

object was to secure the present site of the village of Prescott, the first claim made north of Prairie du Chien. A levy of \$2,000 was made to make the necessary improvements to hold the claim, and Mr. P. Prescott, from whom the town takes its name, was appointed to take possession of, and hold the property for the Company. Improvements were made in the way of log buildings, and twelve hundred acres claimed. A trading post was opened for the sale of Indian goods. This claim was protected until 1841, when Congress passed an act forbidding all such organizations, when Mr. Prescott claimed 160 acres, the amount allowed by the pre-emption law of 1841. In 1837 a treaty was made with the Sioux or Dakotas, for all their territory east of the Mississippi, which included the tract in question. This purchase, together with the lumbering interest of the St. Croix valley, drew pioneers from the States.—Commercial points were first sought as the most desirable possessions, and a number of struggles were had with the company at Prescott to disposses them of their claim, as, at this time, it was held by proxy. But power in high places was too strong for the weak hand of private enterprise. Finally, Mr. Prescott was compelled to reside upon his claim, still the property of, or so protected by, the original company or their assignees. At this time, the Fur Company having become interested, no person was allowed to settle on the claim, for any kind of business, as fear was entertained that each settler would be a competitor for the title of the town. They succeeded in banishing all hope of a settlement at Prescott, until Government should give a title to the land, which, it was known, could not be for many years. At this time very little attention was paid to the country above the St. Croix valley, as the principal business was lumbering, and that mostly confined to the St. Croix. Fort Snelling afforded some trade with the soldiers, most of which had to be stolen. Around the fort was a reserve, which extended down the Mississippi to the present site of St. Paul.