1864, he had pretty well decided to sell the Upper Missouri Outfit. Trade was off; the Sioux were still at war with the whites; and the Lincoln administration in Washington was suspicious of the company's activities and of the Chouteau family's loyalties.<sup>25</sup>

When in Washington in the spring of 1865, Charles met James Boyd Hubbell, in the freighting business in Minnesota. Chouteau suggested to Hubbell that the latter purchase the forts and their contents on the Missouri River. Hubbell promptly accepted the offer: "I made the purchase from Mr. Chouteau individually, but gave [Alpheus F Hawley, my partner 1/2 interest, he knew nothing about it." Later, J. A. Smith, Chicago, C. Francis Bates, New York, and J. A. Smith, Chicago, joined with Hubbell and Hawley to form the North Western Fur Company.<sup>26</sup>

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24. Except where indicated, all this material came from Charles Larpenteur, "Journal, 1864-1866," Minnesota Historical Society; and Larpenteur, p. 377.

25. Sunder, pp. 260-62; Larpenteur, p. 366.

26. Hubbell Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, folder, "Letters, Accounts, Legal Papers, Undated." The quotation



In his reminiscences, Hubbell described the takeover of the forts on the upper Missouri. He said he was delayed in getting to Fort Union in 1865, because of the hostility of Col. Charles Dimon. One of the 17 men of Dimon's regiment who had deserted and fled to Fort Union was an artist. It was this deserter, said Hubbell, who did the sketch of Fort Union that is customarily labeled "unknown soldier."

Despite the decline in trade, the North Western Fur Co. apparently had a profitable first year at Fort Union. There being no other bidders, the company was able to acquire all the army stores in the fort for \$2,000. Hubbell then had these supplies transported to Fort Benton and sold them to miners for about ten times their cost to him. It seems, too, that the winter of 1865-66 saw a fairly good trade in robes.<sup>27</sup>

In the spring of 1866, a competitor to Hubbell, apparently called "Gregory, Bruguier, and Gregory," appeared at Fort Union.

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was found written in the margin of Hubbell's personal copy of Chittenden, Early Steamboating, 1, 239, and was signed "J.B.H." Most references to the company found in the Hubbell Papers called it the North Western Fur Company or N.W.F.Co. Other names popularly assigned included Northwestern Fur Co., Northwest Fur Co., and North West Fur Co. See Lucile M. Kane, "New Light on the Northwestern Fur Company," Minnesota History 34 (1955), 325n.

27. Hubbell Papers. Minn. H.S., folder, "Misc. Notes & Clippings," photostat of St. Louis Dispatch, Aug. 3, 1901, an article by John B. Hubbell, "Trading With the Indians," and folder, "Affidavits to Hubbell's Claim, 1900-1903."



From one Phillip Alourey they purchased a building "near the fort to be used for a store," for \$100. Later, they purchased a second log house for \$10. Little is known about these gentlemen except that they kept a fair stock of goods and sold to everyone who came their way. About the height of the Sioux troubles at Fort Union, in December 1866, Indian Agent Mahlon Wilkinson, staying at the fort, gave permission to the North Western Fur Company's bourgeois, Mr. Pease, to tear these structures down to prevent the Sioux from firing them. Their lumber was used for firewood inside the fort. Wilkinson promised to pay the competition for its loss.<sup>28</sup>

With the Civil War over, the U. S. Army turned its attention once again to the settlement of differences with the western tribes, particularly the Sioux. An inspecting officer arrived at Fort Union in 1866; his mission was to make a determination for a site for a permanent fort in the vicinity of the river junction. He agreed with General Sully and did not pick Fort Union, but chose the site at the junction. Shortly thereafter, on June 12, a company of the 13th U. S. Infantry under Capt. W. G. Rankin arrived and commenced building Fort Buford.<sup>29</sup>

Granville Stuart, handy with a pen and sketch pad, stopped at Fort Union in May 1866; "We stopped awhile at this fort and got

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28. Gregory, Bruguier and Gregory Papers, and Hubbell Papers, folder, "Misc. Notes and Clippings," Minn. H.S.

29. Athearn, pp. 226-27; Washington Matthews, Asst. Surg., U. S. A., "A Medical History of Fort Union."

some ice at five cents per pound, and I took a slight sketch of it." It seemed to him that there were very few employees about, and the fort itself "had a sort of 'played out' look, and is evidently on the decline."<sup>30</sup>

Boller passed Fort Union for the third time that summer. To him, everything at Fort Union seemed the same, "and some few of the old retainers were still about." Farther down, he saw the soldiers building their new post.<sup>31</sup> By June 11, Larpenteur was back at Fort Union also.

Fort Union was no longer Larpenteur's responsibility, and his diary for the next few months sheds less light on the fort than usual. He did describe an amusing but potentially dangerous incident on July 4, a "rather dry day for Fort Union two shots were fired both pieces were turned up side down and one corner of the Fort damaged." It reached 102° that day and, before it was over, "we had one of the heaviest thunder Storm[s] I ever heard at this place which took place at early bed time the flag staff was struck." Later in July, during the distribution of annuities, the fort was set on fire in the night. The Sioux were suspected since, "it had been started on the out Side." However, the fire was extinguished immediately.<sup>32</sup>

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30. Granville Stuart, Diary and Sketchbook of a Journey to 'America' in 1866 . . . (Los Angeles, 1963), p. 34.

31. Boller, p. 415.

32. Larpenteur, "Journal, 1864-66." The old flag staff had long since disappeared. The lightning struck a shorter staff mounted on a tower.

During the fall and winter of 1866-67, the Sioux harrassed Fort Union and Fort Buford time after time. One of the more observant witnesses was a sutler at Fort Buford, Charles W. Hoffman, later a prominent banker in Bozeman, Montana. Hoffman spent much of his time up at Fort Union and witnessed many of its experiences. The first Sioux incident after his arrival occurred December 20, when a few attacked a man riding in a sleigh between the two forts. On New Year's Day Hoffman visited Fort Union under an escort of soldiers. On the way home, two men were following behind the escort when they were cut off by the Sioux less than one mile from Fort Buford. At least one soldier was killed in the rescue.

Two weeks later, Hoffman witnessed the Sioux chase two Assiniboin women at Fort Union out wooding. They killed one before being driven off by "a shot from one of the six pounders on the corner of the fort facing the river." On one occasion during the winter, Sitting Bull came to Fort Union from his camp some ten miles distant. He met with Bourgeois Pease outside the fort, and demanded and received a red shirt. Hoffman said the soldiers then were given the order to shoot red-shirted Indians.

Pease welcomed all the men he could get at Fort Union, Hoffman recalled that there were "about thirty white men and a lot of friendly Assinniboine Indians to help guard." To prevent a night attack, they built two large lanterns out of glazed window sash, moulding the candles in a piece of 2-1/2-inch pipe. "We put them outside at the opposite corners from the bastions and kept them burning dark



nights." Unfortunately, these do not appear in the one photograph of the exterior taken in 1866.

As a sort of climax to this time of troubles, Hoffman described the arrival of Thundering Bull and "a large party of Santee and Cuthead Sioux." For some reason, Pease or Wilkinson decided to entertain Thundering Bull in the Indian house where he and his more important men spent their first night. The next day Pease, apparently feeling secure, sent a detachment of the fort's personnel out wooding.

Hoffman was in the (retail?) store talking to a friend when he noticed the Sioux, "in full paint and feathers," on their way to Pease's office. He said that Wilkinson at that moment was "up in the look-out over the mess houses." This possibly was a new structure located toward the north end of the fort so that it looked over the north gate.

Hoffman, armed, entered Pease's room where he found the bourgeois "seated near a window and a round table near him . . . . The Indians were seated on the floor," except Thundering Bull, who had taken a chair. Hoffman suggests that a rather tense meeting took place but, in the end, danger was averted when Pease told the Indians that powder had been distributed throughout the fort so that it could all be blown up, presumably including Thundering Bull. Despite the drama sensed by Hoffman, there remains the possibility that Thundering

Bull's only intention was to carry out a trade.<sup>33</sup>

The North Western Fur Company kept Fort Union in operation throughout 1866 and into the summer of 1867. By 1867, however, Hubbell decided to give up the post as an unprofitable operation. He hired the Luella sometime in this period to transport his goods up to Fort Benton.<sup>34</sup> He also opened a store at Fort Buford, which had increased in size to 500 soldiers. Charles Larpenteur, who, in the spring of 1867, had begun building an adobe trading store just outside Fort Union, decided that he too would open a store at Buford. He commenced a log building, 120 feet in length. For the moment the soldiers could choose from three traders: the military sutler, the North Western Fur Co., and Larpenteur.<sup>35</sup>

In June of 1867, General Sully, accompanied by Father De Smet, arrived at Fort Buford in an effort to arrange a peace with the Sioux. On July 4, both men came up to Fort Union for a visit, otherwise the holiday passed quietly.

Larpenteur was still at his adobe store just outside Union when, on August 4, he witnessed the beginning of the end for the 38-year-old fort: "The Miner [a steamboat] arrived at Union, and left at

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33. Hubbell Papers, Minn. H.S., Affidavits re Claims, 1900-1903, Affidavit by Charles W. Hoffman. See also Athearn, pp. 232-34.

34. Hanson, p. 77.

35. Larpenteur, pp. 388-89. Larpenteur was backed at this time by the firm of Durfee and Peck of St. Louis.

about one oclock after having demolished the old Fort Union Kitchen for the Steamboat wood." On that same day, he wrote, "Fort Union is sold to the government to build up Fort Buford." On August 8, he wrote "The Soldiers Commenced tearing down the Fort Union yesterday." Apparently, Larpenteur himself had been living in Fort Union while his own establishment was being finished for he recorded on August 10 that he moved out of Fort Union. During these past few days, Larpenteur had had his own men hard at work building a bastion for his own establishment, apparently a little concerned that Fort Union would no longer offer any protection. However, on August 12, he made the decision to open a store at Fort Buford, and it was not long before this new project was taking most of his time.

On August 25, Larpenteur noted that "the pony express arrived from above." However, it appears the express station was at Fort Buford rather than at his store. Referring to the disappearance of Fort Union, he noted on August 26 that "the Carpenter tore down the Black Smith Shop and put his tools in order, to rebuild the Shop at Buford."

Through September, Larpenteur kept both stores in operation. However, he received a setback when the commanding officer at Buford forbade temporarily the soldiers from trading with him. This did not discourage him, and he continued to enlarge and improve upon his new establishment outside Buford. On October 14, he acquired "fourty logs from the old root house built by the government whilst quartered in Fort Union" in 1864. In November, Larpenteur had his



men haul 21 loads of logs, three loads of slabs, and one of lumber from Fort Union. While he did not see fit to explain the circumstances, it seems likely that the Army and Hubbell had both taken what they needed out of the old fort and had left the rest for whomever had use for it.

Larpenteur and his men were now quartered in their new establishment and, on November 23, he wrote in his journal that his Union store had been abandoned.<sup>36</sup>

Five years after Larpenteur wrote that the U. S. Government bought Fort Union, the post surgeon, Washington Matthews, wrote that Union "was never owned by the Government nor, as far as I can learn, was any rent ever paid for it." Matthews was right that the Army did not pay rent for its use of the fort in 1864-65. Hubbell put in a claim for rent for that period (even though the post was owned by Pierre Chouteau Jr. and Company for part of that time) but failed to obtain compensation.

However, Hubbell did sell the materials of the post to the Army in 1867 according to Larpenteur. Actually, Matthews agreed with Larpenteur by noting that these materials went into the construction of Fort Buford. It was not a proud ending for the grand old establishment that had for so long been the capital fort of the upper Missouri.

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36. Larpenteur, "Journal."

Dr. Matthews, in visiting the site around 1872, mentioned a cemetery "about one hundred paces east of the ruins of Union and separated from them by a little ravine." The little ravine is still there today, but all traces of a cemetery have long since disappeared. While Larpenteur never made clear just where he built his adobe store in 1867, Matthews described also "the ruined adobe walls to the west of the old fort." It all lay in ruins now; there was no proud fort.





## PART 2

### The Things of Life

The preceding narrative dealt primarily with the structures that composed Fort William between 1829 and 1867. Of importance too are the things these structures contained. Collectively, the objects that were at Fort Union tell a great deal about the lives of the fort's employees, the Indians who traded there, and the appearance of the fort itself.

No attempt is made to document each item in the lists below. To do so would result in a documentation longer than the report itself. However, notice should be made of several sources that are extraordinarily rich. These include inventories of Fort Union made in the years 1831, 1832, 1845, 1846, 1847, and 1851. They also include requisitions for merchandise for such years as 1832 and 1846; Kenneth McKenzie's accounts, 1831-36; and an invoice of merchandise aboard the S. B. Assiniboin in 1834. All these documents are located at the Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

The dates shown on the following lists are but representative, i.e., while the list shows that red beads were inventoried in 1832, one may assume that red beads were to be found at Fort Union in other years as well. Also, there is some duplication; this has been kept to a minimum, but there were occasions when it was more convenient

to repeat an item than to check through several hundred entries to see if it already appeared.<sup>1</sup>

### Clothing

"Please to bear in mind that the men who migrate to this country are or ought to be large, strapping fellows, clothing should be selected of proportionate dimensions." -- 1832

"Here I am, a regular carter of Fort William, dressed in cow-skin pants, cowskin coat, buckskin shirt, wolfskin cap, red flannel undershirt, and a blue check shirt over that, stepping along behind my old horse and cart." -- Larpenteur

"Chiefs Coats can be made here in sufficient quantity if you can bring a little more lace the large round Button add much to the appearance of the coat and costs but little more than the other."  
-- 1834

Socks, woolen	(12 doz. in 1834)
" Black, worsted	( 1 " " )
" white, woolen	(1832 and 1836)
" colored "	(1832)
" white, cotton	(6-1/2 doz. in 1831)

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1. Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Folder 1831, June-Aug., "Inventory of Stock . . . at Fort Union 10 June 1831;" Folder 1832, June-Aug., "Inventory of Stock at Fort Union June 18, 1832;" American Fur Company Ledger Book JJ, "Inventories," for inventories in 1845 and 1847; American Fur Company Ledger Book LL, "Inventories for 1846-51;" American Fur Company Ledger Book Y, Invoice of Supplies aboard S.B. Assiniboin, 1834; American Fur Company Ledger Book V, Fort Union's Account 1831-36; Folder 1832, Jan.-Feb., An order for merchandise for Fort Union, Spring, 1832. All other sources used appear in the bibliography.

Socks, Lamb's wool	(1831)
Suspenders	(2 doz. in 1834)
Mackinack, common, white	(1832)
" 2-1/2 pt., scarlet headings	("this is scarlet bar in place of blue" -- 1832)
" 3 pt., best	(1832)
" 3 pt., common	"
" 2-1/2, 2, & 1 pt.	"
" Hudson Bay Stripe	("Bright scarlet, not dingy red, such as those rec'd this season -- 1832)
Capots, blue cloth	(1832)
" gray "	"
Surtouts, fine blue	"
" " green	"
" " olive	"
" superfine blue	"
" " green	"
" " olive	"
Shirts, salempore	(1832)
" fancy calico & bright colors	(260 in 1834)
" red flannel	(200 in 1834)
" cotton check	(1832)
" pink check	(152 in 1834)
" domestic plaid	(36 in 1834)
" English strip cotton	(80 in "
" leather hunting	(2 in 1831)
Shawls, Mexican	(4 in 1831)
" red cashmere	(1 in 1831)
" cotton	(1831)
" scarlet damask	(1 large in 1834)
Sashes, Iroquois	(9 in 1831)
" silk	(6 in 1831)
Shoes, children	(3 pr, 1831)
" women	(6 pr, " )
" men	(4 pr, " )
Brogans, men	(16 pr, " )
Boots, fine, men	(9 pr, " )
Brogans, fine	(12 pr, 1832)
Brogans, coarse	(24 pr " )
Fringe, silver	(1831)
Lace "	"
Stars "	"
Tassels "	"
Epaulettes "	"
Lace, gold	(1832)
Fringe "	(1835)
Feathers, black cock	(1831)
" green "	(1832)
" white "	(1832)



Feathers, fox tails	(1831)
" red cock	(1835)
Hat bands, silver	(1832)
Pantaloon, common blue cloth	"
" cassinett	"
" summer	"
" Russia duck	"
" sattine (sateen?)	(50 pr in 1834)
" leather	(1836)
Trousers, Russia duck	(20 pr in 1834)
Vests, bright & lively colors	(1832)
" gray & drab	"
" black bombazine	(12 in 1834)
" Valencia	(6 " )
" Swansdown	(6 " )
" blue & drab & scarlet facings	(4 " )
" black cloth, double breasted	(2 " )
Bonnets, Scotch, woolen	(1832)
Gloves, woolen	"
Mittens "	"
Caps, red woolen	"
Hats, black, (rowm?), men's	(1832)
" " wool "	"
" white " "	"
" Palm leaf	(1846)
" red woolen	(1831)
" Scotch, woolen	"
" red, silk	(36 in 1834)
" black, fur	(90 " )
" " wool	(24 " )
" drab, "	(48 " )
Caps, black, cloth	(12 " )
" fur seal	(1/2 doz, 1838)
" 3-cornered	(3 " " )
Capotes, blue & gray	(13 in 1831)
Coats, superfine, blue, frock	(4 " )
" scarlet, chiefs	(47 " )
" blue "	(18 " )
" blue, chiefs, common	(4 " )
" green, French	(2 in 1834)
" blue "	" "
" brown "	" "
" drab	" "
Roundabouts, blue, cloth	(26 in 1831)
" cordaroi (corduroy?)	(2 " )
" summer	(12 in 1834)
Scarlet gartering	(3 gross " )
Highland "	(3/4 " " )
Colored "	(3-1/4" " )
Buttons, orange, gilt, vest	(11/12" " )

Buttons, plated, gilt, vest	(2 gross in 1834)
" orange, coat	(40 " " )
" white bone, suspender	(12 " " )
" eagle	(3 " " )
Hooks and eyes	(6 boxes, 1838)
Leather belts	(1834)

### Household Furniture, Kitchen Equipment, Etc.

"As our tin smith will now be able to furnish the river with tin kettles please inform us the quantity of each size acquired for your post & its dependencies." -- 1835

Candlewick	(2-1/2 lbs, 1834)
Table covers, green & scarlet	(1834)
Table cloth, \$5.00	(1 of them, 1832)
" " \$4.00	(1 " " )
Spoons, table	(3 doz., 1834)
" " iron	(1831)
" " 5¢ ea.	(4 " 1845)
" tea	(3 doz., 1834)
" "	(9 " 1832)
" " 3¢ ea.	(3 " 1845)
Trunks, seal skin	(4 nests, 1834)
" morocco leather, red	(2 in 1831)
Skillets with lids	(6 in 1834)
" \$1.50	(1 in 1845)
Kettles, Japanned, strong	(18 nests in 1834)
" open brass	(47 in 1834)
" tea, tin 1 gal.	(3 in 1831)
" tin 2 gal. 50¢	(1 in 1845)
Plates, blue-edged, earthen	(4 doz. in 1831)
" tin	(1831)
" " 37¢ ea.	(5 in 1832)
" pewter	(15 in 1832)
Nutmeg grater, tin	(1831)
Lanterns, tin	"
Bowls, breakfast	(2 doz. in 1831)
Scissors, several sizes	(1831)
Candle molds, tin	"
Coffee boilers, tin	"
Coffee pots, 1-1/4 gal., 1 gal., 3/4 gal.	"
Pitchers, tin	"
Funnels, tin	"
Funnel, large	(1 in 1851)
Funnel for molasses	(1 in 1851)
Cups, tin 10¢ ea.	(1831)(1832)
Cups and saucers \$1 for 17	(1832)

Mugs 25¢ for 2	(1832)
Small cup 6-1/4¢	(8 in 1845)
Measurers, tin, 1 qt., 1 pt., 1/2 pt.	(1831)
Pans, tin, #1, #2, #3, & #4	(1831 & 1832)
Pan, frying 75¢	(1832)
Pan, for molasses	(1851)
Lanterns, tin	(1831)
Candlesticks, brass \$2 a pr.	(1832)
" " \$1 a pr.	( " )
Candlesticks, 25¢ ea. & 37-1/2¢ ea.	(1845)
Brass cocks 75¢ ea.	(2 in 1832)
Ovens \$4.50 for 3	(3 in 1832)
Boxes, tin, 25¢ ea.	(3 in 1832)
28 knives & 20 forks, 10¢ ea.	(1845)
9 knives & 27 forks, total \$.50	(1832)
Basin, pewter, 50¢ ea.	(3 in 1832)
Pots, tea, 50¢ ea.	(1 in 1832)
Pot, cream, 37-1/2¢	(1 in 1845)
Pot, tea, 50¢	(1 " " )
Jugs, \$1 ea.	(2 in 1832)
Irons, flat \$1 ea.	(2 in 1832)
Spoons, new plated	(10 in 1832)
Watering pots	(2 in 1845)
Dish, large earthen 50¢	(1 " " )
Tin waiter 75¢	" "
Com.ss soup tureen & ladle \$4	" "
Large S.I. Camp kettles	(3 in 1845)
Pepper boxes, 25¢ ea.	(2 " )
Grid iron \$1	(1 in 1845)
Cleaver 25¢	" "
Skimmer 25¢	" "
Meat saw 37-1/2¢	" "
Candle molds, 6-1/4¢	(25 in 1845)
Wash tubs, \$1 ea.	(2 " )
Coffee mill 75¢	(1 " )
Roaster, tin \$2.50	(1 " )
Dinner plates 20¢ ea.	(20 " )
Soup plates 20¢ ea.	(20 " )
Saucers 10¢ ea.	(13 " )
Plate heaters 50¢ ea.	(3 in 1845)
Oval tin dishes 30¢	(5 " )
Sugar bowl 50¢	(1 " )
Salt cellars 25¢	(2 " )
Tin castor \$1	(1 " )
Dipper, for molasses	(1851)
Knife, for molasses	"
Ice cream churn \$1	(1 in 1851)
Graters 12-1/2¢ ea.	(2 " )
Flesh fork 12-1/2¢	(1851)



Hand bells (for dining room?) 37-1/2¢ ea.	(2 in 1851)
Sausage stuffers 75¢ ea.	(2 in 1851)
6 boxes tin plate	(1834)
Pewter measures, 1/2 gill, gill, 1/2 pt., pt., qt., 4 of each	(1832)
Kettles, 96 brass & 75 copper	(1831)
Kettles, English Camp, 6 in a nest	"
Chest, wooden	"
Stove, iron, with pipe	(1832; and worth \$20, 1845)
" small, cast, with pipe	(1851)
" cooking " " "	"
" large sheet iron "	"
" small " " "	"
Cast ovens	(4 in 1851)
Chairs, painted, 8 of them worth \$6.75	(1832)
Chairs, arm \$1.50 ea.	(2 in 1845)
Chairs, Windsor \$1.25 ea.	(16 " )
Mattresses 2 for \$5	(2 in 1832)
" \$4 ea.	(2 in 1845)
Gridirons	(2 in 1832)
Basins, pewter	(3 in 1832)
Snuff boxes	--
Bell, 1 large fort bell \$20	(1845)
Clarinet, Brass, Key C	(1845)
Drum, military	"
Violins, no pegs, no strings	(2 in 1845)
Large beam and wooden scales	(1845)
Hydrometer	"
Painted marble slab & mullen	"
Bastion lanterns	(2 in 1845)
Desk, office, large \$5.50	(1845)
Desk, small \$2.50	"
Desk, tin, writing \$2	"
Desk, cloth covered \$5.50	(1851)
Desk, small \$2	"
Post Office, Tin \$2	"
Tables, dining \$7.50 ea.	(2 in 1845)
Table, round \$5	(1845)
" small \$2.50	"
Table, half-round \$2	"
Table, mess \$3.50	"
Tables, common, small \$1.50 ea.	(4 in 1845)
Tables, kitchen \$2 ea.	(2 in 1845)
Sofas & mattresses \$7 ea.	"
Sofa, cloth covered & padded, new \$20	(1 in 1851)
Map of U.S.A., \$10	(1845)
Andirons, 75¢ a pr.	(6 pr. in 1845)
Tongs \$1 a pr.	(4 pr. " )
Shovels, tin 50¢ ea.	(3 in 1845)
Maple wash stand \$5	(1845)

Common wash stands \$1.50 ea.	(2 in 1845)
Turned wash stand \$2	(1851)
Cupboard, small \$6	(1845)
" walnut \$10	"
" kitchen \$5	"
" pine \$6	(1851)
" san'd	(2 in 1851)
Bureau \$21 (maple)	(1845)
Bedstead, turned & damask hangings \$26	"
" turned with hangings \$15 ea.	(2 in 1851)
" common	(1851)
Snuffey 25¢ ea.	(3 pr. in 1845)
Pitchers, tin 30¢ ea.	(4 " )
Tobacco cutter \$1	(1845)
" receiver \$1	(1851)
Looking glass \$1.50	(1845)
Pier glass \$3	(1851)
Basin 30¢	(1845)
Bookcase \$2	(1845)
Sconces	(1/2 doz. in 1851)
Brittania pitcher 50¢	(1851)
Chairs \$1 ea.	(4 in 1851)
Chairs 75¢ ea.	(17 in " )
Arm chair \$1.50	(1 in " )
Pine & maple sideboard, new, \$20	(1851)
Large landscape oil paintings \$10 ea.	(4 in 1851)
Demi John	(1845)
2 stone jugs	"
1 cloth broom 25¢	(1846)
1 clothes brush 30¢	"
1 doz. Windsor chairs (\$13.72)	(1833)
6 iron Dutch ovens "usual size"	(1832)
Fort Bell same size as one on the <u>Yellow Stone</u>	"

### Blankets, Cloth, Handkerchiefs, Etc.

"Keep a tight hand on your English goods such as Blkts  
cloth guns and all other Costly articles." -- 1845

"Woolen goods of coarse fabric such as blue and red strouds,  
Blankets etc. constitute the principal and most costly articles --  
they are almost exclusively of English manufacture, and tho'  
coarse, are good." -- William Gordon

"In this important article we have to contend with the cheap

Blankets of the Hudson's Bay Co. quality should therefore be carefully looked to." -- 1832

"Scarlet cloth of this year is the most inferior ever brought to U. Missouri." -- 1832

"handkfs generally rec d have been so diminutive as be useless & unsaleable." -- 1832

"the mountain men buy shawls to ornament their Indian saddles with the border."

Blankets, sky blue	(1835)
" scarlet, 2-1/2 pt., 3 pt.	(1834)
" dark blue, 3 pt.	"
" blue, 3, 3-1/2, & 4 pt.	(1832)
" green, 3, 3-1/2, & 4 pt.	(1834)
" white, scarlet bars, 3 & 3-1/2 pt.	"
" " 2-1/2, 3, 3-1/2, & 4 pt.	"
" " 1-1/2 & 1 pt.	"
" Hudson's Bay, 2-1/2 & 3-1/2 pt.	"
" scarlet, Danig, 1-1/2 pt.	(1831)
" common, 3-1/2 pt.	(1834)
Cloth, saved list blue	(1834, 1846)
" "	"
Fancy lists	"
Saved list, scarlet	"
" " green	"
White molton (mutton?)	"
Salempores	"
Scarlet flannel	"
White flannel	"
Pink checks	"
Blue checks	"
Domestic plaids	"
Russia diaper	"
Tartan plaid	"
Scarlet saved list	(1832)
Blue "	"
Superfine "	"
Blue cassinett	"
Super scarlet cloth	"
Indigo blue stroud	(1846)
Scarlet stroud	(1834)
Blue "	(1831)
Red "	"



Gray stroud	(1831)
Bleached "	(1846)
5 pieces blue Sattinel	"
5 " Sailampon calico [Salempore?]	"
30 " fancy calico	"
Apron check	"
Scarlet cloth	(1831)
Superfine blue	"
Superfine mixed	"
Green Lav O List	"
Blue lattinithe	"
Green baise	"
Blue cloth	(3 bar, 1834)
Green "	(1834)
fancy calico	(1831)
bleached shirting cotton	"
Duck	"
India plaid cotton	"
Handkerchiefs, black silk	(1834)
" silk flag	"
" bandana	"
" blue romal	"
" " bandana	"
" Madrass	"
" crimson or scarlet ground	(1832)
" Madrass cotton for neck	"
" Turkey red for neck	"
" fig'd silk	(1846)
" Bernagow	(1831)
" blue & yellow silk	"
" purple	"
Bandana, Moia, 32 inches square	(1832)
Flag, Moia " " "	"
Shawls, cotton	(1831)
" Paisley	"
Shawls -- "bright colors, rich borders, a few plain grounds, remainder handsome pattern"	(1832)
Ribbon, No. 3, 4, & 6	(1834)
Tapes, 2 doz.	"

### Beads

"No other kind of Beads then those now ordered can be traded with the Indians of this district, strict attention is therefore requested." -- 1832

"Fancy beads are for the whites or half-breeds." -- 1832

"I have this moment received an Express from Fort Union by which it appears that the Bead supply to that place as white are all Blue. This is a serious mistake as to its effect upon the trade." -- 1849

green glass, Sample #21	(1832)
amber glass " "	"
75 bunches fancy painted, No. 45	(1834)
109 " " " " 55	"
54 " " " " 60	"
60 " " " " 70	"
40 " " " " --	"
20 " " " " --	"
43 bunches cut glass beads	"
assorted colors cut glass	(1832)
wampum hair pipe	"
wampum shells	"
120 bunches barley corn #4	(1831)
3/4 " " " #18	"
50 " agate beads #4	"
120 lbs red beads	(1834)
red glass beads, Sample #21	(1832)
red pound beads, Sample #22	"
10 bunches red barley corn	(1831)
300 lbs black beads	(1834)
336 lbs blue pound beads	(1832, 1834, 1835)
116 doz. blue cut glass beads	(1834)
blue glass beads, Sample #21	(1832)
round blue agate, #24	"
blue oblong	"
blue garnishing beads	(1846)
1/2 bunch blue necklace	(1831)
8 " blue round agate	"
608 pounds white pound beads	(1834)
chalk white beads	(1835)
10 lbs smallest chalk white pound	(1836)
white pigeon egg, 4 lbs	(1831)
round chalk white #23	(1832)
white barley corn #25 & #26	"
16 lbs white shells	(1831)
black/red barley corn	(1835)
yellow/ruby	"
blue pigeon eggs	(1832)
scarlet "mk" garnett	"

Ornaments, Games, Library, Personal Items

"Return what books you have read by first safe convenience."

-- 1834

"Be so good as to have sent up the spy glass . . . and the  
Clarinet for Fort Union with a few reeds." -- 1849

"Can 15 or 20 Silver Astor medals be struck, and sent to me,  
the size and thickness of Government medals would be most approved."

1833

"the medals . . . are in the hands of the die-sinker, who I  
hope will give us a good likeness de notre estimable Grand-papa."

I wrote to Washington about them, and the War office made no ob-  
jection to our having these ornaments made. Remember they are  
ornaments!! not medals."

Crooks

"For Mr. McKenzies coat of mail I have sent to England, for  
nothing of that sort is to be found here. His fusil a six coups  
is ordered from Rochester."

1832

- 10 doz. playing cards
- 20 doz. boxwood combs
- 8 " Ivory combs
- 2 " Tuck "
- 95 " Britannia looking glasses
- 200 lb. rough house bells
- 20 gross clay pipes
- 6 cases vermillion (Chinese)
- 5-1/2 doz. looking glasses in cases
- 1 pr. spectacles
- 20 silver medals, total \$281.63
- fine tooth combs
- dressng case combs
- crambo combs
- goggles
- finger rings
- painters brushes
- Soap
- Shaving soap
- Razors
- Shaving boxes with glass
- Shaving brushes
- Tobacco, Cavendish 1 lb. plugs (Kipp's favorite)
- Tobacco, North West Twist

(1834)

(1835)

(1832)



Tobacco, Regular Trade	(1832)
Book, <u>Conversations on Chemistry</u>	"
" <u>Boys Everyday Book</u>	"
" <u>Conversations on Natural Philosophy</u>	"
" of instructions on mixing colors for dyeing	"
Gorgetts, silver	"
1 box fireworks--rockets, wheels, flower pots	"
Roman candles, jack-in-the-box, etc.	
37 beaded bags	(1833)
Magic Lantern (total value \$50)	(1833, 1845)
Magic Lantern slides (2 worth \$5)	" "
2 doz. wine glasses	(1833)
1 thermometer & 1 hydrometer	"
Hawk bells	(1831)
House bells	"
Sleigh bells	"
French snuff boxes	"
Brass pocket compasses	"
Silver hat crowns	"
Arm bands, silver, 1st & 2d sizes	"
Wrist bands, silver, " " "	"
Verdigris (34 lbs)	"
25 lbs brass wire	"
27 lbs worsted yarn	"
1 Mariner compass	(1845)
Tin speaking trumpet	"
1 Electrical machine \$19	"
7 tiger skin arrow quivers	"
2 cut glass decanters \$2.75 ea.	(1846)
1 ornamental painting 50¢	"
84 gross plain finger rings	(1834)
8 " stoned " "	(1834)
20 Indian medals representing J. J. Astor on one side and peace and friendship on the reverse, weighing 3-7/10 oz. of fine silver Total value \$228.60	(1835)
1 lb. pounded zinc or amalgum for electrifying machine	(1832)
2 military drums	"
2 tin coachman's horns	"
Ornamental pockamoggans (?), painted wood, brass nails tastefully arranged	(1832)
2 brass mounted spy glasses with shades	(1831)

Transportation, Livestock, Horse Furniture

"Harris and I went across the river on a ferry flat, taking  
with us a cart and a most excellent mule."  
-- Audubon

"Mr. Denig has indulged a new fancy: Three splendid wolfhounds, in new harness with bells, hitched to a cariole! This one-seated sled I am now to give a coat of paint; the last supply of oil at the fort is to be lavished on it."

-- Kurz

Tinned iron stirrup irons	(1834)
6 doz. surcingle buckets	"
1 " double ? plated ? bridles	"
1 " common snaffle bridles	"
4 " stirrup leathers	"
horse shoes	(1830)
blk stirrup halters & buckles	(1832)
red " " "	"
iron stirrups	"
plated spurs & leathers	"
hemp girthing	"
woolen "	"
6 American saddles	(1831)
2 sets single-horse harness "plain black leather, plated mounting, strong & good, gay & even gaudy, fit for sleigh or carry-all, reins etc. complete."	
1 sorrel horse	(1831)
1 bay horse	"
6 Indian horses	"
1 bull	"
4 Fall Back saddles	(1831)
5 pr. stirrups	"
4 super Bridles & martingales	"
5 common bridles curb	"
15 pr. saddle bags	"
3 woolen girths	"
4 cotton "	"
2-1/4 doz. painted belts	"
2 " black "	"
2 pr. cart wheels	"
34 mules	(1832)
30 horses	"
1 American pony	"
1 bay horse -- Chouteau's	"
1 dark bay	"
1 bay	"
1 roan	"
1 bull	"
1 ox	"
2 goats	"
1 boar	"
1 sow	"
1 iron anchor & chain cable	(1845)
10 boat poles, ironed	"

5 pole sockets	(1845)
1 boat hook	"
1 keel camboose & kettles	"
1 super Spanish riding saddle	"
2 super American Bk. Seath saddles	"
1 American fair saddle	"
19 common Sp. riding saddles	"
38 Am. pack saddles	"
16 pack saddle trus (?)	"
3 sets leather wagon harness	"
3 " double cart "	"
1 " single " "	"
4 " " ox "	"
29 dog collars & harness	"
2 Indian saddle cushions	"
4 snaffle bit riding bridles	"
1 old Dearborn	"
1 truck cart, ironed	"
1 ox cart "	"
3 horse carts "	"
5 pr. iron tires for wheels	"
5 ? cart bodies	"
1 wheel barrel	"
2 ox yokes	"
1 flat boat \$15	"
1 skiff \$5	"
1 tombreau, shafts & axle	(1846)
1 one-horse sleigh	"
2 wooden sleds	"
4 pr. snow shoes	(1851)
4 sets Am. leather harness for wagon	"
4 double cart harness complete	"
1 set buggy harness	"
2 bull harness	"
3 sets dog harness	"
1 halter	"
1 old Am. saddle	"
23 pack saddles	"
4 Sp. riding saddles	"
43 old pack saddles	"
8 Sp. saddle trees	"
2 bear skins saddle covers	"
5 single carts, iron tire	"
1 truck " " "	"
1 hay " " "	"
3 ox " " "	"
4 pr. cart wheels	"
2 hay cart bodies	"
1 old Dearbourne, repaired	"
1 buggy complete with 2 bodies	"



1 four-horse wagon F. P[ierre]	(1851)
1 " " " F. U.	"
4 ox-yokes	"
1 wheel barrow	"
2 ox sleds	"
4 horse sleds	"
4 dog trains	"
1 scow	"
1 skiff	"
1 covered Mackinaw boat	"
4 mules \$40 ea.	"
4 Indian horses \$25 ea.	"
3 train dogs \$5 ea.	"
7 working oxen \$25 ea.	"
1 black bull \$25	"
1 red stag bull \$25	"
2 large young cut bulls \$25 ea.	"
11 milch cows \$25 ea.	"
4 heifers \$15 ea.	"
3 two-yr. old bull calves \$15 ea	"
6 one-yr. " calves \$10 ea.	"
7 small calves \$5 ea	"
4 hogs \$5 ea.	"
2 pigs \$1.50 ea.	"
1 mackinac boat \$50	"
3 iron axle trees	(1833)
17 Indian horses, \$25 ea.	(1845)
16 Mules \$40 ea.	"
18 milch cows \$25 ea.	"
1 heifer \$20	"
4 oxen \$25	"
1 bull \$25	"
3 2-1/2-yr-old steers \$20 ea.	"
1 2-1/2-yr-old bull \$20	(1845)
8 calves \$5 ea.	"
13 large hogs \$5 ea.	"
1 flatboat \$15	"
1 skiff \$5	"

#### Hardware, Construction Materials

The round- and square-headed axes "are for Indian women and if they have any but good axes their whole time is consumed in getting wood and consequently very few robes are pressed." -- 1832

"3 large locks for Fort gates on principle of those used in Iron chests or prison doors having at least three bolts & placed

far asunder."

-- 1832

Brass cocks	(1834)
1 doz. stock locks	"
1 doz. spring padlocks	"
50 " bright oval fire steels	"
8 " needles	"
20 doz. brass nails	"
1 " fish hooks	"
thimbles	"
30 gross flat bastard files, ass't'd.	"
1 " rat tailed files	"
1 " square "	"
5-2/3 gross half-round files	"
10 gross handsaw "	"
36 " pitsaw "	"
3 " crosscut "	"
2 " rasps	"
1 screw plate 2x4	"
1/4 doz. mouse traps	"
" " cork screws	"
75 lbs. brass wire	"
139 " iron "	"
75 " small iron wire	"
1 doz. quart (jars?)	"
12 " pint "	"
299 lbs. sheet iron	"
38 lbs. solder	"
6 AA rivets	"
1 doz. grass scyths	"
163 lbs brazier's copper in sheets	"
4 kegs 12d wrought nails	"
2 " 24d " "	"
1 " 14d " "	"
23 bars Swedish iron	"
25 bars ? iron	"
80 bars rolled iron	"
1 bar 3"-square iron	"
5 bundles hoop iron	"
6 iron rods	"
3 faggots (Cromly?) steel	"
100 beaver trap springs	"
50 beaver traps	"
10,714 lbs. pig lead	"
2 boxes window glass	(1837)
200 ft. fine walnut plank	(1832)
100 " " cherry "	"
1 keg shingle nails	"
round head axes	
square " "	

24" yellow rough-grain grindstones	(1832)
24" grey stone	"
English Crawley steel	"
Blistered steel	"
rod iron -- "to make rat spears"	"
1-blade & 2-blade knives, Roger	"
green handled spear point 8" blade knives	"
padlocks, Chub's patent	"
wrought nails, 3-1/2", 2"	"
cut nails, 2-1/2"	"
wood screws, assorted	"
tacks	"
white chapel needles	"
darning needles	"
sail cloth needles	"
packing needles	"
oakum	"
pitch	"
putty	(1832)
wrought nails, 8d, 12d, & 24d	(1833)
cut nails, 6d, 12d, 16d	"
brass nails	"
small wood screws	"
200 feet Cherry tree plank	"
200 " Walnut " "	"
4-1/2" wrought spikes	"
nail rod iron	"
bar iron, 2 x 1/2, 30' & 60'	(1846)
fire steels	(1831)
fish hooks	"
flat files 8"	"
rasps 12"	"
1/2 round files 14"	"
hand saw files, 4-1/2 & 5"	"
2 half boxes window glass	"
2 doz. Spanish dirk knives	"
5 165 lbs lead	"
9 mowing scyths	(1845)
2 1-horse plows	"
1 harrow	"
1 corn mill	"
1 plumb	"
8 pulley blocks	"
6 oil cans	(1845)
2 funnels	"
1 doz. brass cocks, no keys	"
1 pick	"
2 frows	"
1 grab hook	"
2 old hoes	"



3 pr. iron hobbles	(1845)
1 pr. handcuffs	"
2 log chains	"
400 lb. old cordage	"
500 lbs. old iron	(1851)
3 small grindstones	"
2 padlocks	"
2 iron rakes	"
4 log chains	"
3 caulking irons	"
3 tackle hooks	"
5 padlocks, no keys	"
1 potash kettle	"
1 canteen	"

#### Weapons, Ammunition, Accoutrements

"The German full stock guns you may recollect we bought 60 of at 350 cts ea. the fellow cheated us sending one half to sample the other half rubbish, old half stocked shabby mean things as ever were looked at."

-- McKenzie

"Mr. Sanford has promised to get loan of cannon from ordnance Department. Confer with him thereon."

-- 1832

"I have no N. W. Guns under 10 & sell the German at 6." -- 1834

300 doz. scalping knives, warranted	(1834)
50 doz. Wilson butcher knives	"
50 " green bone-handled knives	"
19 " buck-handled knives	"
6 " pocket knives	"
2 " pen knives	"
9 " gun flints	"
5 " rifle flints	"
12 gross gun worms	"
200 powder horns	"
1 bullet mold	"
5 twist guns	"
5 sham twist guns	"
50 northwest guns 42"	"
160 northwest guns	"
4 rifles, Hawkins	"
100 half bbls. gun powder	(1835)
octagon brass barrel pistol	"
plain iron pistol	"

super twist pistol	(1835)
100 Henry Hickory Ramrods	(1837)
10 lbs. powder \$2.80	(1831)
20 lbs. balls \$1.20	"
1 powder horn 59¢	"
100 3-foot Barnett Guns	(1832)
200 pure white powder horns	"
4 iron cannon	(1833)
ornamented battle axes	(1832)
gun flints	"
rifle "	"
musket "	"
guns, Barnetts best 3' barrel	"
" " " 3-1/2' "	"
" common, lowest possible price	"
Rifles, best N. Y. steel, mounted, large bore,	"
3' barrel, best possible locks	"
4 pieces cannon, 3 pounders & 6 pounders, 2 ea.	"
brass ball molds	"
powder horns, pure white with black tops	"
"Dupont's" powder	"
plain leather shot pouches	"
ornamented red leather shot pouches	"
90 Best NW guns	(1846)
40 Belgian guns	"
percussion caps	"
115 NW guns	(1831)
8 Double Triggered Rifles	"
8 Single " "	"
9 doz. C&M scalping knives	"
123 Assiniboin lances	"
200 lbs. balls	"
2,730 lbs. powder	"
4 plated scabbard swords	"
1 brass cannon, \$60	(1832)
1 iron 4-pounder cannon \$60	"
1 swivel gun \$10	"
Cartridges for cannon \$20	"
1 Fort flag, \$30	"
1 Ensign flag, \$7.50	"
34 cannon balls, 3 lbs. ea.	(1845)
34 lbs. grape shot	"
Sundry fireworks	"
20 English sabers, \$2.25 ea.	"
28 U. S. muskets	"
1 four pounder iron cannon on wheels \$60	(1845)
1 three pounder iron " mounted \$66	"
1 brass swivel gun \$90	"
1 " " " small \$60	"
1 set rammers & sponges	"

1 pr. good ball molds	(1845)
1 buckshot mold	"
6 pr. old ball molds	"
4 bows	"
1 Indian bow & 20 arrows	"
1 4-lb. mounted cannon, complete	(1831)
1 swivel	"
cartridges	"

### Office Supplies

"Some quills ret d herewith (part of this years supply) cannot be coaxed to write. Could they speak, they would tell a piteous tale of their companions' condition." -- 1832

1-3/4 gross best quills	(1834)
1 ream foolscap paper	"
1 " letter "	"
1/2 quire blotting "	"
6 one quire blank books	"
1 doz. 1/2 quire blank books	"
lead pencils	"
slate pencils	"
1/2 lb. sealing wax	"
good steel pens	(1846)
red sealing wax	"
ruled blank journal	"
ink powder	(1831)
cork ink stands	"

### Alcohol

"Wine I would send with pleasure, but it would freeze, lose its virtues, & be valueless." McKenzie

25-3/4 gal. brandy	(1838)
5 gal. shrub	"
11 gal. port wine	"
1 bbl cognac brandy	"
2 qtr-casks port wine	"
5 gal. whiskey \$3.90	(1831)
2 gal. alcohol \$1.78	"

"I will trade wine for robes in any quantity." -- Hamilton, 1834



30 barrells strongest alcohol	(1832)
5 " old Monaghahela whiskey [sic]	"
1 " brandy	"
1 " Jamaica rum	"
2 " N.O. rum	"
4 " Shrub	"
1/4 cask rich port wine	"
15 gal. "London particular" Madeira	"
12-1/2 bbls alcohol	(1831)
2 casks brandy	"
3 bbls & 2 kegs whiskey	"
2 kegs port wine	"
39 barrels (1,432 gal.) alcohol	(1833)
2 barrels old whiskey (75.5 gal.)	"

Blacksmith tools in use, 1831

1 pr. bellows \$20.  
 1 silver smith's bellows \$8.  
 2 anvils \$14.  
 1 anvil \$4.  
 3 vices \$16.  
 1 sledge hammer & 6 small hammers \$5.75  
 6 pr. tongs  
 2 fire tools  
 2 screw plates  
 4 axe [ ? ]  
 3 tomahawks  
 4 heading tools  
 4 pinchers  
 5 chissels [sic]  
 3 hammers  
 1 pr. pinchers  
 1 botter [?]  
 1 rasp  
 1 shoe crest and punch  
 9 files  
 3 [ ? ] sinks  
 1 iron drill  
 1 tug pin  
 1 hand vice  
 1 bucket  
 13 pr. horse shoes  
 5 old axes  
 1 lampress cutter  
 7 trap springs  
 5 broken guns  
 8 screw drivers & drill  
 45 lbs steel  
 old iron

1 case hardening box  
5 iron saws  
1 spade  
1 press [ ? ]  
2 rakes  
2 stone hammers  
1 branding iron

Total value of blacksmith's equipment: \$124.58

Carpenter tools, 1831

3 handsaws  
1 X cut saw  
1 old pit saw  
2 smoothing planes  
3 grooving planes  
1 long plane  
4 plane[s?] iron[s?]  
2 jack planes  
8 bead planes  
1 keg grooving plane  
3 gages  
3 squares  
8 chissels  
4 gouges  
3 files  
1 oil stone  
4 augers  
2 axes

Total value of Carpenter's tools: \$16.12

Cooper tools, 1831

1 grooving tool  
1 dog tool  
1 round saw  
3 drawing [knives?]  
1 tapborer  
1 gimlet  
3 files  
1 frow  
1 hammer  
1 hoop driver  
1 stave joiner  
1 compass  
1 wooden horse  
1 long plane & acc.  
11 iron hoop moulds

Total value of Cooper's tools: \$26.49

Dairy, 1845

1 strainer .30  
1 churn 2.00  
48 milk pans .30 ea.  
2 kettles .50 ea.  
3 cheese moulds .37-1/2 ea.  
1 butcher knife .25

Mason's Tools, 1845

1 set Masons & Miners tools

Timmans Tools, 1845

1 set Timmans Tools Complete

Blacksmith's Tools, 1845

1 large bellows 15.00  
1 anvil 12.50  
1 bench vice 5.00  
1 sledge hammer 2.50  
6 hammers .75 ea.  
11 pr. tongs .50 ea.  
12 heading tools .25 ea.  
7 driving & punching hammers .50 ea.  
22 gun sock [sic] tools .50 ea.  
16 punches .25 ea.  
2 horse stamps 2.00 ea.  
1 horse stamp AMF 3.00  
1 large double hand rasp 1.50  
4 large screw plates with taps & dies 2.50 ea.  
2 smaller " " " " " "  
3 wrenches .62-1/2 ea.  
1 iron brace & bitts 3.00  
1 drill bow, plate, & drill 1.50  
1 compass wheel .75  
1 saw set .25  
3 [chains?] .25 ea.  
1 saw stock 1.75  
3 hand vices .50 ea.  
1 pr. pincers .50  
14 files .06-1/4 ea.  
3 chisels .10 ea.  
1 shovel poker & scraper 1.00  
1 wheel tool 1.00  
1 pr. large iron shears 1.00  
1 pr. Clams .50



1 butress .75  
8 draw bores & ranrod bitts .50 ea.  
1 iron bound water bucket .50  
1 ox sling & chains 2.00  
2 old kettles .25 ea.  
11 pr. ox & horse shoes .50 pr.

Coopers Tools, 1845

1 handsaw 1.00  
1 frame saw 1.00  
1 tap bour .15 [sic]  
2 iron hoop drivers .12-1/2 ea.  
1 grooving tool .50  
1 rasp .12-1/2  
2 crooked drawing knives .75 ea.  
2 drawing knives .50  
1 pr. compasses .37-1/2  
1 coopers hammer .50  
2 Am. half axes .50 ea.  
1 doz [left blank] .25 ea.  
1 frow .37-1/2  
2 funnels .12-1/2  
8 sets moulds .50 ea.  
1 coopers anvil 1.50  
1 coopers joiner plane 3.00

Carpenter's Tools, 1845

1 turning & polishing machine with stones etc. 40.00  
2 broad axes 2.00 ea.  
1 hand axe 1.00  
2 chopping axes 1.00 ea.  
3 jack planes 1.30 ea.  
3 fou [sic] planes 1.50 ea.  
2 smoothing planes .75 ea.  
2 sets plough & grooving planes 1.00 ea.  
1 pat plough plane 5.00  
1 beading plane .50  
16 moulding planes .50 ea.  
1 spoke shave .50  
4 single gages .12-1/2 ea.  
1 double gage .50  
1 drawing knife .75  
3 handsaws 1.00 ea.  
1 tenant saw 1.00  
1 foot adze 1.50  
3 round adzes .75 ea.  
1 pr. compasses .50  
35 chissels & gauges .16 ea.

12 turning chissels & gauges .16 ea.  
 1 wheel gauge .50  
 2 rasps .12-1/2  
 8 caulkg irons .25  
 1 iron square .33  
 1 trying square .25  
 1 brace & bits 3.00  
 2 Am half axes .37-1/2  
 1 nail wrench .50  
 1 cramping iron 1.00  
 2 cross cut saws 3.00 ea.  
 1 frow .37-1/2  
 28 qrts augurs .10 ea.  
 2 grind stones 2.00  
 1 spade .50  
 1 large kettle .75  
 1 oil stone .25  
 1 pr. cart wheels, no tire 3.00  
 3 dog trains 1.50 ea.

Tailor's Tools, 1846

1 pr. shears 1.50  
 1 goose .75  
 1 lapboard .25  
 1 work bench 1.00

Tools. (In addition to the above craftsmen's tools.)

1/2 doz. claw hammers	(1834)
emory paper	"
1 Smith's bellows \$17.59	(1833)
1 anvil 97 lbs \$14.22-1/2	"
1 vice 30-1/2 lbs \$5.36-1/2	"
1 pr. small scales \$6.58	"
1 set Brass weights \$16.45	"
1 large iron beam & weights \$65.17	"
2 pitsaws \$23.52	"
1 crosscut saw \$7.	"
2 handsaws \$5.64	"
1 set teeth instruments & lancets \$7.35	(1834)
Indian awls	(1832)
Hand vices	"
Frame saw	"
Coper's saw	"
Whetting stones	"
Iron rule, 2 feet	"
Iron square	"
Drawing knives	"
Spike gimblets	"

Augurs		
Joiner's tools, 1 set		(1832)
Sash saw		"
Dovetail saw		"
Keyhole "		"
Foot adge		"
Jack plane		"
Fore "		"
Jointer "		"
Smoothing plane		"
Rabbet " 1"		"
Sash "		"
Rabbet " 1/2"		"
Bead " 1/2"		"
Cove & bead " 1/2"		"
" " " 1-1/2"		"
Grooving " 1-3/4"		"
Bead " 1-1/4"		"
" " 1-3/4"		"
Grooving " 1-3/4"		"
" " 1/4"		"
Files, pit saw, cast steel		"
" rat tail		"
" flat 8"		"
" " 10"		"
" " 12"		"
" " 14"		"
Files, bastard		"
" half-round 8", 10", & 12"		"
" polishing 8", 10", & 12"		"
Moving plough		"
1/4 set hollows & rounds		"
Chisels, duck's bill		"
" cast steel		"
Brass bits		"
Hand axe, cast steel		"
Broad axe, " "		"
Iron hinges, 2-1/2"		"
Brass hinges, 1", 1-1/2", & 2"		"
Brass weights, 1/4, 1/2, 1, 2, 4, 8 oz., 1, 2, 4 lb.		"
Cast iron " 10, 20, 50 lbs		"
1 left tooth instrument		(1831)
1/2 doz. lancets		"
1 Nova Scotia grindstone, 145 lbs.		(1845)
1 branding iron		(1851)
1 iron hay fork		"
2 shaving benches		"
2 large double tackle blocks		"
1 " single " "		"



Food

4 chests of H. Tea	(1834)
10 lbs. coffee	"
7 boxes brown Havana sugar	"
2 boxes white " "	"
2 bbls. rice	"
25 bbls. superfine flour	"
4 bbls pilot bread	"
2 bbls. butter crackers	"
4 bbls. peas	"
2 bbl. peaches (dried)	"
4 bbl. apples "	"
2 boxes raisins	"
4 " chocolate	"
2 " prunes	"
150 lbs. black pepper	"
180 lbs. bacon	"
2 kegs butter	"
2 boxes rosin soap	"
7 " " "	"
5 bags ground alum salt	"
30 boxes tobacco	"
1 bbl. molasses	"
green coffee	(1835)
loaf sugar	"
raisins	"
2 bbl. prime bacon hams	(1832)
1 bbl. fresh eggs	"
1 bbl. green apples	"
2 boxes French plums	"
4 lbs. ginger	"
2 lbs. caraway seeds	"
raisins "muscatel"	"
rice	"
Havannah sugar	"
loaf sugar	"
coffee	"
young Hyson tea	"
pepper	"
salt	"
yeast cakes	"
essence of spruce	"
rice	(1846)
cloves	"
allspice	"
mustard	"
15 lbs. chocolate	(1831)
211 " coffee	"

1/4 lb. allspice	(1831)
1/4 " cloves	"
12 gal. honey	"
7 bbls. N.O. sugar	"
27-1/4 lbs. loaf sugar	"
52 lbs. V.M. tea	"

Paints etc.

Shelac	(1837)
Linseed oil	"
Putty	"
Glue	"
Varnish	"
Lamp black	"
White lead in oil	(1832)
Yellow paint in oil	"
Green " " "	"
Blue " " "	"
Turpentine	"
Linseed oil	"
Ivory black	"
100 w chrome yellow	(1833)
2 lbs. Prussian blue	(1831)
4 lbs. red lead	"
Spanish brown	"
Dry white lead	"
3 paint brushes	"

Robes, Furs, Etc.

966 packs Buffalo	(1849)
457 loose "	"
62 packs furs & skins	"
82 bags tongues	"
4 rolls beef hides	"
4 packages castorum	"
150 robes	(1831)
30 elk	"
51 painted parflesches	(1851)
40-1/2 dressed cow (buffalo) skins	"
48 assishimos	"
2 porcupine skins	"
793 lbs. rendered grease	"

Medicines

"Salts, castor oil, & essence of peppermint are our usual specifics and it requires but little skill in administering them:

in cases arising from amatory passions the remedies are equally  
simple." -- 1833

10 kegs epsom salts	(1834)
14 lbs. salt petre	"
6 lbs. flour of sulphur	"
10 lbs. alum	"
2 lbs. borax, refined	"
1 lb. camomile, "	"
1 lb. " flowers	"
6 bottles Bals Cassaira	"
6 " Chapmans musteen	"
3/4 lb. oil peppermint	"
6 doz. Opedildoc & 6 doz. Tulingter	"
6 doz. sees pills	"
2 M Blue pills	"
2-1/4 lbs. blistering ointment	"
1 lb. oil cinnamon - bottle	(1831)
1 lb. oil ambor "	"
14 lb. gum asafoetida	"
5 lb. Basilicon ointment	"
5 " oil peppermint - phial	"
2 oz. gum opium	"
Epsom salts	(1832)
Castor oil	"
Landanum (Laudanum?)	"
Balsam C _____	"
Calomel	(1832)
Camphor	"
Senna	"
Turkey rhubarb	"
Powder of Jalap	"
Tincture of Foxglove	"
Tartar Emetic	"
Blue or mercurial pill	"
Sugar of lead	"
Blue vitriol	"
White "	"
Green copperas	"
Flower sulphur	"
Stone Brimstone	"
Calcium magnesia	"
Linseed meal	"
Spirits Hartshorn	"
Tincture Cautharides	"
Oil peppermint	"
Turlingtons balsam	"
Fryars balsam	"
Sees pills	"
Seidlitz powders	"



Gum arabic	(1832)
Cream tartar	"
Carbonate Soda	"
Stoughtons bitters	"
Good sponge	"
Leeches	"

List of Medicines, March 1833

Epsom Salts  
 White Vitriol  
 Blue Vitriol  
 Sugar Lead  
 Copp---.  
 Gum Arabic  
 Gum Al[oes?]  
 Gum Camphor  
 Carbonate Soda  
 Cream Tartar  
 Ground Ginger  
 Orange Peel  
 [Rad Gentian?]  
 Winter Bark  
 Calomel  
 Burgundy Pitch  
 S \_ ? \_ Sulphur  
 Hanna  
 Sinna  
 Rhubarb  
 Carbonate Magnesia  
 Mace  
 Lint  
 Indian Rubln?  
 Tallap?  
 Zinc digitalis (foxglove)  
 Fnais Balsam  
 Turlingtone  
 Ess. Spruce  
 Oppodeldoc  
 Landanum (Laudanum?)  
 Ink Powder  
 Tooth Brushes  
 Lees Pills  
 Seidlitz Powders  
 Phials (4, 2, 1 oz.)  
 Corks  
 Oil peppermint  
 Tartar Emetic  
 Blue Pills  
 Castor Oil

Balsam Copaine  
 Linseed Oil  
 Hartshorn  
 Tinct. Canthandes  
 Bitters  
 spring lancet  
 salt petre  
 Stone Brimstone  
 mortar & pestle

Miscellaneous

1-1/2 lb. sewing silk	(1834)
1 lb. silk twist	"
12 kegs pitch	"
8 bales oakum	"
19 bales cloths	"
boxes	"
Casks	"
1 coil tarred rope	(1838)
1 " manila "	"
2 doz. blacking cakes	(1832)
"Kirby's" salmon fish hooks	"
fish lines, small size	"
Hay seed	"
1 slate	(1851)
inkstand	"
Toothbrushes	(1832)

Specimens and Zoo.

In 1849 Denig wrote to Culbertson that he was progressing with the animal specimens and had already prepared "the White Wolf, the Beavers, the War Eagle, the Caputi Argali or Antelopes head . . . which will be in order to put into every museum you think proper."<sup>1</sup> This undertaking by Denig was but one instance of Fort Union's long record of interest in and assistance to science. From the beginning, it was a policy of the American Fur Company to give every

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1. Chouteau Coll., Mo. H.S., Folder 1849, Denig to Culbertson, Dec. 1, 1849.

possible aid to scientists, artists, and adventurers. These visitors to the upper Missouri could repay the kindnesses by thinking and writing favorably in their reports to the world. Maximilian, Audubon, and many others received the royal treatment. Denig's furs (see above) became a part of the collection of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington.

Audubon, in 1843, collected petrified wood in the nearby hills, but was not impressed with its quality. The company employees gave him a pair of deer horns and a bow of elk horn. They also brought in both live animals and skins for the Audubon party to paint. As a handsome souvenir, Kipp presented Audubon with "a complete dress of a Blackfoot warrior, ornamented with many tufts of Indian hair from scalps, and also with a saddle."<sup>2</sup>

Another avid collector, with Denig's help, was Rudolph Kurz. His journal describes his acquisitions: a red stone pipe bowl, a large and lustrous black buffalo horn, a necklace made of 30 bear's claws, and a medicine doll. He described the last as "a stuffed doll made of the dressed skin of an animal. It is about 2 feet high and adorned with the usual ornaments children wear, i.e. bracelets, and necklace of 'dove's eggs,' made of blue and white porcelain." A prized possession was a buffalo robe that Denig gave him:

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2. Audubon, 2, 35 and 127.



The hair is as fine as silk, the under side like velvet. Across the middle of it runs a broad band, decorated with beads, porcupine quills, and tiny bells that hang from rosettes. He got it from the crows. Though it is so smooth, I found it impossible to adorn it further with fine drawings, still less with drawings on a large scale.

Kurz mentioned in passing one or two objects of interest about the fort, such as the set of elk horns fastened to a bastion wall. These may have been the same ones "of remarkable size" that Joe Picotte brought in one day. Kurz noted too that "a number of Indian trinkets are displayed in the reception room and there are, besides, a stuffed Rocky Mountain sheep (female bighorn), black-tailed deer, large white owl, prairie hens, and pheasants." One of the Indian "trinkets" that Denig owned was "A military headdress containing 36 eagle feathers."

Fort Union also sported a zoo from time to time. Besides supplying live animals for Pierre Chouteau's zoo in St. Louis, the traders at Union kept a few creatures in captivity. During the time Kurz was there a grizzly and an eagle were "confined behind the powder house." On one occasion the bear broke loose, but was recaptured with lassos. One of the workmen gave Kurz "a real live red fox" for him to paint. The Indians were quite taken by Denig's parrot. They did not understand what he said but were highly amused to see a bird speak in any language.<sup>3</sup>

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3. Kurz, pp. 121, 127, 128, 128n, 145, 153, 209, 245, 257-59, 269, and 315; Sunder, p. 75.

## PART 3

### Individual Historic Structures

During the 39 years of its existence, Fort Union underwent many changes. Some of these developments resulted in quite dramatic changes in appearance, such as the bourgeois' house rising from 1-1/2 to 2 full stories, and the addition of a third story to the southwest bastion. Each known structure is discussed separately below in order to bring together that which has been learned about each. A number is assigned to each structure known to have had a separate identity. Other structures or use-areas about which less is known or which were located away from the fort are also discussed below, but historic structures numbers have not at this time been assigned to them.

#### HS 1, Palisades

Edwin Denig described the palisades as "fronting [the river] 220 feet and running back 240 feet." Other dimensions vary from these but Denig's figures are considered to be the most accurate. He wrote also that the wall was 20 feet high. Other observers would have them lower: Catlin (1832) - 18 feet; Maximilian (1833) - 16-17 feet; Stevens (1853) - 16 feet. The pickets were hewn cottonwood and, according to Sprague (1843), one foot square. In contrast to the palisades of other fur posts, Fort Union's pickets were not buried in the ground; instead, they were founded upon a

stone foundation. This method of construction did not enable the pickets to withstand the fierce winds of the Dakotas. In the fall of 1833 a strong wind knocked down two sides of the fort. To prevent this happening again, McKenzie had substantial reinforcements built inside. Denig described this new construction:

The pickets are fitted into an open framework in the inside, of sufficient strength to counter-balance their weight, and sustained by braces in the form of an X, which reaches from the pickets to the frame, so as to make the whole completely solid and secure, from either storm or attack.

This X-framing may be seen in the illustrations of Kurz (1852) and of the Soldier (1864). Denig also described how the top of this frame, about 15 feet above the ground and 8 feet wide, was boarded so as to make a gallery running around the palisades, "formed of sawed planks nailed to the cross beams from one brace to another. This balcony affords a pleasant walk all around the inside of the fort . . . . It is a favorite place from which to shoot Wolves after nightfall." Audubon asked Larpenteur to call him whenever he happened to see a wolf from this gallery. The walkway cannot be seen clearly, if at all, in the Kurz sketches (1851-52); but it definitely existed in 1864 when the Soldier's sketch showed a guard walking it. The troops laid new flooring that year according to Larpenteur's diary: "Soldiers making a walk on the gallery of the Fort to go from one Bastion to the other on their guards."



Several adventures befell the palisades over the years. In early 1832, a disastrous fire destroyed most of the west wall. McKenzie wrote that at least 170 new pickets had to be cut and shaped but that he had the damage to the wall repaired within five days. Besides the wind damage in 1833 (above), Kurz (1851-52) noted that the west wall blew down again "where the supports were badly decayed." In 1865, someone (Sioux were suspected) set fire to the outside of the walls. However, the fort's occupants quickly put out the blaze. These disasters required immediate repairs of course, but the pickets and their foundations also required constant maintenance over the years. Larpenteur's 1835 diary noted "Holmes painting the under pinning of the sills around the outside of the Fort." Thirty years later, his diary stated that he "straightened a place in the east side of the Fort."

Generally, the various sketches agree on the appearance of the palisades. None show the chevaux-de-frise that Maximilian (1833) said existed. Nearly all of them show horizontal planks tying the pickets at both the top and the bottom of the walls. The most detailed drawings are the two Hays (1860). Here one sees that the western half of the south wall is divided into 8 panels. While these possibly were for added strength, the written documents do not mention them. A horizontal plank on the west wall most likely is emergency stabilization. A similar condition is found in the Corbett photograph (1866) of the north wall. The Hays sketches also show a series of dark markings on the west wall.

These are not otherwise identified but may be the ends of cross-beams used for reinforcement or something similar; detail of the same nature appears on the south wall of the unknown-artist sketch that shows the U.S. wagon. More puzzling is the meaning of the extreme western portion of the south wall, between the panels and the bastion in this drawing. No suggestions come to mind to help explain this.

## HS 2 Southwest Bastion

Catlin's 1832 sketch shows, rather indistinctly, this bastion. In his narrative he told of using one of the bastions as a studio; other than saying it had an artillery piece in it, he did not make clear which of the two he used. Maximilian, one year later, suggested that both bastions, or blockhouses, were completed, "with pointed roofs, two stories high, with embrasures and some cannon, which, though small, are fit for service." Bodmer's sketch, done at the same time, shows only the tip of the roof; this gives the impression of its being finished.

It is somewhat surprising then to read the reports of Acting-Bourgeois Hamilton in 1834-35; Sept. 17, 1834: "One bastion is roofed & shingled & pointed, the other built up as high as the pickets." Oct. 9, 1834: "Miller has finished the bastions & starts to day for St. Louis." Mar. 9, 1835: "The Bastions are completed with the exception of laying down the floors but the planks are all tongue and grooved. Lancier was employed untill Christmas in finishing the attics." There are two possible explanations for this seeming contradiction. Either Maximilian and Bodmer were reporting the fort as it would appear when finished and not as it was when they were present, or, in 1834-35, stone bastions replaced earlier wooden ones.

Denig (1843) gave his usual good description of the bastions:

built entirely out of stone, and measuring 24 feet square, over 30 feet high, and the walls three feet



thick; this is whitewashed. Around the top of the second stories [at the roof line] are balconies with railings, which serve for observations, and from the tops of the roofs are two flag-staffs 25 feet high, on which wave the proud Eagle of America. Two weathercocks, one a Buffalo bull, the other an Eagle complete the outsides.

Although Sprague's sketches (1843) show the two tall staffs mentioned by Denig, the earlier Bodmer sketch (1833) and all later sketches show the roof-top ornaments to be relatively short. The balcony was reached through a dormer (door or window?) on the east side of the hip roof. These galleries were completed as early as August 1835, for Larpenteur noted while "promenading on the galleries of the Bastions we saw six Indians." Kurz' and Point's sketches show the buffalo weather vane as being on the northeast bastion, thus one may presume the eagle was affixed to the top of the southwest bastion. Also, several sketches show the cardinal points of the compass mounted below the buffalo and these were probably mounted below the eagle as well. Indeed, a few later sketches confirm that something was mounted on the southwest staff.

Besides their defensive functions, the bastions served other purposes. Catlin used one as a studio. In 1835 they served as temporary storehouses while the new range of stores was being constructed (Larpenteur). Two years later, Larpenteur noted that a stock of iron was stored in the southwest bastion and that bales of blankets were moved from it to the warehouse.

When Kurz arrived at Fort Union in 1851, he noted that the stone bastions were painted white. Two years later, Stanley showed

this blockhouse as still being two stories. However, sometime between 1853 and Wimar's visit in 1858, a third story, of wood, was added. The gallery with its railing remained in place. While we have no written description of this third floor, it appears in all subsequent sketches of the post. Hays' very good 1860 drawings give the best details of this addition. It is to be noted that by then the railing around the gallery had been removed and that it appears in none of the later pictures. The gallery flooring itself remained; the unknown-artist sketch having the U.S. wagon shows a guard standing on it.

One other minor change appeared in the 1866 photograph--a small stovepipe seems to be sticking out of the north side of the roof. This arrangement is reflected by Bolter's 1863 description of living in a bastion: "The quarters assigned to me were in the bastion, which commanded a most extensive and delightful view." He also mentioned stepping out of his room onto the gallery, suggesting he may have lived in this third floor room.

Only one specific mention of the armament of this bastion appears. In 1843, Denig said it had no cannon but had one small swivel.

A particular problem is the number of openings in the various sides of the three floors. There is no written description of this, and the artists were not able to agree in their renditions:

Ground Floor: West side: Point (1847) -- 3 slits

Hays (1860) -- 4 "

South side: Sprague (1843) -- 4 large openings  
               Murray (1845) -- 3       "       "  
               Point (1847) -- 4 slits  
               Hays (1860) -- 4 large openings  
               Soldier (1864) -- 2       "       "  
               Unknown -- 3       "       "  
 East side: Murray (1845) -- 1       "       "  
               Soldier (1864) -- 3 slits  
 Ground Floor: North side: Photo (1866) -- 3 large openings  
 Second Floor: West side: Point (1847) -- 1       "       "  
                               Hays (1860) -- 1       "       ", 3 slits  
                               Unknown -- 1       "       "  
 South side: Sprague (1843) -- 1       "       "  
               Murray (1845) -- 3       "       "  
               Point (1847) -- 1       "       "  
               Stanley (1853) -- 1       "       "  
               Hays (1860) -- 1       "       ", 2 slits  
               Cary (1861) -- 1       "       "  
               Soldier (1864) -- 1 slit  
               Unknown -- 1 large opening  
 East side: Sprague (1843) -- 1       "       "  
               Murray (1845) -- 1       "       "  
               Soldier (1864) -- 1       "       ", 1 slit  
 North side: Photo (1866) -- 1       "       "



Third Floor: West side: Hays (1860) -- 4 large openings

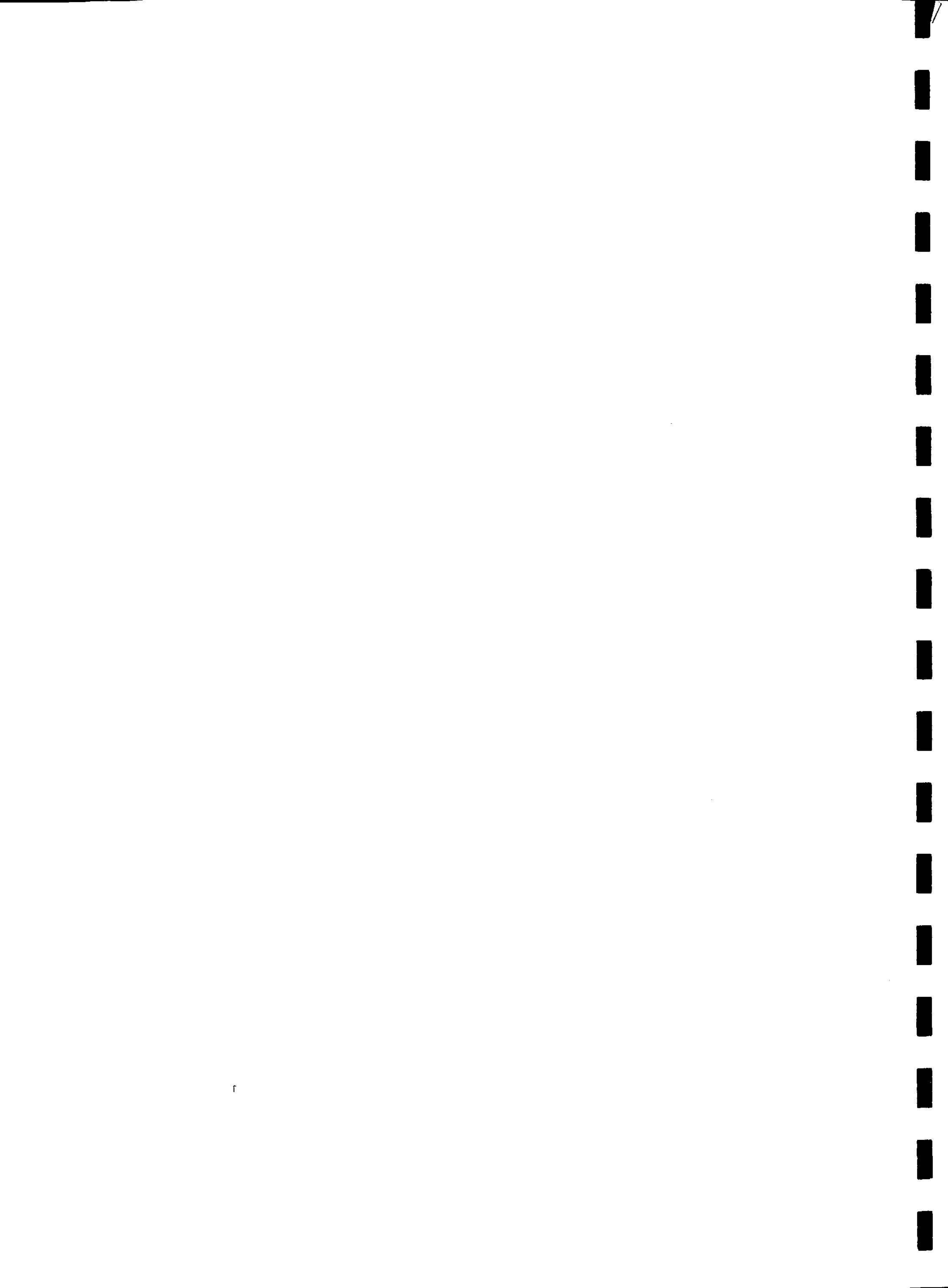
South side: Hays (1860) -- 4 " "

Soldier (1864)-- 2 " "

Unknown -- 5 " "

Third Floor: East side: Soldier (1864)-- 2 " " (?)

North side: Photo (1866) -- 4 " "



### HS 3 Northeast Bastion

The origins of the northeast bastion are identical to the southwest bastion. In 1843, Denig described the two as being the same: 24 feet square, over 30 feet in height, and having 3-foot thick walls. The buffalo weather vane on top has already been noted. This bastion's armament was greater than was the southwest's; Denig (1843) wrote that it had "one three-pounder iron cannon and one brass swivel . . . together with a dozen muskets."

The dormer opening onto its gallery, as shown in several sketches, was on the west slope of the roof, facing into the fort. Although two sketches (unknown artist [U.S. wagon] and the Bedticking) show a third story of wood, the basic structure of this bastion was not altered. The 1866 photograph shows clearly that it was still a 2-story stone structure. Its walls were whitewashed and, like the other's, shingles covered its roof.

The matter of openings in its walls is as much a matter of conjecture, for the most part, as is the southwest's:

Ground Floor: West side: Point (1847) -- 3 slits

Kurz (1852) -- 3 "

South side: Murray (1845)-- 1 large opening

Soldier (1864)- 3 " "

East side: Murray (1845)-- 3 " "

Soldier (1864)- 4 " "



North side: Kurz (1852) -- 4 slits

Bedticking (?) -- 1 large opening

Second Floor: West side: Kurz (1852) -- 1 " ", 3 slits

South side: Sprague (1843) -- 1 " "

Murray (1845) -- 1 " "

Stanley (1853) -- 1 " "

Soldier (1864) -- 1 " ", 2 slits

East side: Sprague (1843) -- 1 " "

Murray (1845) -- 3 " "

Soldier (1864) -- 3 " "

North side: Kurz (1852) -- 4 " ", 4 slits

Photo (1866) -- 1 " "

Bedticking (?) -- 1 " "

By the time the Soldier drew his sketch in 1864, it appears that the gallery around the northeast bastion had been removed. Also, the weathervane had disappeared, although a short spire still rose from the roof tops. The Photo of 1866 confirms these changes. It also shows that this bastion had fallen into such a state of disrepair as to require planks to help keep it propped up.

#### HS 4 Front Gate

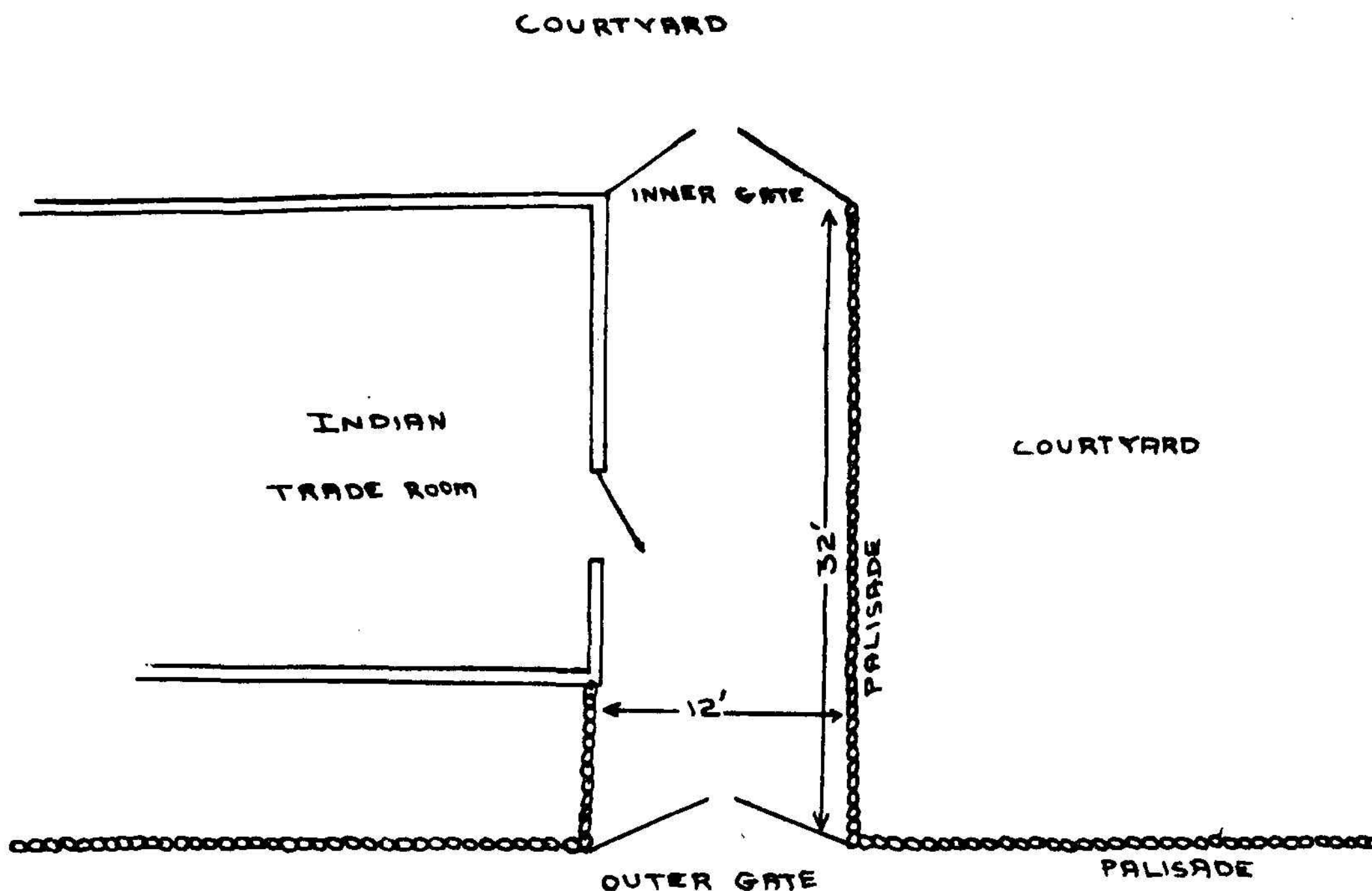
The history of the front gate begins with a mystery. In 1833, Maximilian wrote that a small gate house stood above it. His companion, Bodmer, painted such a gate house, showing it to be of a style and size similar to the bastions. The mystery is that no other writer or artist indicated, or even hinted at such a structure. This report assumes that either the gate house had a very brief existence or that it was planned but never built.

Maximilian described the gate as a large "folding" one. Unfortunately, none of the sketches show the front gate closed, thus its details are not available. A considerable change in it occurred as a result of the smallpox epidemic of 1837; Bourgeois Halsey, fearful of Indians seeking revenge, had a second, inside gate erected.

Denig (1843) described it thus:

At the front there is an inside gate of the same size at the inner end of the Indian reception room, which shuts a passage from the outside gate of 32 ft. in length, and the same width as the gate; the passage is formed of pickets. The outside gate can be left open, and the inside one closed, which permits the Indians to enter the reception room without their having any communication with the fort.

He also said that the dimensions of this gate were 12 feet in width and 14 feet in height. At the time of Audubon's visit (1843), a group of Assiniboin, passing the night in this space between the gates, built a large fire that worried Audubon lest it burn down the fort. Halsey (1837) and Harris (1843) both talked about ordinary Indians being allowed into the space, but Chiefs coming on into the fort proper.



Audubon mentioned the opening of the gate at sunrise. Kurz (1852) included among his duties opening the gates in the early morning, "in the evening I must close them; at night, if anyone without wishes to come in, I must open them again; if strangers are there I report the fact."

According to Denig (1843), one of the post clerks, J. B. Moncrevier, did a painting of a treaty of peace between Indians and whites. The bourgeois had this painting erected over the front gate. No sketch shows the painting itself, but Sprague's two works, done at the same time that Denig described the fort, shows what apparently is the frame for the painting.

The date of this painting's removal has not been found. A close examination of Kurz' diary (1851-52) shows that he made no reference to Moncrevier's work. Since Kurz was responsible for



painting works of art at the fort, it seems likely that the peace treaty scene had already been removed. Certainly, the detailed Hays painting of the front gate in 1860 shows no trace of this work.

Although no one after Maximilian mentioned a gate house, Kurz did describe, in 1852, his firing a welcome salute from a 4-pounder "that stands on the gallery above the river gate." This was probably the gallery that ran around the inside of the palisades; but Kurz did not explain how he managed to fire the cannon over the fairly high wall. Did he fire from a raised platform perhaps?

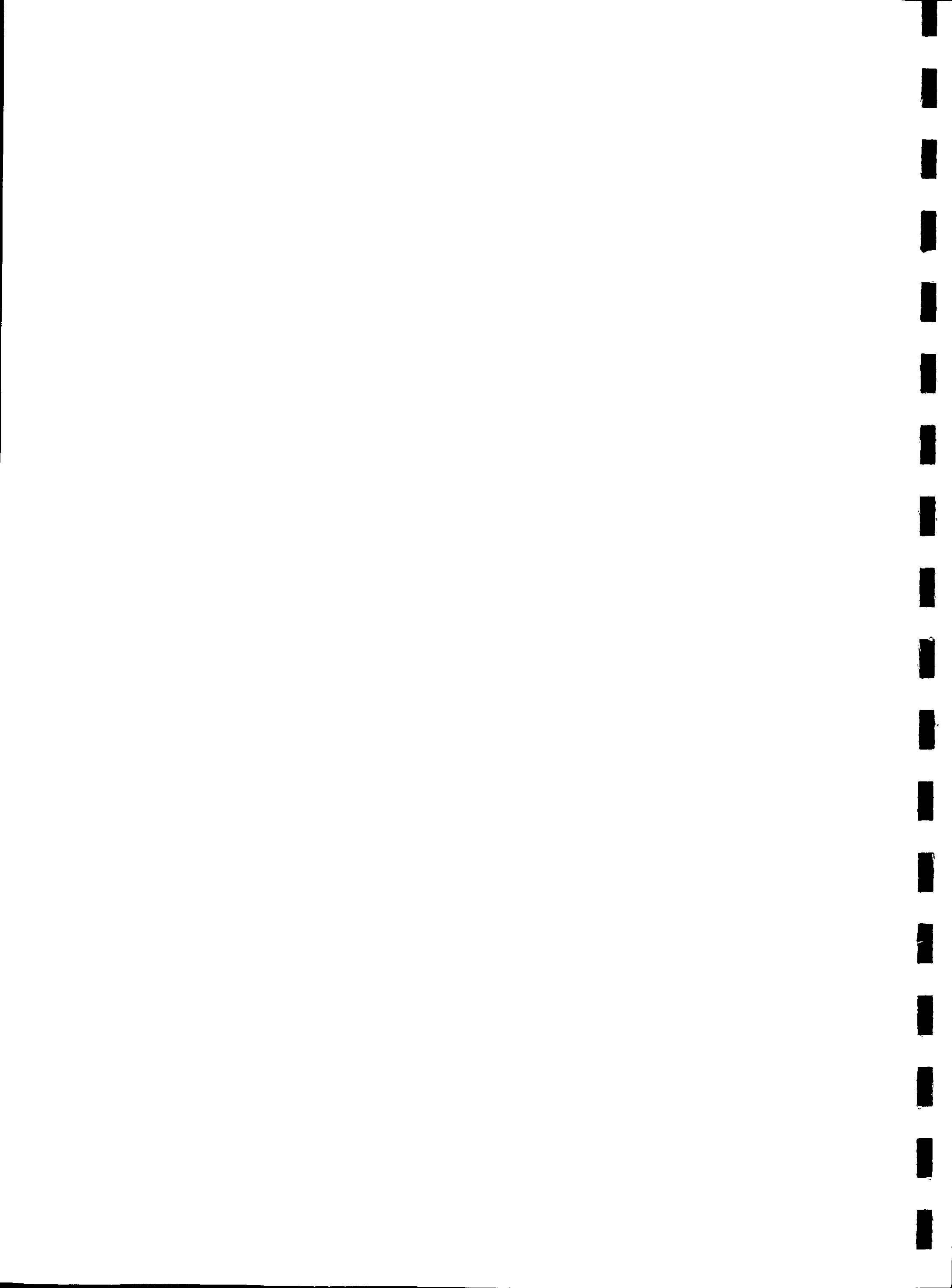
One other point must be mentioned. Stevens, in 1853, described the gate in the north wall to be the "front, or main entrance." Since he approached Fort Union overland and would naturally arrive at this side of the fort, he may have thought he was at the front. However, most visitors and employees reached Fort Union by water; also, Indians were required to trade at this river gate, which was considered by all except Stevens to be the main entrance.



### HS 5, Back Gate

Denig (1843) said that this gate, which opened onto the prairie toward the north, was in the middle of the wall. This location is supported by the Bodmer sketch (1833), which shows it directly behind the bourgeois' house. However, the Kurz (1852), Stanley (1853), Soldier (1864), and Photo (1866) sketches show this gate to be toward the western end of the north wall. Kurz' Sept. 1851 sketch shows the gateway in some detail; however, the gate itself which appears to be a double one, can be detected only by its shadows.





## HS 6 Indians' and Artisans' House

Located immediately west of the main gate, this building served two functions. Its east end, the end nearest the gate, served as a reception room and store for Indians. The west end served as the work area for several artisans. The long axis of the building ran east-west and, according to Denig, was 21 by 50 feet. At the time Denig described it (1843), the blacksmith, gunsmith, and tinner were using it. Denig used the singular form "shop," perhaps indicating that the three shared one large room. If they had separate rooms, archeology might disclose the fact. The Indian reception room at the east end opened into the passageway formed by the double gates. Behind it, to the west was the "trade shop," or room where the trader located himself, dealing with the Indians in the reception room through a wicket. That this building might have stood directly against the palisade is indicated by Denig's remark, "there is also another window through the pickets to the outside of the fort, which is used in trading when the Indians are troublesome, or too numerous." No picture of the fort shows this opening.

Maximilian commented on the Indian reception room (1833), "only the chiefs and about thirty of the principal warriors were admitted, who sat down around the apartment which was allotted to such meetings." In his autobiography, Larpenteur recalled working as trader after the smallpox epidemic, "nothing serious occurred except some few shots fired at me through the wicket during the night liquor trade." He decided that these bullets were not an attempt at revenge but just the ordinary run of affairs.

In his 1835 diary, Larpenteur described the drying of "the lodges which covered the Indian house" and recovering them with earth. This was one of the few buildings in the fort that was covered with buffalo skins and earth. Kurz' (1852) sketches show a corner of this building with the grass on its roof at various lengths. From time to time, the reception room served other functions. In the summer of 1835, Larpenteur mentioned a supply of iron being removed from the room in order to store packs of robes in it.

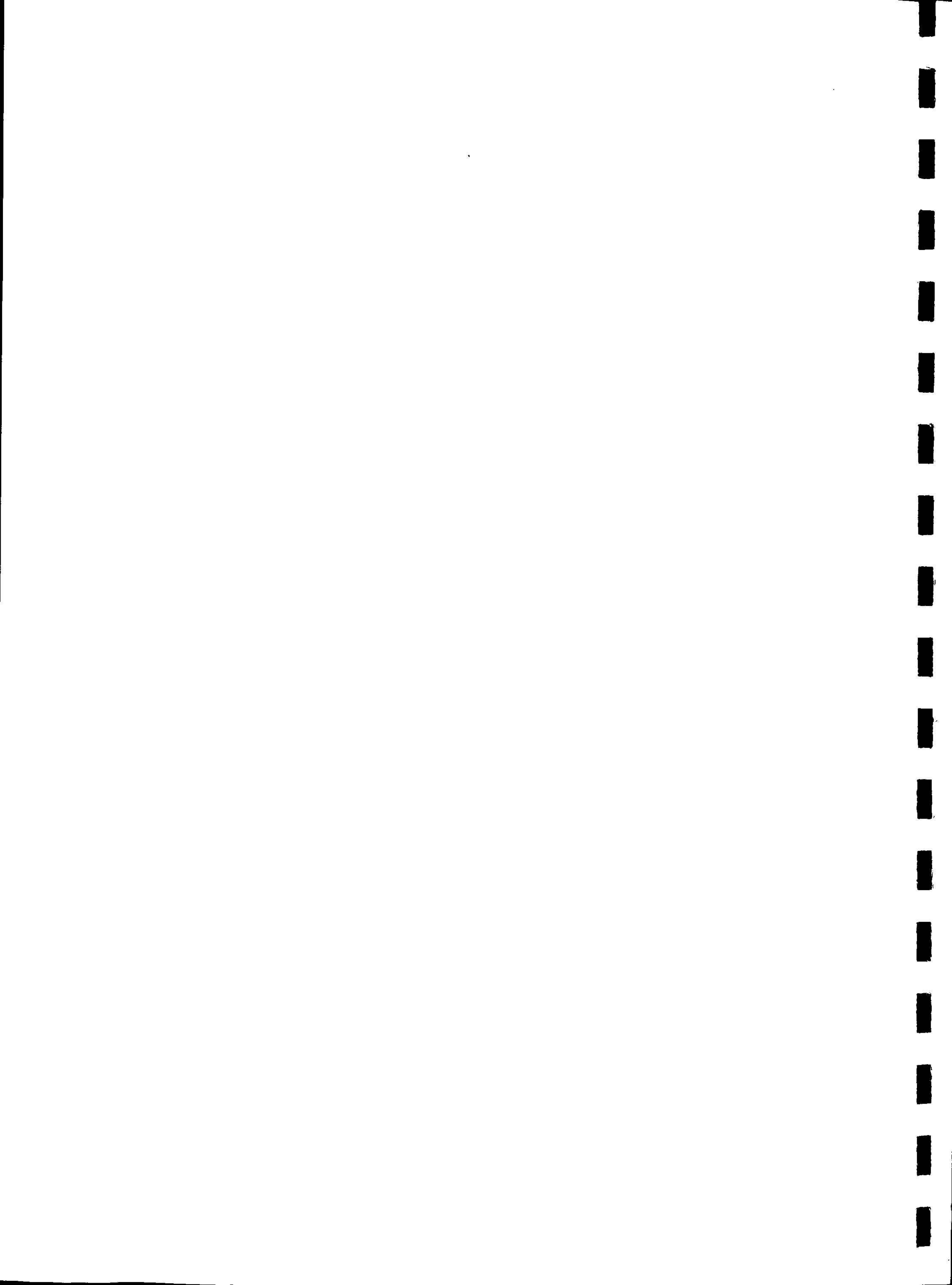
Visitors to Fort Union mentioned this building in their accounts. T. Culbertson (1850) wrote, "A room . . . is built against the wall by the gate, in which they used to trade through a small hole about one foot square in the wall." Hoffman (1866) described it as "a large building at Fort Union for the purpose of entertaining the Indians. Dirt floor with big opening in center of the roof so they could have a fire."

Kurz, whose 1852 sketches shows a little of the detail of the construction of the walls of this building as well as its roof, wrote in his diary that the Indian facilities were actually inadequate. Denig was then planning a new Indian lodge. Kurz said that a group of men had set out to cut the timber for the new structure. It is not known if the lodge was actually built. If it was, its absence in later sketches of the fort suggests it was located outside the walls.

Very little discussion of the west end of the building has been uncovered despite the importance of these artisans' work. Other



than Denig's description, the only substantial reference was an 1864 diary entry by Larpenteur, "Daubing the blacksmith shop." The Soldier sketch (1864) and Stuart (1866) both show the roof line of this building, but they disagree on the number and location of chimneys.



## HS 7, Bourgeois' House

By any standard, the bourgeois' house at Fort Union was the most elaborate structure on the upper Missouri during the heyday of the fur trade. However, today's student, impressed with the elegant sketches of the building that Kurz drew in the early 1850's, finds it difficult to visualize the simpler structure that was the bourgeois' house prior to Kurz' time.

Denig wrote the most thorough description of the structure in 1843, before the modifications. This description provides the best starting point for developing the history of the building:

It is 78 feet front by 24 feet depth, and a story and a half high. The front has a very imposing appearance, being neatly weather-boarded, and painted white, and with green window-shutters; it is roofed with shingle, painted red to preserve the wood. In the roof in front are four dormer windows, which serve to give light to the attic. The piazza in front adds much to the comfort and appearance, the posts are all turned, and painted white.

He continued:

The interior of this building is handsomely papered and ornamented with portraits and pictures, and portioned off in the following manner. Mr. Culbertson [the bourgeois] has the principal room, which is large, commodious, and well-furnished; from it he has a view of all that passed within the fort. Next to this is the office, which is devoted exclusively to the business of the Company . . . . These two rooms occupy about one-half of the building. In the middle is a hall eight feet wide, which separates these rooms from the other part. In



this is the mess-room, which is nearly equal in size to that of Mr. Culbertson. Here the bourgeois, taking his seat at the head of the table . . . serves out the luxuries . . . to his visitors and clerks, who are seated in their proper order and rank. The mechanics of the fort eat at the second table. Adjoining this room is the residence of Mr. Denig [the author and chief clerk].

In one of the upstairs rooms at this time Audubon and his party had their beds:

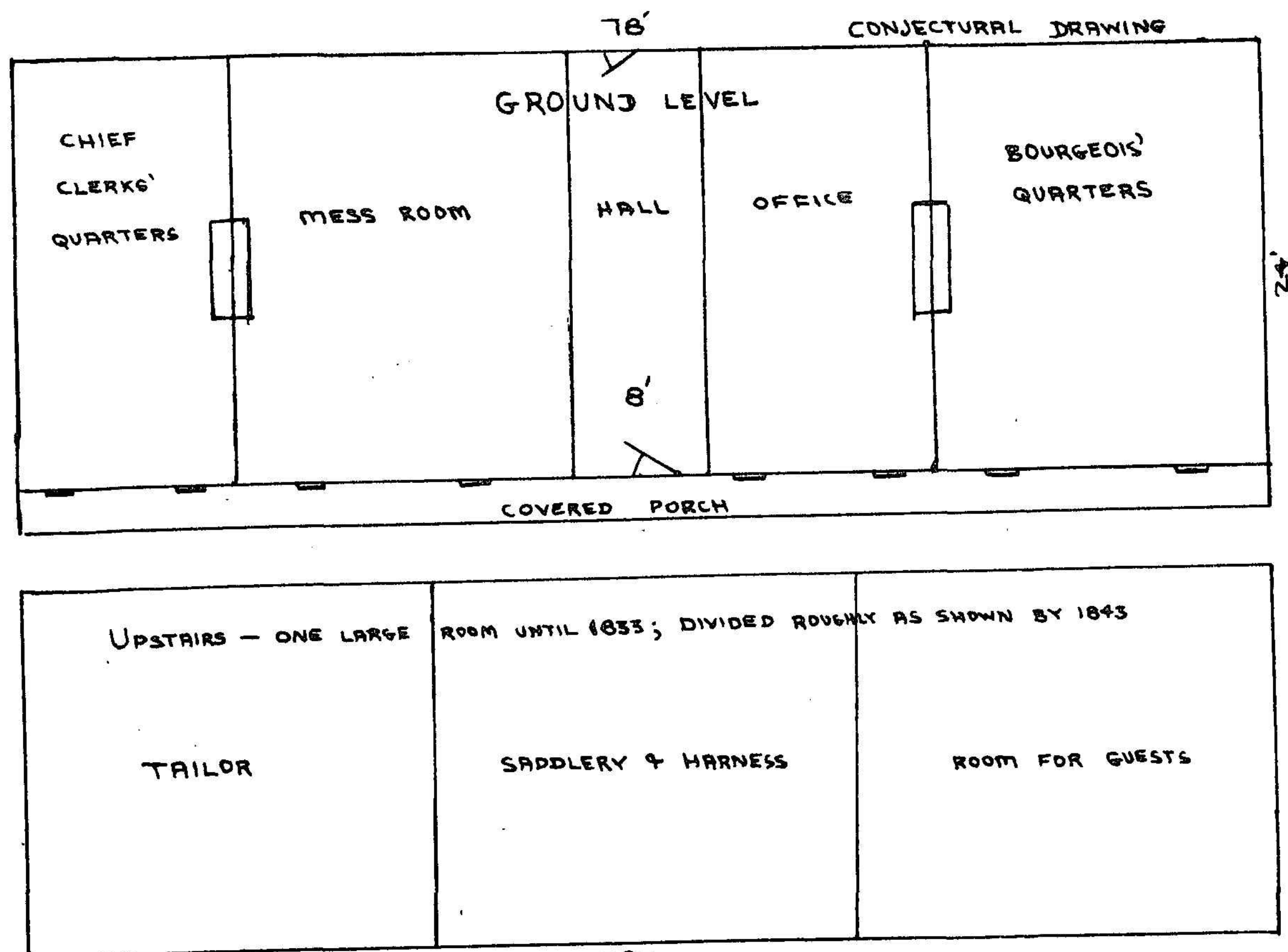
In the room next to this is always kept a selection of saddlery and harness, in readiness for rides of pleasure . . . . The next apartment is the tailor's shop, so placed as to be out of the way of the Indian visitors as much as possible, who . . . would steal . . . . So much for the principal house.

Maximilian (1833) was the first to put down his impressions of the building, "the house of the commandant; it is one story high, and has four handsome glass windows on each side of the door. The roof is spacious, and contains a large, light loft. This house is very commodious and, like all the buildings . . . constructed of poplar wood." Bodmer's sketch of this same period also indicates clearly that the house is still 1-1/2 stories high. Taken literally, Maximilian said the upstairs was still one large loft and not yet divided into the three rooms that Denig listed (above).

In the fall of 1833, when he returned from a visit to Fort McKenzie, Maximilian wrote again that "Hamilton allowed my chests

to be opened in the very light spacious loft of the governor's house, in order completely to dry my things." While not specifically placing it in this house, he also said that "a well-lighted and pleasant apartment likewise enabled us to continue our employments during our . . . stay." Also, the prince mentioned enjoying a seat by the fireplace in the evenings.

Bodmer, that autumn, had "a good clear room" in which to paint. However, as will be noted later, this may have been a separate structure (HS 17) and not a room in the bourgeois' house. Finally, Maximilian recorded that the fence around the house had been damaged by a horse chewing on it, even though the fence had been painted reddish-brown.



Clerk Larpenteur's 1835 diary includes a few references to the house. Again, when tearing down the old store range, the retail stores were moved into "the Northwest end room of Mr. McKenzie's Dwelling house." This is apparently the room that was Denig's quarters by 1843. The kitchen building (HS 8) was to the north of the bourgeois' house, and Larpenteur reported that three men were "splighting the fire wood small and piling it between the kitchen and the Dwelling house." Also, during that busy summer of 1835, "Holmes commenced building the inside of the office with rocks to the weather boarding between studing in order to be plaistered over."

There is a possibility that in 1837 part of the attic served as a library. When the smallpox hit that year, Larpenteur's diary noted that "Doctor Thomas Medical Book was brought down from the Library and the Treatment of small Pox vanination noculation was read over and over." Larpenteur's memoirs recalled the dining room the first time he saw it, "On entering the eating hall, I found a very white tablecloth, and two waiters, one a negro. Mr. McKenzie was sitting at the head of the table . . . . [Larpenteur's seat] would come very near the end of the table, for it appeared to go by grade."

On one occasion, in 1835, the house became a fortification, according to Larpenteur. Too many Indians had come into the fort proper, and Bourgeois Hamilton became quite concerned lest they attack. He ordered Larpenteur "to bring eight or ten muskets out of the bastion and put them on the men's table in the dining room; also to put one of the smallest cannon in a passage of the main



quarters [the downstairs hallway?]." Then "the window blinds [shutters?] of the dining room were opened," and the cannon was pulled through the hall so as to make a great deal of noise. These activities succeeded in quieting the Indians, and Hamilton sent Larpenteur to the cellar to get a bottle of Madeira. Remnants of this cellar are to be found today.

While Denig wrote his description for Audubon (1843), the latter kept a journal of his own in which he made references to the bourgeois' house. The Audubon party was first given a small, dark, dirty room "with only one window, on the west side." Audubon found it difficult to believe that Prince Maximilian had stayed in this same room for two months in 1833. This description suggests that the room was in or near the dwelling range (HS 9) to the west of the bourgeois' house. However, there are two additional factors to be considered. During the evening, the Audubon party was disturbed by a drunk in a room above theirs. Later that night a dance in the dining room interrupted the visitors rest. According to Harris, their room adjoined the ballroom and was 12 by 14 feet. This implies that Denig's quarters in the west part of the house were divided into at least two rooms and that Audubon and friends occupied one of them.

At any rate, the visitors gathered up their robe beds and moved to a cleaner, quieter room upstairs the next day. Sprague's sketches of the fort from the south bank of the Missouri, done at this time, also show the roof-top of the house. It still appears to be a 1-1/2 story structure.

When Kurz arrived at Fort Union in 1851, Denig was then the bourgeois and had undoubtedly moved himself into the appropriate quarters. It is possible that Kurz inherited Denig's old quarters in the west end of the building. He said that "the room in which I am now writing was put in order for me and furnished with bedstead, two chairs, and a large table. Here I am alone." Later he wrote, "Engagees are giving a dance at their own expense in the dining room, which is near me." His quarters had problems however; "Rain . . . penetrated through the roof and ceiling into my room in such quantities that I was forced to the constant occupation of placing water basin and empty paint pots beneath the leaks."

Four years before Kurz, Father Nicholas Point stopped at Fort Union on his last journey from the missions of the Pacific Northwest to civilization. While waiting for the steamboat, he took time to do two sketches of Fort Union. His rendition of the interior of the fort shows the bourgeois' house to be still the 1-1/2 story structure described above--although Father Point's sense of proportion is not what it could be. Besides the four dormer windows, the roof line extends outward with a change in pitch to form a porch. Audubon wrote of sleeping on this porch.

Kurz found a greatly changed building. The long porch had been removed. The space between the two chimneys had been enlarged to a full second story. Only the two outside of the original four dormer windows remained. In front now stood a handsome two-story porch. Kurz, one of the best artists ever at Fort Union, did three

handsome sketches of the house, 1851-52, recording these changes in fine detail. Strangely nothing has yet been found in Bourgeois Denig's correspondence discussing the remodeling.

One of Kurz' first jobs on arriving at Fort Union in the fall of 1851, was to paint the outside of the house. It is quite possible that the reason for this assignment was that the carpentry work had just been finished. In his most detailed diary, Kurz described his progress:

I am to paint . . . the front of the house, and then I am to decorate the reception room with pictures.

This entire day I have been painting, with the assistance of two clerks . . . the balcony and reception room.

Last week I . . . painted the pickets in front of the house.

Mr. Denig expressed the wish that I paint also a sideboard in the mess hall.

Had to paint, from a medal, the portrait of Pierre Chouteau, Jr., in a gable over the house gallery. All day long I had to work in a most uncomfortable position on an unsafe scaffold.

In an excellent sketch of the front of the house, dated September 18, 1851, Kurz showed the various colors he used. The fence, that Maximilian had described as reddish brown, was now white; however, the fence posts, four hitching posts, and the railings around both the upper and lower porches were now red. The eight pillars around both porch levels were now painted blue (in 1843 the pillars were white). A new gallery on the top of the roof had blue posts, white pickets, and red railings. A circle indicated the painting



of Chouteau on the gable over the second-floor porch. The weatherboarding on the front of the house was white. The roof, in contrast to the red described by Denig in 1843, now appears to be unpainted. Another change, from green to red, is to be noted for the shutters.

Other details of the remodeled house that may be noted in Kurz' sketches and his journal include: two large stones set as steps to a door in the west end of the building, a gable window in the west end, a large staff on the roof gallery (this may have been intended as a lightning rod, as requested at an earlier time), a wide walkway running along the front of the house, and a narrow board walkway leading from the front door to the main gate. Kurz sketched a meeting between Denig and some Indians in the office east of the main hall. The details include a wooden floor, a rather elegant chair, a bench, Kurz' life-sized portrait of Denig, and one of the large eagle flags that Kurz painted for trading purposes.

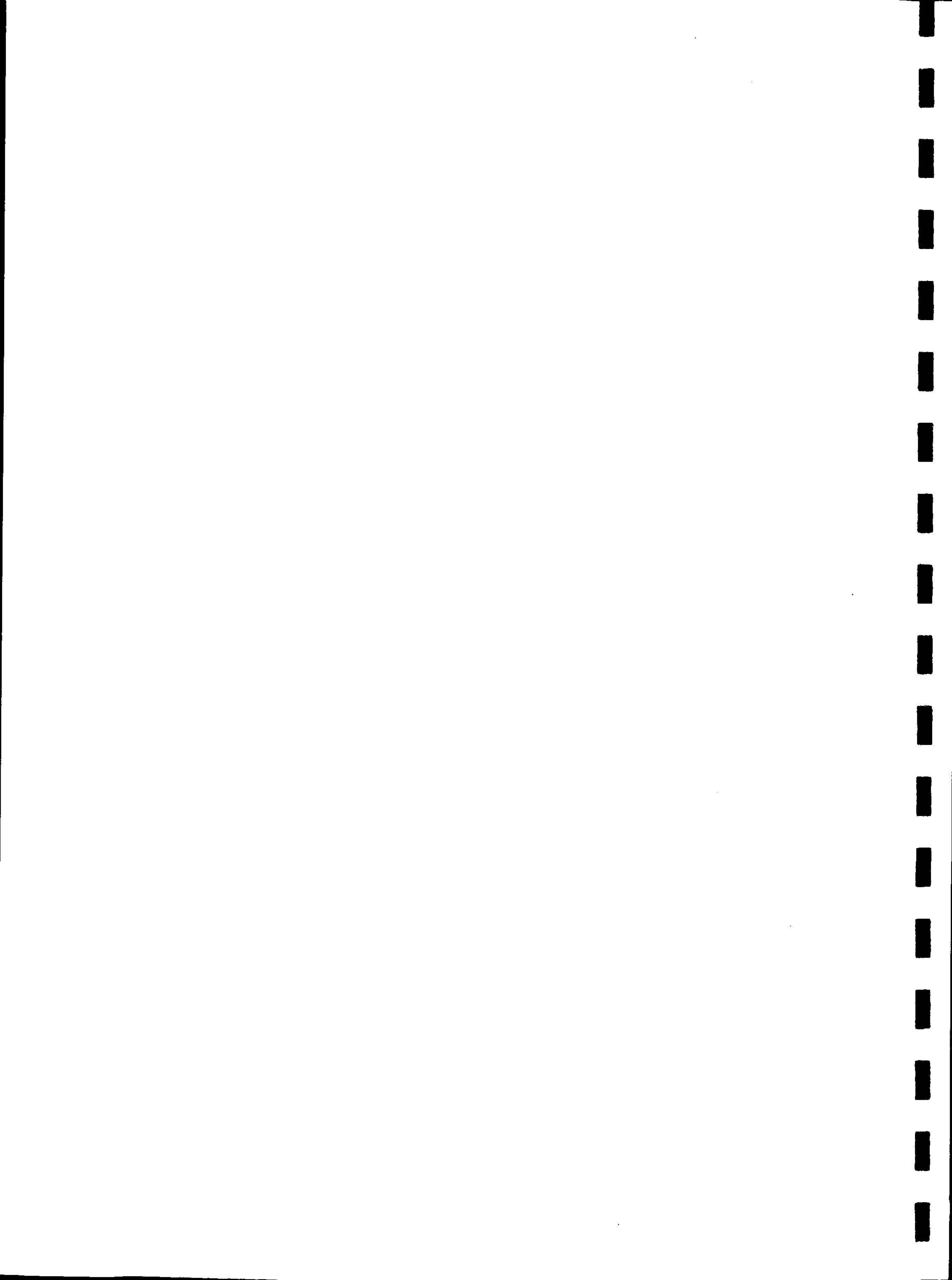
When appointed to clerk, Kurz noted that he was responsible for everything everywhere, including the attic and the cellar. Besides the fireplaces, this house was equipped with at least one iron stove, at which Denig liked to warm himself. Kurz, on one occasion, made reference to a garret "that serves as storage room for drugs, paints, and crackers."

One year after Kurz left Fort Union, in 1853, John Frise Stanley sketched the fort from outside its walls. The roof of the bourgeois' house appears, people are standing on the roof-top gallery and a large flag is waving from the staff.

In 1864, Larpenteur, now the bourgeois, had a flight of stairs added to the outside front of the house. Access to the upper story was then possible without going inside the building. Although he did not say why he built the stairway, he may have been influenced by the newly-arrived Army officers who took over nearly all of the house temporarily, leaving Larpenteur only his own room. Later, he was able to bring the cook in from the kitchen building to do his cooking in the dining room during the winter months. Within a short time, however, the officers had their own temporary quarters constructed. Larpenteur then had a series of small repairs made: repairing window blinds, painting the palings in front, painting the doors and chair boards.

Despite Larpenteur's efforts, the bourgeois' house decayed rapidly in the 1860's. It was now some thirty years old. About the time the Pierre Chouteau, Jr., and Company sold Fort Union, a deserter from the Civil War army, taking refuge from his colonel, sketched the fort. His details of the house show little change from Kurz' time except that the date 1851 under Chouteau's portrait was replaced by branches of leaves.

One of the last known views of the house was a photograph taken in 1866. Besides Larpenteur's new outside stairs, signs of neglect are obvious. A stovepipe sticks out of the roof; panes of glass are missing; the porch pillars are sagging, the building is askew. Within a year, the once-elegant structure was torn down.





## HS 8 Kitchen

Located behind (to the north) of the bourgeois' house, the kitchen never appeared in any of the illustrations of the fort. In 1843 Denig said the building was about two steps from the hall that divided the bourgeois' house--"so situated for convenience in carrying in the cooked victuals to the mess-room." In 1835 Larpenteur made a reference to the kitchen that is not quite clear, but he seemed to be saying that the kitchen floor had just been "paved." In 1864-65, he described various efforts to maintain the structure: daubing the walls, repairing the roofs, and whitewashing the walls with white earth.

The kitchen had an ignominious end. Larpenteur noted in his diary on August 4, 1867, that the building had been torn down and its wood used as fuel by the SB Miner. No illustrations exist.



### HS 9 Dwelling Range

In January 1832, the first range of dwellings, located on the western side of the fort, was destroyed by fire. Bourgeois McKenzie described the range briefly; it was 24 by 120 feet, and was occupied by the clerks, interpreters, mechanics, engagés, and their families. Considering the number of such employees at the post during the 1830's, one can imagine the crowdedness. The fire began under the floor of Mr. Chardon's room "and there being . . . a free communication under the whole range, and much rubbish accumulated there, it was almost simultaneous in every apartment." Besides the building and the personal possessions, 1,000 planks stored in the lofts and a cellar full of small kegs were also destroyed. McKenzie estimated that it would take five months to rebuild the range.

The new building apparently was the same size and style as the old. Denig (1843) said it was 119 by 21 feet. Although not as strongly built as the store range (HS 10), Denig thought it was satisfactory:

The height of the building is in proportion to that of the pickets; it is one large story high, and shingle-roofed. This is partitioned off into six different apartments of nearly equal size. The first two are appropriated to the use of the clerks who may be stationed at the post. The next is the residence of the hunters, and the remaining three the dwellings of the men in the employ of the Company.

Kurz (1851) entered the interpreter's room to witness a gambling game: "The room, dimly lighted by the open fire and one candle, was crowded with performers and onlookers . . . redskins,



white . . . and half-breeds." The gamblers, sitting in two rows on the floor, consisted of "eight Herantsa and seven Assiniboin." Kurz spent his first night at the fort in this room, "The inside . . . presented an appearance rather like an Indian's habitation. On the floor . . . were three beds for three couples of half-Indians and their full-blooded wives."

Larpenteur's diary recorded some of the maintenance on the building and some of the details of his own room: "a chimney corner," curtains, locks on insides of the doors, hauling lime and sand to plaster the clerks' room, temporary storage of furs in the interpreters' room, hauling slabs "to make an upper floor in the mens room," and whitewashing the outside walls.

The Bodmer sketch (1833), the Point sketch (1847) and one of Kurz' drawings (1851) suggests that the range was not covered by one continuous roof although the apartments, or rooms, abutted one another. Two other Kurz drawings, looking down on the roof, show it to be one continuous line. Most of the sketches that include the chimneys show three of them. This number is probably correct, each chimney serving two rooms. A door and a window on the east wall served each apartment (Kurz and Point). A (board?) sidewalk ran along the east side of the building (Kurz, 1851, and Soldier, 1864).

### HS 10, Unknown Structure

In the two Kurz sketches done from the top of the southwest bastion, the end of a gable roof appears in the lower left corner of the drawings. We have no other information concerning this structure at this time. Later, notice will be made of several structures that are known to have existed but the location of which is unknown. It is possible, of course, that HS 10 might be one of those structures. (See, particularly, HS 29.)





## HS 11, Store Range

Through the medium of Larpenteur's 1835 diary, history has a detailed description of the construction of this long narrow building, 127 by 25 feet. Before turning to the diary, it would be helpful to look at Denig's 1843 description:

On the east side . . . extending north and south, is a building, on [e?] range, all under one roof . . . used for the following purposes. A small room at the north end for stores and luggage; then the retail store, in which is kept a fair supply of merchandise, and where all white persons buy or sell. The prices of all goods are fixed by a tariff or stationary value . . . . Adjoining this is the wholesale warehouse, in which is kept the principal stock of goods intended for the extensive trade; this room is 57 ft. in length. Next is a small room for the storage of meat and other supplies. At the end is the press room, where all robes, furs, and peltries are stored. The dimensions extend to the top of the roof inside, which roof is perfectly waterproof. It will contain from 2800 to 3000 packs of Buffalo robes. All this range is very strongly put together, weather-boarded outside, and lined with plank within. It has also cellar and garret.

The old storerooms appear to have been torn down simply because they had been hastily built and of a temporary nature. The new building would be substantial:

May 1: "Mr. Luteman comenced the building of the stores and warehouses."

May 15: "Drivers hauling rocks for the foundation of the building."

May 25: "Still sawing timber for stores & warehouses."

May 28: "Commenced moving goods out of the [old] Stores and ware houses in to the Bastions in order to pull them down."

May 30: "Sawyers finished raughters for the store & ware houses."  
\*Seaucie at the door and window frames of the new building."

June 3: "Commenced pulling down the store & ware houses."  
"Sawing planks for sheeting the new buildings."

June 5: "Smith hauling the sills of the old buildings and the earth away from the foundation. Holmes and Kieffer digging the foundation for the new buildings."

June 8: "Holmes commenced the foundation of the new building."  
"Mr. Luteman and Charls commenced fraiming the raughters for the roof . . . . Smith hauling lime and sand and the earth away from where the foundation is to be. Euneau making shingles."

June 16: "Smith hauling the sills of the new buildings."

June 19: "After Breakfast commenced raising the buildings."

June 22: "Carters finish hauling rocks for the foundation and the rafters of the building. Seaucie commenced dressing planks for weather boarding."

June 23: "Mr. Luteman finish[ed] raising the framing of the [illeg.] after which they tied a posey on the top of one of the rafters and fired few guns towards it with the view of getting [a treat?] which is commonly done in such occasions."

June 24: "Impleyed two men in straightening the edge of the shingles."

June 25: "Quarrying rocks for the cellar. Mr. Luteman commenced sheeting the roof . . . . Impleyed five men in digging the cellar."

July 1: "Commenced shingling."

July 8: "Finish digging the cellar Holmes commenced building the cellar wall."

July 16: "Seaucie puting the window and door frames in the new buildings."

July 18: "commenced weather boarding."

July 21: "preparing planks for flooring."

July 27: "Impleyed two extry men in tongue and grooving planks for the flooring of the warehouse."

July 31: "Mr. Luteman placing the sleepers."



Sept. 12: "removing the potatoes . . . in to the cellar of the ware house."

Sep. 16: "removing bales of blankets . . . into the ware houses."

Sep. 24: "commenced painting the roof of the new building."

Sep. 25: "The red paint gave out and only one quarter of the roof painted."

Oct. 5: "Seaucie finish[ed] flooring the new building and finish the robe press also which stands in the south end room of the new building."

During the next thirty years there appears to have been little change in the appearance or in the functions of the store range. An employee named Harvey caused some excitement around 1840 by killing a personal enemy, Isadore Sandoval, in the whites' retail store. About the same time, George Sumpter successfully robbed this store. When Kurz arrived in 1851, robes and furs were still being stored in the press room at the south end. His sketches give considerable detail regarding the external appearance of the structure. As with the dwelling range, one long roof covered the complex. The walls appear to have been weather-boarded. Each of the four windows that are shown could be closed with a wooden shutter held in place by a long iron hook. The doors (one single, one double) were wooden. The 1866 photograph shows no chimneys in this building--most of the sketches agree with this. A (board?) walk ran along the west side of the building. (See also Point, 1847.)

Larpenteur's diary resumed its discussion of the stores in 1864. On June 30, "a great crash was heard in the Stores . . . the principal Beam which supported the Joists had given away which



occasioned all the Joists to break off in the Middle." Not as much damaged occurred to either the Company's or Army's goods as first thought, and props placed under the main beam allowed full use of the building again.

Other maintenance jobs (1864) including making a "trough to turn the rain from the Store roof off of the hay," repairing the weather-boarding, and building new shelves in the retail store. The building continued to function as the store range until the end of the fort.

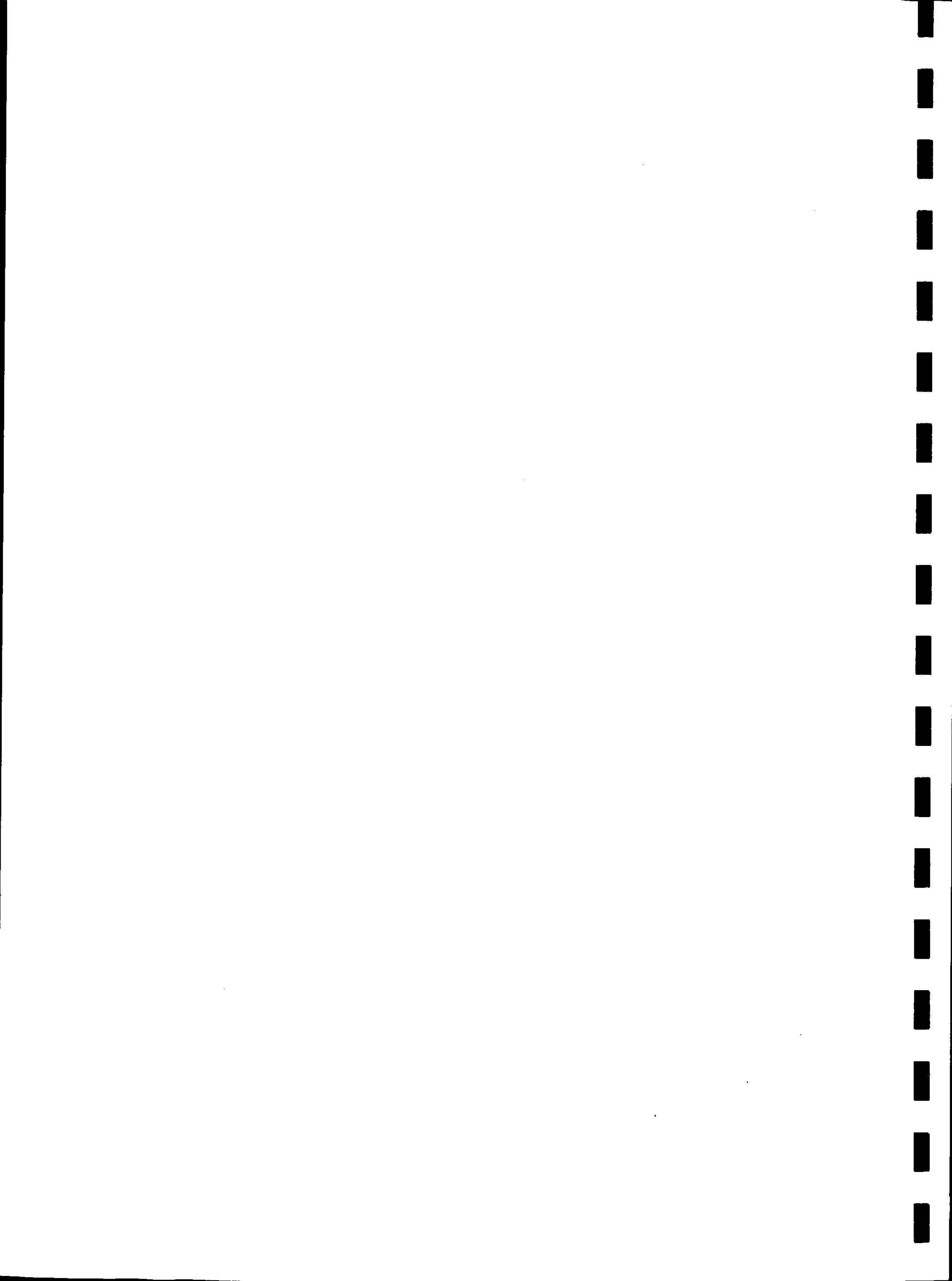
## HS 12, Powder Magazine

When the dwellings caught on fire in 1833, McKenzie decided that being without a proper powder magazine was simply too dangerous. As a result, Denig (1843) was able to describe the new magazine as being

perhaps the best piece of work as regards strength and security, that could be devised for a fort like this. The dimensions are 25 by 18 ft.; it is built out of stone, which is a variety of limestone with a considerable quantity of sand in its composition. The walls are 4 ft. thick at the base, and increasing with the curve of the arch become gradually thicker as they rise, so that near the top they are about 6 ft. in thickness. The inside presents a complete semicircular arch, which is covered on the top with stones and gravel to a depth of 18 inches. The whole is covered with a shingle roof through which fire may burn yet with no danger to the powder within. There are two doors, one on the outside, the other a few feet within; the outer one is covered with tin.

Prince Maximilian (1833) described it as very handsome, of hewn stone, and capable of containing 50,000 pounds of powder. The location of the quarry from which McKenzie hauled the stone by cart, is unknown. It apparently was not very far from the fort; Audubon contemplated riding out to visit it but changed his mind (1843). Larpenteur's diary shows the magazine still stood in 1865.

According to Kurz (1851) the magazine was located at the rear of the warehouse. If this should mean at the north end of the store range, then it is the building that appears in Point's and Kurz' sketches, located to the east of the bourgeois' house and to the north of the store. This structure had an ordinary gable roof and its walls appear to have been whitewashed.





### HS 13, Flag Staff

The flag was an important symbol at the outpost of Fort Union. While it did not fly every day, it rarely failed to greet every visitor and to salute every one departing, either for St. Louis or for the Blackfoot nation. Prince Maximilian (1833), on his arrival, was struck by "the handsome American flag, gilded by the last rays of evening, floating in an azure sky."

Denig (1843) described the staff with his usual thoroughness:

In the center of this [189 by 141-foot open space inside the fort] arises a flag-staff 63 ft. high. This is surrounded at the base by a railing and panel work in an octagonal form enclosing a portion of ground of 12 ft. in diameter, in which are planted . . . [vegetables]. By the side of this stands a mounted four-pounder iron cannon. This flag-staff is the glory of the fort, for on high, seen from far and wide, floats the Star Spangled Banner, an immense flag which once belonged to the United States Navy.

The paintings of Catlin, Bodmer, Sprague (who said the staff was 60 feet), Murray, Point, and Kurz, all show the flag staff. Kurz' sketch, dated April 7, 1852, presents it in a most detailed manner, although it does not show the very top of the staff. Here the fence is circular, rather than octagonal as described by Denig and shown by Point (1847). The base of the staff, about five feet high, was square. Three large braces supported the circular staff, which had wooden pegs for climbing as far up as the crossarms. A smaller staff joined on at the crossarms. Ropes ran from the ends of the parallel crossarms to meet at a point on the upper staff. The flag was tied to one of these ropes by some sober employee who first had to climb up. Another painting by Kurz, done outside

the fort, shows the top of the flag staff; an object of some nature appears at the very top. (See also the Point sketches.)

Starting with Stanley in 1853, and including all subsequent artists (Hays 1860, Soldier 1864, and the unknown with the U. S. wagon) and the 1866 photographs, this flag staff is missing from the illustrations. No one accounted for its demise. Did it fall from old age? Was it struck by lightning? From then on the flag flew from various places but most often from a new tower (HS 24) that had been erected.

#### HS 14, Stables

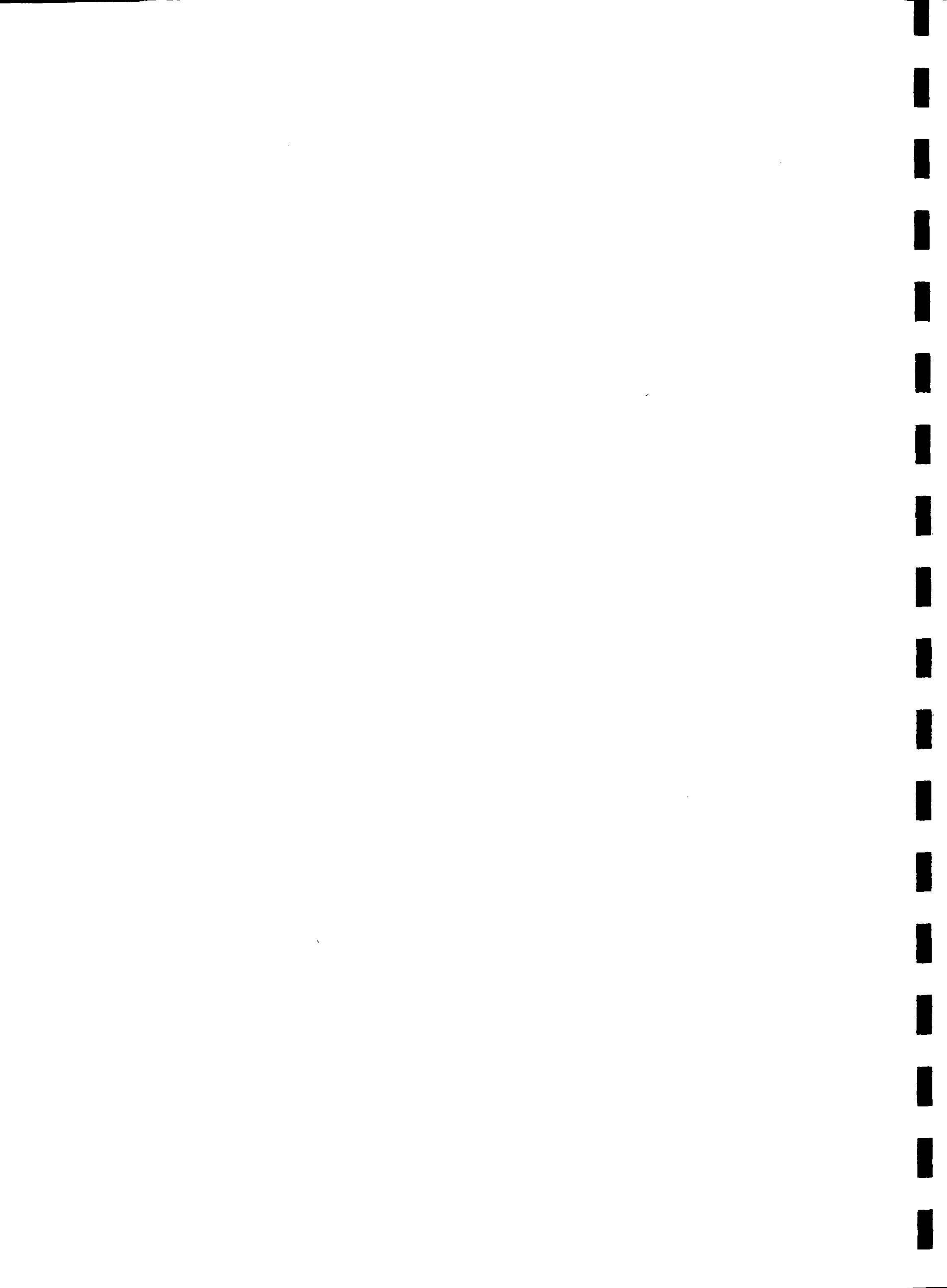
Maximilian (1833) listed the 50-60 horses, some mules, cattle, swine, and goats that he found at the fort. The horses were taken out on the prairie during the day but driven back into the fort at night for safety. Although the prince said that most of the horses spent the night in the open air, he also mentioned stables within the walls.

Larpenteur, in his 1835 diary, mentioned having to tear down part of the stables in order to erect the new store rooms. This suggests they were located on the east side of the fort. Later that fall he said that the carpenter was building new stables under the galleries, but he did not locate them any more specifically. He mentioned two rafters being hewn for them and, on October 16, noted stabled horses.

Denig, in 1843, helps a little, "Several houses . . . are also built on the west and south sides . . . [including] ten stables, in all 117 ft. long, and 10 ft. wide, with space enough to quarter fifty horses." He went on to note that "the space behind the warehouse between that and the pickets, being free from buildings, affords a good horse yard, and some shelter to the horses in bad weather."

Twenty years later, Larpenteur (1864) wrote, "Recovered the Stables with earth that is a portion of them those where we put in the Companies horses in." None of the sketches shows structures that could be readily identified as stables.





HS 15, Stable, Buffalo Calves

The only specific mention made of this structure was by Denig in 1843: "The openings . . . under the galleries, are fitted in some places with small huts or houses. Behind the kitchen there are five of such houses . . . . The first of these is a stable for Buffalo calves, which are annually raised here." Larpenteur, in 1835, mentioned using timber out of the old stores "to make a pasturing pen for calves," also a shed for them.





HS 16, Hen House

The hen house was the second of the five huts that Denig said were located under the north gallery behind the kitchen. He added that it was "well lined, plastered, and filled with chickens."

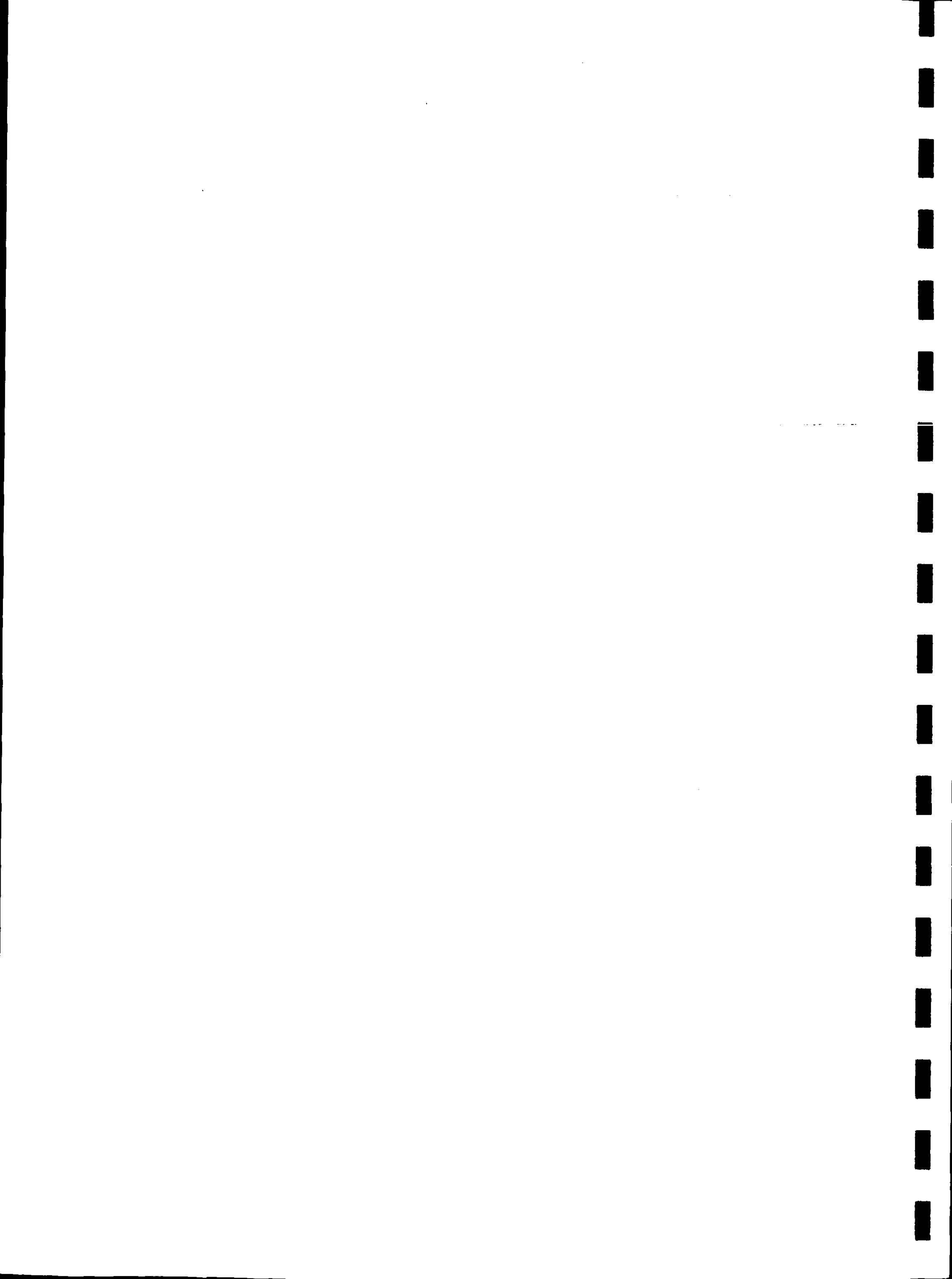
(See HS 15)



HS 17, Artists' Studio

This was the third of the five buildings behind the kitchen.  
(See HS 15 and 16.) Denig said it was "a very pleasant room." None of the artists at the fort mentioned whether they used it or not.

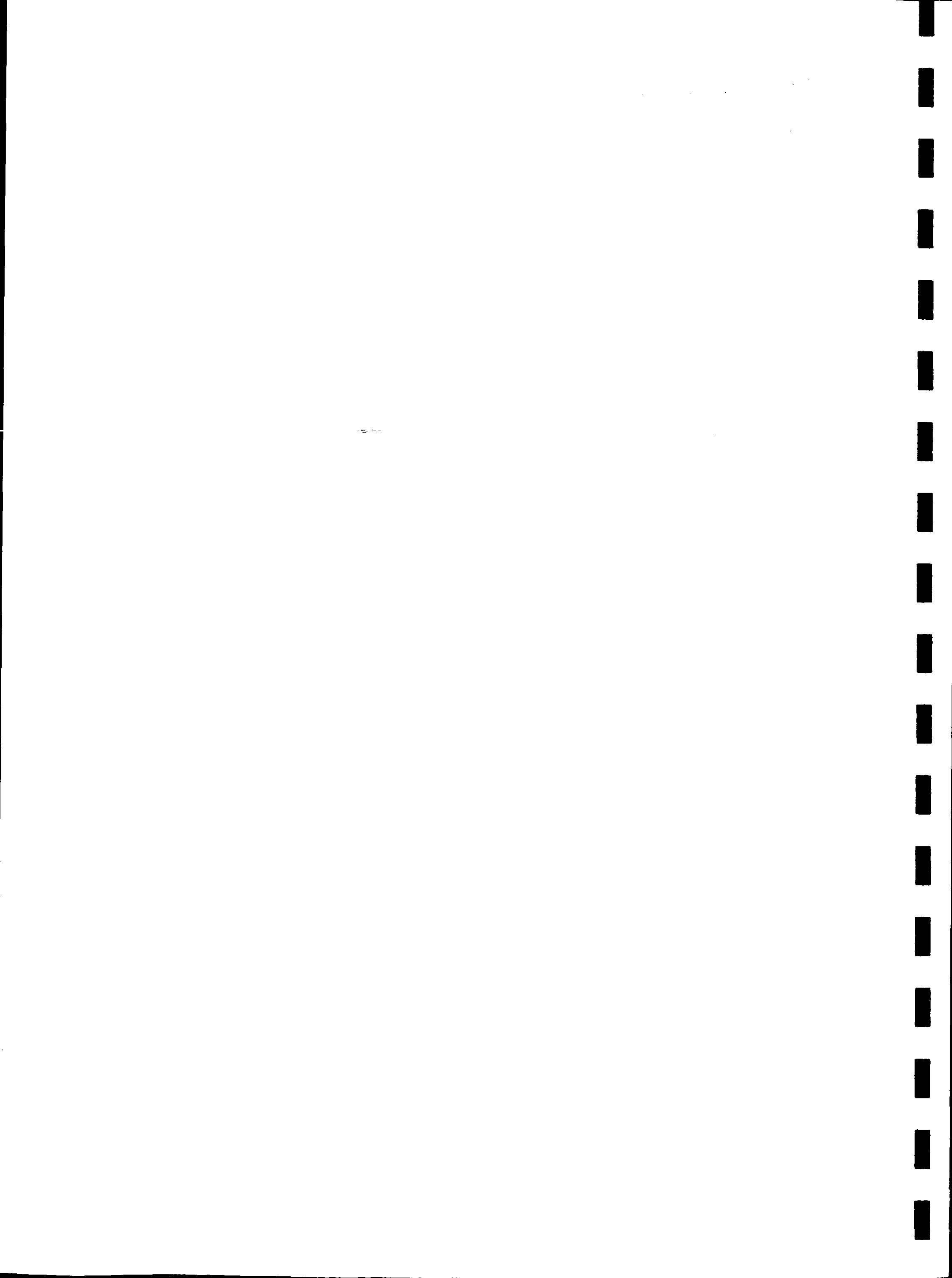




HS 18, Cooper's Shop

Denig listed this as the fourth of the huts north of the kitchen.

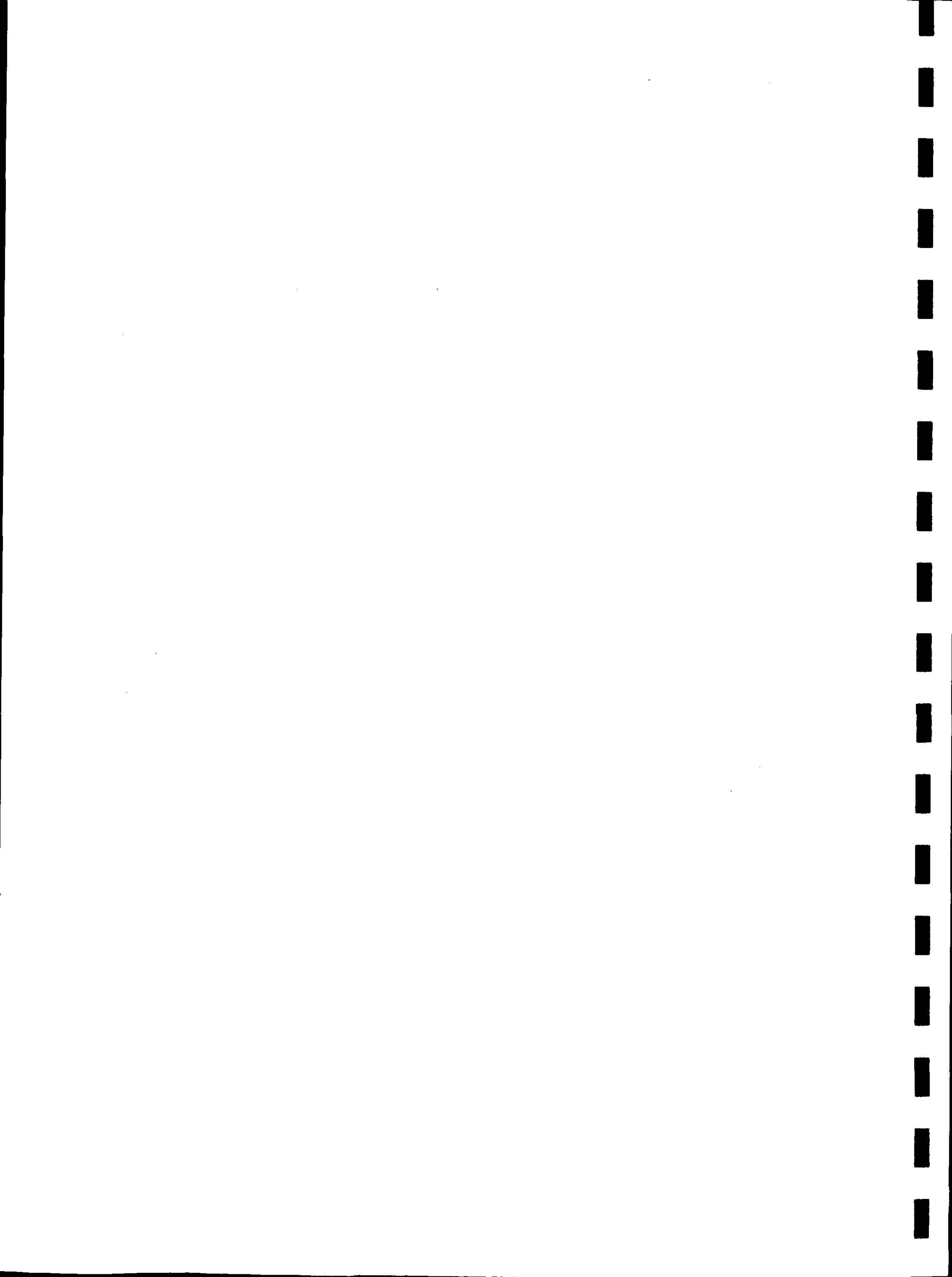
(See HS 15-17.)





HS 19, Milk House and Dairy

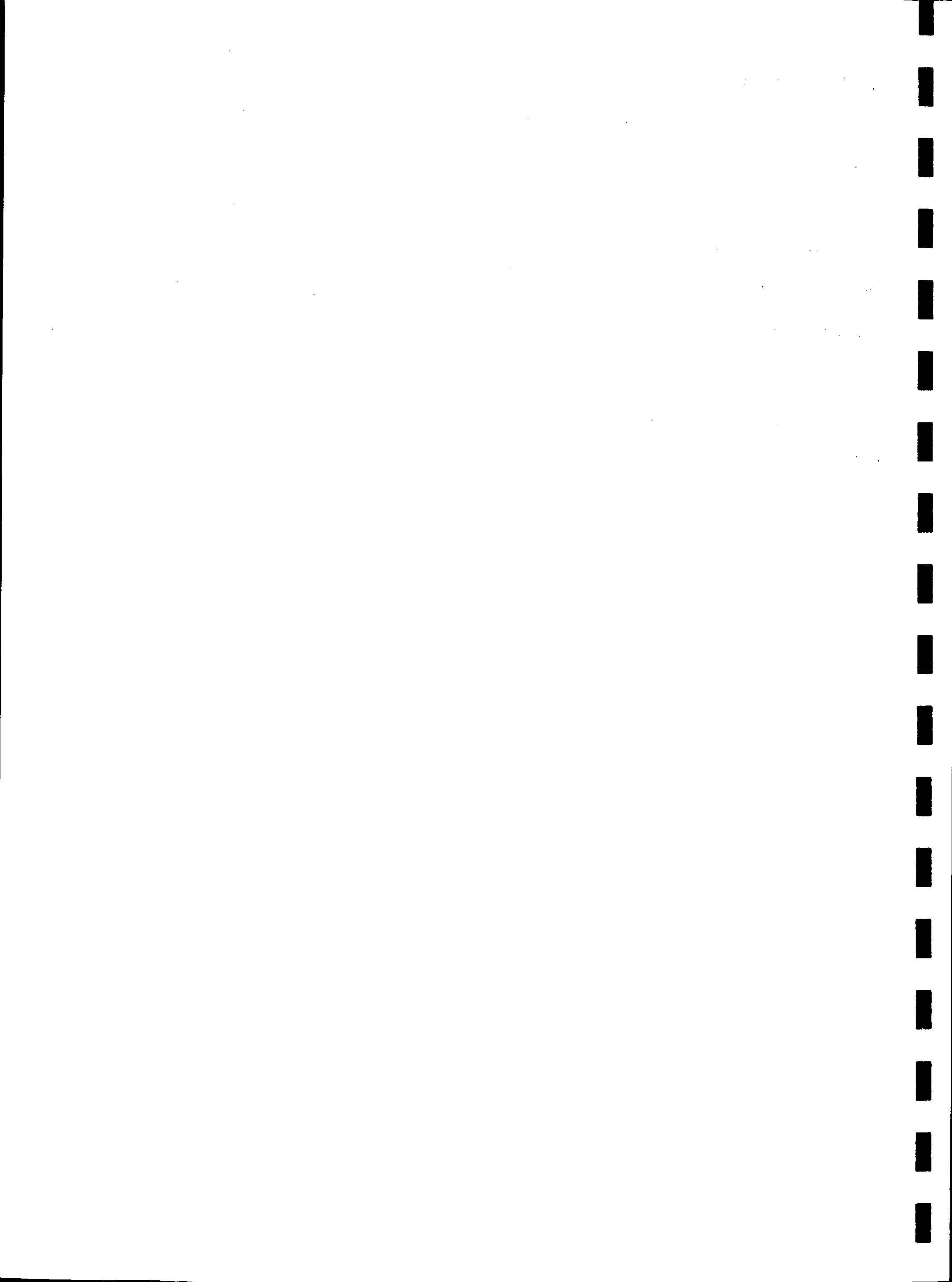
This, the fifth, completed the five huts that stood under the north gallery. Larpenteur's diary, 1835, discussed underpinning and paving this building. Later on it was shingled and plastered. The carpenter built for it a door frame and a window frame. At one time, four men had to stop work elsewhere in order to bail this house out. This last may have suggested that the floor was sunk into the earth a few feet in order to keep the structure cool.



## HS 20, Coal House

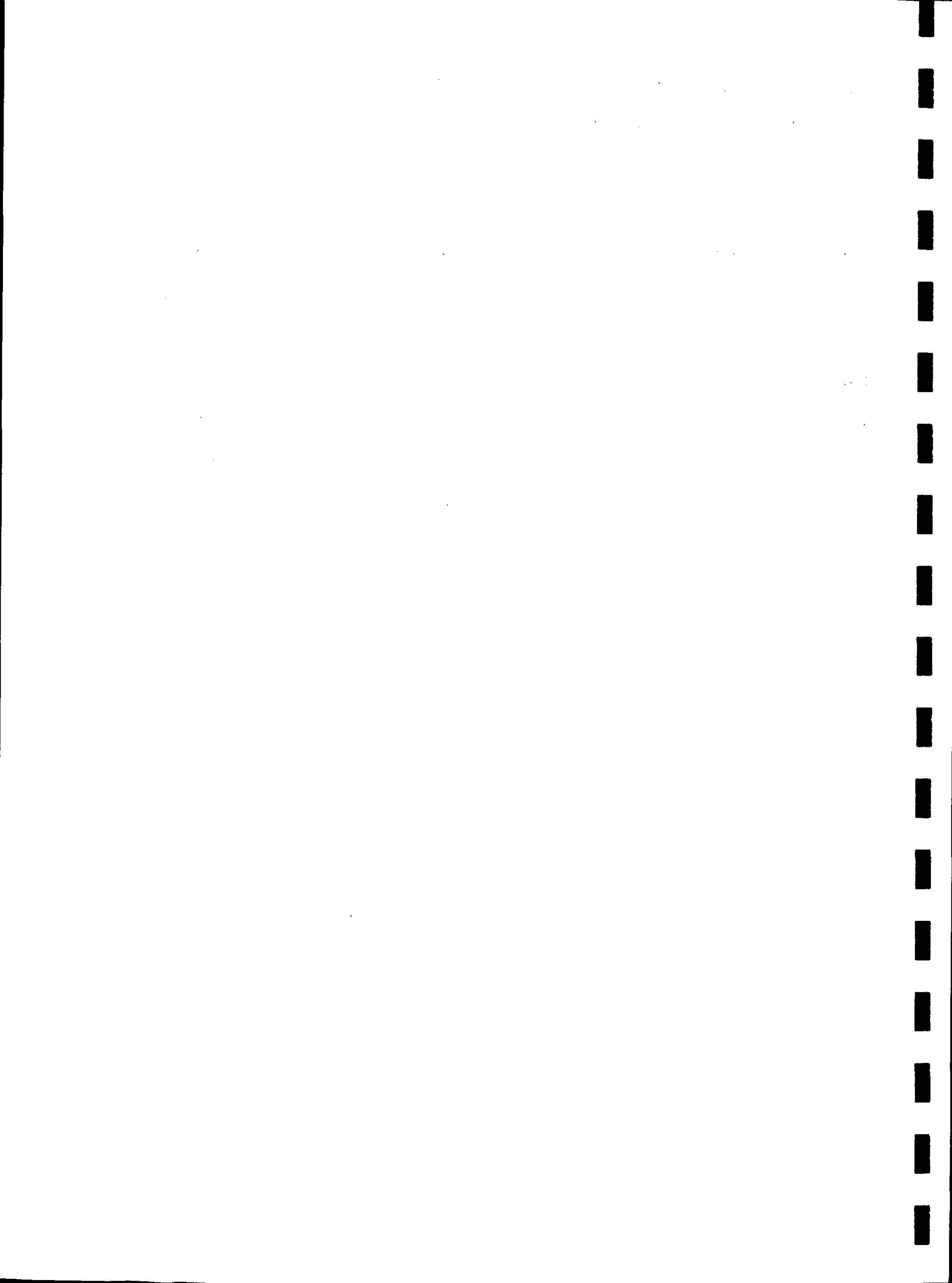
Denig continued his 1843 description of the fort by saying that on the west and south sides, under the galleries, were additional structures similar to the five above. One of these was the storage house for the blacksmith's charcoal. Denig did not make clear if it was on the west or south side; however, it probably was close to the blacksmith's shop itself, which, as has been noted, was in the south-west part of the fort. Denig's statement implies this coal house was a part of the same structure that contained the ten stables discussed above (HS 14); if so, the whole structure was 117 feet by 10 feet.





## HS 21, Building and Pens, Outside East Wall

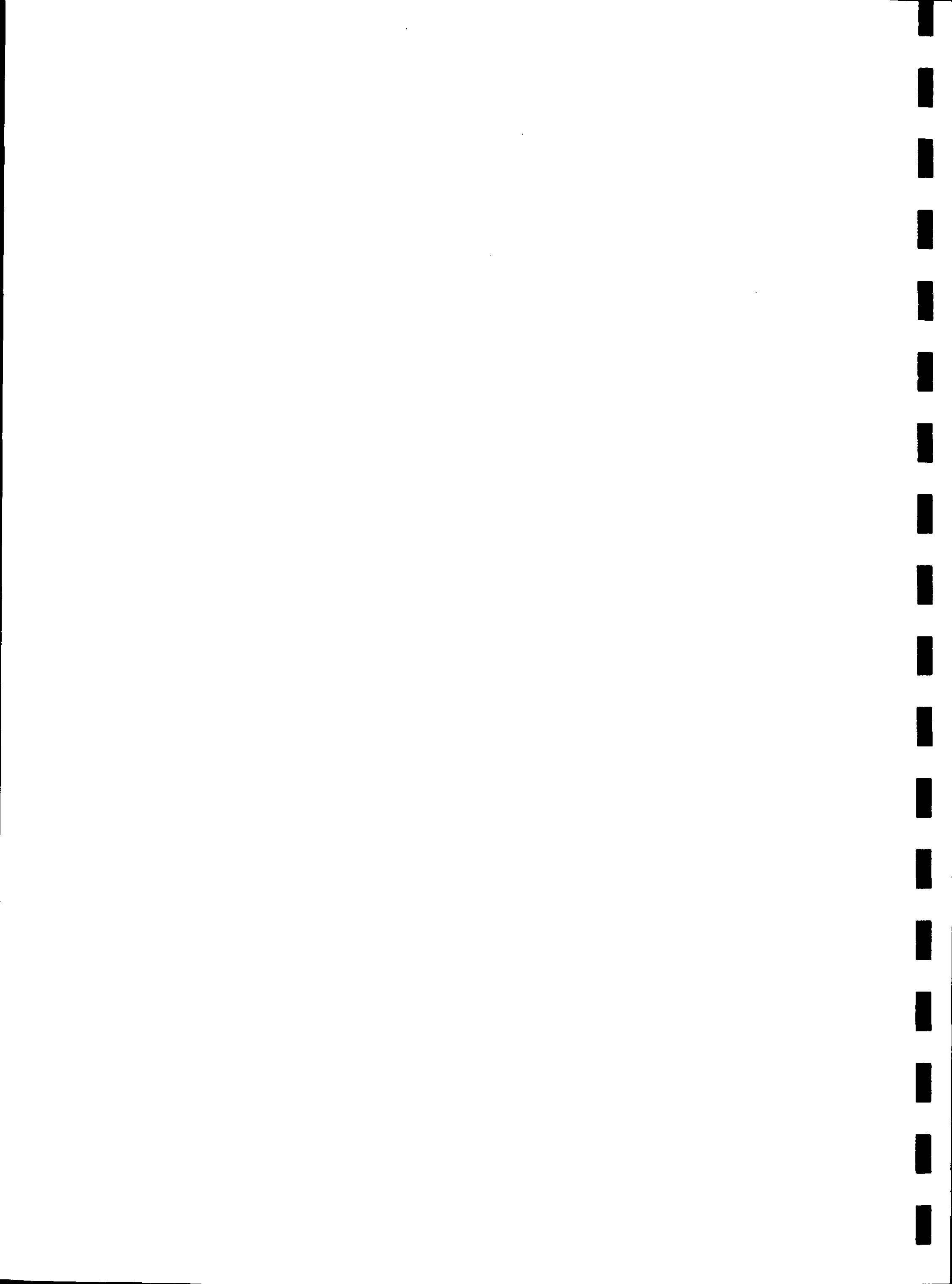
Bodmer's 1833 sketch appears to show a low building erected against the outside of the east wall. Strangely enough, very little mention of outside structures is made by those at the fort over the years. However in the Wimar sketch, 1858, we see clearly this small house and a fenced in area on either side of it. These fenced areas might be considered to be pens or yards. In the written documents, there are references to calf pens and to the pigs at Fort Union. Whether or not any relationship exists between these pens in Wimar's sketches and those in the written sources can be but conjecture. Audubon mentioned a pig's trough immediately "under the side of the fort."





HS 22, Building East of Fort

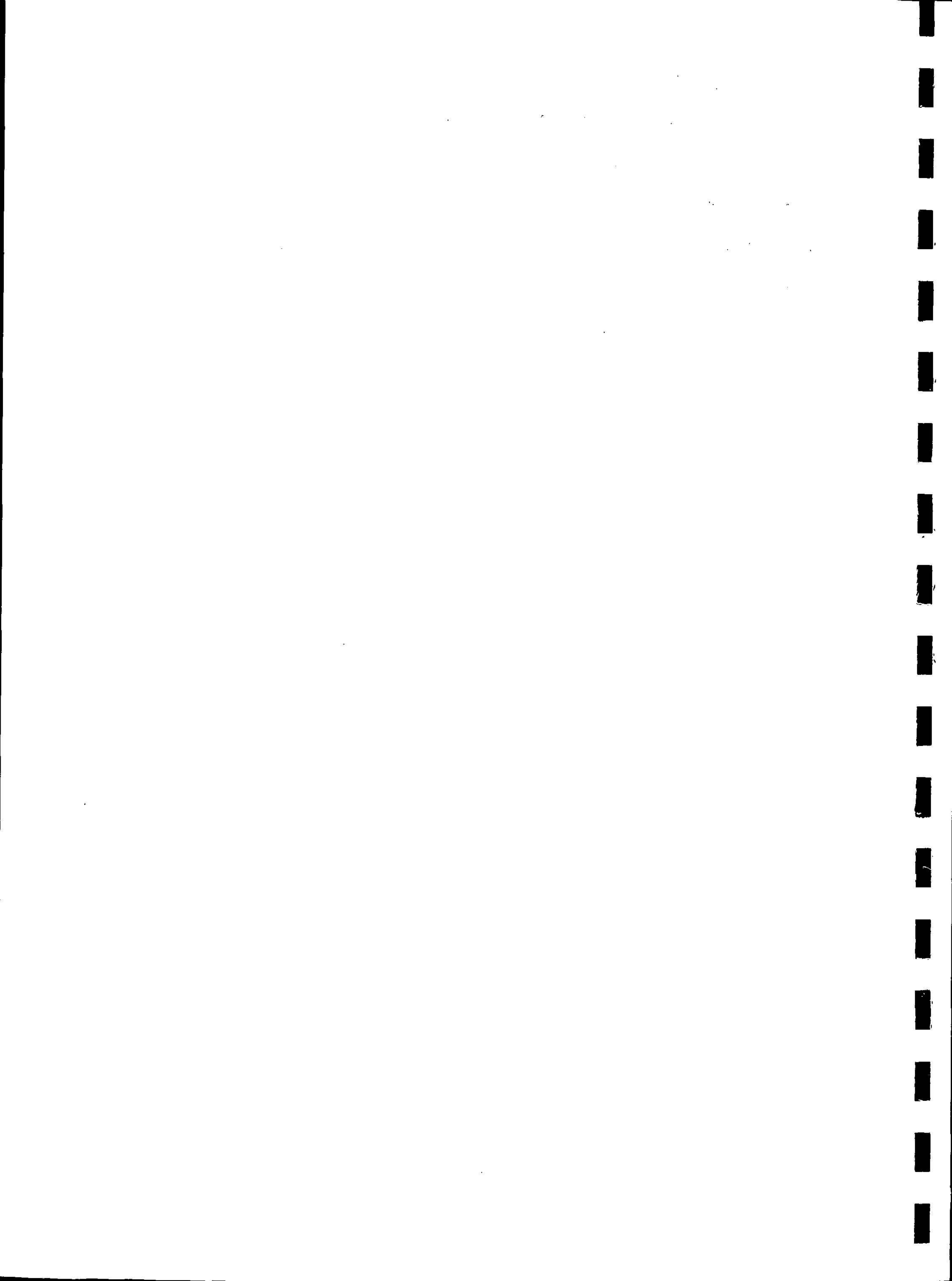
Wimar's 1858 sketch also shows a small wooden house that is about 100 feet east of the fort, near the bluff, and just east of the ravine that led down to the river. Nothing else is known about this building at this time. It is also noted that the Bedticking sketch has several small buildings in this area.



### HS 23, Bell Tower

While not mentioned in the narratives, this tower is very much in evidence in a number of sketches. It first appears in Kurz' sketches of 1851-52. Those he did of the bourgeois' house, show the pointed roof of the tower and its decorative lightning rod (?) just beyond the roof-top gallery. In his sketch of the north side of the fort, from the exterior, we see the top of the tower. While no written source exists that says this is a bell tower, it stood near the kitchen and there is written evidence that meals were announced by the ringing of a bell--e.g. Harris, 1843: "the bell sounded for the second supper;" Palliser, 1848: "We rose when the bell rang, and repaired to the dining room and a cheerful cotton-wood fire." Point (1847), Stanley (1853), Soldier (1864), and Photo, 1866, all show this bell tower.





#### HS 24, New Tower

For want of a better name, a tall tower, built in the 1850's at Fort Union, is herein referred to as the "new" tower. When Kurz did his sketches, 1851-52, there was still a flag staff and, apparently, no tower. One year later, Stanley's sketch shows the tall rectangular tower in the southwest quarter of the post with the flag flying from it. There is now no flag staff.

Wimar (1858) shows the new tower. In Hays' 1860 sketches one cannot see the tower because of the southwest bastion; however, the flag may be seen flying from the approximate position. The Soldier sketch (1864) has the tower showing. The Bedticking sketch shows it as having windows on two of the upper floors of the north side.

The 1866 photograph, which must be considered accurate, shows a considerably lower tower, having one window on the north side that is above the level of the palisades. The staff on top has cross arms similar to those that were on the former flag staff.

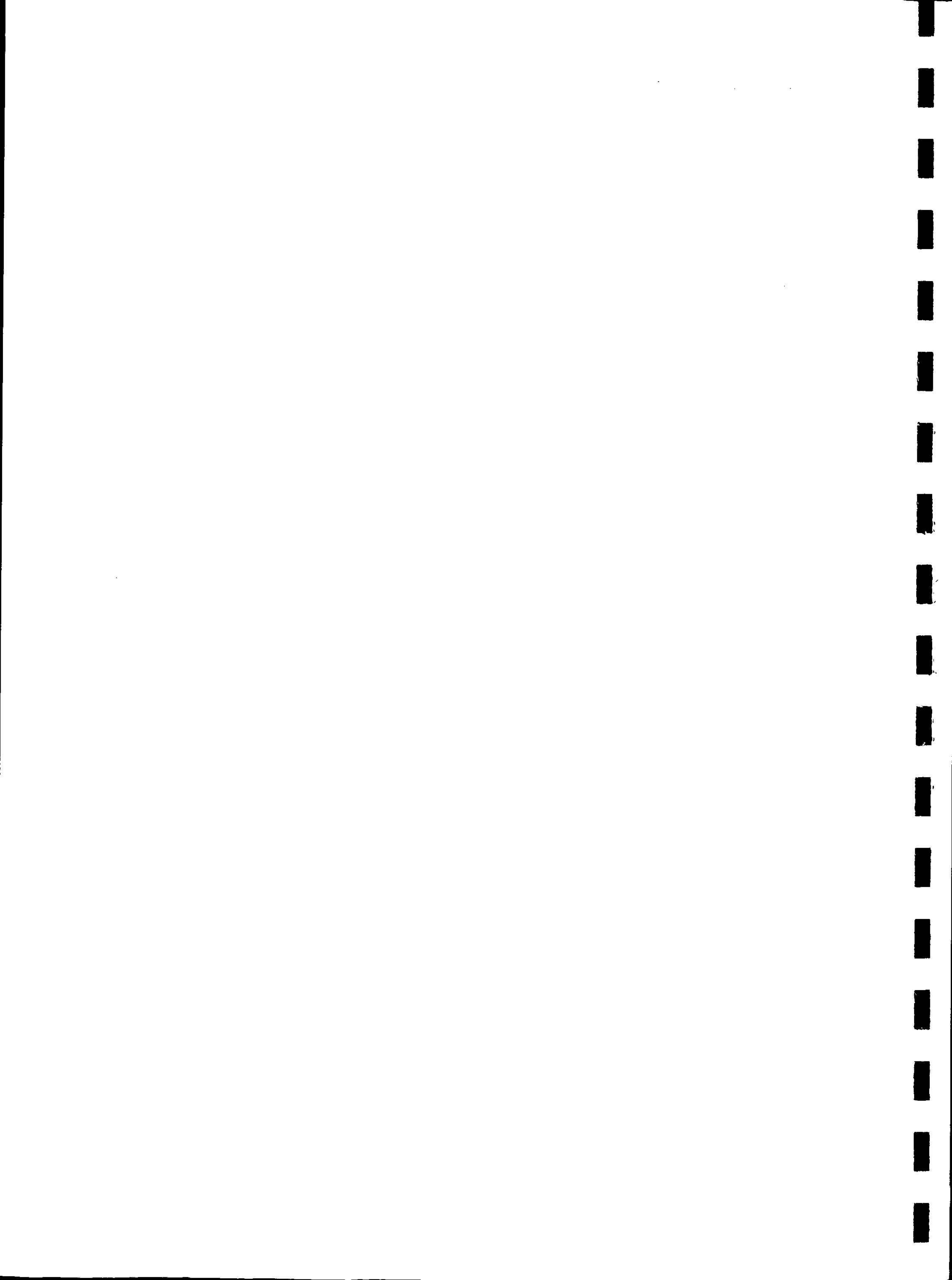




## HS 25, Cemetery

Over the forty years of its history, a considerable number of deaths occurred at Fort Union, including the disastrous smallpox epidemics of 1837 and 1857. The first reference to a burial was by Prince Maximilian in 1833. An Assiniboin killed a Blackfoot, and the body, in a coffin made by the fort's carpenter, was buried "near the fort." However, most Indian "burials" were in coffins placed in trees both above and below the fort. The bourgeois felt some concern about these scaffold graves, and there is one reference (Larpenteur, diary, 1835) to building a strong fence around one "for fear that the enemies might Come and pull the Coffin down."

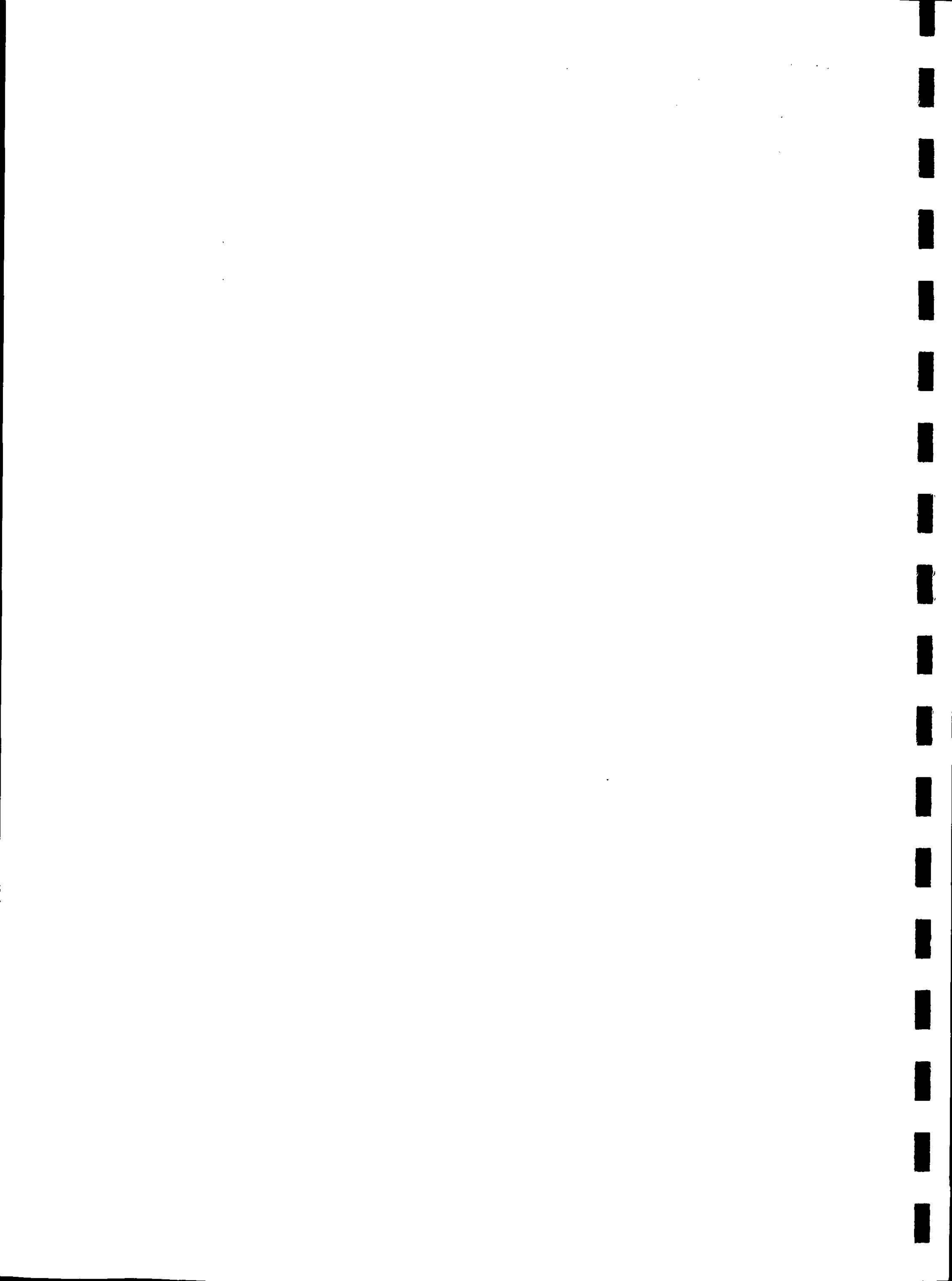
At least six of the soldiers at Fort Union, 1864-65, died in the spring of 1865 (one from Indian arrows, five from scurvy). It seems probable that the Army buried these dead in the area already used by the fort. The only specific reference to the cemetery is found in the reports of Dr. Washington Matthews, U.S.A., Fort Buford: "About one hundred paces east of the ruins of Union and separated from them by a little ravine may now be seen the remains of the cemetery--empty graves, and overturned paling and head-boards." After the Army built Fort Buford, it moved at least some of Fort Union's dead to the new post.



## HS 26, Distilling Building

Kenneth McKenzie not only installed a distillery in 1833, he erected a building for this important but short-lived operation. In 1834, he wrote, "You have heard of my new buildings & mill for grinding corn . . . ." A year later, after the manufacture of alcohol had been suspended, Larpenteur made reference to radishes growing in the distilling house yard. The life span of this structure or to what other uses it may have been put are not known. Larpenteur, in his autobiography, said that after the liquor manufacture had been exposed, the still house was destroyed.

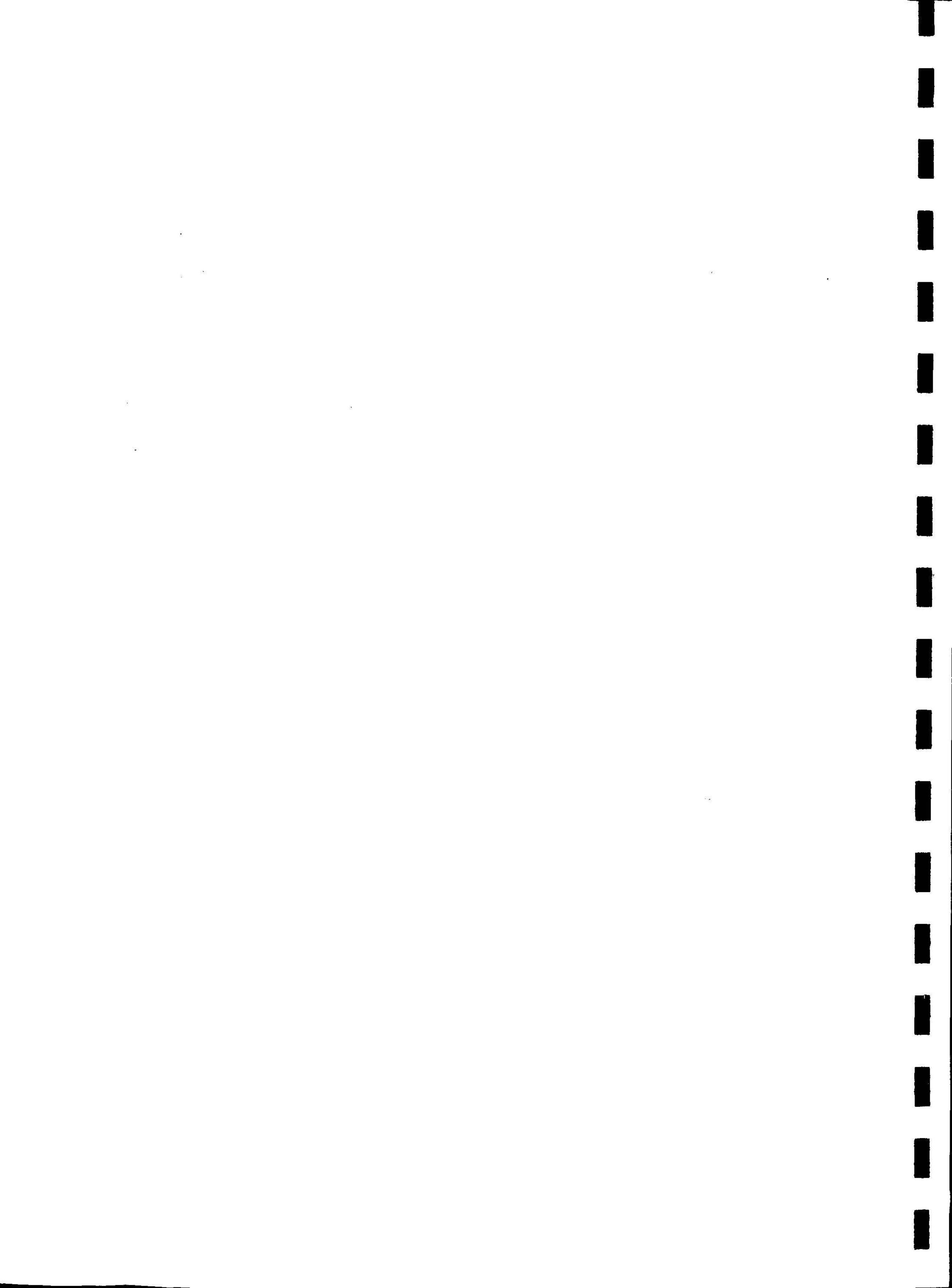




## HS 27, Kilns

Undoubtedly a great number of kilns existed at Fort Union over the years. Most of these were for the manufacture of charcoal, although Denig (1849) talked of burning a lime kiln if he could find a man who knew how. The locations of the kilns undoubtedly changed many times. Harris (1843) mentioned charcoal kilns on the southern side of the Missouri river.

Larpenteur's diary, 1835, described the process: Sept. 30, "Implied four men chopping wood for the Coal Pit." Oct. 5, "Carters hauled thirty cords of wood to the Coal Pit." Oct. 6, "Coal Pit ready to be covered with earth." Oct. 7, "Coal pit ready to set fire." Oct. 8, "Blacksmith commenced setting fire to the Coal pit." Oct. 13, "Finish Coal wood."





HS 28, Fenced Area, Outside North Wall

There is no written evidence concerning this area. It does not appear in the 1866 photograph. But on the Bedticking sketch, date unknown, an area against the eastern part of the north wall has been fenced in. One gate is shown on the west side of this wall, which appears to have been 8 - 10 feet in height. Within the "yard" there is a small building. Archeological evidence may give an idea of possible structures in this area.



## HS 29, Carpenter Shop

One of the more important men at the fort was the carpenter, who oversaw all construction. Although the location of his shop remains unknown, its existence was verified by I. I. Stevens (1853) who mentioned both the shop and the carpenter's dwelling. Larpenteur, in 1864, talked about cleaning up the carpenter's shop, and moving all the carpenter's tools "in to the antient [sic] Carpenter Shop."

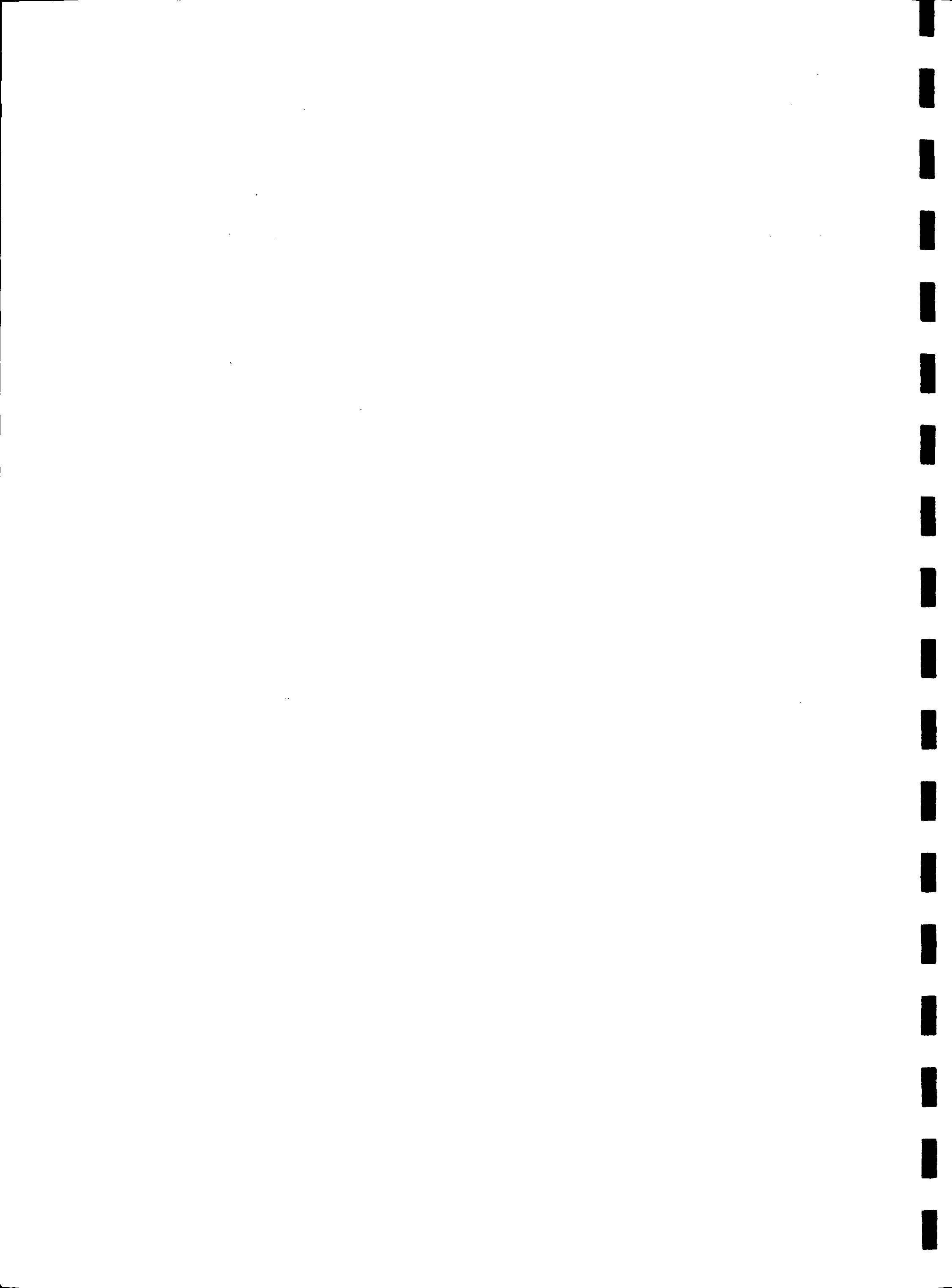




## HS 30, Ice House

George Catlin (1832) spoke of the "spacious ice-house" from whose cool depths he enjoyed meat and wine. Competing Trader Campbell, in 1833, wrote that Fort Union's ice house "serves for Lumber having a door in the floor and a descent by rope ladder to the Ice." Apparently, he meant that the upper room was used for storing lumber. In 1835, Larpenteur recorded that a workman was hauling earth to repair the ice house roof and that three others were "covering and daubing it." Twenty-nine years later, Bourgeois Larpenteur told how he had the upper part of the ice house raised so that four new sills could be put in. The structure was then lowered, the floor was "layed back," and the front of the building was whitewashed. A week or two later (1864), the Army troops "commence[d] to prepair [sic] a room in the end of the ice house for an hospital."

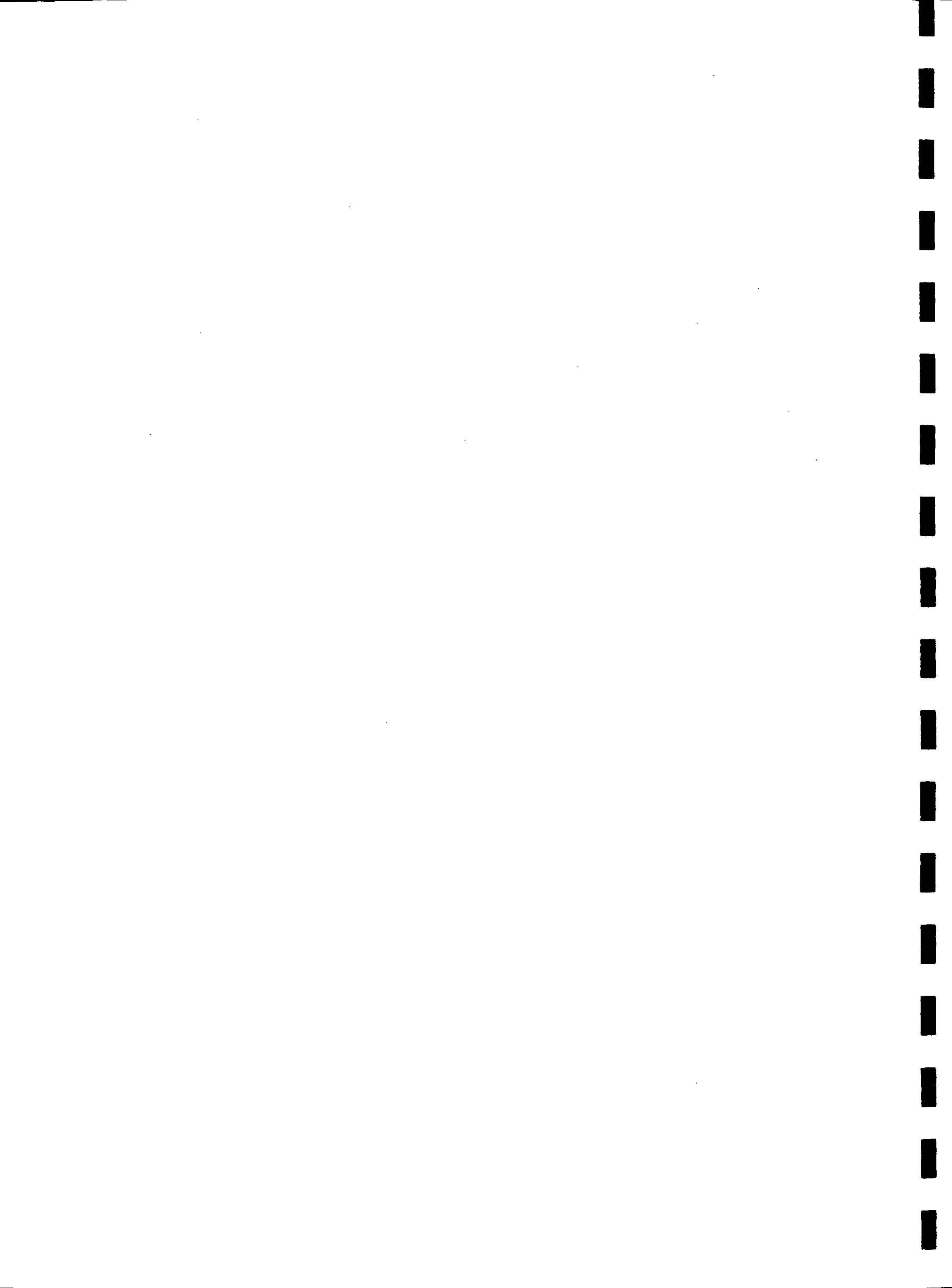
Denig (1843) described the ice house as being 24 by 21 feet and located near the dwelling range on the west side of the fort. It may be that the corner of the building appearing in the Kurz sketches (1851-52) is the ice house (see HS 10)





HS 31, Storerooms (Army)

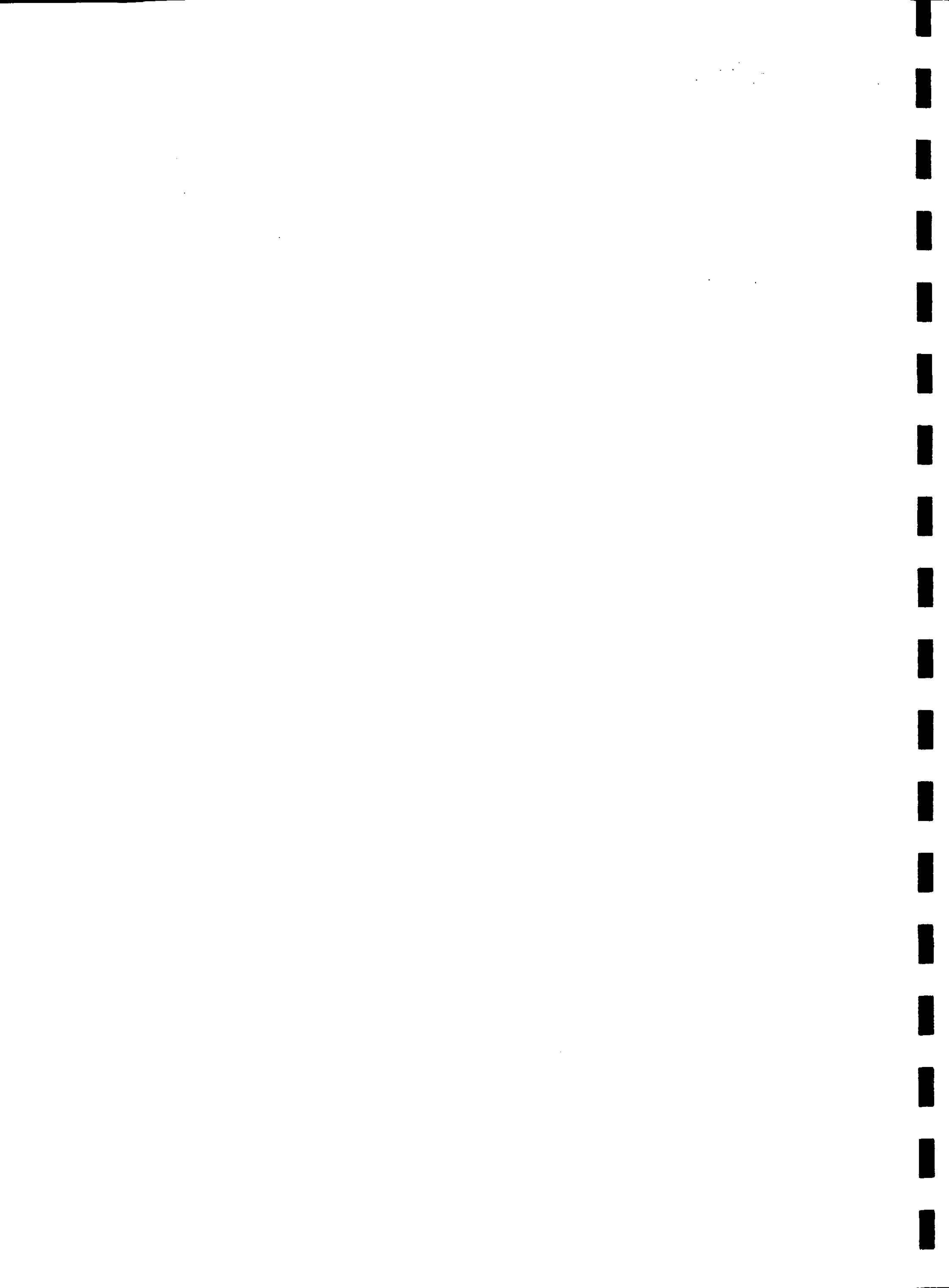
Larpenteur's diary (1864-65) recorded the construction of several buildings by the company of troops occupying the fort that winter. Considering how quickly the troops erected these structures, they must have been crude buildings. Apparently, the first of these were the storerooms: Aug. 23, 1864: "Quarters master Commence building in the Fort making store rooms next to the picketts." Several weeks later, Larpenteur again referred to this: "The Soldiers commenced to saw and to weather board up their flour and stuff stored under the Fort gallery."



HS 32, Sawmill (Army)

Between September 1 and 3, 1864, the soldiers set up a sawmill at the fort. Larpenteur's diary does not make clear if this was inside or outside the walls. A few weeks later the bourgeois noted, "Broke some of the Coggs of the Saw Mill." Not until the next spring was the mill again mentioned when Larpenteur said, "Got the saw mill in readiness."





HS 33, Root House (Army)

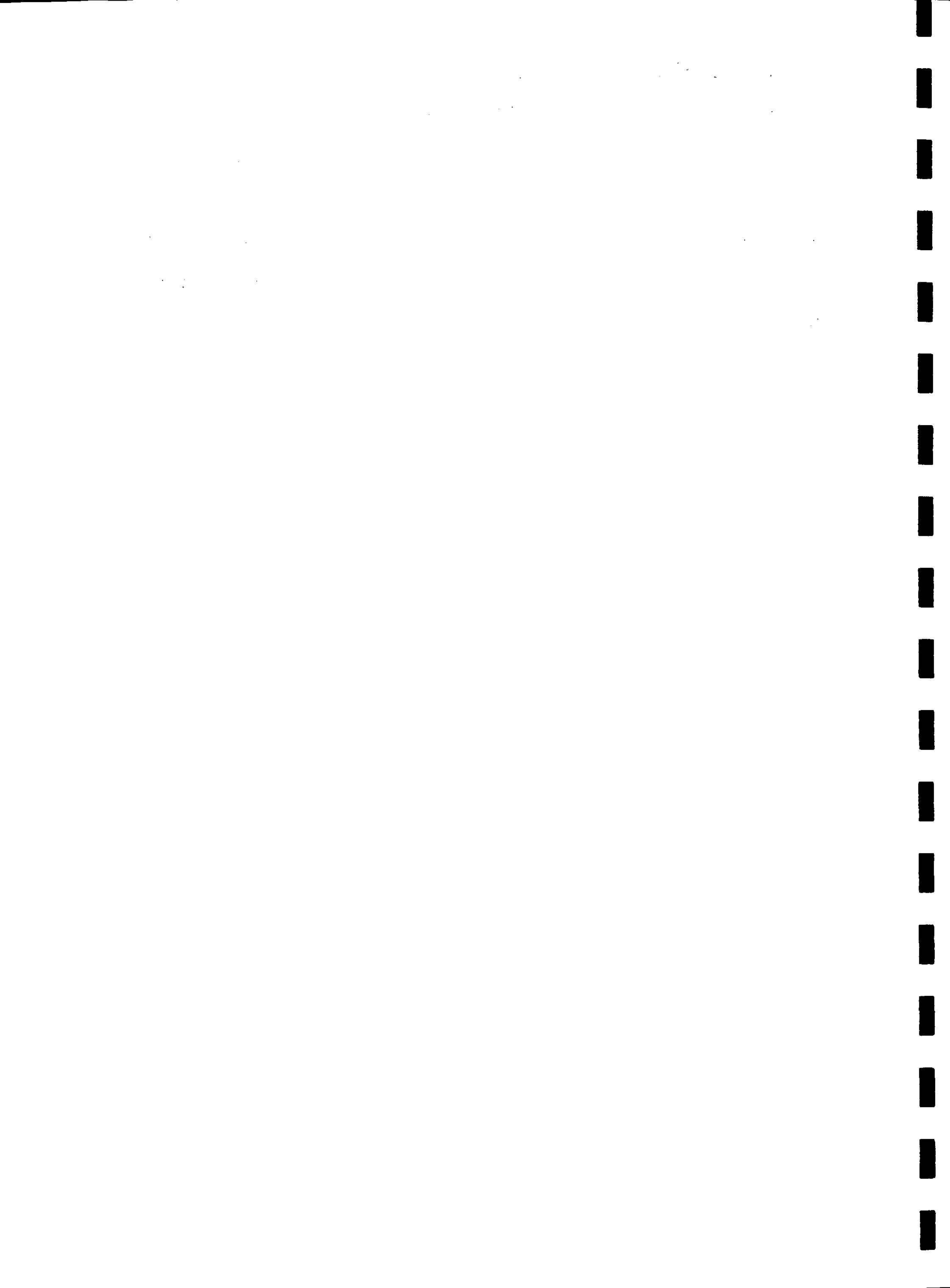
The only notice of the Army's first root house at Fort Union came when it built its second one.





HS 34, Second Root House (Army)

Larpenteur wrote in his diary Sept. 3, 1864, that the soldiers were "working on an other root house or an underground Store room." One week later, he added, "The Soldiers finished their Second root house." Larpenteur possibly used these structures after the troops left the post. He wrote in August 1865, that he "put all the pork & beef into the root house," as well as the salt supply.



HS 35, Winter Quarters (Army)

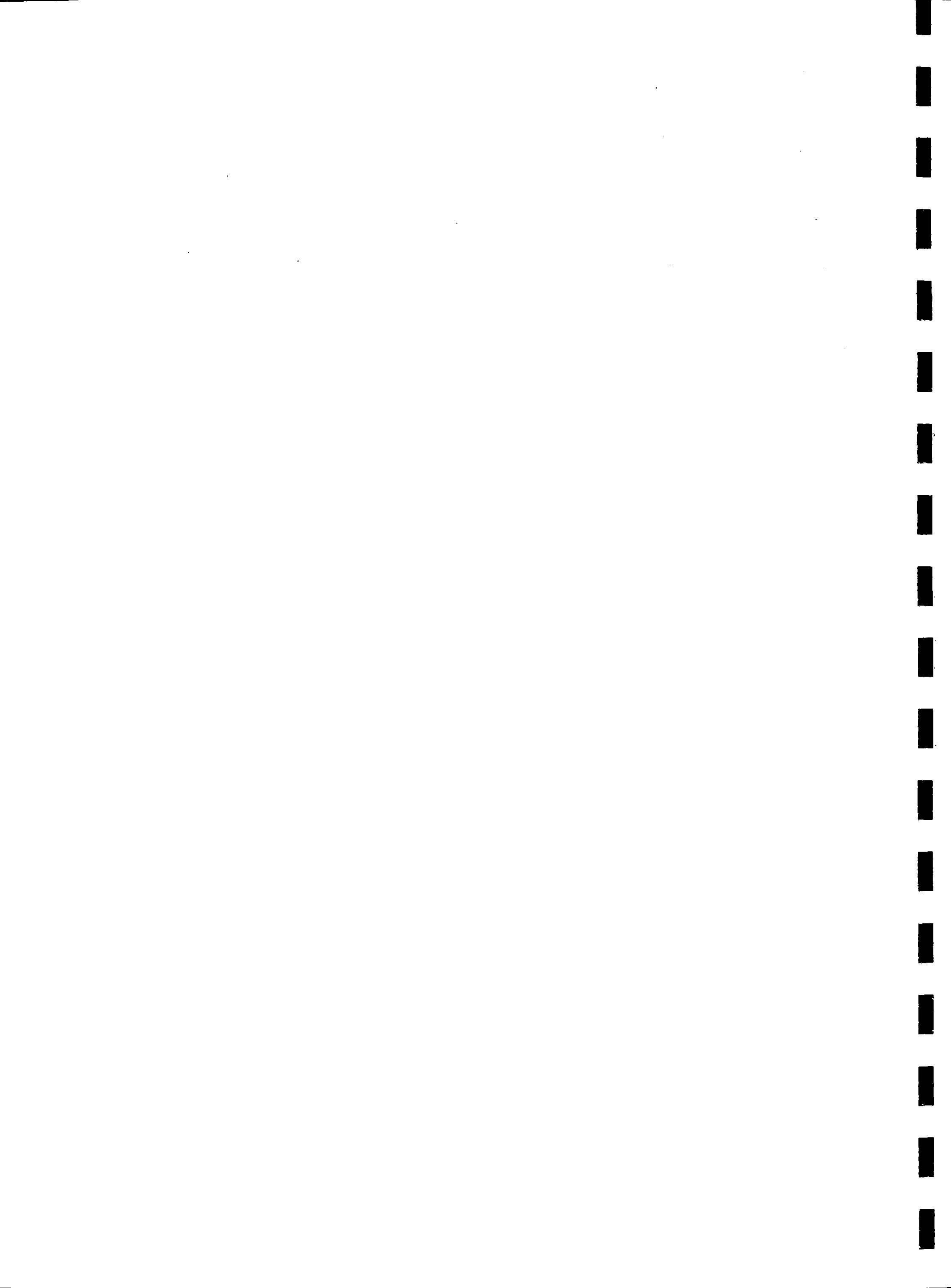
At first the soldiers (1864) lived in "two fine rows of tents . . . in the Center of the Fort." But, as winter approached, they began building winter quarters. Construction began on Sept. 26 and, by Oct. 1, Larpenteur was able to record, "Soldiers finished their houses except making the bunks."





HS 36, Officers Quarters (Army)

At first, the Army commandeered the bourgeois' house. Whether or not the officers lived in it is not clear. But on Oct. 3, 1864, Larpenteur wrote that the troops had gone out to get house logs for officers quarters. Construction began on Oct. 13, and was finished except for the flooring by Oct. 18. They laid the floors on October 26.





HS 37, Blacksmith Shop (Army)

Again, the diary of Larpenteur records the soldiers "making" their own blacksmith shop in the fall of 1864.



HS 38, Ice House (Army)

By Oct. 20, 1864, the Army had finished building its own ice house.





### HS 39, Corral

In the beginning, the horse herd had to come into the fort each night, there being no corral elsewhere. When Maximilian returned to the fort in the fall of 1833, he noted that McKenzie had "lately had a separate place, or park, provided for them." This was a step forward for those living at the fort, for now the horses' manure would not add to the mud and smells of the post. We do not know the whereabouts of this corral.

After Maximilian left Fort Union, McKenzie acquired the property of his competitor, Fort William. He had Fort William's palisades moved up to Union and had them erected on the prairie, east of the fort. Denig described this new structure as an enclosure that was about 150 feet square, and said it was about 200 feet to the east of the fort. At the time he wrote (1843), Denig said the enclosure was being used for storing hay "and other purposes." Yet, the enclosure seems also to have been used as a corral. In his 1835 diary, Larpenteur wrote that "four or five indians got over the Pickets of the old fort mounted two of the best horses opened the [door?] with the intention of taking the whole band." It might be noted that this enclosure was commonly called "the old fort" by the employees. The fences of this enclosure appear in three sketches: Bodmer (1833)--Bodmer's sketch probably is the new "park" mentioned by Maximilian before McKenzie acquired Fort William; Sprague (1843)--both his preliminary sketch and oil; and Father Point (1847)--the only one to show the gate, which was on the west side.





HS 40, Adobe store (Larpenteur)

Dr. Matthews mentioned "the ruined adobe walls to the west of the old fort" which were the "remains of some buildings erected by opposition traders in 1866 and 1867." Among the opposition to Fort Union at that time was none other than Charles Larpenteur, who had been the last bourgeois at Fort Union under the management of Pierre Chouteau, Jr., and Co. Larpenteur now worked for a different company and, in the summer of 1867, returned to Fort Union to establish his own trading enterprise in opposition to Hubbell and his partners.

Larpenteur did not say where he built his structures, the main building being 96 by 20 feet, but throughout the summer his diary is filled with references to his new adobe buildings. He even erected his own bastion. But the real trade now was with the soldiers at Fort Buford and not with the few poor Indians who still came into Union. Before the year was out Larpenteur abandoned his adobes and moved down to Fort Buford to begin again. Other competition at Fort Union about this time included Gregory, Bruguier, and Geowey. This small firm had two wooden buildings outside Fort Union, one they valued at \$100, the other at \$10. Whether to their relief or dismay, the Indian agent at Fort Union ordered the two structures demolished and used for firewood before the Sioux set fire to them. Not knowing the date of the Bedticking sketch, it is not possible to say if these might be the structures shown to the east of the fort. They probably are not Matthews' "adobe" ruins.



### Unnumbered Structures

Still other structures are mentioned in Fort Union's records. These have not been given numbers for several reasons: Some, like the "arsenal," are believed to have been in reality different names for buildings already discussed. Some are so vaguely mentioned that there is doubt of their location and/or existence, such as the "saw pits." Others, like the main gardens, were too far from the fort to be actually a part of it. However, they are important, or have potential importance, to Fort Union's history and are therefore included here.

Fur Press -- In addition to the fur press Denig described as being in the store range, Fort Union had a quite large, wooden press erected outside the fort, between it and the river. The first appearance of this press was in Sprague's 1843 sketches of the post. It again appears, quite clearly, in Hays' 1860 drawings.

Arsenal -- Catlin, in 1832, made two references to the arsenal. On both occasions, visiting Indians were required to leave their weapons in it. No other reference to the arsenal, as such, exists. The only structures known to have contained stores of weapons were the two stone bastions. Perhaps it was one of these to which Catlin referred.

Liquor Shop -- Larpenteur, in his autobiography, referred to a fight in the liquor shop at Christmas, 1858. Perhaps he was referring to the retail store for whites in the stores range.

Saw Pits -- Undoubtedly, like charcoal kilns, there were several saw pits at Fort Union over the years. The only specific reference to them is Larpenteur's 1835 diary, wherein he said a new one was being made over on the south bank of the Missouri river.

Gardens -- During Maximilian's visit in 1833, the summer was too dry to get a garden to grow. However, 1835 was a wet year, and Fort Union's garden of every kind of vegetable prospered. So good was this season that the fort planted several gardens: one in the coulee about one-half mile east of the fort (today called Garden Coulee); one on the south bank of the Missouri (corn, melon, squash, etc.); radishes and "tongue grass" in the distillery house yard; and, if not that year then later, inside the fence around the flag



staff. In 1843, Denig noted still another garden site adjacent to the corral, or "old fort," east of the post. One of the gardens, probably the one in the coulee, was considered to be the main one. Larpenteur made several references to the garden-walk and to fencing around the garden. This fencing appears to have been only to keep out animals. There are several references to both Indians and competing traders stealing from the garden. On one occasion, the rails from the fencing were hauled back to the fort because the Indians were burning them for fuel.

As late as the arrival of trouble with the Sioux, in the 1860's, references to a garden appear in the records. All in all, it should be considered as a fairly successful undertaking.

Due to the problem of prairie fires, hay was not always plentiful in the vicinity of the fort. Just a mile or two above it was a piece of bottom land that produced excellent yields of hay in good years, such as 1843 when Audubon was at the fort. At other times, carters had to haul hay as far as 10 miles, from a large bottom farther down the Missouri, such as Kurz described in 1852.

Chantier (Boat yard, etc.) -- When Fort Union was founded, there were three excellent stands of timber suitable both for constructing the fort and for boat-building: above and below, on the north side, each only 2-300 yards from the fort; and across the Missouri on the south bank. The principal trees were cottonwood, ash, and elm. Undoubtedly, such activities as boat-building moved from time to time, but it would seem that most of such construction

took place right at the fort (Harris, 1843), the suitable timber being rafted down from above, rather than hauled up from below. Boller described in 1863, that the wooded points above the fort "had been nearly all cut away for fuel and building materials," while the point below was still heavily wooded.

The woods across the river were depicted by several artists, particularly Catlin and Bodmer.

Boat Landing -- All the evidence points to the fort's not having a dock or quay on the Missouri river. The reason for this was that the river then, and still, changed its course frequently, now passing immediately under the bluff at the fort, later swinging to the south and throwing up a sandbar between itself and the fort. In Maximilian's time, the river was only 60 feet from the fort (1833). But when Audubon arrived (1843), he and his companions had to make a fair walk to reach the fort while their belongings were carried on a cart. Larpenteur (1864) noted in his diary, "It Seems that the main Channel is about comming on this side." Later he complained, "Commenced to unload boats, obliged to make half loads to cross over the bar in front of the fort. Nearly all the visiting artists showed the river as running close to the front of the fort, especially Wimar (1858) who showed a steamboat tied up directly in front.

Although there was no dock, Larpenteur's diary did mention, "imployed two men in planting four seader [sic] posts on the river bank to fasten the Boats." Besides the steamboats each summer, the

fort maintained a ferry with which to cross the river. No description of this boat has been found except that it was large enough to transport a cart and mule, and alternatively described as a keel boat, ferry flat, and the flat boat.

Quarry -- This quarry, the source of rock for constructing the powder magazine, was far enough distant to discourage Audubon from visiting it because he did not get away from the fort early enough. We have no idea of which direction it was from the post. The carters had a bridge built across a ravine that ran between the quarry and the fort. This could possibly be Garden Coulee. It is likely that traces of this quarry could still be identified today.

Miscellaneous: Several miscellaneous details have been accumulated from the vast body of material on Fort Union. These, each in its own way, may add a little to the structural history of the fur-trading post:

Wyeth, 1833: "The fort is of usual construction . . . and is better furnished inside than any British fort I have seen."

McKenzie, 1833: "The tin Smith arrived here Nov. 29. He is a good workman. I shall find him a most useful artisan."

Hamilton, 1834: "Will you procure . . . 60 or 100 feet of rod iron for lightning rod."

Hamilton, 1835: "The fort was quite a Lake for a month."

Larpenteur, 1835: "Employed four men at making shingles."

Larpenteur, 1835: "John Prill raking the chips off the bank on front of the Fort into the river." and "Employed three men in making steps to go down to the river."



Kurz, 1851: "Tools . . . are scattered everywhere--in the saddle room, in the meat house, in the storeroom, in outhouses, bastions, on the floor--axes are . . . under the beds." (This is the only reference found to outhouses.)

Harkness, 1862: "The fort is on a good site, but fast going to decay."

Gregory, Bruguier, & Geowey (1866-67): "We paid \$100 for one and \$10 for the other log house and made some improvements on them. Pease by permission of Wilkinson tore down the houses & used the logs as fire wood." (These three men were independent traders. Pease was the bourgeois of Fort Union. Wilkinson was the Indian agent.)

Larpenteur, 1865: "Employed . . . the Carpenter at making a plank way from the kitchen to the main house."

Larpenteur, 1865: (Army had left; Larpenteur temporarily responsible for the Army's supplies) "Fenced in between the mens houses and the pickets, to prevent going to the baggage. Made and put up a door and hung it, between the Indians house and the gabled end of the mens house, way to the black smith shop. So the baggage is intirely locked up." In fact, Larpenteur effectively fenced off the southwest corner of the fort.

Hoffman, 1866: "We made two large lanterns out of glazed window sash. The candles were made by moulding them in a piece of 2-1/2 inch pipe. We put them outside at the opposite corners from the bastion and kept them burning dark nights." (Because of the Sioux.)

Matthews, 1869: In 1867, the North Western Fur Company "tore



down Fort Union, although the buildings were still in good condition. A part of the material was sold to the government and used in the building of Fort Buford, and a part retained by the company and used in the building of their new warehouses," near Fort Buford.

Thus came to an end "the principal and handsomest trading-post on the Missouri River." (Denig, 1843). It had a long history, a history of derring-do and enterprise; a history of violence and intellectual pursuits; a history of white man's culture firmly establishing its roots in the land of the Indian and the buffalo.



## Appendix A

### List of Historic Structures, Fort Union

HS 1 Palisades  
2 Southwest Bastion  
3 Northeast Bastion  
4 Front Gate  
5 Back Gate  
6 Indians' & Artisans House  
7 Bourgeois' House  
8 Kitchen  
9 Dwelling Range  
10 Unknown Structure  
11 Store Range  
12 Powder Magazine  
13 Flag Staff  
14 Stables  
15 Stable, Buffalo Calves  
16 Hen House  
17 Artists' Studio  
18 Cooper's Shop  
19 Milk House & Dairy  
20 Coal House

HS 21 Building, Pens, Outside  
22 Building, East of Ravine  
23 Bell Tower  
24 New Tower  
25 Cemetery  
26 Distilling Building  
27 Kilns  
28 Fence & Structures, Outside  
29 Carpenter Shop  
30 Ice House  
31 Storerooms (Army)  
32 Sawmill "  
33 Root House "  
34 Second Root House (Army)  
35 Winter Quarters "  
36 Officers Quarters "  
37 Blacksmith Shop "  
38 Ice House "  
39 Corral  
40 Adobe Store (Larpenteur)

### Unnumbered

Fur press  
Arsenal  
Liquor Shop  
Saw Pits  
Gardens

Hayfields  
Chantier  
Boat Landing  
Quarry  
Miscellaneous

## APPENDIX B

### DESCRIPTION OF FORT UNION

By EDWIN T. DENIG, July 30, 1843

FORT UNION, the principal and handsomest trading-post on the Missouri River, is situated on the north side, about six and a half miles above the mouth of the Yellowstone River; the country around it is beautiful, and well chosen for an establishment of the kind. The front of the fort is but a few steps, say twenty-five, from the bank of the Missouri. Behind the fort is a prairie with an agreeable ascent to the commencement of the bluffs, about one and a half miles in width and two in length, surrounded at the borders with high hills, or bluffs. Above and below, at the distance of two hundred yards commence the points, or bottoms, of the Missouri, which contain great quantities of cottonwood, ash, and elm, supplying the fort with fuel, boat and building timber. The fort itself was begun in the fall of 1829, under the superintendence of Kenneth McKenzie, Esq., an enterprising and enlightened Scotchman, and now a well known and successful merchant in St. Louis. As the immense deal of work about such an undertaking had but few men to accomplish it, it was not wholly completed till after the expiration of four years, and indeed since then has been greatly improved by the other gentlemen who subsequently took charge of the fort. The plan of the fort is laid nearly due north and south, fronting 220 feet and running back 240 feet. This space is enclosed by pickets or palisades of twenty feet high, made of large hewn cottonwood, and founded upon stone. The pickets are fitted into an open framework in the inside, of sufficient strength to counterbalance their weight, and sustained by braces in the form of an X, which reaches in the inside from the pickets to the frame, so as to make the whole completely solid and secure, from either storm or attack. On the southwest and northeast corners, are bastions, built entirely out of stone, and measuring 24 feet square, over 30 feet high, and the wall three feet thick; this is whitewashed. Around the tops of the second stories are balconies with railings, which serve for observatories, and from the tops of the roofs are two flag-staffs 25 feet high, on which wave the proud Eagle of America. Two weathercocks, one a Buffalo bull, the other an Eagle, complete the outsides. In the interior of the northeast bastion are placed opposite their port-holes one three-pounder iron cannon and one brass swivel, both mounted, and usually kept loaded, together with a dozen muskets in case of a



sudden attack from the Indians. Balls, cartridges, and other ammunition are always in readiness for the use of the same. The contents of the southeast bastion are similar to those of the other, with the exception of the cannon, having but one small swivel. These and other preparations render the place impregnable to any force without, not furnished with artillery. The principal building in the establishment, and that of the gentleman in charge, or Bourgeois, is now occupied by Mr. Culbertson, one of the partners of the Company. It is 78 feet front by 24 feet depth, and a story and a half high. The front has a very imposing appearance, being neatly weather-boarded, and painted white, and with green window-shutters; it is roofed with shingle, painted red to preserve the wood. In the roof in front are four dormer windows, which serve to give light to the attic. The piazza in front adds much to the comfort and appearance, the posts are all turned, and painted white. It serves as a pleasant retreat from the heat of the day, and is a refreshing place to sleep at night when mosquitoes are plenty. Mr. Audubon, the naturalist, now here upon scientific researches, together with his secretary, Mr. Squires, prefer this hard bed to the more luxurious comforts of feathers and sheets. The interior of this building is handsomely papered and ornamented with portraits and pictures, and portioned off in the following manner. Mr. Culbertson has the principal room, which is large, commodious, and well-furnished; from it he has a view of all that passes within the fort. Next to this is the office, which is devoted exclusively to the business of the Company, which is immense. This department is now under my supervision (viz., E. T. Denig). These two rooms occupy about one-half the building. In the middle is a hall, eight feet wide, which separates these rooms from the other part. In this is the mess-room, which is nearly equal in size to that of Mr. Culbertson. Here the Bourgeois, taking his seat at the head of the table, attends to its honors, and serves out the luxuries this wilderness produces to his visitors and clerks, who are seated in their proper order and rank. The mechanics of the fort eat at the second table. Adjoining this room is the residence of Mr. Denig. In the upper story are at present located Mr. Audubon and his suite. Here from the pencils of Mr. Audubon and Mr. Sprague emanate the splendid paintings and drawings of animals and plants, which are the admiration of all; and the Indians regard them as marvellous, and almost to be worshipped. In the room next to this is always kept a selection of saddlery and harness, in readiness for rides of pleasure, or



for those rendered necessary for the protection of the horses which are kept on the prairie, and which suffer from frequent depredations on the part of the Indians, which it is the duty of the men at the fort to ward off as far as possible. The next apartment is the tailor's shop, so placed as to be out of the way of the Indian visitors as much as possible, who, were it at all easy of access, would steal some of the goods which it is necessary to have always on hand. So much for the principal house. On the east side of the fort, extending north and south, is a building, on range, all under one roof, 127 ft. long by 25 ft. deep, and used for the following purposes. A small room at the north end for stores and luggage; then the retail store, in which is kept a fair supply of merchandise, and where all white persons buy or sell. The prices of all goods are fixed by a tariff or stationary value, so that no bargaining or cheating is allowed; this department is now in charge of Mr. Larpenteur. Adjoining this is the wholesale warehouse, in which is kept the principal stock of goods intended for the extensive trade; this room is 57 ft. in length. Next is a small room for the storage of meat and other supplies. At the end is the press room, where all robes, furs, and peltries are stored. The dimensions extend to the top of the roof inside, which roof is perfectly waterproof. It will contain from 2800 to 3000 packs of Buffalo robes. All this range is very strongly put together, weather-boarded outside, and lined with plank within. It has also cellar and garret. Opposite this, on the other side of the fort enclosure, is a similar range of buildings 119 ft. long by 21 ft. wide, perhaps not quite so strongly built, but sufficiently so to suit all purposes. The height of the building is in proportion to that of the pickets; it is one large story high, and shingle-roofed. This is partitioned off into six different apartments of nearly equal size. The first two are appropriated to the use of the clerks who may be stationed at the post. The next is the residence of the hunters, and the remaining three the dwellings of the men in the employ of the Company. An ice-house 24 by 21 ft. is detached from this range, and is well filled with ice during the winter, which supply generally lasts till fall. Here is put all fresh meat in the hot weather, and the fort in the summer season is usually provisioned for ten days. The kitchen is behind the Bourgeois' house on the north side, and about two steps from the end of the hall,--so situated for convenience in carrying in the cooked victuals to the mess-room. Two or three cooks are usually employed therein, at busy times more. The inside frame-work of the fort, which sustains the pickets, forms all around



a space about eight feet wide described by the braces or X, and about fifteen feet high. A balcony is built on the top of this, having the summit of the X for its basis, and is formed of sawed plank nailed to cross beams from one brace to another. This balcony affords a pleasant walk all round the inside of the fort, within five feet of the top of the pickets; from here also is a good view of the surrounding neighborhood, and it is well calculated for a place of defence. It is a favorite place from which to shoot Wolves after night-fall, and for standing guard in time of danger. The openings that would necessarily follow from such a construction, under the gallery, are fitted in some places with small huts or houses. Behind the kitchen there are five of such houses, leaving at the same time plenty of space between them and the other buildings. The first of these is a stable for Buffalo calves, which are annually raised here, and a hen-house, well lined, plastered, and filled with chickens; third, a very pleasant room intended as an artist's work-room, fourth, a cooper's shop, and then the milk house and dairy. Several houses of the same kind and construction are also built on the west and south sides; one contains coal for the blacksmith, and ten stables, in all 117 ft. long, and 10 ft. wide, with space enough to quarter fifty horses. These are very useful, as the Company have always a number of horses and cattle here. These buildings, it will be understood, do not interfere with the Area or Parade of the fort, and are hardly noticed by a casual observer, but occupy the space under the balcony that would otherwise be useless and void. Fifty more of the same kind could be put up without intruding upon any portion of the fort used for other purposes. On the front side, and west of the gate, is a house 50 by 21 ft., which, being divided into two parts, one half opening into the fort, is used as a blacksmith's, gunsmith's, and tinner's shop; the other part is used as a reception-room for Indians, and opens into the passage, which is made by the double gate. There are two large outside gates to the fort, one each in the middle of the front and rear, and upon the top of the front one is a painting of a treaty of peace between the Indians and whites executed by J. B. Moncr vier, Esq. These gates are 12 ft. wide, and 14 ft. high. At the front there is an inside gate of the same size at the inner end of the Indian reception room, which shuts a passage from the outside gate of 32 ft. in length, and the same width as the gate; the passage is formed of pickets. The outside gate can be left open, and the inside one closed, which permits the Indians to enter the reception room without their



having any communication with the fort. Into this room are brought all trading and war parties, until such time as their business is ascertained; there is also behind this room a trade shop, and leading into it a window through which the Indians usually trade, being secure from rain or accident; there is also another window through the pickets to the outside of the fort, which is used in trading when the Indians are troublesome, or too numerous. The Powder Magazine is perhaps the best piece of work, as regards strength and security, that could be devised for a fort like this. The dimensions are 25 by 18 ft.; it is built out of stone, which is a variety of limestone with a considerable quantity of sand in its composition. The walls are 4 ft. thick at the base, and increasing with the curve of the arch become gradually thicker as they rise, so that near the top they are about 6 ft. in thickness. The inside presents a complete semi-circular arch, which is covered on the top with stones and gravel to the depth of 18 inches. The whole is covered with a shingle roof through which fire may burn yet with no danger to the powder within. There are two doors, one on the outside, the other a few feet within; the outer one is covered with tin. There are several other small buildings under the balcony, which are used for harness, tool-houses, meat, etc. The space behind the warehouse between that and the pickets, being free from buildings, affords a good horse yard, and some shelter to the horses in bad weather. The area of the fort within the fronts of the houses is 189 ft. long, and 141 ft. wide. In the centre of this arises a flag-staff 63 ft. high. This is surrounded at the base by a railing and panel work in an octagonal form, enclosing a portion of ground 12 ft. in diameter, in which are planted lettuce, radishes, and cress, and which presents at the same time a useful and handsome appearance. By the side of this stands a mounted four-pounder iron cannon. This flag-staff is the glory of the fort, for on high, seen from far and wide, floats the Star Spangled Banner, an immense flag which once belonged to the United States Navy, and gives the certainty of security from dangers, rest to the weary traveller, peace and plenty to the fatigued and hungry, whose eyes are gladdened by the sight of it on arriving from the long and perilous voyages usual in this far western wild. It is customary on the arrivals and departures of the Bourgeois, or of the boats of gentlemen of note, to raise the flag, and by the firing of the cannon show them a welcome, or wish them a safe arrival at their point of destination. When interest and affection are as circumscribed as here, they must necessarily be more intense, and partings are more regretted, being accompanied by dangers to the departing friends, and meetings more cordial, those dangers



having been surmounted. The casualties of the country are common to all, and felt the more by the handful, who, far from civilization, friends, or kindred, are associated in those risks and excitements which accrue from a life among savages. About two hundred feet east of Fort Union is an enclosure about 150 ft. square, which is used for hay and other purposes. Two hundred and fifty good cart-loads of hay are procured during the summer and stacked up in this place for winter use of horses and cattle, the winter being so severe and long, and snow so deep that little food is to be found for them on the prairies at that season. There are, at present, in this place thirty head of cattle, forty horses, besides colts, and a goodly number of hogs. A garden on a small scale is attached to the 'old fort' as it is called, which supplies the table with peas, turnips, radishes, lettuce, beets, onions, etc. The large garden, half a mile off and below the fort, contains one and a half acres, and produces most plentiful and excellent crops of potatoes, corn, and every kind of vegetable, but has not been worked this year. In the summer of 1838, Mr. Culbertson had from it 520 bushels of potatoes, and as many other vegetables as he required for the use of the fort. Rainy seasons prove most favorable in this climate for vegetation, but they rarely occur. It is indeed pleasant to know that the enterprising men who commenced, and have continued with untiring perseverance, the enlargement of the Indian trade, and labored hard for the subordination, if not civilization, of the Indians, should occasionally sit down under their own vine and fig-tree, and enjoy at least the semblance of living like their more quiet, though not more useful brothers in the United States.

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Baker Library, Harvard Business School, Mass. The library has a collection on John Jacob Astor and the American Fur Company that was gathered by Kenneth W. Porter for his study of Astor. In general, the collection consists of letter books, miscellaneous letters, maps and plans. It tends to be particularly strong on the subjects of Astoria and Green Bay.

Detroit Public Library, Mich. Available here, in photostat, are two large volumes of Ramsay Crooks' correspondence with John Jacob Astor concerning the fur trade.

Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Neb. At present, the museum has an extensive exhibit of the work of three Western artists, Catlin, Bodmer, and Miller, including a Bodmer sketch of Fort Union. Also made available for a brief scanning was that portion of Maximilian's work that dealt with Fort Union.

Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka. Selected Items from the Records of the U.S. Superintendency of Indian Affairs, St. Louis, Clark Papers.

Library of the Boston Athenaeum, Mass. Manuscript of the Diary of Isaac Sprague, of his trip up the Missouri river with Audubon, 1843.

Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul. Of importance were the Hubbell Papers, covering the period after the American Fur Co. sold Ft. Union; the Edwin Hatch Papers, which describe briefly an Indian agent's stay at Ft. Union; the Gregory, Bruguier and Geowey, Fort Union (D.T.) Papers, 1863-1877, who were competing traders in the mid-1860's; the Overholt Papers, on microfilm, a soldier at Fort Union; and the most valuable Journals of Charles Larpenteur, who kept detailed accounts of life at Ft. Union in the 1830's and again in the 1860's.

Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis. The extensive holdings of this society were indispensable to this study. Of importance were the Kenneth McKenzie Papers, 1796-1858; the Steamboat Collections, 1832-1867; the Indians Collection, wherein



is the important letter of Henry L. Ellsworth, Ft. Leavenworth, to E. Herring, Indian Commissioner, Nov. 8, 1833; the Carl Wimar Papers, and the Wimar sketchbooks and a collection of his sketches; various Ledger Books (containing inventories and invoices) and Account Books of the American Fur Company; the Culbertson Collection, containing a history of Indians by Edwin T. Denig; the Joseph A. Sire Log Books, a steamboat captain, 1841-47; the Andrew Drips Collection, 1820-60; and, the largest of all, the Chouteau Collections, 1828-1869, plus folders of undated material, including the only Fort Union Letter Book known to exist.

Montana Historical Society, Helena. In addition to photographs and sketches of Fort Union, the society has a manuscript by Dr. Washington Matthews, "History of Fort Buford, Dakota Territory, and Locality," 1869.

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1. George Catlin, 1832. First known sketch of Fort Union. Catlin was criticized for his lack of accuracy. Generally, his sketch reflects the scene accurately. Of importance are the point of woods above the fort and the extensive woods across the river. Both these are mentioned in written sources as being the source of supply for construction of the fort and of boats. Although the fort is too distant to give much detail, it does show the palisade and the bastions in place (if not finished) by 1832.



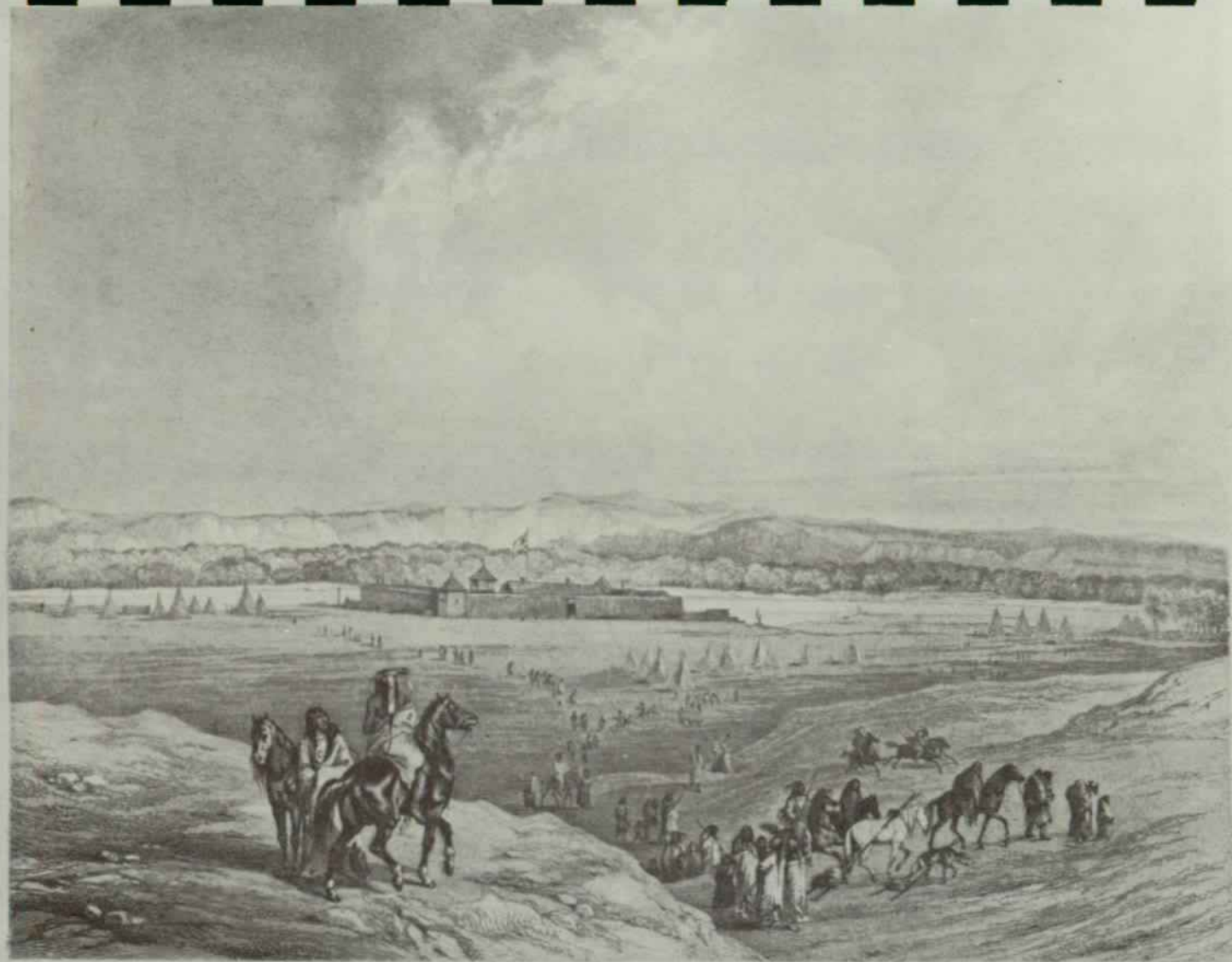


2. Karl Bodmer, 1833. A preliminary sketch showing the fort structures only in outline. This may be compared with the finished illustration, No. 3, below.





3. Karl Bodmer, 1833. First detailed sketch of Fort Union. Besides the 2 bastions, it also shows a "blockhouse" over the main gate--the only illustration to show this structure, which probably did exist at this time. The bourgeois' house appears as the simple 1-1/2-story structure it first was. To the east is a fenced-in area that may be the corral McKenzie built in the fall of 1833. The original sketch from which this lithograph was made has been examined, but photographic copies are not available. Fortunately, there is very little difference between the two.



FORT UNION

*as it appears*

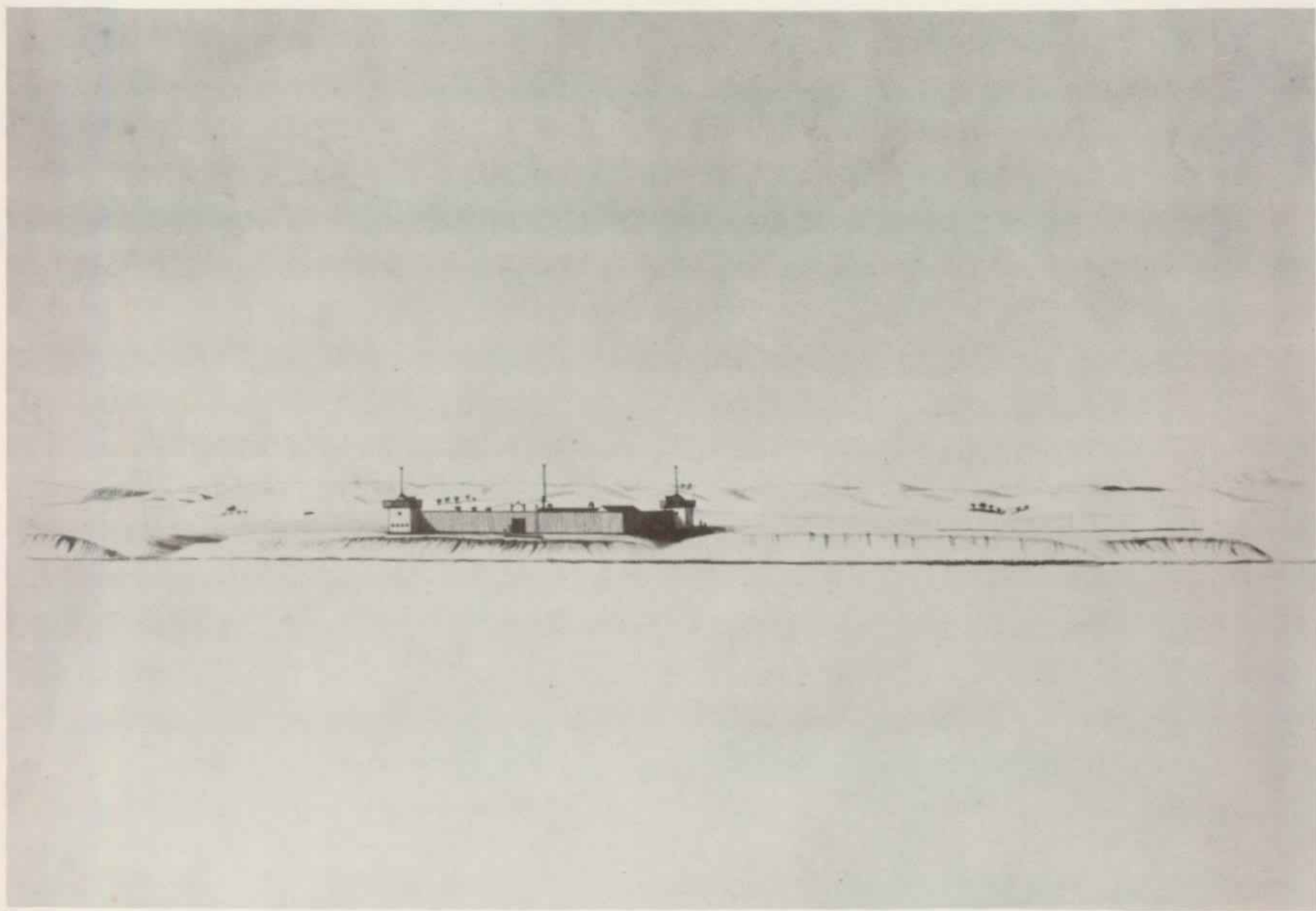
FORT UNION

*as it appears*

FORT UNION

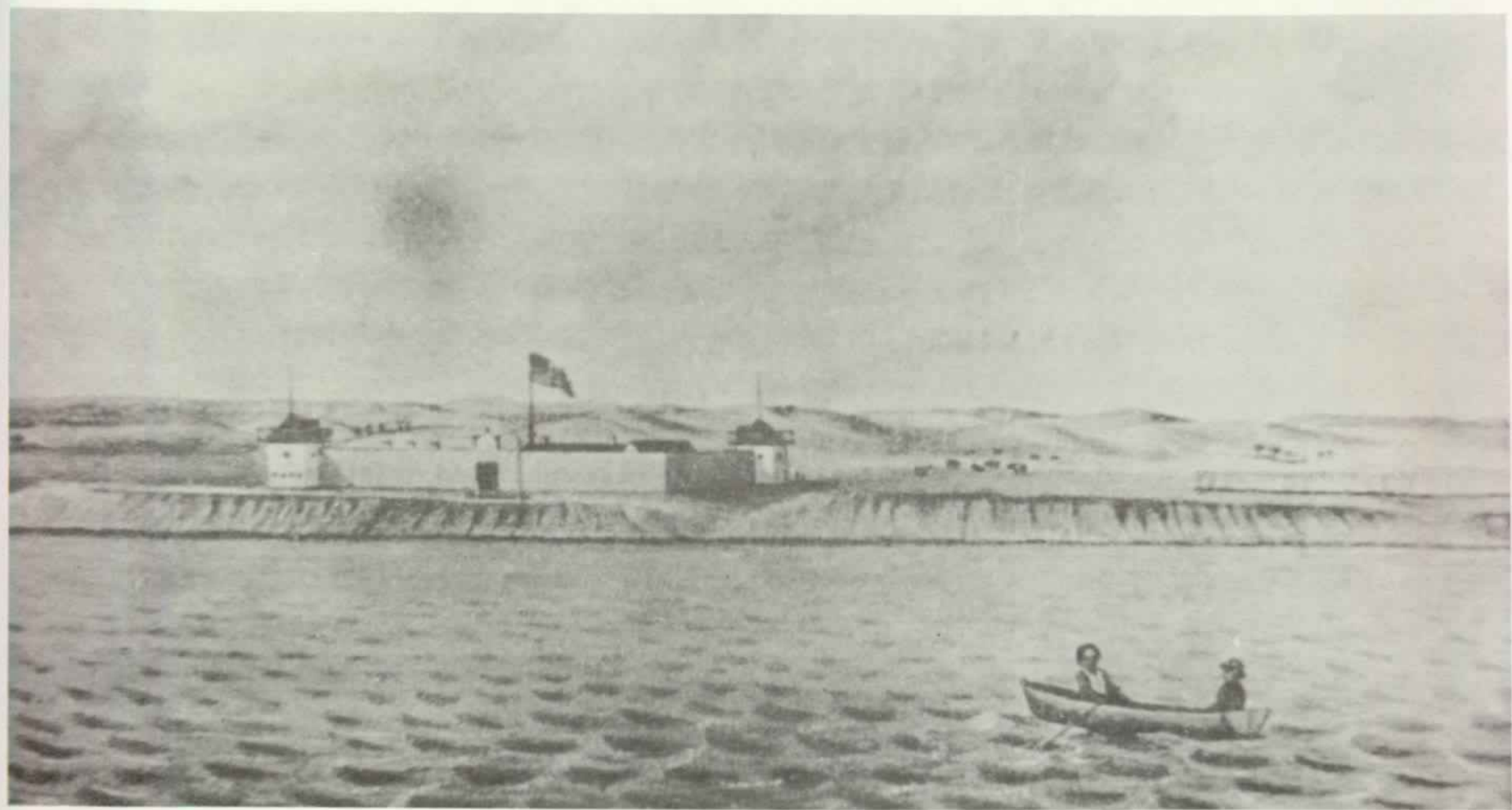
*as it appears*

4. Isaac Sprague, 1843. The bourgeois' house is still not enlarged. The railings and weather vanes have been put on the bastions. A very large fur press stands in front of the fort. To the east, one has a clear idea of the corral built of palisades from Fort William. The small structure over the main gate has not been identified positively, but is thought to be a painting of a peace treaty.

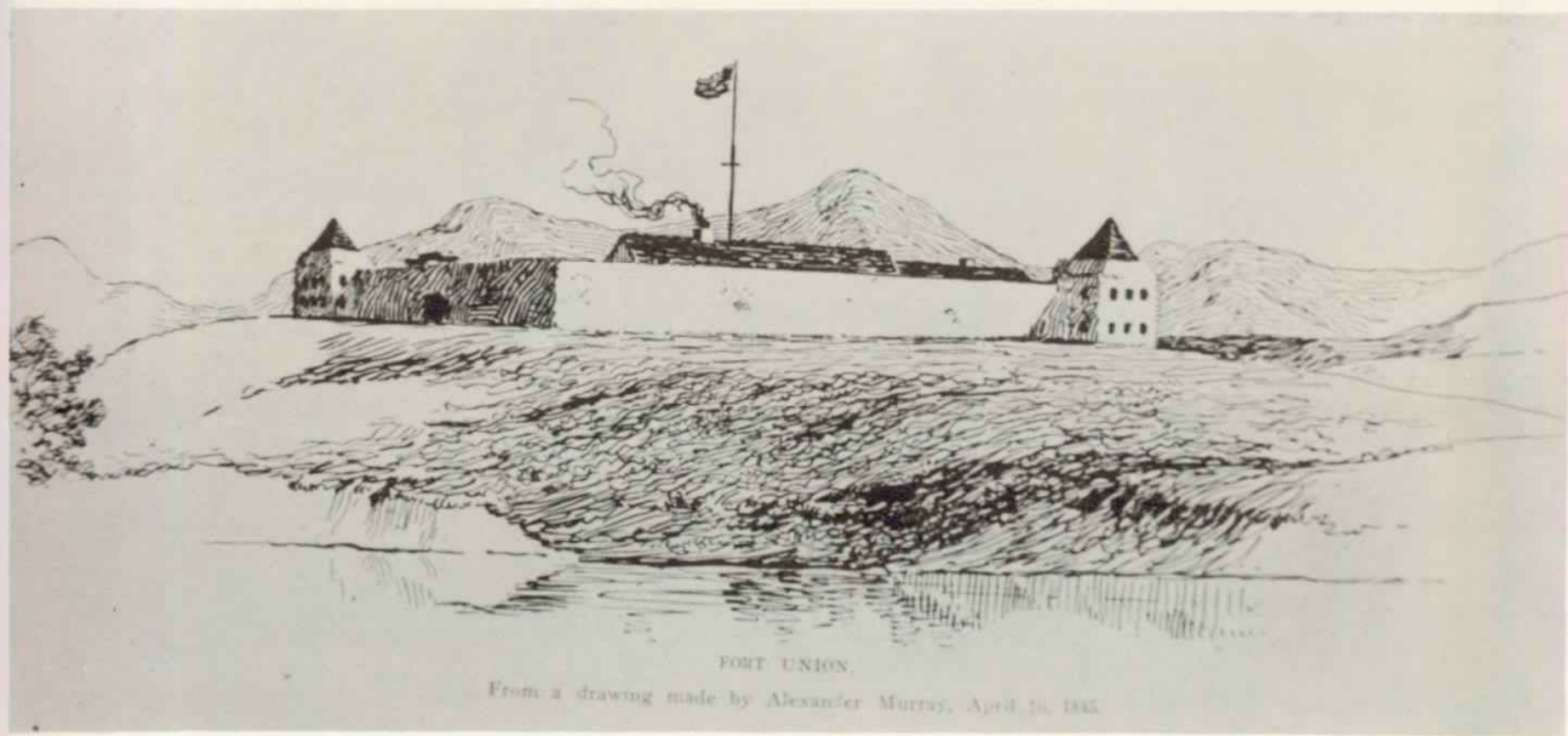




5. Isaac Sprague, 1843. The finished painting probably done from No. 4, above. Here, too, the bastions appear to be whitewashed. One suspects the skiff is the one identified in inventories as worth \$5.



6. Alexander Murray, 1845. Murray was a rather good artist. This sketch is undoubtedly but a poor copy of his original work--which cannot be found. This picture can be treated only in generalities.

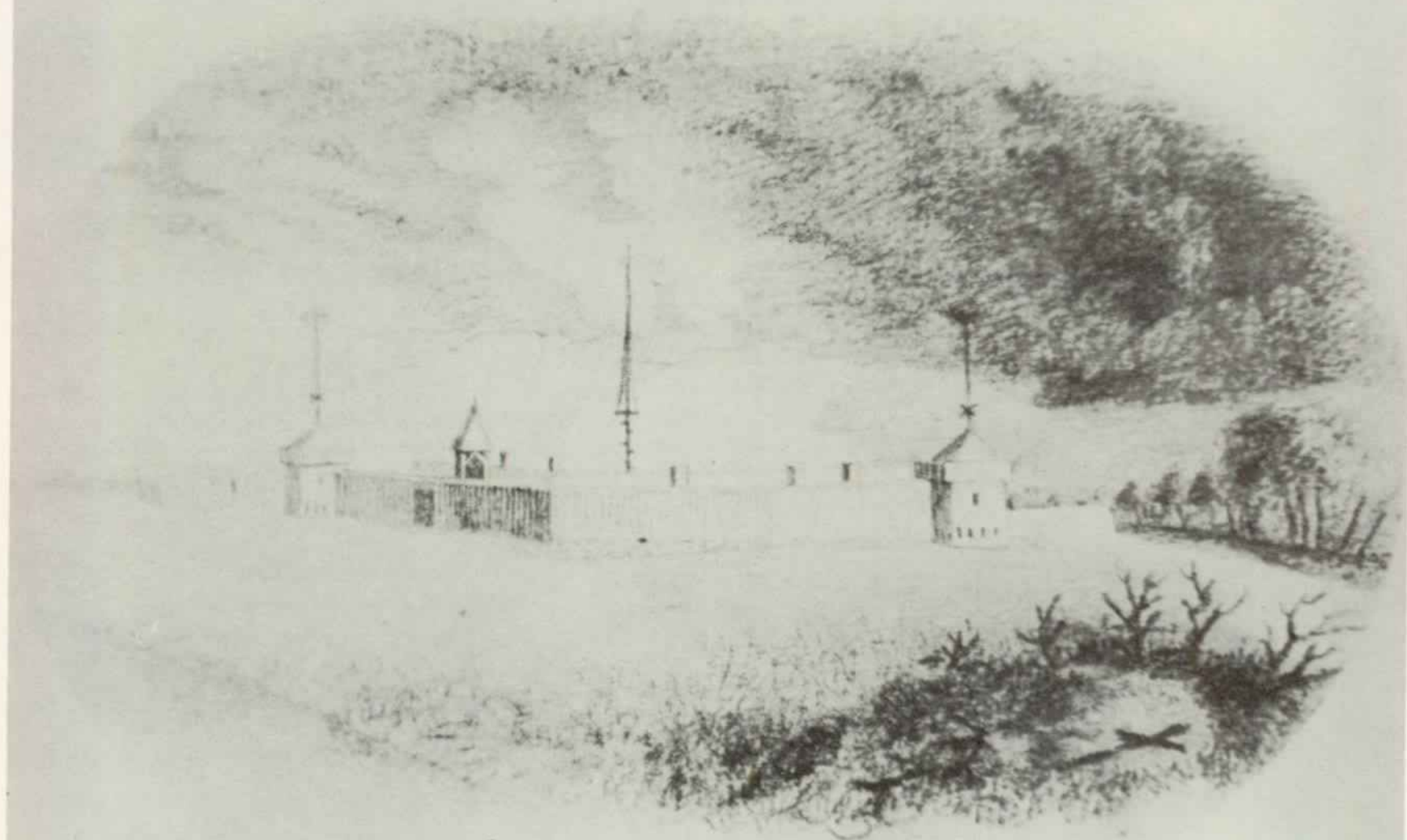


FORT UNION.

From a drawing made by Alexander Murray, April 10, 1865.

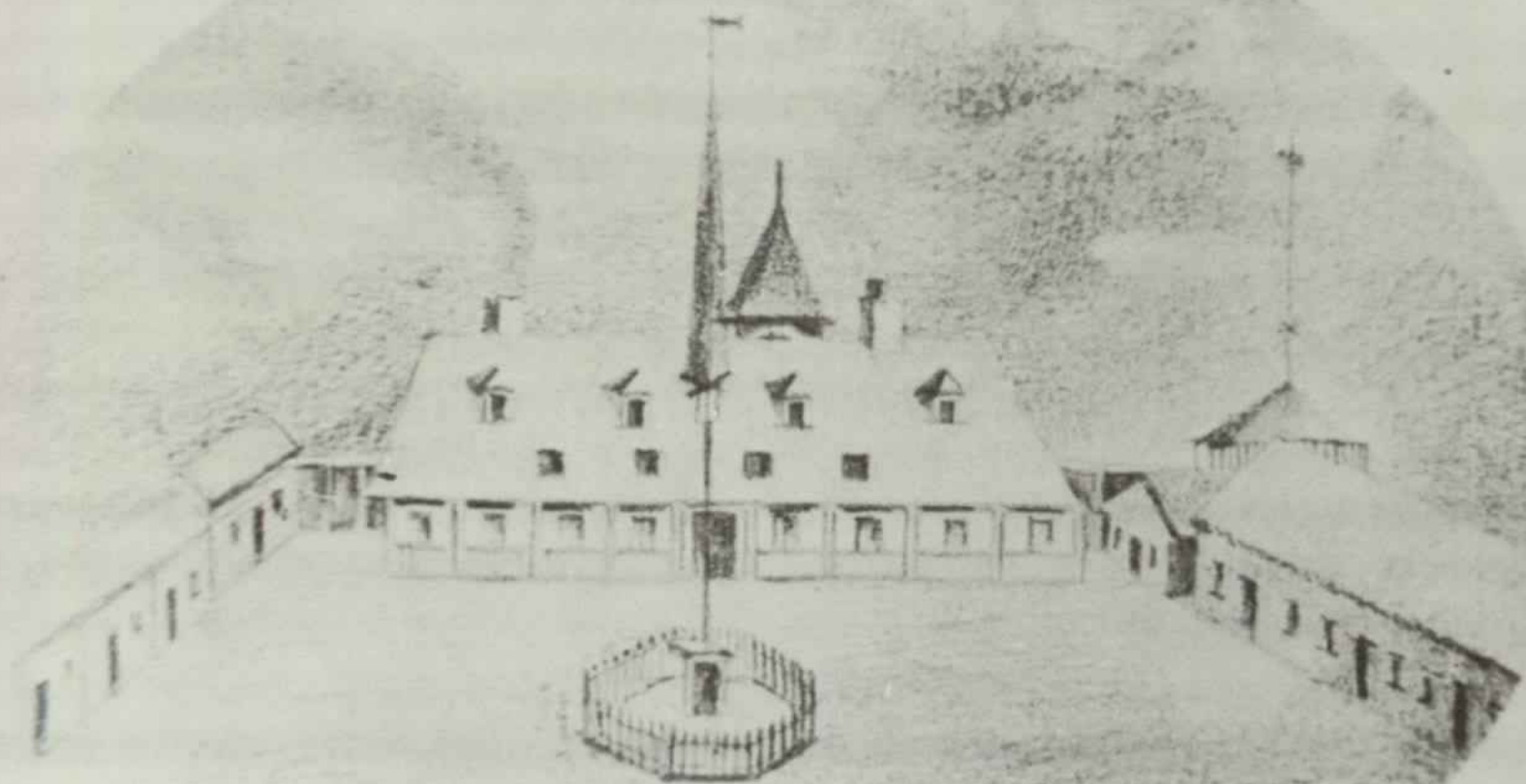


7. Nicholas Point, 1847. The height of the roof of the bourgeois' house shows that it is still only 1-1/2 stories. The new bell tower to the rear (north) thus appears tall by comparison. In this sketch, Point shows the pegs in the flag staff used for climbing. Beyond the fort the corral area and its gateway are to be seen.



Fort union, vu du côté  
du sud.

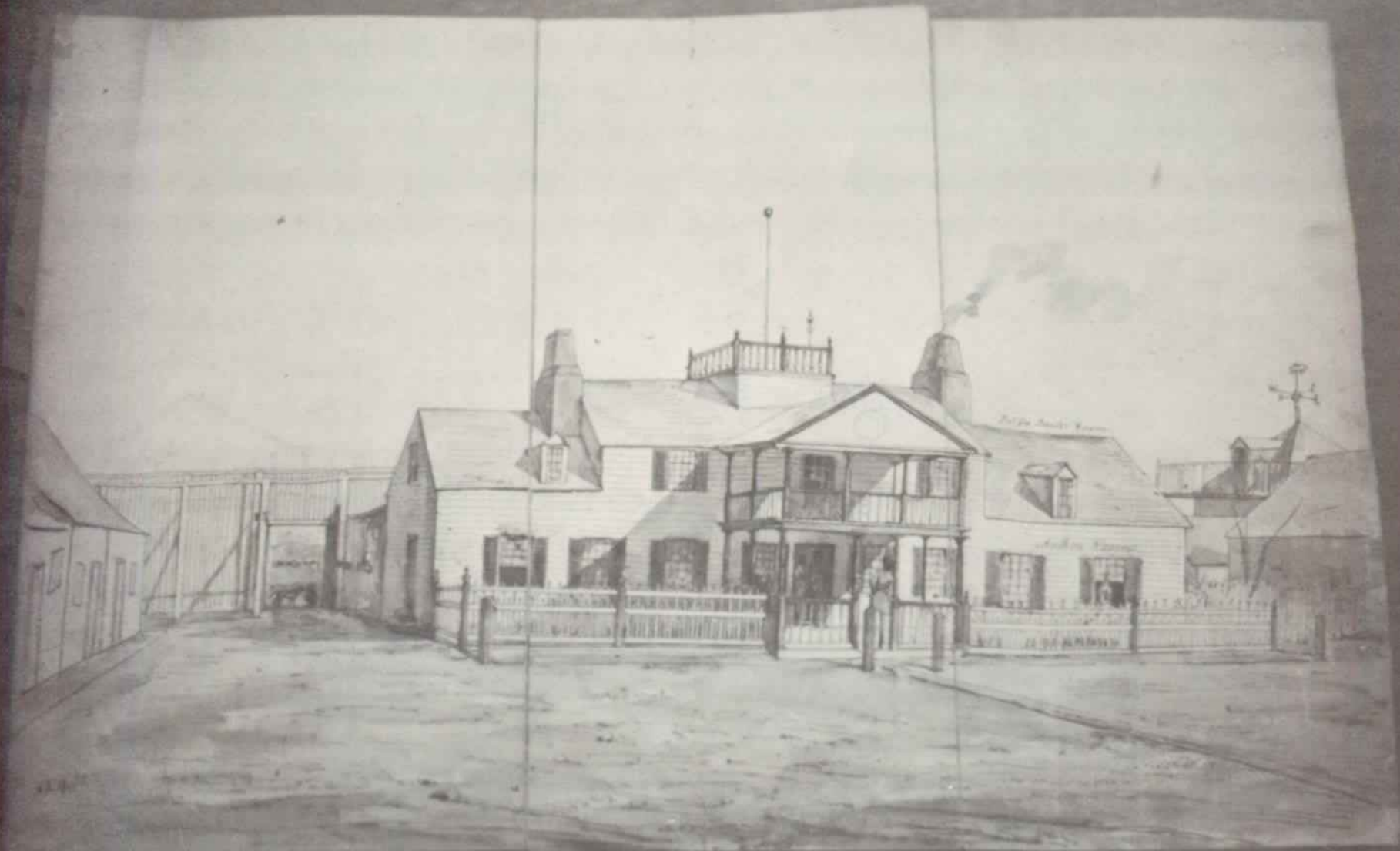
8. Nicholas Point, 1847. This is the only known sketch showing the front of the bourgeois' house while it was still 1-1/2 stories high. The four dormer windows are to be seen, but the four objects in or on the roof of the verandah remain unidentified. The building to the upper right is located about where the magazine is thought to have been, but the magazine is not known to have had windows.



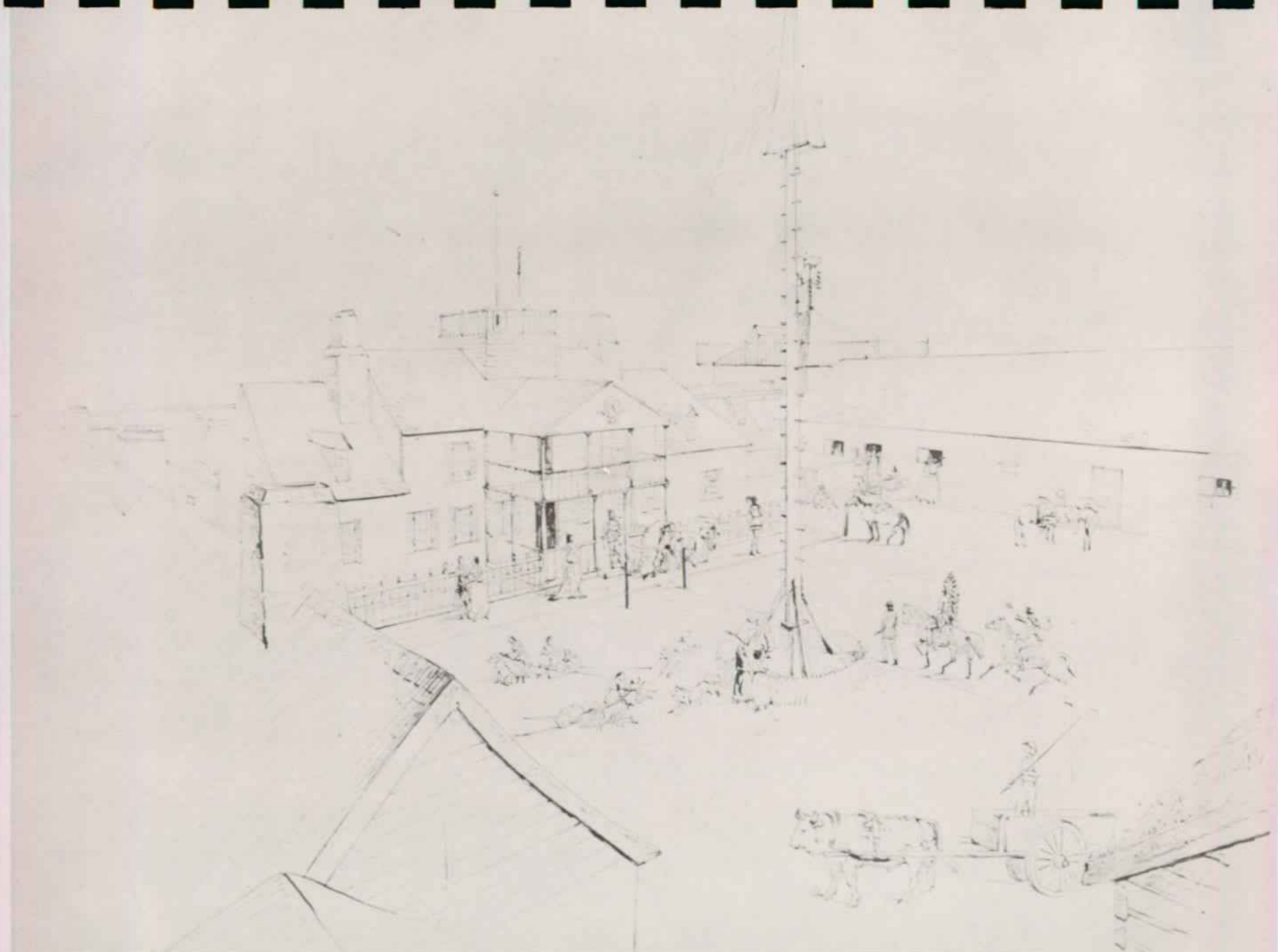
Vue interieure du fort union



9. Rudolph Frederick Kurz, 1851. This remarkable detailed drawing needs little comment. Most noticeable is that the bourgeois' house now has a second floor and a widow's walk. This drawing is filed at St. Louis University with Father Point's (1847) material. However, it is a Kurz beyond doubt. The writing "Authors Room" and "Pere de Smet's Room" is thought to be Denig's writing--but this has not yet been proved.

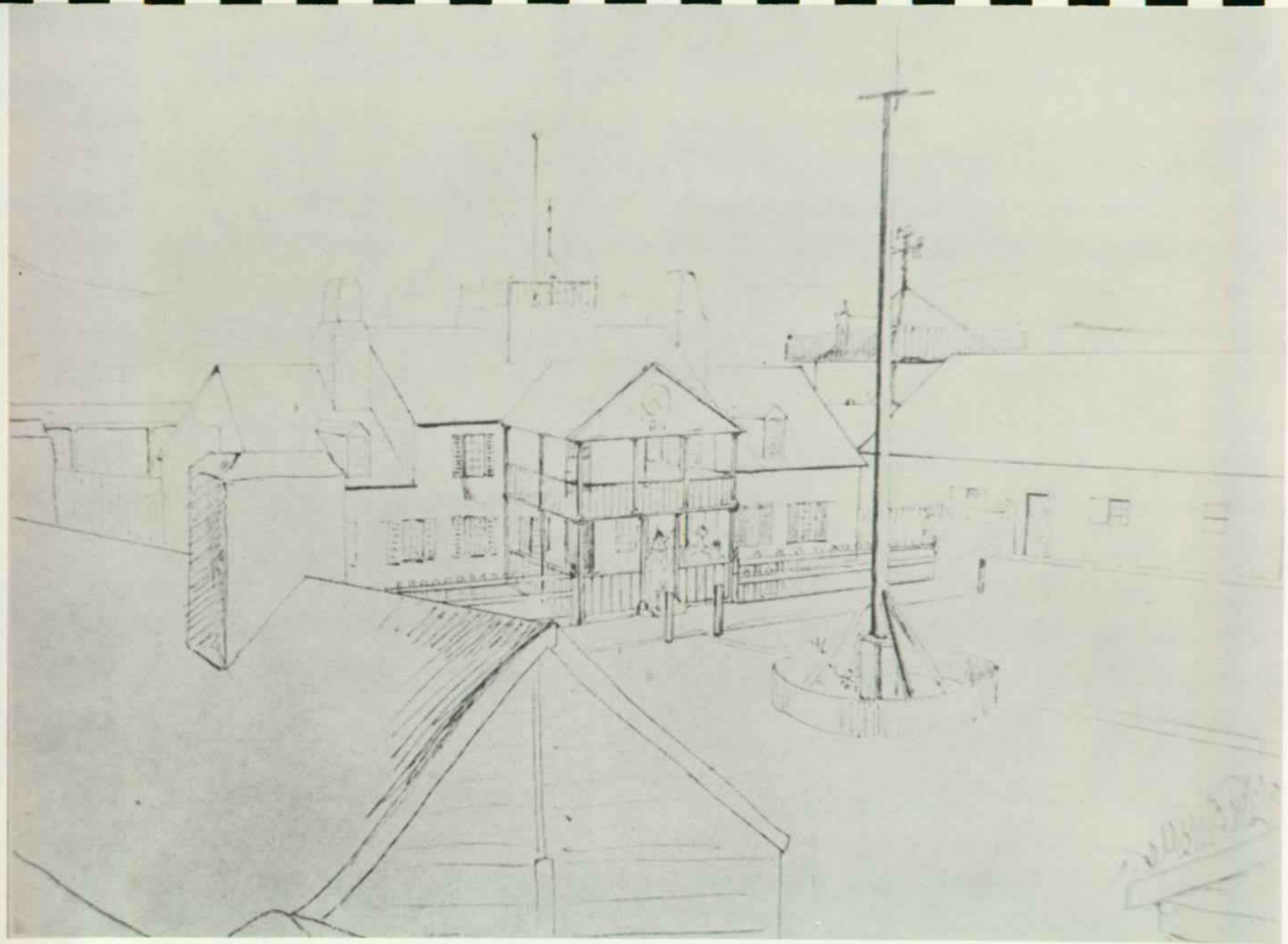


10. R. Frederick Kurz, 1852. Even more remarkable for detail than No. 9. The original is at the Gilcrease Institute. This, as well as No. 9, shows the X construction that supported the palisade.

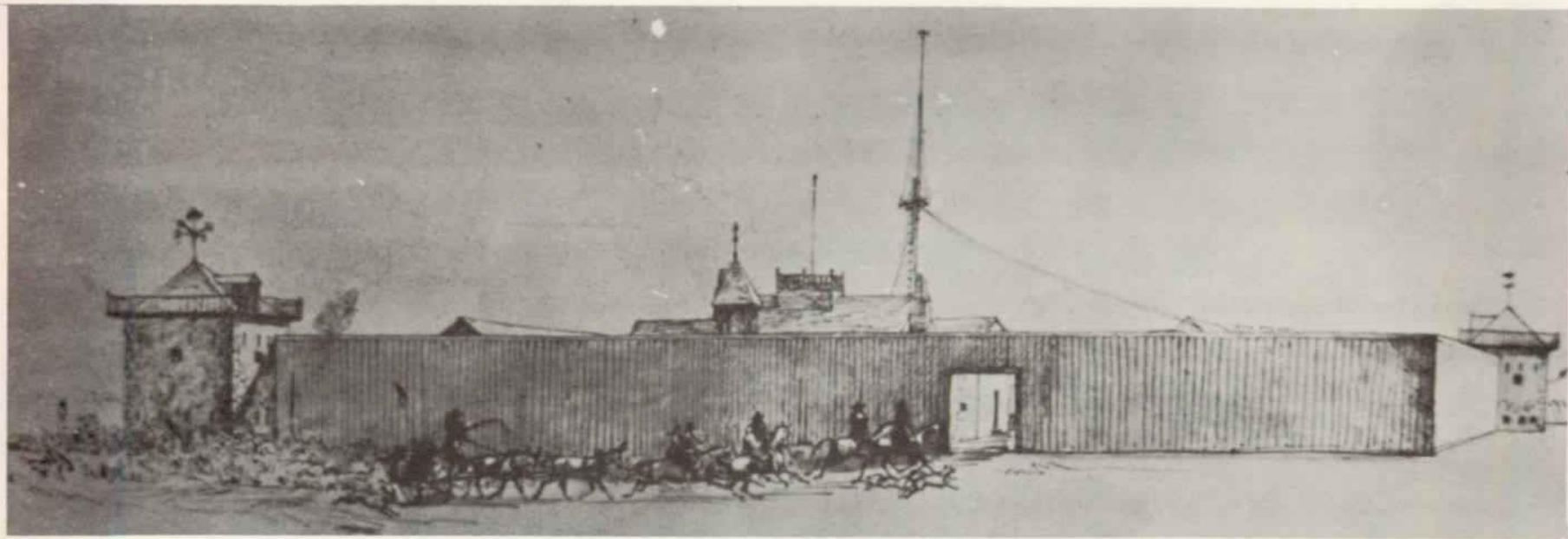




11. R. Frederick Kurz, 1852. Much the same as No. 10, above, but with less detail. It and No. 10 show that the backyard of the bourgeois' house was fenced off from the north gate entrance and, also, on the east side, a fence joins it to the storerooms. In the lower right corner one sees the sod roof of the Indian house--confirmed by written sources.



12. R. Frederick Kurz, 1852. Denig, his two wives, Kurz, and others returning to Fort Union from a party at Fort William. This gives the first details of the tower built near the kitchen, and which is probably a bell tower.





13. R. Frederick Kurz, 1851. The comfortable furniture reflects the ease of transporting supplies up the Missouri by steamboat. On the wall hangs one of Kurz's eagle flags, used for both trade and for recognizing the high rank of visiting chiefs.

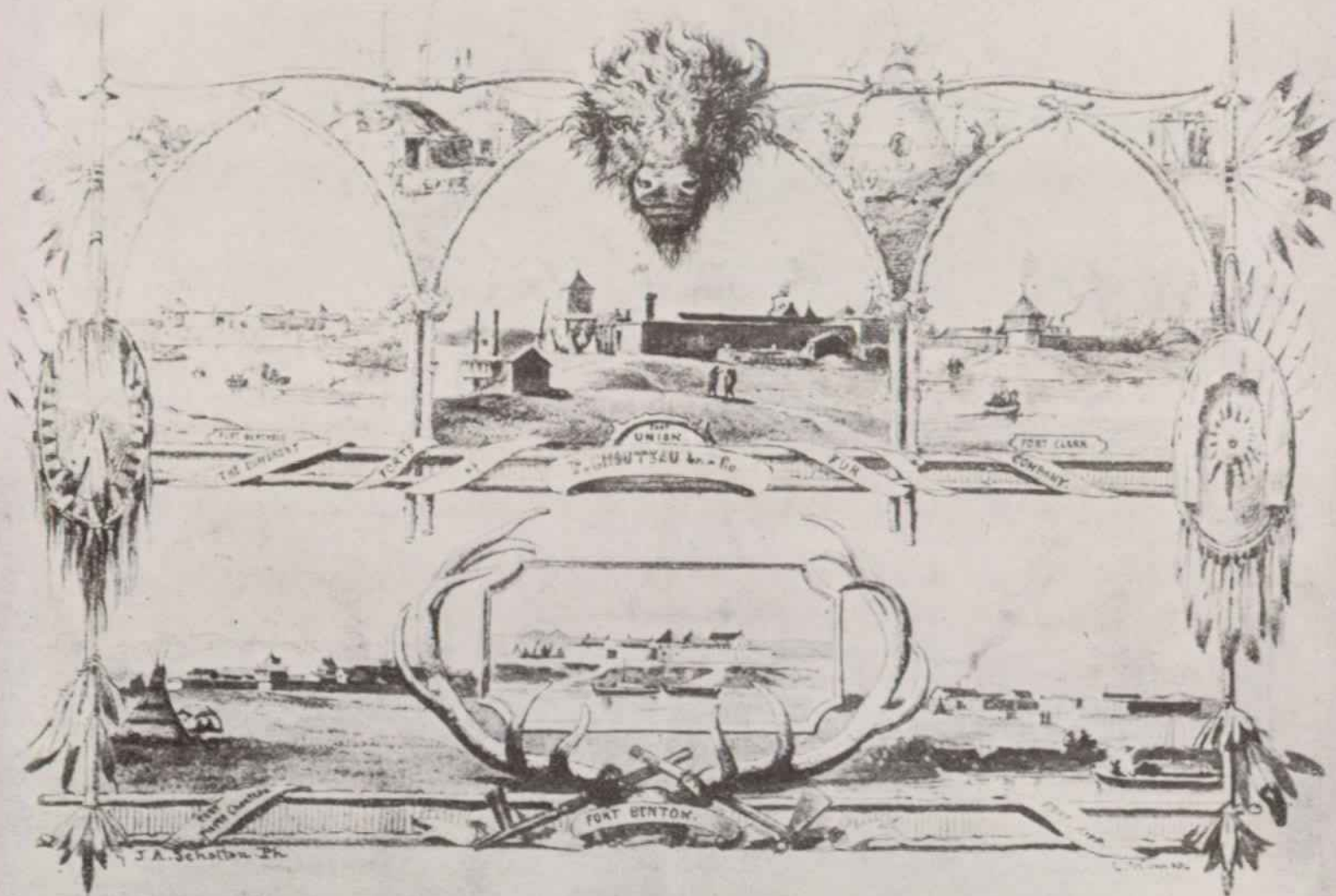


14. John Mix Stanley, 1853. In general, this is similar to the earlier sketches. Stanley omits the north gate. He shows a new tower (to the right) and no flag pole. The new tower has a flag on top, as does the gallery on top of the bourgeois' house.





15. Carl Wimar, 1858. The original of this detailed exterior has not been located. Here we see outbuildings, also a steamboat tied up in front of the fort. This print has lost a little clarity; the one it was taken from shows more clearly that a pen or yard stood on either side of the house next to the wall. Wimar was standing about where the cemetery was said to be. For the first time, we see a third-floor room added to the southwest bastion.



16. William J. Hays, 1860. An excellent drawing from the southwest. The robe press is shown in some detail. This is the first notice of panels in the palisades. This possibly was because of deterioration of the stockade. Some deterioration also seems to be setting in on the rockwork of the bastion, whereon the third-floor room can be seen in detail. A study of the colors on this painting shows that the bastion had lost, at least temporarily, all its whitewash.



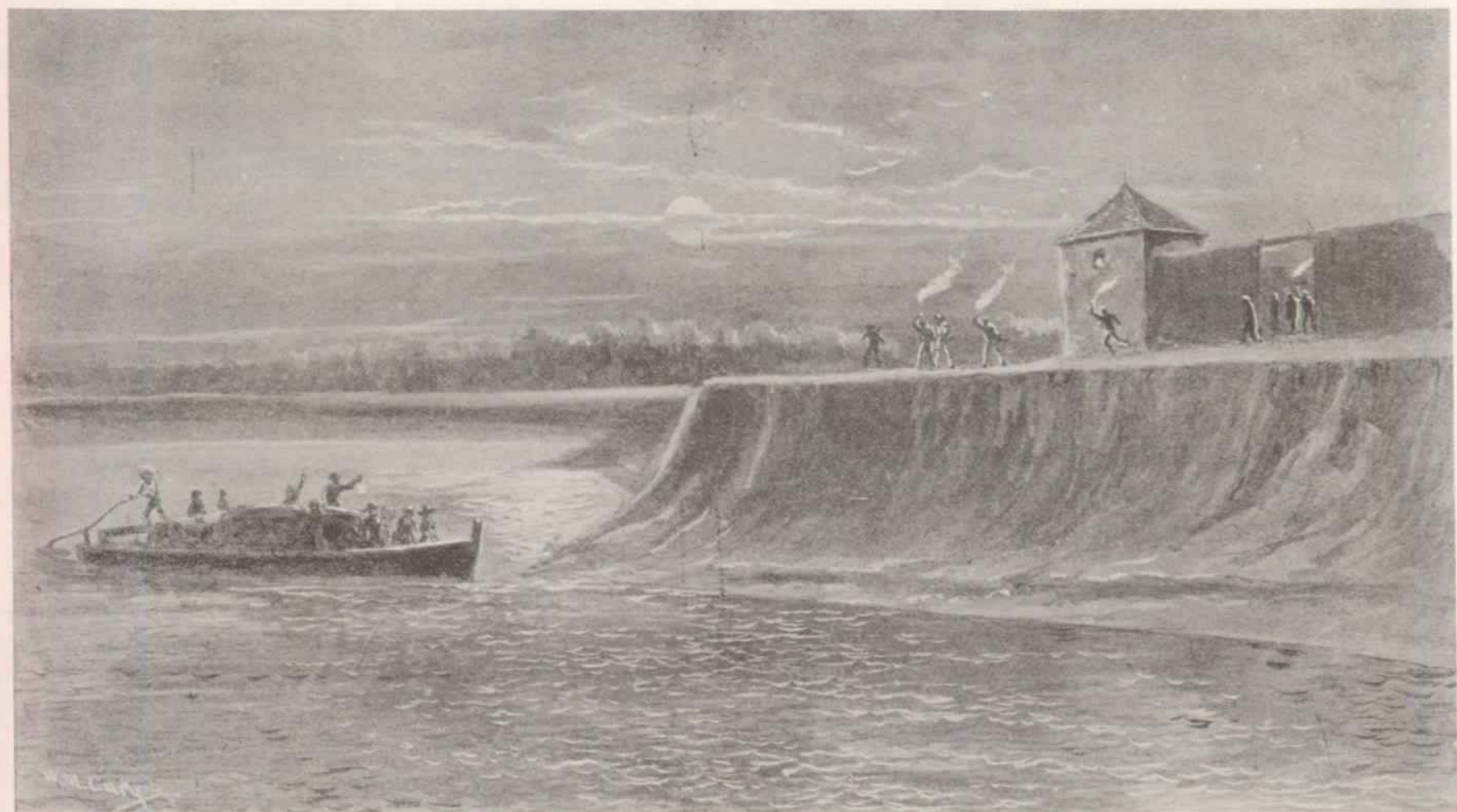


17. William J. Hays, 1860. Essentially the same as No. 16 and probably a preliminary sketch for it.



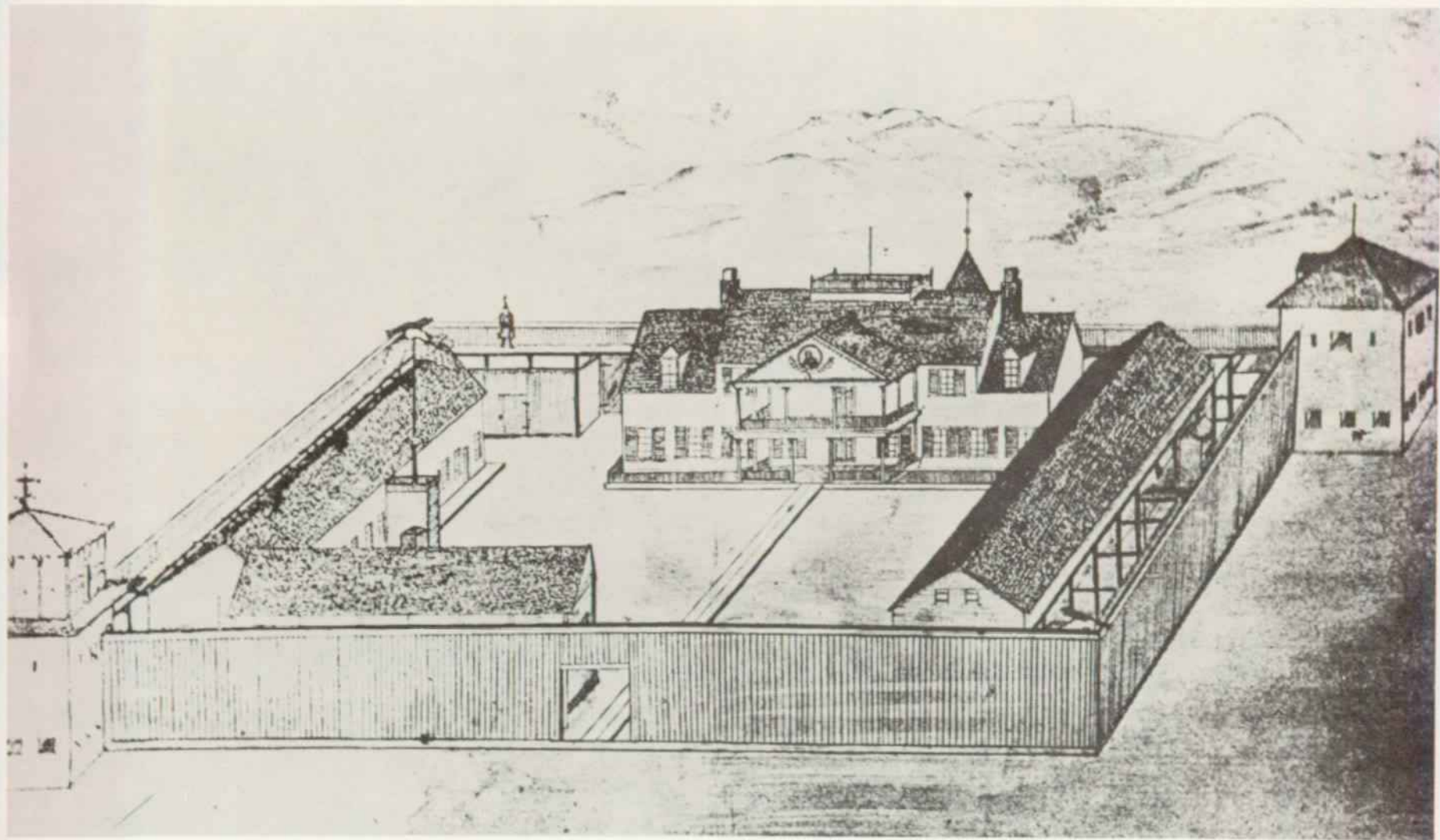
Fort Union, New Mexico  
June 18, 1909  
Mouth of the Yellowstone

18. William Cary, 1861. A poor representation of the fort. The main point of interest is the fort's relationship to the river.





19. Soldier, 1864. The post's new owner, Hubbell, acquired this sketch from an Army deserter who had taken refuge at Fort Union.



20. Photograph, 1866. The new outside staircase is shown for the first time. There are several signs of decay, yet there are excellent details not hitherto disclosed, such as the shutters.





21. Photograph, 1866. Again, signs of wear are showing.



22. Granville Stuart, 1866. One of the last sketches made of the fort before its demolition. The cross-like object to the left (west) of the stockade also appears in a sketch by Sprague. The cemetery was described as being to the east of the fort.

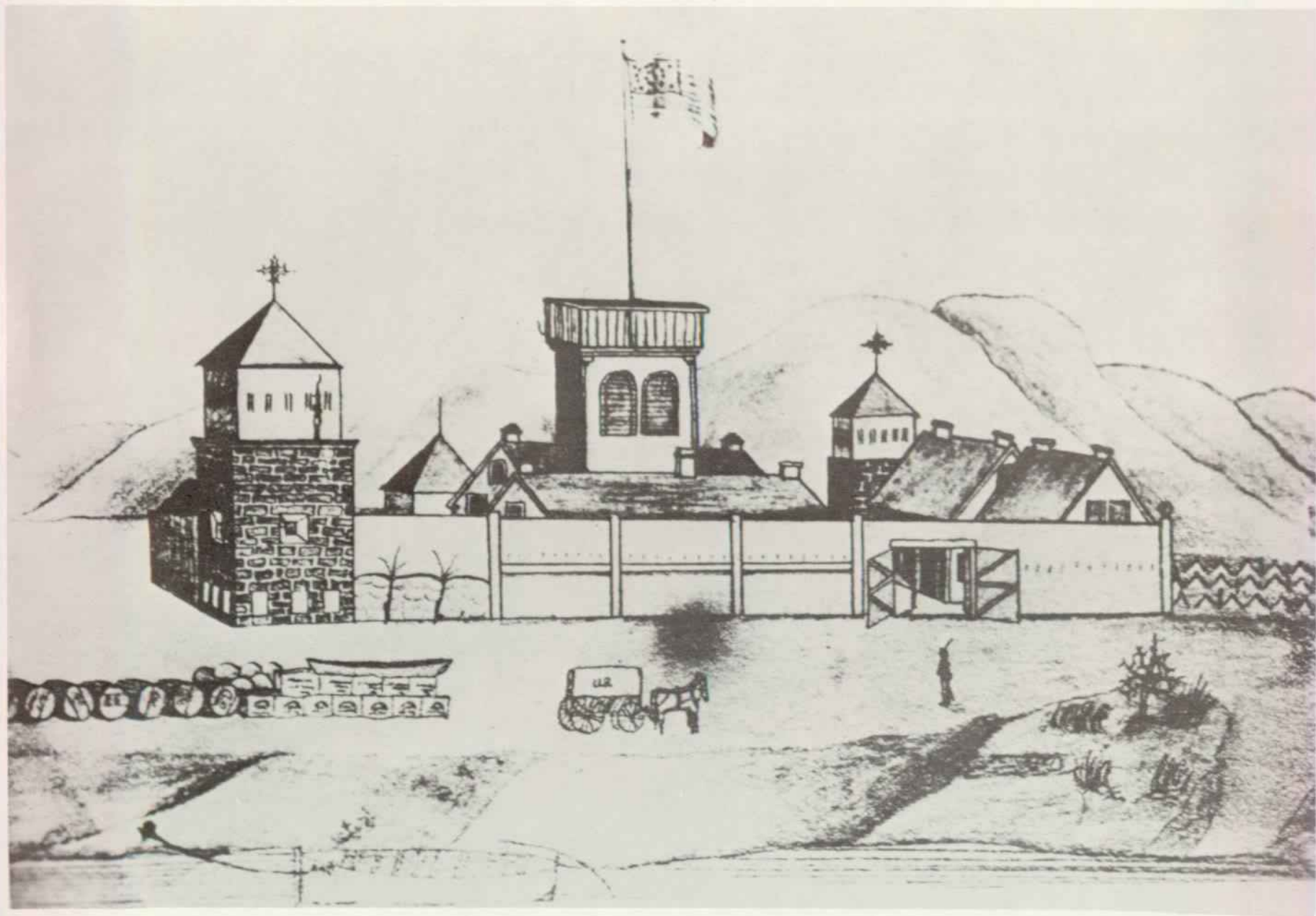


## Fort Union

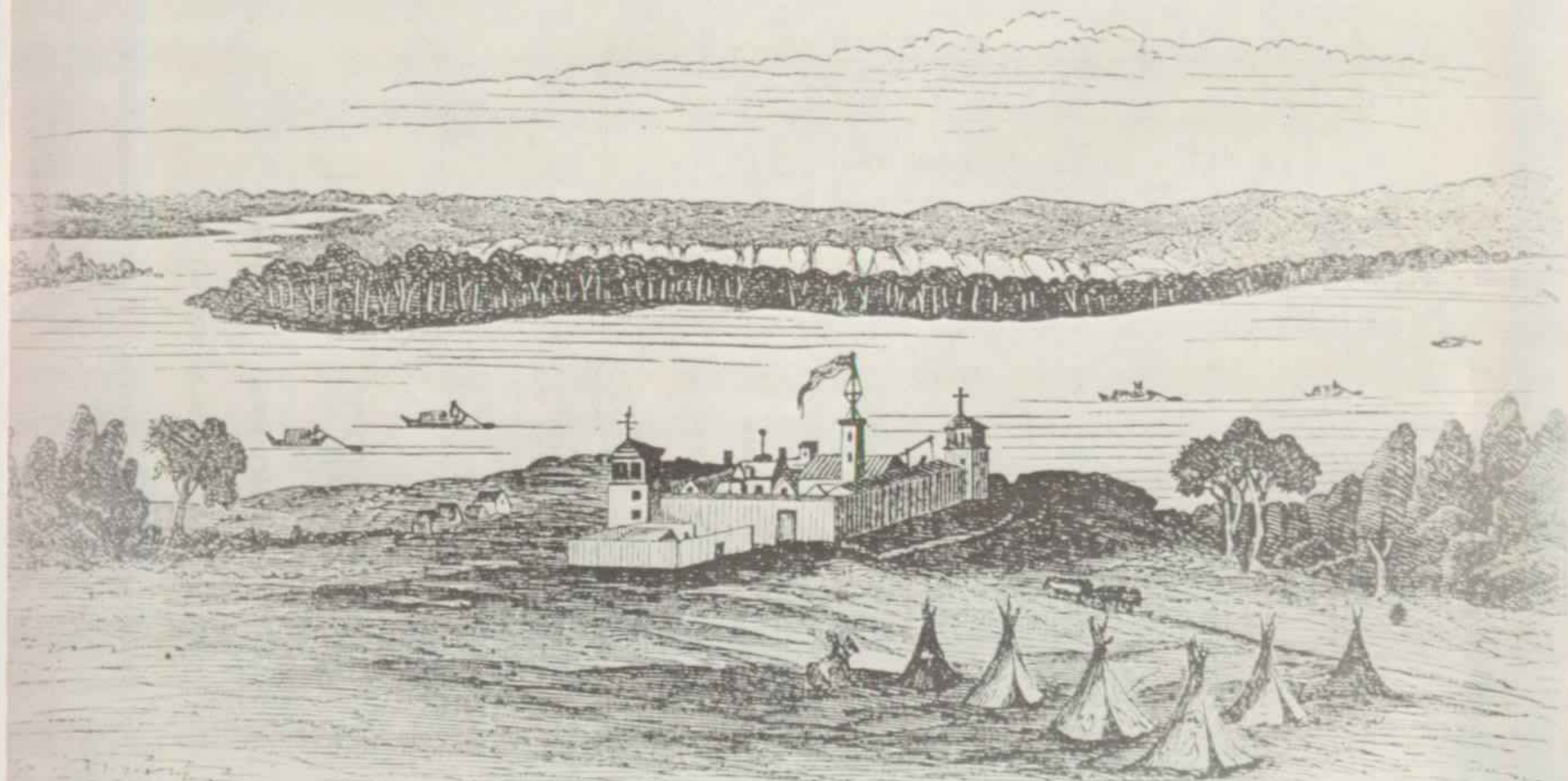
On the north bank of the Missouri 5 miles above the Yellowstone.  
looking up the river, N. W. May 27<sup>th</sup> 1866. J. D.



<sup>4</sup>  
23. Unknown. The tower's presence indicates this was sketched after 1851. This is the only evidence, pictorial or written, to show a walled-in area to the north of the stockade. The small house to the east has now been joined by three more.



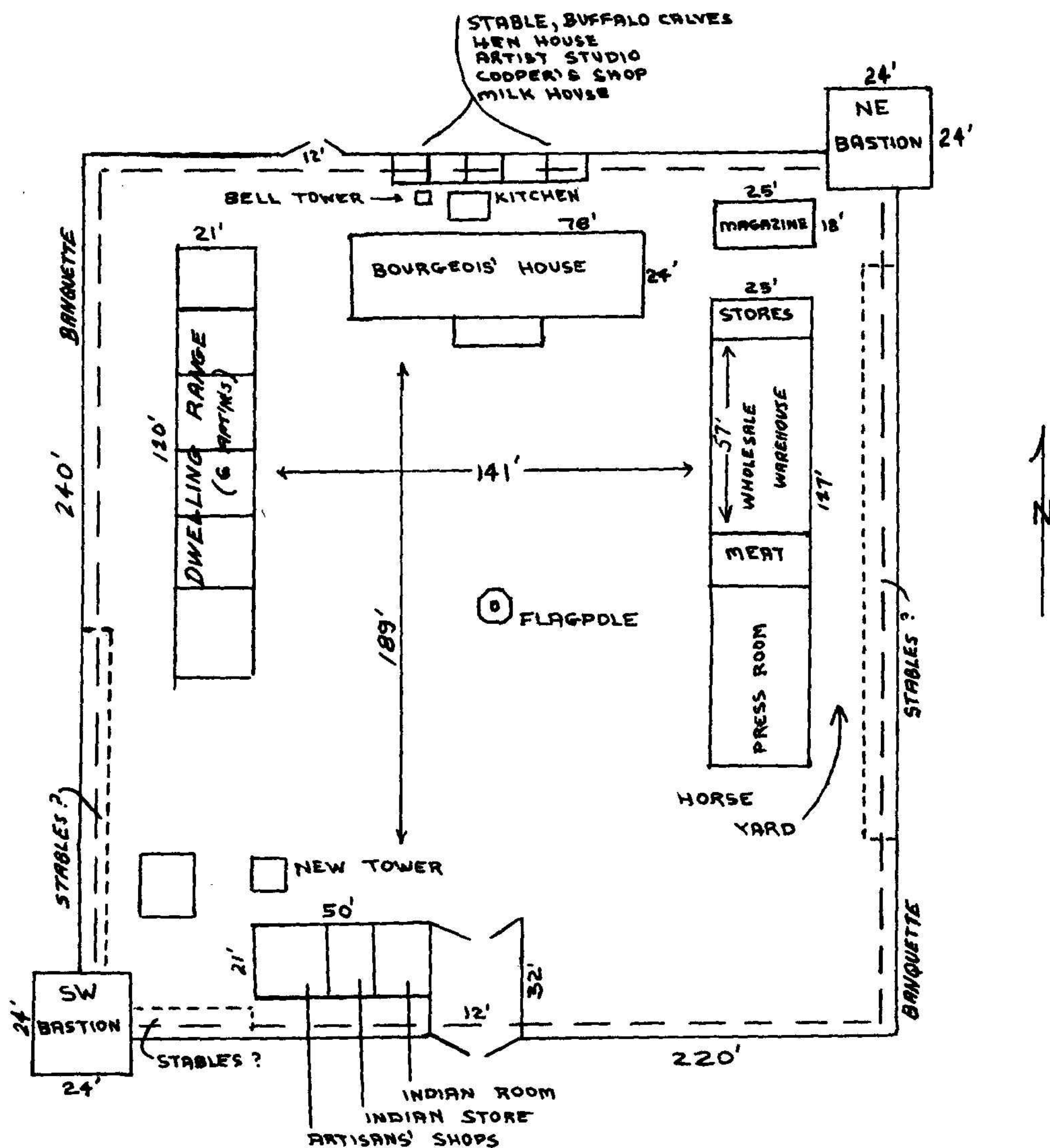
3  
24. Unknown. Referred to in text as "the unknown having a U.S. Army wagon." Highly romantic and out of proportion, this sketch contains most of the main elements of the fort. Obviously, it was drawn while troops were at Fort Union.



PORT UNION—AS PAINTED UPON BED-TICKING, BY AN EMPLOYEE OF THE AMERICAN FUR  
COMPANY.



# MAP NO. 1



## FORT UNION

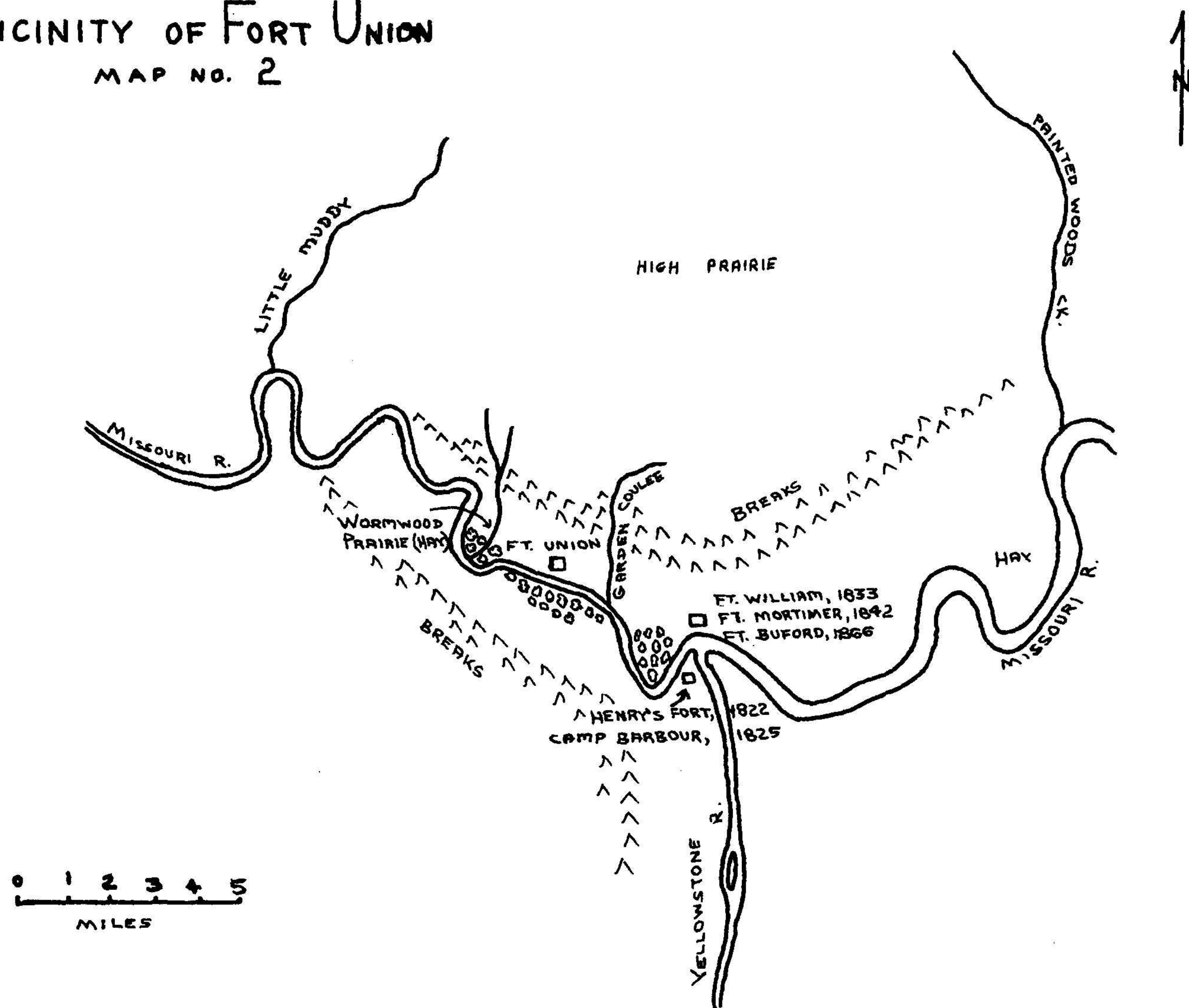
CONJECTURAL DRAWING

SCALE 55' = 1"

(LOCATIONS OF KNOWN STRUCTURES ARE APPROXIMATE ONLY)

# VICINITY OF FORT UNION

MAP NO. 2



# UPPER MISSOURI AREA (SITES IN NARRATIVE)

MAP NO. 3

