

traders, camp-followers, army speculators and a mixed class generally to gather around, made it assume a livelier tone than many would imagine. Prairie Du Chien was also an important point in consequence of the Indian Agency then located here. Gen. Joseph M. Street,\* was appointed Indian Agent the same year I came, and he was engaged in several negotiations and treaties with different tribes of Indians, among whom he managed to preserve comparatively friendly relations: inducing them to part with their land to the Government, strip after strip, for which he saw them paid off in cash or goods. I will not be certain that he always commanded the confidence of the Indians, but he was impartial in all his dealings with them, saw the conditions of engagements faithfully fulfilled, and made the annual payments promptly at the proper time. It was at these same payments, some of which I attended, that the traders and employees of the Fur Company reaped rich harvests. There are those here now, who made the bulk of their fortunes, after these payments, in trading with the unsophisticated Indians. This being a point most accessible to a great many tribes, they frequently received their payments here, at head quarters. These payments were great occasions—to the Indian because he would obtain new blankets, and money wherewith to buy guns, ammunition and whisky—to the trader for he would rake in all that money, giving in exchange a very superior quality of goods; at a very small advance on first cost—and to the Government, as it offered a chance for purchasing more territory. An Indian payment was invariably attended with a great jubilee, in most cases got up at the expense of the Indians. At these frolics the Indians generally got “plenty drunk,” but the traders got all their money, and the Government got their lands. Gambling was a common thing at such times, and the Indian often returned to his village, empty handed, *sans* land, *sans* money, *sans* everything but a deep conviction of having been cheated. Thus it will be plainly seen, that the trade carried on between the Indians and

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\*A brief sketch of Gen. STREET is given in a note, p. 173, of vol. II, Wisconsin Historical Collections.