

among the Sioux Indians, and had been a trader about forty years. There was also another man by the name of Duncan Graham, who had been engaged in the Indian trade about the same length of time, and was captain in the British Indian Department during the war, from whom I obtained considerable information of the Indian country, and of the earlier days of Prairie du Chien.

Prairie du Chien was, at this time, an important post for Indian trade, and was considered by the Indians as neutral ground, where different tribes, although at war might visit in safety; but if hostile, they had to beware of being caught in the neighborhood, going or returning. Yet I never heard of any hostile movement on the Prairie after they had safely arrived.

The factories which John W. Johnson had charge of, were established by an act of Congress previous to the war of 1812, for the humane purpose of preventing the British traders from extortions on the Indians, and of counteracting British influence over them, which they exercised through the traders. But unfortunately they had the contrary effect, and through the bad management of the traders, the Government of the United States was made to appear contemptible in the eyes of the Indians. The idea was then prevalent in the U. S., that the most sleazy and cheap goods were what the Indians wanted, whereas the blankets furnished by the British traders, although of coarse wool, were thick and substantial, and so were the cloths and calicoes, while those furnished by the Americans were greatly inferior. It was many years before Mr. Astor, with all his wealth and sagacity, could obtain in England suitable blankets and cloths for the Indian trade, and also the proper guns. There was, at that time, an Indian gun manufactured in England, called the North West gun, of simple, plain and strong construction, and it was understood that the manufacture of blankets, cloths and guns was so much under the influence of the North West Fur Company, that an American could not procure the genuine article, and hence the goods furnished by the factors were all of an inferior article, except