



250 Years of Fur Trading.

The Verndale history book, “Pages from History,” mentions that some historians believe it may be possible that Pike’s expedition traveled through Wadena County on his return trip.

Pike valued the land ceded by the Dakotas at \$200,000, but the U.S. Senate, when approving the treaty, agreed to pay only \$2,000 for the 100,000 acres of land. Fort Snelling was constructed on the ceded land.

Over the next 50 years, the Dakota and Ojibwe were pressured to cede most of their land. By 1858, the Dakota had only a small strip of land in Minnesota and no access to the land upon which they had hunted for generations. They had to rely on treaty payments for survival. The inadequate money and goods often arrived late. By the summer of 1862, most the Dakota were starving, which was one of the factors leading the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862. In 1863, the Dakota were forced to give up their remaining land in Minnesota and the U.S. government canceled all treaties made with them.

The Ojibwe reluctantly ceded most of their remaining land in northwestern Minnesota in treaties made in 1863, 1864 and 1867. Four years later, Congress ended the practice of making treaties of

the Indian nations, but allowed past treaties with the Ojibwe to remain in place.

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Among the first white men in Minnesota were fur traders, with French traders being the first to venture into this area in the 1600s. The “French Era” of fur trading was from 1600 to 1760, followed by the “British Era” from 1760 to 1816, and ending with the “America Era” from 1816 to 1850.

There were few traders among the Native Americans in Wadena County after 1873. A few posts operated along the Crow Wing River and on the Shell Prairies, but except for a man named Howard, the fur traders’ names were scarcely known to the first settlers. Jarvis Howard was the best known Indian trader. He went among the Indian camps along the Leaf River at first, and later to the Shell Prairies and gathered up furs in exchange for goods. “One-Eyed Johnny Flannery” was also an early Indian trader who operated along the Red Eye River for a short time.

In his 1924 memoirs, Ernest H. Pelton remembered Howard Jarvis: “On September 10, 1878, Clarke & McClure sent us up on the Red Eye River, near where

Sebeka is now located.... We crossed the Wing River, then Leaf River, struck the Red Eye River and followed its course for 15 miles when we came upon a trading post where we camped all night. Mr. Jarvis Howard of Skowhegan, Maine, was doing a thriving business with the Indians, buying furs and skins.” Pelton was with a group of five men sent by Clarke & McClure to set up a logging camp.

Verndale’s “Pages of History” records that there were two trading posts built by Joseph Reaume in 1792 on the Leaf River. One was on the west shore of the Red Eye River, where it flows into the Leaf River (in Bullard Township). Reaume’s second post was on the south shore of the Leaf River where it flows into the Crow Wing River (in Thomas-town Township). The American

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