

Northwest as Col. Gratiot. His knowledge of the Indian character, obtained by him while in St. Louis, through his brothers-in-law, Pierre Chouteau Jr., and John P. Cabanne, both controlling spirits in the American Fur Company, taught him that to obtain consideration and influence with the Indians, it was necessary for him to deal with them with kindness and good faith, and never to practice on them any deceit. Let an Indian be once knowingly deceived by a white man, confidence was gone, and never to be regained. Always dealing honorably and frankly with the Indians, treating them with the utmost kindness, and vigilantly guarding himself and all about him against the least deception, even in the smallest matters, Col. Gratiot obtained an almost unbounded control and influence over them, particularly the Winnebago tribe, which in his time claimed all the country in what is now Southwestern Wisconsin and Northwestern Illinois.

Col. Hercules L. Dousman, so well known to all your early settlers, as connected with the American Fur Company, and so long the manager of its vast trading establishment at Prairie du Chien, and as a business man without an equal during his day and generation in the Northwest, once told me, that in dealing with the Indians what they had to guard against with the greatest vigilance was to avoid any possible deception when dealing with them. If by any accident or mistake a blanket or a gun, or any other article, which was not up to the standard was sold to an Indian, the utmost pains would be taken to exchange the faulty article, and replace it by the most perfect one at the earliest moment, without regard to trouble or expense. And such was always the rule of the American Fur Company in all of its colossal transactions with the Indians over half a continent, and it was that which enabled it, during its entire existence, to hold such a control over the Indian tribes.

The two most important Indian treaties ever concluded in the then Northwest, was the treaty concluded with the Chippewas, Ottawas, and Pottawatomies, executed July 27, 1829; and the treaty with the Winnebagoes, executed August 1, 1829. These treaties were negotiated with the