

RAMSEY COUNTY
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Zebulon Pike and Fur Trader
James Aird: The Explorer and
the 'Scottish Gentleman'

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Summer, 2005

Volume 40, Number 2

Rendezvous at the Riverbend

Pike's Seven Days in the Land of Little Crow—
The Wilderness that Later Became St. Paul

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A view of Pike Island with Fort Snelling in the distance as painted by Seth Eastman. The fort, of course, did not exist at the time of Pike's 1805 expedition, but Pike had recommended its site as the location for a military fort. Minnesota Historical Society collections.

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Volume 40, Number 2

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THE MISSION STATEMENT OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS IN JULY 2003:

The Ramsey County Historical Society shall discover, collect, preserve and interpret the history of the county for the general public, recreate the historical context in which we live and work, and make available the historical resources of the county. The Society's major responsibility is its stewardship over this history.

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A Message from the Editorial Board

September 23, 2005, marks the 200th anniversary of the signing of what is known as Pike's Treaty—an agreement between a number of Mdewakanton leaders and Lieutenant Zebulon M. Pike in which the Native Americans granted an area that includes today's historic Fort Snelling to the United States in return for what eventually was about \$2,000. Historian Gary Brueggemann leads off this issue with a carefully drawn account of Pike's visit to Minnesota in 1805 and the consequences of this treaty.

Complementing Brueggemann's article is a short piece by Duke Addicks, who is a historical re-enactor. Addicks tells readers how he, as a modern-day storyteller, portrays the nineteenth-century Scottish fur trader James Aird, who met Pike just days before the Pike party arrived in Minnesota.

Readers may remember that in our Winter 2005 issue, we carried an essay reconstructing the history of the DeLoop Parking Ramp using building permits in the RCHS's St. Paul Building Permits Collection. In this issue, Steve Trimble gives us a photo essay in which he uses photographs to demonstrate the many ways in which parking garages helped shape the urban landscape of St. Paul.

This issue concludes with a "Growing Up" piece in which Alexandra (Sandy) Klas fondly remembers her aunt, Frances Boardman, the long-time journalist for the *St. Paul Dispatch*. Frances Boardman was a colorful and compelling St. Paul writer whose death in 1953 was mourned by many friends as well as others who had simply enjoyed reading her many theater, music, and other reviews in the newspaper over the years.

John M. Lindley, Chair, Editorial Board

Rendezvous at the Riverbend

Pike's Seven Days in the Land of Little Crow—the Wilderness That Later Became St. Paul

Gary Brueggemann

On an early Saturday morning, September 21, 1805, two years after President Jefferson's celebrated Louisiana Purchase and two months before the Lewis and Clark expedition reached the Pacific, Lieutenant Zebulon Montgomery Pike—leader of the first American expedition to explore Minnesota—approached a beautiful bend in the Mississippi River. Two hundred years later the bend now marks the southern edge of the City of St. Paul and includes its oldest, most identifying districts.

The twenty-six-year-old lieutenant—a blue-eyed, light-haired, light-skinned, five-foot-eight inch, slender, “good featured” man—was riding the “remarkably red” river on a thirty-foot bateau—a combination sail and oar boat developed by the French Canadians and distinguished by its flat bottom, raked ends and flaring sides. Accompanying him and providing the oar power for not only his boat but also a second thirty-foot bateau (both of which were equipped with cannons), were Sergeant Henry Kennerman, Corporals Samuel Bradley and William E. Mack, “seventeen privates,” and Indian interpreters Joseph Renville and Pierre Rousseau. A few of the privates were also fiddle players, who upon command would enliven the troops with some music—anything to ease the monotony of all the rowing the men had to do.¹

Pike and the twenty-two men under his command were a special military expedition, that would last almost nine months. It was authorized and conceived by the infamous General James Wilkinson—the intriguing, double-dealing, governor of the new upper Louisiana Territory, who was also the commanding general of the United States Army. (Wilkinson later would be exposed as not only a paid spy for the Spanish government, but also a coconspirator in Vice President Aaron Burr's sensational plot to seize Spanish territory in Texas and New Mexico in hopes of creating a new country.) Although President Jefferson—the originator of the Lewis and Clark expedition—

would ultimately approve of Pike's exploration of the upper Mississippi, the expedition was launched without the authorization of the president.²

Was Pike's trip up North in 1805 entangled in the Burr-Wilkinson scheme down South during the same period? The fact that Wilkinson was a scoundrel and a traitor, as well as one of the most corrupt officials to ever reach high office in the history of the United States, is beyond doubt. But to link the Pike expedition to the shadowy, convoluted Burr conspiracy

would require more evidence than actually exists. The mere fact that the treacherous Wilkinson was involved in both endeavors is not enough to prove the impropriety of the first American expedition into Minnesota. Although it is reasonable to view anything originating from General Wilkinson with suspicion, it may be in the end that the Pike expedition was as legitimate a pursuit of the national interest as the universally praised Lewis and Clark expedition.

The recorded mission of the Pike expedition was, from the standpoint of the national interest, quite legitimate. According to his order from Wilkinson, Lieutenant Pike was “to trace the Mississippi to its source,” gather information about the land, Indian inhabitants, and fur traders, and perform various other appropriate geographical and military missions, includ-



Map of the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 with the routes of the Lewis and Clark expedition of 1804 and Zebulon Pike's in 1805 clearly marked. From the Minnesota Historical Society's collections. Unless otherwise noted, all illustrations used with this article are from the Minnesota Historical Society collections.



Portrait of Zebulon M. Pike.

ing selecting sites for future American forts and "trading houses."³

Those were ambitious objectives but not strong signs of conspiratorial agenda. Indeed, two decades after the United States had won the Minnesota lands east of the Mississippi from the British in the Treaty of Paris (1783) that followed the American Revolution and two years after the United States had purchased most of Minnesota west of the Mississippi from Napoleon of France, an American exploration of that region was long overdue.

Why young Pike—a supply officer with "only a common school education," who had never been northwest of southern Illinois, let alone served in any frontier exploring party, was selected to lead the challenging expedition General Wilkinson never explained. However, Pike's résumé was not unimpressive. Born in New Jersey, raised in Pennsylvania, and married in Ohio, Pike was the son of a Revolutionary War captain and career army officer of the same name, who steered him into a military career at the age of fifteen and then mentored him into adulthood. Thus, at the time of his selection as mission commander, Pike was an eleven-year veteran of the army, with maturity beyond his years. He was favorably described by one of his fellow officers as "very gentlemanly in his deportment—manners agreeable

and polished, rather reserved in general and somewhat taciturn . . . his habits were in keeping with his character, uniformly abstemious and temperate, his attention to duty unremitted." One of Pike's modern biographers described him as, "independent and headstrong, with a lofty sense of honor and a healthy dose of self-righteousness." In the end, perhaps Pike's most important qualification, aside from his reputation for loyalty to his superiors, was the fact that his father was an old friend of General Wilkinson and the general had known young Pike since he was a child.⁴

When the Pike expedition approached the future site of St. Paul on the morning of September 21, 1805, it already had been trekking through the upper Mississippi wilderness for forty-three days since they had departed from St. Louis. It had been thirteen days since they had left the last known outpost on the upper Mississippi, the crude fur trading center of Prairie du Chien, and three days since they had last seen any other human beings—the inhabitants of Chief Red Wing's Dakota village, near the mouth of the Cannon River. Now, as the blue uniformed soldiers approached that bend, on that clear blue-sky morning, with only a gentle breeze stroking the two seventeen-star American flags flying atop the masts of the twin riverboats, they suddenly sighted another sign of human habitation. There, on the east bank along the shore of a big backwater lake (now called Pig's Eye) was an Indian village, framed by a striking "ledge of rocks" in the distance. The village had eleven big lodges—all framed with poles and covered with elm bark, and each with well-pitched roofs, also thatched with elm bark.⁵ Pike soon learned that the village was the home of Chief Little Crow's band, a community of a few hundred people, but on this particular day, all the inhabitants were away harvesting wild rice, one of the traditional staples of their diet.

What Pike did not know, but what other subsequent explorers and missionaries collectively uncovered, was the interesting history of those Indians. They were an important band of the powerful Mdewakatwon tribe of Dakota (Sioux). The Dakota (their word for "alliance of friends") were a union of seven closely

related tribes (the Teton, Yankton, Yanktonai, Sisseton, Wahpeton, Wahpakute, and Mdewakatwon). Once the dominant Indian nation in the Minnesota region and still considered in Pike's day the most powerful tribe west of the Mississippi—allegedly the Dakota controlled more territory than any other Indian nation.⁶ The center of Dakota land was originally "Mde-wakon"—Spirit Lake (now called Lake Mille Lacs), that huge historic body of fish-filled water, ninety miles north of the ledge of rocks at the river bend. It was there that at one time all seven tribes maintained semisedentary villages. Sometime in the early eighteenth century, the northern part of the Dakotas' land (the pine-scented north woods) was invaded from the east by a large tribe of Indians from Wisconsin and Michigan called the Ojibwe (or Chippewa). Eventually, by the late eighteenth century the relentless Ojibwe had conquered all of present northern Minnesota (including Lake Mille Lacs) and had pushed the Dakota down into what is now southern Minnesota, the land of hardwoods and prairies and hordes of buffalo. The Teton, Yankton, and Yanktonai were the first of the Dakotas to forsake the pine country and migrate to the land of the buffalo—and had done so even before the Ojibwe conquered their homeland. Abandoning their semisedentary lifestyle, these three restless tribes committed themselves to hunting the buffalo and living as hunters. Their new nomadic life now required them to dwell exclusively in their easy-to-carry, cone-shaped buffalo-skin tents, that they called "tee-pees." As the Teton, Yankton, and Yanktonai migrated westward through the Minnesota River valley, they eventually acquired Spanish horses (the first Dakota tribes to do so) and once that happened, their westward migration accelerated to the point that by the early 1800s they not only had left Minnesota, but some had crossed the Missouri River.

In 1804 Lewis and Clark found the Yankton at today's Yankton, South Dakota, and the Teton (also called Lakota) around the site of present-day Pierre. And it would be there, west of the Missouri, that the Teton would later produce two of the most celebrated Indian leaders in American history: Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse.

The rest of the Dakota tribes, the Sisseton, Wahpeton, Wahpekute, and Mdewakatwon, collectively called the Woodland Sioux or Santee Sioux or Eastern Dakota, stubbornly resisted adopting the nomadic life and remained essentially in southern Minnesota, living as hunters, gatherers, and gardeners, until the United States forcibly removed them to South Dakota in 1863.

Clearly, the most traditional of the Dakota tribes were the Mdewakatwon—"the people of Spirit Lake." According to their oral traditions, they were the last tribe to retreat from Spirit Lake and indeed, the last defenders of their sacred homeland. Thus, they alone earned the distinction of being called Mdewakatwon—"the people of Spirit Lake." True to their traditional ways, the Mdewakatwon avoided moving to the prairies of western Minnesota and migrated instead to the hardwood forests of southeastern Minnesota. Under the leadership of the great warrior Chief Wapasha I (or Wabasha)—the "Red Leaf" (circa 1718–1806)—the Mdewakatwon drove several competing Indian tribes (the Iowa, Cheyenne, and Omaha) from the Mississippi valley and conquered the woodlands of southeastern Minnesota before the dawn of the nineteenth century. Prospering and multiplying in the bountiful "Big Woods," the Mdewakatwon eventually subdivided into at least six historic bands,* each settling in a different section of the Big Woods. Stretching from Shakopay's (or Shakopee's) village on the Minnesota River, to Wabasha's village on the Mississippi at Winona, the Mdewakatwon domain represented one of the choicest portions of Minnesota—the region where most of Minnesota's first towns would emerge and where a majority of the non-Indians would concentrate on the eve of statehood in 1858.⁷

The particular Mdewakatwon village that Pike's men observed on that Saturday morning in 1805 was known by the Mdewakatwons as Ka-po-ja (or Kaposia)—

*Wabasha's at present Winona; Red Wing's at present Red Wing; Little Crow's at the present St. Paul-South St. Paul river bend; Black Dog at Black Dog Lake in present Eagan; Pinasha's, at the mouth of Nine Mile Creek in Bloomington; and Shakopay at present Shakopee.



General James Wilkinson (1757–1825), the first governor of the Louisiana Territory and the head of the United States army from 1796 to 1807. Wilkinson organized the Pike expedition. This photograph is from Royal Ornan Shreve's 1933 book, *The Finished Scoundrel* (Bobbs-Merrill Co., Indianapolis, Ind.).

"village of the light carriers." Exactly when it sprang up on that special stretch of the river bend cannot be determined precisely. It was not there in 1766–67 when Captain Jonathan Carver—the first English explorer in Minnesota and the author of the first English language book describing the Minnesota region—visited the locality in a canoe, a few years after the French and Indian War. Although Carver did discover "a remarkable cave of amazing depth" in a "rocky mountain," at present-day Dayton's Bluff and later observed a Dakota tribal council meeting in that cave that the Dakota called "Waukon Teebee—the house of the spirits" (and the white men would call "Carver's Cave"), he never reported any Indian village anywhere along the great river bend. He did, however, underscore the importance that the Dakota gave to that special cave and its adjoining "rocky" bluffs.

Though the people have no fixed residence, living in tents and abide a few months on one spot, yet they always bring the bones of their dead to this place [i.e. present Mounds

Park] which they take the opportunity of doing when the chiefs meet [at the cave] to hold their councils and to settle all public affairs for the ensuing summer.⁸

Thus, before the existence of the village called Ka-po-ja, the bluffs of Waukon Teebee, two miles upriver from where the village (known today as Kaposia) eventually would emerge on the east side of the river, was a special place for the Dakota people. The "cave of the spirit" was shrouded in spiritual and historical significance. Carved on its moss-covered sandstone walls were "many Indian hieroglyphics, which appeared very ancient." About sixty feet back from the cavern's entrance, just beyond the wide room where presumably some of the grand tribal meetings were held, was a mysterious crystal-clear lake (the place where reportedly the spirit dwelled). It extended so far back into the darkness that Carver could not see its end. (A century later it was measured to be 110 feet long.) The bluff tops above the "Cave of the Spirit" were equally sacred ground, for there, in a scattering of burial mounds stretching from Dayton's Bluff to Mounds Park, are said to lie the bones of many generations of Dakota people. Nineteenth century archeologists would count no fewer than thirty-nine mounds on those bluffs, and excavations of some revealed that the oldest probably were 2,000 years old. Exactly how long the Dakota used the Mounds Park area as their burial ground remains a mystery.⁹

Obviously, sometime between Carver's visit in 1766–67 and the arrival of the Pike expedition in 1805, the Ka-po-ja village was created. One small piece of evidence suggesting that the village was in place by the time of the American Revolution comes, interestingly enough, from the biographical records of one of Pike's own Indian interpreters, Joseph Renville (1779–1846). According to one of Minnesota's first historians, the Reverend Edward D. Neill (who drew heavily from information provided by a pioneer missionary to the Dakota, Samuel Pond), Renville was born to a Dakota woman and a French fur trader at Ka-po-ja "about the year 1779, during the War of the American Revolution;" he lived with his

mother's people until he was about ten, and his father took him to Canada for a Catholic education.

Neill further claimed that Renville (for whom Renville County was named) was probably the best Dakota language interpreter in the region. "Perhaps no man ever spoke Dakota better than he and in rendering the French into that language he had no equal."¹⁰ Pike probably would have agreed with Neill's assessment. In a letter to General Wilkinson, Pike recommended that he be appointed the region's official "interpreter to the United States" and praised him as "a man respected by the Indians and I believe an honest one" who had served "graciously and willingly."¹¹ Given Renville's expertise with the Dakota language and his intimate knowledge of the Ka-po-ja band, it would seem likely that Renville would have "willingly" shared some historical information about the band and its village with Lieutenant Pike. However, if he did, Pike never recorded it. All Pike said in his journal about his first visit to the village was this disappointingly brief note: "Breakfasted at the Sioux village, on the east side. It consists of 11 lodges and is situated at the head of an island, just below a ledge of rocks. The village was evacuated, all the Indian having gone out to gather *fols avon* [wild rice]."

Pike later admitted that his journal writing "had little to strike the imagination, being a dull detail of our daily march," and that the "daily occurrences, written at night, frequently by firelight, when extremely fatigued and the cold so severe as to freeze the ink in my pen, of course, have little claim to elegance of expression." The excuse of frozen ink would not have applied to the date Pike penned his "dull detail" about the Sioux village on the east side. According to his meteorological chart, the temperature reached 77 degrees on both September 21 and September 22 and then climbed to 81 and 86 degrees respectively during the next two days.¹² Whatever the reasons for Pike's brevity, one might wonder what the men discussed while they breakfasted there. Did Renville tell Pike any stories about life in the village when he was a boy? Did he ever shed any

light on the genesis of the village, or the mostly lost history of that historic band?

Fortunately, other explorers who later visited the village reported on it in greater detail. On July 16, 1817, two-and-a-half years after the War of 1812, a small ten-man American exploring party (eight soldiers and two civilian Indian interpreters) commanded by Army map-maker Major Stephen Long and accompanied by five civilians in a second boat (two of whom were grandsons of Jonathan Carver) stopped at Ka-po-ja. Again, the entire band was not at home. This time they were away on a hunting trip. However, unlike Pike, Major Long vividly described the village in his journal:

Passed a Sioux village on the right containing 14 cabins. The name of the chief is Petit Corbeau, or Little Raven [or Little Crow]. The Indians were all absent on a hunting party up the River St. Croix, which is but a little distance across the country from the village. Of this we were very glad, as this band are said to be the most notorious beggars of all the Sioux on the Mississippi. One of their cabins is finished with loopholes and is situated so near the water that the opposite side of the river is within shot range from the building. By this means the Petit Corbeau is enabled to exercise a command over the passage of the river and has in some instances compelled traders to land with their goods and induced them, probably through fear of offending him, to bestow presents of a considerable amount before he would suffer them to pass. The cabins are a kind of stockade buildings and of a better appearance than any Indian dwellings I have before met with.¹³

Three years later, on August 2, 1820, another American expedition of river explorers would stop at this "Sioux village on the right," and this time the Dakota band was home. These explorers were a three-boat party commanded by Lewis Cass, governor of Michigan Territory (an area which included all of present-day Minnesota east of the Mississippi) and a future secretary of war, secretary of state, and Democratic nominee for president of the United States. Cass's official scientist and record-keeper Henry Schoolcraft, (a man who later gained fame as the "discoverer of the source of the Mississippi")

found the Ka-po-ja village so notable that he penned over four pages of comments about it in his journal. Unlike Long, who had been "very glad" that the "notorious" band of "beggars" was far away hunting, Schoolcraft was delighted to meet the villagers. He was impressed with this friendly Dakota community and their chief, the very man Long had accused of being a kind of Indian river pirate. The following are some highlights of Schoolcraft's long, colorfully detailed report, perhaps the most illuminating eyewitness description of the village and its people ever recorded:

We landed at the village of Le Petit Corbeau, or the Little Raven. Here is a Sioux band of 12 lodges, and consisting of about 200 souls, who plant corn upon the adjoining plain and cultivate the cucumber and pumpkin. They sailed from their lodges on seeing us approach and gathering upon the bank of the river fired a kind of *fen-de-jove*, and manifested the utmost satisfaction on our landing. Le Petit Corbeau was among the first to greet us. He is a man below the common size, but brawny and well proportioned, and although rising of 50 years of age, retains the looks and vigor of forty. There is a great deal of fire in his eyes, which are black and piercing—his nose is prominent and has the aquiline curve, his forehead falling a little from the facial angle, and his whole countenance animated and expressive of a shrewd mind.

We were conducted into his cabin, which is spacious, being about 60 feet in length by 30 feet in width and covered with bark. Being seated, he addressed Governor Cass in a speech of some length, in which he expressed his satisfaction on seeing him there . . . He said he was glad that the Governor had not, like many other officers and agents of the United States, who had lately visited these regions, passed by his village without calling . . . He spoke with deliberation and without that wild gesticulation which is common among savages . . . While these things were going forward, the Indian women were busily engaged in gathering green corn and each one came into the centre of the chief's cabin and threw a basketful upon a common pile . . . This was intended as we could conveniently find storage in our canoes.¹⁴

*Renville, a mixed blood, was born in Kaposia.



Moonlight View of the Mound's Park area. A certain romanticism was attached to the Pike and other expeditions of the early 1800s. This lithograph presents a "Moonlight view of an Ancient Naudowessie Burial Place formerly on the verge of that Great Bluff above the Cavern of Wakan-tebee, and overlooking the site of St. Paul." The site is now Mounds Park on Dayton's Bluff. It's from the book, *Dakota Land, or the Beauty of St. Paul* by Col. Hankins, and published by Hankins & Sons Pub., New York, in 1869.

Clearly, the high point of Schoolcraft's visit to the village was his witnessing of a great ceremonial "feast in honor of the cereal goddess, or *manito* of the Indians, which is annually held when the corn becomes suitable for boiling in the ear." The ceremony was held in a large cabin, where "two large kettles full of green corn . . . [were] hung over a moderate fire in the centre of the cabin, and the Indians, both men and women, were seated in a large circle around them." Music—that universal form of religious expression—was a main component of this annual feast to the corn spirit.

They were singing a doleful song in the savage manner, accompanied by the Indian

drum and gourd rattle. The utmost solemnity was depicted upon every countenance not engaged in singing, and when the music ceased, which it frequently did for a few seconds, there was a still and mystic pause, during which certain pantomimic signs were made and it appeared as if they pretend to hold communication with invisible spirits. Suddenly the music starts up and the singing commenced, but as we did not understand their language, it is impossible to say what they uttered, or to whom their songs or responses were addressed.¹⁵

The Indian village that all these American explorers reported on was, in fact, the first recorded human settlement located on the land destined to become part of

the city of St. Paul. In modern terms, the village that was first observed in 1805, stood on the northwest shore of Pig's Eye Lake, not far from the present-day Metropolitan Waste Treatment Plant and near the southeastern border of the city. If we accept the accuracy of each of these explorer's accounts, the village ranged from eleven to fourteen lodges and (if we include the estimates of a few other primary sources) its population fluctuated between 200–400 people. The inhabitants of Ka-po-ja lived by fishing, hunting (deer was their favorite game), harvesting wild rice, tapping maple sugar, and growing a little corn, cucumbers, pumpkins and squash. Although the marshlands of today's Pig's Eye Lake (a place the French Canadians called the "Grand Marais" or "great marsh") was the first recorded site of their lodges, the entire area along the river bend was the village's domain, especially the landmark white cliffs on the east bank (probably the largest expanse of exposed white sandstone on the upper Mississippi) which the Dakota called *Im-na-inja-ska* or "white rock."¹⁶ And it would be there at White Rock where thirty-six years later, in 1841, the town of St. Paul would be born.

On the west bank of the Mississippi, down and across from White Rock and directly opposite the lodges where Pike breakfasted, was an attractive open plain, where thirty-some years later the entire band would transplant themselves. There along the river flats, northeast from the corner of Concord and Butler Streets in South St. Paul, a new Ka-po-ja (Kaposia) village would arise in 1837 and also become a landmark. Yet regardless of where the Ka-po-ja lodges stood, the entire river-bend region was the realm of the Ka-po-ja band for more than a century of recorded time.¹⁷

As Pike, Long, and Schoolcraft reported in their journals, the Ka-po-ja chief at the time of their visits was a man that the French-speaking Dakota interpreters called, Le Petit Corbeau. The "brawny" chief with "fire in his eyes," whom the American explorers called Little Raven or Little Crow, was known to his people as *Cetanakwon*—"He who Shoots Pigeon Hawks Walking." He carried within his medicine pouch the skin of a raven,

a relic he reportedly inherited from his grandfather, the original and virtually unknown Little Raven or Little Crow. After *Cetanakwon* was killed fighting the Ojibwe in 1834, his son, *Wakinnyan-tonka* or "Big Thunder" would inherit the sacred crow's skin and also be known as Little Crow. When Big Thunder died in October 1845 (he accidentally shot himself pulling a rifle off a wagon), his son *Tayodadute*—"His Red Nation"—would in turn acquire both the sacred relic and the right to the dynastic title of Little Crow. *Tayodadute* (1810?–1863)—the last of the leaders by the name of Little Crow who presided over the Ka-po-ja village and the chief who would lead his band to a reservation on the Minnesota River in 1853—would become the famous leader of Minnesota's Dakota Conflict of 1862, a tragedy which would take the lives of more than 300 white settlers and ultimately lead to the banishment of the Dakota from Minnesota. Thus, the chiefs named Little Crow would span five generations and that continuity would be one of the Ka-po-ja village's identifying marks. Indeed, throughout history many Minnesotans would know the place by only one name: Little Crow's village.¹⁸

* * *

After eating breakfast amidst the bark houses of Little Crow's village, Pike and his men pushed on in their two bateaux toward the white cliffs of *Imna-injaska*. Having read Jonathan Carver's book, Pike was aware of the fact that somewhere in those cliffs was Carver's "remarkable cave." Yet on this day—fifty-nine years after Carver's discovery of *Wakon-teebee*—no visible sign of the "Cave of the Spirit" could be found. As Pike subsequently noted after he returned to the area seven months later: "Although my interpreter had been frequently up the river, he could not tell me where the cave spoken of by Carver could be found. We carefully sought for it but in vain."¹⁹

It is now easy to understand how Pike and his men failed to find Carver's Cave. Sometime after Carver's last visit to the cave, its low entrance became covered by fallen chunks of limestone, and it would remain in that hidden, inaccessible state until 1837 when French scientist Joseph



Watercolor of Cetanakwan, the first of the Dakota chiefs to be known to white Americans as Little Crow. From McKenney Hall Indian Gallery, octavo edition and copyrighted by Joel Oppenheimer.

Nicollet finally rediscovered it after almost two days of excavation work. Fallen rock debris would indeed be a continuous problem for this historic landmark; in fact, even today its entrance is mostly obstructed by rock and sand.²⁰

Somewhat surprisingly, Pike made no mention of the other sacred site Carver had reported seeing near the Cave of the Spirit; namely, the ancient burial mounds atop the bluffs. He did note the first sighting of bears on the upper Mississippi: "About two miles above [the Ka-po-ja village] saw 3 bears swimming over the river, but at too great a distance for us to have killed them; they made the shore before I could come up with them."²¹ Although Pike failed to shoot the bears, the record of his expedition proves that he and his designated hunters, led by Corporal Sam Bradley, Private John Sparks, and interpreter Pierre

Rousseau, all were excellent marksmen. Indeed, within the next six-and-a-half months Pike and his hunters would ultimately bag eleven bears, eighty-four deer, five elk, twenty-one prairie hens, twenty geese, fourteen raccoons, eleven ducks, nine grouse, three swans, four otters, two mink, two wolves, one black fox and one porcupine—all, however, shot north of St. Anthony Falls. Since the explorers carried only four months' worth of provisions, Pike considered hunting more a necessity than a sport.²²

After sighting the three bears, Pike saw and heard something even more interesting on the east shore of the Mississippi: a small "camp of Sioux of four lodges," filled with friendly, talkative women. In fact, Pike "saw only one man, whose name was Black Soldier," there and speculated

that it was the absence of the men that made the Dakota women so outgoing.

The garrity of the women astonished me, for at the other camp they never opened their lips, but here they flocked around us with all their tongues going at the same time. The cause of this freedom must have been the absence of their lords and Masters.²³

Who exactly was Black Soldier and what connection did he and the talkative women have with the Ka-po-ja village downriver? Pike did not explain. Given, however, that the expedition had just recently left a vacant village, a good guess would be that they were simply one of the hunting and gathering parties from Ka-po-ja. A little upstream from Black Soldier's camp on the "west side of the river," about three miles below "St. Peter" (the name then of the Minnesota River), Pike's party passed another surprising scene: "the encampment" of a French-Canadian fur trader, "Mr. Ferrebault"—who had "broken his peroque [canoe]."²⁴

Although Pike made no further note of "Mr. Ferrebault," the fur trader was Jean Baptiste Faribault, a man destined to become the first legal settler of Minnesota and the first resident of Mendota's Faribault House. His son, Alexander, founded the city of Faribault and the county also was named for him. At the time Pike saw him, Faribault was a resident of Prairie du Chien but operated a trading post on the Minnesota River, near present-day Jordan. Seven years later, during the War of 1812, Faribault would become one of the only (if not *the* only) Minnesota area fur trader to fight for the American cause, an action that ultimately earned him the rank of second lieutenant in the United States Army and a stay in a British prisoner of war jail. Ironically, Pike's Indian interpreter, Joseph Renville, would fight against Faribault as an officer in the British frontier forces.²⁵

* * *

As the American explorers under Pike continued farther upriver beyond what is now downtown St. Paul, they entered a stretch of the Mississippi, which Pike later especially noted for its beauty and wildlife. "The shores have many large and beautiful springs issuing forth, which



Zebulon Pike in later years. He was killed during the War of 1812.

form small cascades as they tumble over the cliffs into the Mississippi. The timber is generally maple. The place we noted for the great quantity of wild fowl."²⁶

Undoubtedly, one of those "beautiful springs" and "small cascades" was a stream and waterfall that an 1839 Fort Snelling military reservation map labeled "Buttermilk Creek" and "Buttermilk Falls" and an 1874 St. Paul atlas identified as Cascade Creek and Falls. (Today this creek is no longer visible, but it flows underground as part of the city's sewer system, a little downriver from the intersection of Randolph Avenue and Shepard Road).²⁷

Finally the explorers came to the scenic intersection of the Mississippi and St. Peters Rivers, a place the Dakota called "Mendota" or meeting of waters, and a long time rendezvous point for British era fur traders. Unlike the "remarkably red" Mississippi, the water of the St. Peter's appeared "blue and clear," no doubt the reason the Dakota called the river, Minnesota—"water like the sky." Precisely at the junction of those two rivers was a long, thickly wooded island that would later be named "Pike Island," in honor of the expedition's commander. And there along the "northeast shore" of Pike Island—directly across the river from the sand beaches

of what is now St. Paul's Crosby Farm Park—the commander ordered his men to land the bateaux and make camp. But it would turn out to be no ordinary encampment. For on that long, wooded island that now literally marks the center of the Twin Cities, Pike would not just make camp, he would make history. Undoubtedly he was struck by the strategic location of the place—particularly the eminent bluff on the west bank of the Mississippi, which offered a commanding view of the two great river valleys—as well as its proximity to at least two Dakota villages. Besides Little Crow's village downriver, Pike had learned of another Mdewakaton village a few miles up the Minnesota River. He decided to convene a grand council meeting with the Dakota leaders at his island camp. It was a logical decision. Among the many missions of the Pike expedition were four explicit objectives which the council meeting could address:

1. "Spare no pains to conciliate the Indians and attach them to the United States." The Dakota had been allied to the British for over thirty years and indeed, under the leadership of the Mdewakaton Chief Wabasha II, had fought for the British during the American Revolutionary War.
2. Learn and report on the Indian "populations and residences; the quantity and species of furs they barter per annum . . . and the people with whom they trade." Implicit in this directive was the goal of gaining intelligence about British fur trading activities on American soil. Twenty years after the Treaty of Paris (1783), both Wilkinson and Jefferson had received reports that the British were still operating in American territory.
3. "Make peace, if possible, between the Sioux and Ojibwe." This was one of Pike's own objectives derived from his discretionary powers and one that he asserted he made only for humanitarian reasons.
4. "Obtain permission from the Indians who claim the ground for the erection of military posts and trading houses at the mouth of the River St. Pierre [Minnesota], falls of St. Anthony and every other critical point which may fall under your observation. These permissions to be granted in formal conference, regularly recorded, and the ground marked off."²⁸

Hence, holding a council meeting on the island might well serve several critical objectives at once. At the very least, the time and place seemed perfect for convening the first major conference between representatives of the United States and the eastern Dakota—a meeting that potentially could lead to the fulfillment of most of Pike's primary objectives.

The timing of Pike's landing at the strategic site was indeed fortuitous, for it coincided with the departure of a large Dakota war party, drawn from perhaps all of the nearby villages, heading to the northwoods to do battle with their archenemy, the Ojibwe. Thus, parlaying with the Dakota at this particular time, before the war party advanced too far to receive Pike's "express" message to meet with him, could prevent at least temporarily, more bloodshed between the two feuding peoples, which, of course, was one of his objectives.

Learning from a runner of the Americans' desire to rendezvous, the Dakota

warriors abruptly halted their trek north and hurried back to Mendota, "in company with those who were in ponds gathering wild rice." Around 6 p.m. Sunday evening, September 22, Little Crow and 200 Dakota warriors "ascended the hill at the point between the Mississippi and St. Peters," the bluff where Fort Snelling later would be built, and fired a friendly salute of rifle shots to dramatically signal both their arrival and their enthusiasm for meeting with the Americans.

The official council meeting was held at noon the next day, September 23, on the beach of the island, under the shade of a special canopy tent, which Pike had resourcefully constructed from his boat sails. And there under that "bower . . . on the beach," Lieutenant Pike, seven Dakota chiefs (Cemmini [Little Crow]; Pinchon [Fearless One]; Grand Partisan; Tahamie [Standing Moose]; Shakopay (six); Wahkantahpay [Broken Arm]; and Tatanwkamani [Walking Buffalo, a.k.a.

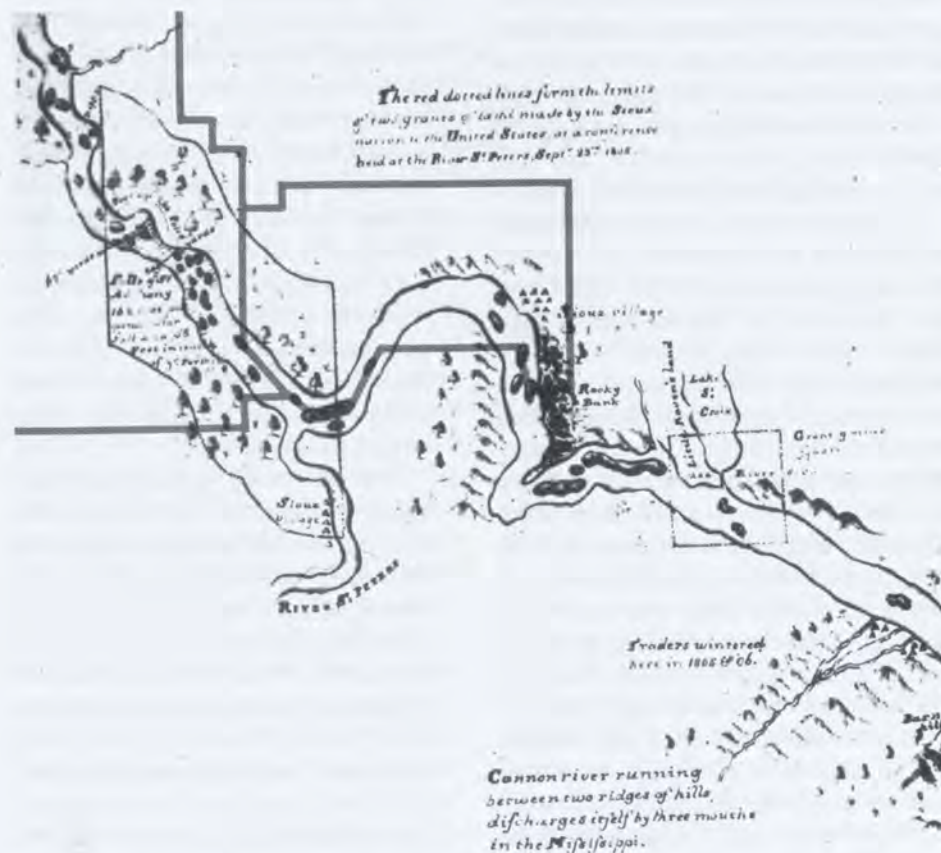
Red Wing]), met. They represented at least four Mdewankatwon villages: Red Wing, Ka-po-ja, Pinasha and Shakopay. Two witnessing fur traders, James Frazier and Murdoch Cameron, had arrived on Saturday afternoon, to join with the Indian interpreter, Joseph Renville, who in fact, was an employee of Frazier. They assembled together (no doubt, sitting in a circle) and commenced the historic conference with as much ceremony as the young lieutenant could muster.²⁹

Rising to the occasion, Pike spoke to the Dakota in a confident, somewhat condescending, almost poetical manner. His opening remarks epitomized that style.

Brothers: I am happy to meet you here at this council fire, which your father has sent me to kindle and to take you by the hand as our children, we having lately acquired from the Spanish the entire territory of Louisiana. Our general has thought it proper to send out a number of his young warriors to visit all of his red children to tell them his will and to hear what requests they may have to make of their father. I am happy the choice has fallen on me to come to this road, as I find my brothers, the Sioux, ready to listen to my words . . . I expect that you will give orders to all your young warriors to respect my flag, and its protection which I may extend to the Chippewa chiefs.³⁰

The principle object of Pike's long speech was "the granting of land at this place, [the] falls of St. Anthony and [the river] St. Croix, and making peace with the Chippewa."³¹

Truly "making peace" between the bitter enemies proved to be beyond the capabilities of Zebulon Pike or any other subsequent representative of the United States. The two peoples would remain enemies right up to the day the Dakota were exiled from Minnesota. Acquiring those desired land grants, on the other hand, was a much more attainable goal—and indeed, in the end would be one of the few major objectives the Pike expedition would actually achieve. They never would, for example, find the source of the Mississippi. The first documented land purchase in Minnesota history (Jonathan Carver claimed he bought a large tract of land from the Dakota in 1767, but the authenticity of that claim was never recognized by the



A map of the sites for military posts that Pike acquired from the Dakota during his expedition into the region. Drawn by a government cartographer, the map was based on Pike's notes.

American courts) would be an incredible deal for the United States.

Pike persuaded the Mdewakatwon chiefs "to grant to the United States for the purposes of the establishment of military posts" two of the choicest tracts of land under their domain: "9 miles square at the mouth of the St. Croix and a tract extending from below the confluence of the Mississippi and St. Peters, up the Mississippi to include the falls of St. Anthony, extending nine miles on each side of the river."³² In other words, the Dakota agreed to cede nothing less than both the center and southeast corner of what is now the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.

The price of this now billion dollar real estate—\$250 worth of "presents" (i.e., "some of your father's tobacco and other trifling things"); sixty gallons of liquor ("to clear your throats"); a promise of some undetermined amount of money to be paid at some point in the future (ultimately the United States Senate approved a total of \$2,000 when they finally ratified the treaty in 1808) and the "United States promise to permit the Sioux to pass and repass, hunt or make their use of the said districts as they have formerly done." It was, as Pike proudly put it in a letter to General Wilkinson, "100,000 acres for a song."³³

Yet the "song" was complicated by the lyrics. Not being a lawyer, nor a surveyor, nor an experienced land purchaser, the young lieutenant was not careful in the way he worded the treaty. Indeed, the language of the land grant provisions was so ambiguous that it was impossible for anyone to later determine the precise dimensions of the ceded lands. The critical Pike Island–St. Anthony Falls land grant is a case in point. Describing the acquired property as imprecisely as simply "a tract extending from between the confluence of the Mississippi and St. Peters up the Mississippi to include the Falls of St. Anthony, extending nine miles on each side of the river," hardly clarifies the boundaries of that tract. Where exactly is "below the confluence"? What exactly does the phrase "extending nine miles on each side of the river" mean? Nine miles wide? Nine miles long? Such vague descriptions will cause the military much confusion in the future, when after finally building Fort Snelling

on the unmarked property, they attempted to ascertain the precise boundaries of the entire military reservation.

Pike's order from Wilkinson, of course, included instructions to have the treaty "ground marked off."³⁴ Why Pike failed to do that he never explained, but it may have been a simple case of not knowing how to execute such a complicated task. Surveying 100,000 acres of wilderness, after all, would have been a difficult, time-consuming challenge for even an experienced surveying crew. As unlawyerly as Pike was in his drafting of the treaty, and as negligent as he was in having the treaty "ground marked off," he nevertheless still managed to achieve something extremely significant: the Mdewakatwon cession of a large tract of land in the Mendota–St. Anthony Falls corridor—an area which later gave rise to the first settlements of St. Paul and Minneapolis, as well as the oldest town in Minnesota, Mendota. Although some might question how clearly the Mdewakatwon leaders understood exactly what they had surrendered, the fact remains that the seven principal leaders were present at the council and the chiefs of the two villages closest to the ceded lands (Little Crow and Pina-sha) both "touched the quills"—i.e. signed the treaty.³⁵

The day after the historic treaty, an incident occurred on the island which has never before been fully reported. On Tuesday morning, September 24, Pike "discovered that [the American] flag was missing from [his] boat" and was "in doubt whether it had been stolen by the Indians, or had fallen overboard and floated away." In either case, he blamed his night guard for not keeping proper watch and in a telling sign of his standard of discipline, punished the sentry by having him flogged, a customary form of punishment in the United States army. A flogging in this case, may even have been a relatively lenient punishment, given the fact that technically the army's penalty for sleeping on sentry duty was death.³⁶ Although Pike never elaborated on the punishment of the unnamed guard, details from another source show it was no routine administration of military justice. In fact, it may have been one of the most dramatic episodes that the Pike expedition experienced.

According to the memoir of British fur

trader Thomas G. Anderson (1779–1875) a long time trader with the Mdewakatwon Dakota in the age of Jefferson and the years before and after the Pike expedition, there was a dynamic Dakota war chief by the name of Red Whale, who claimed to have been present at the Pike Island conference, and later told Anderson about that missing flag incident. Anderson's version of Red Whale's account is worth presenting in its entirety:

Red Whale with part of his band was encamped on the island at the time. An awful storm of wind, snow, hail and rain came up, with thunder and lightning. The storm had abated in the morning, and Lieut. Pike missed the flag. After the usual military invitation, the man who was on sentry at the time was pinioned to be flogged. Red Whale, hearing a rumpus in the camp, went up to see what it was all about. He found the man tied to a tree, ready to be scored, and the chief was told by the American commander that the man had lost the flag, and must be flogged. Red Whale said no, and added: "I'll send my young men for it, as it must have caught in the brush." But Lieutenant Pike persisted in his determination to punish the negligent Soldier. Red Whale drew his knife and said: "I will stick the first one that strips that soldier." The Stars and Stripes were brought forward, the man released; and Red Whale lectured the Lieutenant for having been himself the cause of the flag's loss. "You knew," he said to Pike, "that it was a black night; we could not see the length of my arrow. Anyone might have taken it away. You knew the wind was strong enough to tear it to pieces, and you should have taken it into the tent."

With this cutting reproach, Red Whale thought all was settled, and he went to his camp but soon another rumpus was heard in the American encampment, and he ran there with all haste. He found the man again tied to the tree, ready for the nine tails. "I told you," said Red Whale, "not to hurt this man. You have got your flag, what more has to be done?" "Nothing," was the reply, "but he must be punished." "I say no," retorted the Sioux Chief, "White man's blood shall not stain my land—unloose him." "No," replied Pike, "he must be flogged." "I say he must not," said Red Whale, and gave the shrill war whoop. A portion of his warriors were quickly at his

side, whom he ordered to cut the string and let the soldier go. It was soon done, and Red Whale turning to the officer said: "Young man my name is *Onketah-Endutah*. I know all that happens for many a days journey around me. It was your fault and not the soldiers that your flag floated down the river. Now I warn you, if you hurt this man during the winter, I will make a hole in your coat, when you come back in the spring. Go now, you may tell all the Sioux you meet that Red Whale desires them to be kind to you and your soldiers, and give you plenty to eat. But as I have warned you, beware of hurting that man's back."³⁷

If Anderson's second-hand story is close to the truth and Red Whale did in fact twice stop Pike from carrying out his order to flog the sentry, then his efforts only postponed the punishment. Pike clearly reported in his journal that "corporeal punishment" was in fact "inflicted on" the guard.³⁸ Thus, if the Red Whale story is true, one can assume that Pike simply had the guard flogged after Red Whale's departure. Of course, the key question is: how accurate is Anderson's Red Whale story? It is now impossible to know with any degree of certainty. It is clear, however, that Anderson's narrative does include some verifiable inaccuracies. For example, Anderson mentioned that Pike was encamped on the island in "November, 1807."³⁹ He was, of course, wrong on both the month and the year. Thus, one might reasonably wonder if perhaps he also was wrong about other aspects of it. One also might question the credibility of Red Whale whose name does not appear on Pike's list of chiefs present at the council. Anderson's sixty-nine-page narrative also includes a "strange story," supposedly in Red Whale's own words, of how that Indian became a member of the Dakota tribe. According to Anderson, Red Whale told "the principle [*sic*] men of his tribe" that he was born centuries earlier "when the world was small" in a land "a long way from here . . . where the people were all black." But he was so "unhappy amongst these black people" that he purposely died. He "laid there" in his grave, "almost six hundred years" and then "got up" and flew away on wings, invisible to people. He flew many miles,



Little Crow's village of Kaposia as it looked around 1854. By this time, the Dakota people were being moved to reservations in western Minnesota, under the terms of the Treaty of 1851, and Cetanakwan, the Little Crow who was one of the signers of the treaty with Pike, had died in battle with the Ojibwa.

"crossing over the Great Salt Lake" and then "traveled to many places looking out for a good camp where [he] would be happy." Finally, "at last . . . one day", he arrived at St. Anthony Falls, where he saw and heard the merry singing and dancing of some Dakota people. "Perched on [the top of an] oak tree," overlooking the Dakota camp, he observed the "most merry people [he] had ever seen," and thus decided to join them.⁴⁰

Red Whale's mythical story might well lead one to conclude that it was the creation of a man with, to say the least, a vivid imagination. One could argue that anyone capable of seriously spinning such a fantasy about his origins to "the men of his tribe" (not children but men) would be equally capable of embellishing a real incident like the Pike Island flag affair. Whatever happened, on the day after the treaty, will never be fully known. Pike, hardly divulged anything about the matter other than his remarks about the missing flag and the punishment of the guard. Since that will be the only case of corporal punishment during the entire trip, it is odd that Pike did not elaborate on the matter. What is most peculiar is that he never specified the number of lashes the

guard received. Fortunately, he did report the ending of the incident.

Early Wednesday morning, September 25, Pike was "awakened out of [his] bed" by Chief Little Crow, "who came up from his village to see . . . if any accident had happened" to the American soldiers. Little Crow informed the commander that he had found the "sacred" American flag floating in the river (with its staff broken) "three miles below the village." The mystery of the flag was over. Little Crow's full story of how he found the flag and what he did about it was so touching that Pike reported it in detail in his journal. According to this account, just before the flag was discovered, a violent scuffle was about to erupt between Little Crow and another chief named *Outarde Blanche*, (White Buzzard or Snow Goose), who was raging because he had a badly cut lip and for some reason blamed Little Crow and his friends for it. As fate would have it, just when "the parties were charging their guns and preparing for action . . . lo! the flag appeared like a message of peace sent to prevent their bloody purposes." The sudden sight of the flag "astonished" the combatants and moved Little Crow to say: "that a thing so sacred had not been

taken from [Pike's] boat without violence; that it would be proper for them to hush all private animosities, until they had revenged the cause of their eldest brother; that he would immediately go up to St. Peters, to know what dogs had done that, in order to take steps to get satisfaction of those who had done mischief." The chief's speech was effective. The fight was canceled, Little Crow "immediately had the flag put out to dry" and sped to the camp of the American soldiers. In gratitude and to help "make peace among his people," Pike "gave him five yards of blue strouds, three yards of calico, one handkerchief, one carrot of tobacco, and one knife." Little Crow, in turn, promised "to make peace with *Outarde Blanche*, and also send the flag to St. Anthony Falls, where Pike was next scheduled to encamp. The flag was delivered to the Falls the next day, exactly as planned, by "two young Indians." In gratitude of their "punctuality and expedition and the danger they were exposed to from the journey," Pike gave the lads "a present."⁴¹

Sometime late Wednesday, September 25, the Pike expedition broke camp. Within hours the explorers were on the way to the birthplace of Minneapolis, St. Anthony Falls. The expedition would spend almost seven more months in Minnesota, tracing the course of the Mississippi River as far as Cass Lake (which they mistook for its source); meeting more Indians (mainly Ojibwe); reprimanding British fur traders for trespassing on United States soil (even shooting down a British flag at a Leech Lake fort); and noting the geographical features of the area. After surviving the winter in northern Minnesota "without the loss of a single man" but with "as many hardships as almost any party of Americans ever experienced by cold and hunger," the full expedition returned down the icy Mississippi to the "tremendous" spray of St. Anthony Falls. Joining them in their return trip was the tall, red-haired Scotch-Canadian fur trader, Robert Dickson (an associate of Thomas G. Anderson), who was on his way home to Prairie du Chien, after spending the winter at his Sauk Rapids trading post. (Like Anderson and Interpreter Renville, Dickson also would serve as a British officer during the War of 1812.)⁴²



This was a camp erected to represent Pike's 1805 camp on the island.

The expedition's arrival back at Pike Island on April 11, 1806, was marked by both a snowstorm and the greetings of 600 Dakota. "About sundown" some of those Dakota escorted Pike, Dickson, Indian interpreters Renville and Rousseau, and presumably some soldiers "across the river" where the Dakota had erected "about 100 lodges." (Although Pike did not specify the location of those lodges, they probably stood across the Minnesota River somewhere in present-day Mendota.) Two of the "large lodges capable of containing 300 men" functioned as the "council house." Inside he "found a great many chiefs"—not just of the Mdewakaton tribe but also of the Sisseton and Wahpeton tribes. In the "upper" council lodge were "forty chiefs, and as many pipes set against the poles." Alongside the Dakota pipes, Pike "arranged" the Ojibwe peace pipes that he had brought back from northern Minnesota precisely for this occasion.

In an effort to set the stage for a peace pact between the two enemies, Pike "informed" the Dakota about the peace conferences he held with the Ojibwe during the past winter. Unfortunately, for some reason

his "interpreters were not capable of making themselves understood." Nevertheless, they eventually were successful in communicating Pike's desire to have "some of their principal chiefs go to St. Louis" and others at least "descend to the prairie" [Prairie du Chien] for another conference, where "we would have all things explained." A promising sign in the peace process was the fact that all of the Dakota chiefs "smoked out of the [Ojibwe] pipes, excepting three, who were painted black and who were some of those who lost their relations last winter."⁴³

Early the next morning on April 12, the expedition broke camp and pushed on downriver. After spending some time "carefully" searching for Carver's Cave without success, they came once again to the Ka-po-ja village. This time, however some of the villagers were home and invited the Americans to come to shore. Accepting their call, Pike and his men landed their boats and soon after "were received in a lodge kindly [and] presented [some] sugar etc." Pike, in turn, "gave the proprietor a dram" of liquor and then all politeness ended. Just when the Americans were "about to depart" the Dakota host "de-



The interior of Carver's Cave looked like this on May 1, 1867 when the Minnesota Historical Society celebrated the centennial of Carver's council with the Indians by exploring the cave with boats and candles. Pike failed to find the entrance to the cave as he traveled up the Mississippi in 1805.

manded a kettle of liquor." Pike refused the demand and, offended by the rudeness of his host, abruptly left the village. As the American boats pushed away from the shore, the demanding Dakota yelled out that "he did not like the arrangements" Pike had made between the Dakota and Ojibwe and "that he would go to war this Summer." Pike responded through his interpreter that "if [he] returned to St. Peters with his troops he would settle that affair with him."⁴⁴ In other words, Pike was threatening that Dakota with military force, should he carry out his boast of going to war with the Ojibwe.

Pike's unpleasant encounter at the Kapo-ja village was the expedition's last stop at the beautiful river bend of *Im-na-injaska*—White Rock. If that negative experience lowered his opinion of the Dakota, it would not last long. Later that day, at the mouth of the St. Croix River, Pike's party found "Petit Corbeau with his people," accompanied by fur trader James Frazier and his partner Wood. Once again Pike held council with Little Crow and when the chief heard what had happened at his village, he "made many apologies for the misconduct of his people"—especially his impetuous "young warriors" who had earlier "been inducing him to go to war." As a token of his friendship and to make amends for the rude treatment, Little Crow presented Pike "with a bea-

ver robe and pipe" and promised him that he would try to "preserve peace."⁴⁵

Pike's friendly conference with Little Crow (*Cetanakwon*) turned out to be their last meeting. Neither man would ever see each other again. Little Crow would remain in the land of the Dakota, leading his village at the river bend for twenty-eight more years. In spite of his assurance to Pike that he would "preserve peace," he and his tribe would ultimately continue their war with the Ojibwe, and none of the Dakota would follow Pike to St. Louis for another grand council. Pike would return to St. Louis, only to be sent off again by General Wilkinson on another expedition, this one to explore the Arkansas River, and it would be a much more controversial mission. His second expedition, with the same soldiers, would take him to the Rocky Mountains, where he would discover "Pike's Peak," and then down, into Spanish New Mexico, where he would be reprimanded by Spanish authorities for trespassing. Pike would not return to his wife Clarissa and young daughter at St. Charles, Missouri, until 1807. He and Little Crow would share similar fates: both would die in battle, Little Crow fighting his old enemy, the Ojibwe, in 1834, the same year Pike's father, Zebulon Pike, Sr., would die. Pike himself would die fighting the British in the War of 1812, at the battle of York,

on April 27, 1813—a month after being promoted to brigadier general and fifteen months before Robert Dickson, Thomas G. Anderson, Joseph Renville, and a motley army of French Canadians and Dakota warriors launched a successful British assault on Prairie du Chien.⁴⁶

Yet of all the coincidences and ironies connected with Zebulon Pike, the greatest of all is a story Thomas G. Anderson told in his memoirs. According to Anderson, in the autumn of 1810, five years after Pike purchased the center of the future Twin Cities, Anderson, Dickson, and several other British traders rode "seven well filled boats" to Pike Island, the site of the historic treaty, and erected a British fur post there. Later that winter, a group of Dakota, undoubtedly some of the same men who five years earlier had pledged their loyalty to Pike's flag on that very island, commenced trading with the British trespassers. Whether or not Little Crow was part of that group of Dakota, Anderson did not say.⁴⁷ But if he was who could blame him, since the United States had made no effort to follow up on the Pike Treaty and would indeed make no effort to do so for at least eleven years. In fact, the future payment of \$2,000 that Pike had promised the Dakota in 1805 would not be delivered to them until 1819. And the future fort that Pike envisioned on the treaty land would not be completed until almost twenty years

after the Pike Treaty and eleven years after his death. What Anderson did say about Little Crow would have stunned Pike, had he been alive. According to Anderson, on September 28, 1814 the "Little Corbeau" arrived [at Prairie du Chien] with one hundred men and their families. With all his young men, he called upon me, gave me a soldier's pipe and every assurance of his fidelity, and insists that when Robert Dickson arrives he will go to work with his warriors, to exterminate what Indians about here that adhere to the Americans." Anderson further paraphrased Little Crow as exclaiming that "he regarded every Indian and white soldier, no matter of what color, as long as they were British subjects as his brother—the rest his inveterate enemies and would act with the greatest vigor towards both accordingly." Other sources verify that Little Crow fought for the British in the War of 1812 and participated along with Dickson in one of Britain's great opening victories, the bloodless seizure of Mackinac Island. Thus, we can add the name of Little Crow to the list of those who once rendezvoused with Pike but later turned against his country. Although the Pike expedition ultimately failed to achieve most of its stated objectives, that failure does not negate the validity of its mission, nor the historical significance of what it did accomplish: a great land purchase and a nine-month record of Minnesota and its inhabitants decades before white settlement.

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Notes

1. Elliott Coues, *The Expeditions of Zebulon Pike* (Washington D.C.: 1895; Mpls: Ross and Haines, 1965), 1:74, XXIV, 77, 3, 39–40, 193. Hereafter cited as Pike's Journal
2. *Ibid.*, IV. William Watts Folwell, *A History of Minnesota* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1921), 1:90. M.R. Montgomery, *Jefferson and the Gun-Men* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2000) 86–88. See also: Royal Ornan Shreve, *The Finished Scoundrel—General Wilkinson, Sometime Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the United States, Who Made Intrigue a Trade and Treason a Profession*. (Indianapolis: Bobb-Merrill Company, 1933).
3. Pike's Journal, II: 842–844
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One of Seth Eastman's paintings which he labeled "Permanent Residence of the Sioux" and probably is the village of Ka-so-ja (Kaposia) as it looked in 1846 when Eastman was an officer at Fort Snelling. Minnesota Historical Society collections.

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