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JOURNALS OF THE LA VÉRENDRYE TRIPS TO
THE MANDAN VILLAGES ON THE MISSOURI
RIVER IN 1738-39 AND TO THE FOOTHILLS
OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN 1742-43

INTRODUCTION

The first of these journals was translated from the French by Douglas Brymner, Archivist, and is reprinted by permission, from a Report on Canadian Archives, being an Appendix to Report of the Minister of Agriculture, Ottawa, 1889. The second was translated by Anne H. Blegen, of the Minnesota Historical Society, from the Margry Papers, hereinafter mentioned.

The two journeys here described were the most important of their efforts to reach the Pacific. On the first, the story of which is in the narrative written by the elder Verendrye, they came from the frontier trading post, Fort La Reine (now Portage la Prairie, in Manitoba), southwesterly up the Mouse River to the south bend of the Mouse River loop, thence southwesterly to the Missouri. This is the first visit of white men among the Mandan Indians of which there is any definite record and occurred sixty-six years before Lewis and Clark were there. The next was made in the winter of 1742-43 by two of Le Verendrye's sons, Chevalier Francois and Louis Joseph. They revisited the Mandans and continued southwestly until they reached the foothills of the Rockies from where, on January 1, 1743, they reported seeing snow covered peaks to the west. This is the first report of white men having

seen the Rocky Mountains in the northern part of the present United States.

An accident to their astrolabe prevented the observation of latitude on this trip, so their exact course is not known, but fortunately a lead plate, which they buried March 31, 1743, was found in 1913 on the bank of the Missouri River at Fort Pierre, South Dakota. That discovery assisted greatly in clearing up the uncertainty of their route, although discrepancies in dates and distances render it impossible to state positively whether their most westerly point was in southeastern Montana, northwestern Wyoming, or southwestern South Dakota.

—*Ralph Budd.*