

An Important Visit



Zebulon Montgomery Pike
1805

An Important Visit



Zebulon Montgomery Pike
1805

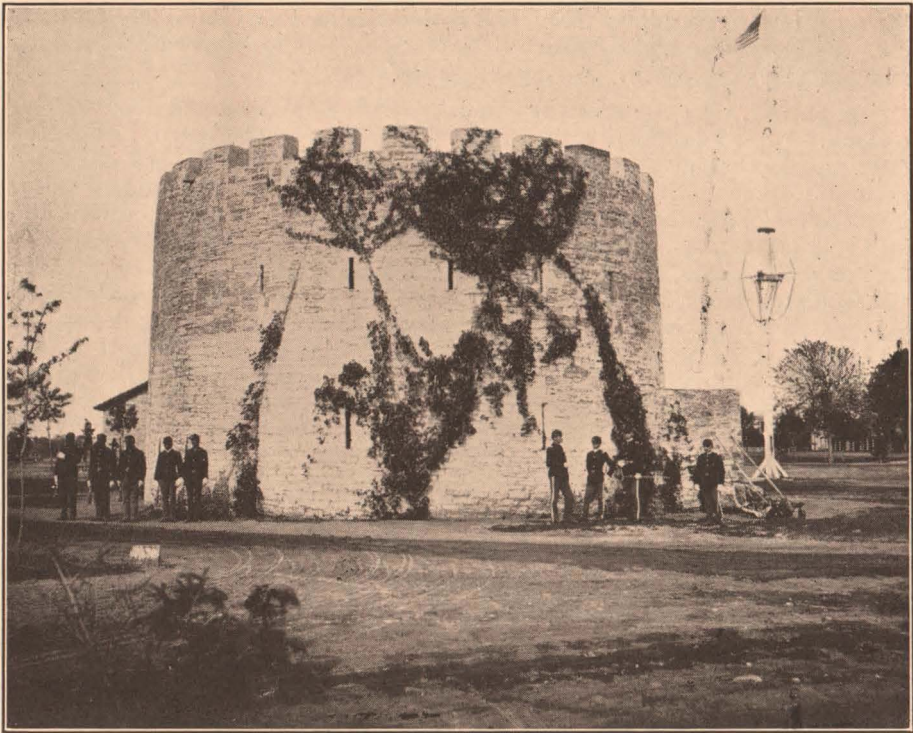
Compliments of
Great Northern Railway



ZEBULON MONTGOMERY PIKE, SOLDIER-EXPLORER

Born in New Jersey Jan. 5, 1779. Died a hero of the War of 1812 while leading a charge on York [Toronto], Canada, April 27, 1813.

He acquired the site for Fort Snelling by treaty with the Sioux Nation September 23, 1805.



Reproduced by courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society

THE ROUND TOWER, FORT SNELLING

A bronze tablet thereon bears this inscription:

"To Honor the Memory of Zebulon Montgomery Pike, First Lieutenant, U. S. A., who on September 23d, 1805, acquired for the Government by treaty with the Sioux Nation the Site of Fort Snelling. This tablet is placed by the Society of Colonial Dames of America in the State of Minnesota, 1909."

The Origin of Fort Snelling

*An excerpt from the itinerary of Zebulon M. Pike,
St. Paul to Leach Lake, reads as follows:*

"Sunday, Sept. 22d, 1805. Employed in the morning in measuring the river. About three o'clock Mr. Frazer and his peroues arrived; and in three hours after Petit Corbeau, at the head of his band, arrived with 150 warriors.

"They ascended the hill in the point between the Mississippi and St. Peter's and gave us a salute, a la mode savage, with balls; after which we settled affairs for the council next day. Mr. Frazer and myself took a bark canoe, and went up to the village, in order to see Mr. Cameron. We ascended the St. Peter's to the village, and found his camp. He engaged to be at the council the next day, and promised to let me have his barge. The Sioux had marched on a war excursion; but, hearing by express of my arrival, they returned by land.

We were treated very hospitably, and hallooed after to go into every lodge to eat. Returned to our camp about eleven o'clock, and found the Sioux and my men peaceably encamped. No current in the river.¹

"Sept. 23d. Prepared for the council, which we commenced about twelve o'clock. I had a bower or shade, made of my sails, on the beach, into which only my gentlemen (the traders) and the chiefs entered. I then addressed them in a speech, which, though long and touching on many points, had for its principal object the granting of land at this place, falls of St. Anthony, and St. Croix (river), and making peace with the Chippewas. I was replied to by Le Fils de Pinchow, Le Petit Corbeau, and L'Original Leve. They gave me the land required, about 100,000 acres, equal to \$200,000, and promised me a safe passport for myself and any (Chippewa) chiefs I might bring down; but spoke doubtfully with respect to the peace. I gave them presents to the amount of about \$200, and as soon as the council was over, I allowed the traders to present them with some liquor, which, with what I myself gave, was equal to 60 gallons. In one-half hour they were all embarked for their respective villages.

"The chiefs in the council were: Le Petit Corbeau, who signed the grant; Le Fils de Pinchow, who also signed; Le Grand Partisan; Le Original Leve, war-chief; gave him my father's (General Wilkinson's) tomahawk, etc.; Le Demi Douzen, war-chief; Le Beccasse; Le Boeuf que Marche.

"It was somewhat difficult to get them to sign the grant, as they conceived their word of honor should be taken for the grant without any mark; but I convinced them it was not on their account, but my own, that I wished them to sign it."

Dr. Elliott Coues makes the following notes on these entries:

"The village which Pike visited is marked on his map on the west, upper, or left bank of the Minnesota r., which here runs little E. of N. into the Mississippi. The hill on the point whence the Sioux saluted him so savagely was the scene of many a more warlike demonstration in after years; for here was built Fort St. Anthony, later known as Fort Snelling, one of the most important and permanent military establishments in the United States, and for nearly half a century the most notable place on the Mississippi above Prairie du Chien. It was erected on the land which Pike secured by the transaction his text is about to describe, and which extended thence up the river to include the falls of St. Anthony, and thus the site of the present great city of Minneapolis, with St. Paul the twin metropolis of the Northwest. The location of Fort Snelling is in Nicollet's opinion "the finest site on the Mississippi River;" and I should be the last to dissent from this judgment, after my enjoyable visit to the fort in 1873, at the invitation of General Alexander. The bluff headland is about 105 feet above the water; the two rivers separated by this rocky point are respectively over 300 and nearly 600 feet broad. The height of Pilot Knob, across the Minnesota r., is about 250 feet. The plateau on the point of which the fort is situated stretches indefinitely S. W.; 8 m. direct N. W. are Minneapolis and the falls. The Mississippi receives the Minnesota at the point of greatest convexity of a deep bend to the S., duplicating that bend to the N. on which St. Paul is situated, the two together forming quite a figure of S. Nothing came of Pike's recommendation of this site for a military post till a report to the same effect was made by Major Long, after his expedition of 1817, during which he reached the place at 2 p. m., Wednesday, July 16th. On Feb. 10th, 1819, the Secretary of War, John C. Calhoun, ordered the 5th infantry to proceed to the Mississippi and establish regimental headquarters at the mouth of St. Peter's r. A detachment of troops, mustering 98 rank and file, under Colonel Henry Leavenworth, who had become Lieutenant-Colonel of that regiment Feb. 10th, 1818, was first cantoned at New Hope, near Mendota, Sept. 24th, 1819, and preparations were begun at once for a permanent structure. The winter of 1819-20 was disastrous from scurvy. On May 5th, 1820, camp was shifted to a place near a spring, above the graveyard, and was thereupon named Camp Coldwater. In the spring of 1820 Jean Baptiste Faribault located himself in the vicinity; Governor Lewis Cass came from his exploration of the upper Mississippi during the summer, and Lawrence Taliaferro's Indian agency was established as Camp St. Peter's. As usual, the colonel commanding and the Indian agent clashed, notably in the matters

of medals and whisky. In August, 1820, Colonel Josiah Snelling, who had become Colonel of the regiment June 1st, 1819, arrived and relieved Colonel Leavenworth of the command. He determined to build on the point originally selected by Pike. The corner-stone of Fort St. Anthony is supposed to have been laid Sept. 10th, 1820; and the building was so far forward in the autumn of 1822 that the troops moved in, though it was not completed. It is traditional that a tree on which Pike had cut his name was ordered to be spared in the process of construction; but, if so, it soon disappeared. On May 10th, 1823, the first steamboat, the *Virginia*, reached the fort. It brought among other notables the Chevalier Beltrami. On July 3d, 1823, Major Long arrived, en route to his exploration of St. Peter's r. In 1824 General Winfield Scott visited the fort on a tour of inspection. It does not appear to have struck anybody before that the name of a professional saint of the Prince of Peace was absurdly inapplicable to any military establishment. General Scott very sensibly reported that the name was "foreign to all our associations," besides being "geographically incorrect," and recommended the post to be named Fort Snelling, in well-deserved compliment to the distinguished officer who had built it. The story of Fort Snelling, from its inception to the end of all Indian collisions, is an integral and very prominent part of the history of Minnesota; it is an honorable record, of which citizens and soldiery may be equally proud—one replete with stirring scenes and thrilling episodes, which in the lapse of years, tradition has delighted to set in all the glamour of romance."

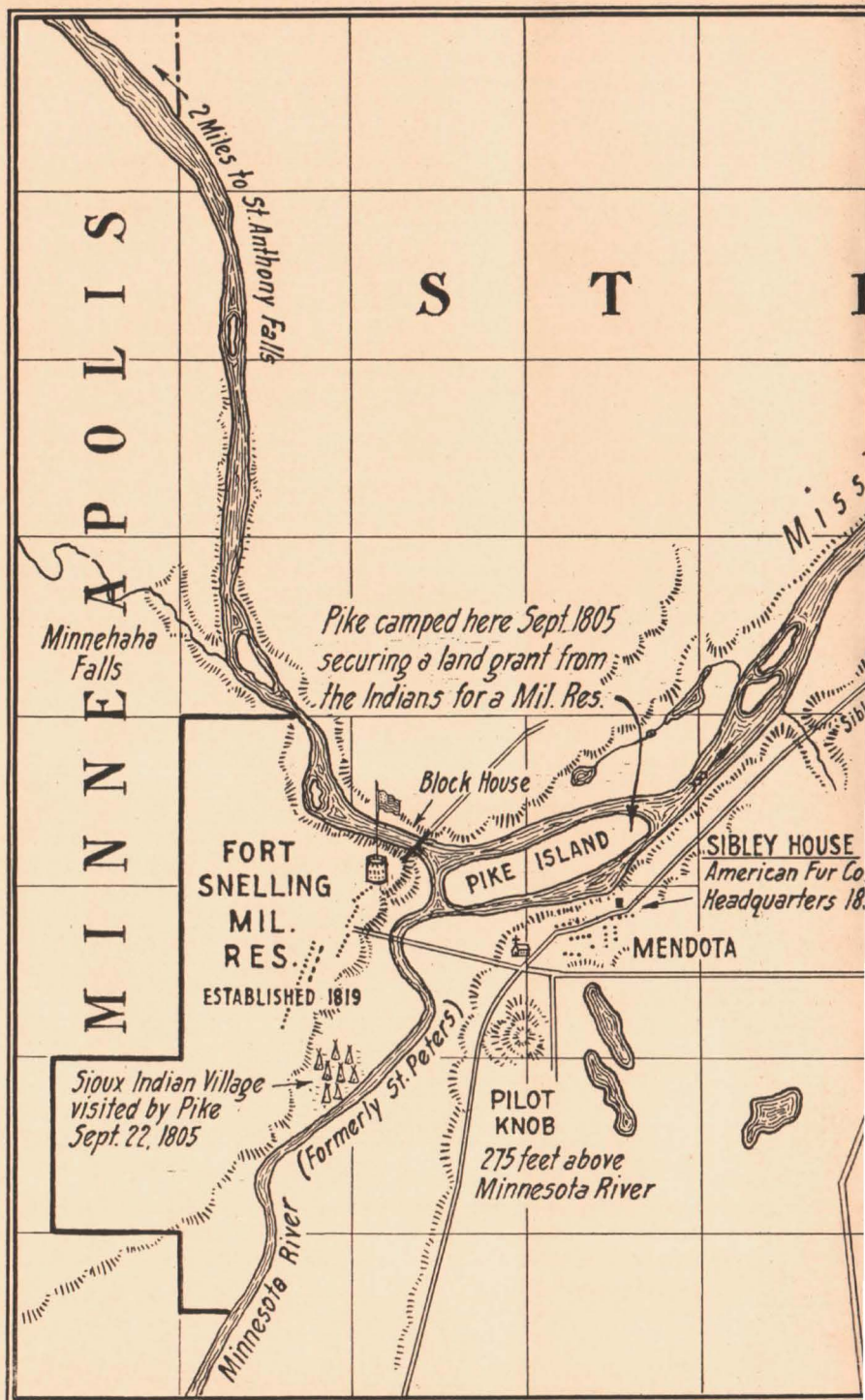
The following is the substance of Pike's speech on this occasion:

"BROTHERS: I am happy to meet you here at this council fire, which your father has sent me to kindle, and to take you by the hands as our children. We having lately acquired from the Spanish [read French] the extensive territory of Louisiana. Our general has thought proper to send out a number of his young warriors to visit all his red children; to tell them his will, and to hear what request they may have to make of their father. I am happy the choice has fallen on me to come this road, as I find my brothers, the Sioux, ready to listen to my words.

"BROTHERS: It is the wish of our government to establish military posts on the Upper Mississippi, at such places as might be thought expedient; I have therefore examined the country, and have pitched on the mouth of the St. Croix, this place [mouth of the Minnesota River], and the Falls of St. Anthony. I therefore wish you to grant to the United States nine miles square at St. Croix; and at this place from a league below the confluence at the St. Peter's and Mississippi, to a league above St. Anthony, extending three leagues on each side of the river. As we are a people accustomed to have all our acts written down, in order to have them handed to our children, I have drawn up a form of an agreement, which we will both sign in the presence of the traders now present. After we know the terms we will fill it up, and have it read and interpreted to you.

"BROTHERS: These posts are intended as a benefit to you; the old chiefs now present must see that their situation improves by a communication with the whites. It is the intention of the United States to establish factories at these posts, in which the Indians may procure all their things at a cheaper and better rate than they do now; or than your traders can afford to sell them to you, as they are single individuals who come far in small boats. But your fathers are many and strong; they will come with a strong arm in larger vessels. There will also be chiefs here, who can attend to the wants of their brothers, without your sending or going all the way to St. Louis; they will see the traders that go up your rivers, and know that they are good men.

"BROTHERS: Another object your father has at heart is to endeavor to make peace between you and the Chippeways. You have now been a long time at war, and when will you stop? If neither side will lay down the hatchet, your paths will always be red with blood; but if you will consent to make peace, and suffer your father to bury the hatchet between you, I will endeavor to bring







Reproduced by courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society

SIBLEY HOUSE—Built 1835

The following inscription appears at the right of the main entrance:

"The first stone house erected in the state of Minnesota by its first Governor, General Henry Hastings Sibley. Secured in 1910 for the Saint Paul Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, from Saint Peter's Parish, Mendota, by Mrs. Lucy Shepard MacCourt. Presented to the State Society D. A. R., June 14, 1910."

down some of the Chippeway chiefs with me to St. Louis, where the good work can be completed under the auspices of our mutual father. I am much pleased to see that the young warriors have halted here to hear my words this day; and as I know it is hard for a warrior to be struck and not strike again, I will, by the first Chippeway I meet, send words to their chief, that if they have not yet felt your tomahawk, it is not because you have no legs or the hearts of men, but because you have listened to the voice of your father.

"BROTHERS: If their chiefs do not listen to the voice of their father, and continue to commit murders on you and our traders, they will call down the vengeance of the Americans; for they are not like a blind man walking into the fire. They were once at war with us, and together with their allies, all the Northern Indians, were defeated at Roche de Butte, and obliged to sue for peace; that peace we granted them. They know we are not children, but like all wise people are slow to shed blood.

"BROTHERS: Your old men know that not many years since, we received Detroit, Michillimackinac, and all the posts on the lakes, from the English, and

now, but the other day, Louisiana from the Spaniards [French]; so that we put one foot on the sea at the East, and the other on the sea at the West; and if once children, are now men. Yet, I think the traders who come from Canada are bad birds amongst the Chippeways, and instigate them to make war on their red brethren, the Sioux, in order to prevent our traders going up the Mississippi. This I shall enquire into; and if I find the case to be so, warn those persons of their ill conduct.

"BROTHERS: Mr. Choteau was sent by your father to the Osage nation, with one of his young chiefs. He sailed some days before me, and had not time to procure the medals which I am told he promised to send up, but they will be procured.

"BROTHERS: I wish you to have some of your head chiefs ready to go down with me in the spring. From the head of St. Peter's also, such other chiefs as you may think proper, to the number of four or five. When I pass here on my way I will send you word at what time you will meet me at the Prairie des Chiens.

"BROTHERS: I expect you will give orders to all your young warriors to respect my flag, and the protection which I may extend to the Chippeway chiefs, who may come down with me in the spring; for were a dog to run to my lodge for safety, his enemy must walk over me to hurt him.

"BROTHERS: Here is a flag which I wish to send to the Gens de Feuilles, to shew them they are not forgotten by their father. I wish the comrade of their chief to take it on himself to deliver it with my words.

"BROTHERS: I am told, that hitherto the traders have made a practice of selling rum to you. All of you in your right senses must know that it is injurious, and occasions quarrels and murders amongst yourselves. For this reason your father has thought proper to prohibit the traders from selling you any more. Therefore I hope my brothers, the chiefs, when they know a trader to sell an Indian rum, will prevent that Indian from paying his [that trader's] credit. This will break up the pernicious practice, and oblige your father. But I hope you will not encourage your young men to treat our traders ill from this circumstance, or from a hope of the indulgence formerly experienced, but make your complaints to persons in this country, who will be authorized to do you justice.

"I now present you with some of your father's tobacco, and some other trifling things, as a memorandum of my good will, and before my departure I will give you some liquor to clear your throats."

Extract from the Sioux Treaty

Art. 5. The Sioux Treaty of Sept. 23d, 1805.

Whereas, at a conference held between the United States of America and the Sioux nation of Indians: Lieutenant Z. M. Pike, of the army of the United States, and the chiefs and the warriors of said tribe, have agreed to the following articles, which, when ratified and approved of by the proper authority, shall be binding on both parties.

Art. 1. That the Sioux nation grant unto the United States, for the purpose of establishment of military posts, nine miles square at the mouth of the St. Croix, also from below the confluence of the Mississippi and St. Peter's up the Mississippi to include the falls of St. Anthony, extending nine miles on each side of the river, that the Sioux nation grants to the United States the full sovereignty and power over said district forever.

Art. 2. That, in consideration of the above grants, the United States shall pay (filled up by the senate with with 2000 dollars).

Art. 3. The United States promise, on their part, to permit the Sioux to pass and repass, hunt, or make other use of the said districts as they have formerly done without any other exception than those specified in article first.

In testimony whereof we, the undersigned, have hereunto set our hands and seals, at the mouth of the river St. Peter's, on the 23d day of September, 1805.

Z. M. Pike, 1st Lieut. (L. S.)

and agent at the above conference.

Le Petit Corbeau, his
 X (L. S.)
 mark

Way Ago Enagee his
 X (L. S.)
 mark



"In the original bill [establishing Minnesota territory] as reported to the senate, Mendota was named as the capital, and it is owing to the strict integrity of Henry H. Sibley, then delegate from Wisconsin territory, that St. Paul was substituted. Stephen A. Douglas, chairman of the committee on states and territories, had, a short time before, made a pleasure trip to this region. He visited Pilot Knob, the elevation in the rear of Mendota, and was particularly pleased with the magnificent and extended view to be obtained from that point. He had this view in his mind when drafting the bill, and decided that Pilot Knob was the place for the capitol buildings, as they could be seen for miles on every side.

"Mr. Sibley knew that the wishes of his constituents were that the capitol should be located at St. Paul. He immediately went to Senator Douglas for an explanation, and was given the senator's reasons for wishing the capitol placed at Mendota. Finally, Senator Douglas agreed that if the committee saw fit to make the desired change, he would not oppose it. Accordingly, Sibley went before the committee, and after much persuasion secured the change, and the bill passed, naming St. Paul as the capital."—History of Dakota County.

In July, 1851, Governor Ramsey, having concluded the treaty of Traverse des Sioux with the Sisseton and Wahpeton bands of the Sioux nation, held a council with the Wahpekute and Mdewakanton bands at Mendota. They met in the warehouse; the large gathering crowded the room and the heat was stifling. Complaining of the conditions, the Indians finally refused to meet again in the building, so the negotiations were continued under an arbor which was built "on a high plain near Pilot Knob and commanding a beautiful view." There on August 5, they consummated the treaty which led to opening for settlement vast territory west of the Mississippi.





Reproduced from original cut loaned by Minnesota Historical Society.

THE TREATY OF TRAVERSE DES SIOUX

From a painting by Frank B. Mayer in the Museum of the Minnesota Historical Society. The artist was present at the treaty.

