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|  | Early explorations in Griggs County |

Omitting the Indian and Metis hunters and the wandering unrecorded whites who were sometimes found in the border land between the land occupied by the whites and those used by the Indians, the earliest white travelers in this part of North Dakota were probably J. N. Nicollet and his engineer officer Lt. John C. Fremont. Their exploration of the country west of the Sheyenne from near Bear Ben Hill and Devils Lake is illustrated in the map which they made following their trip in 1839. This indicates that they paused briefly at Lake Jessie on the 25-26th July, 1839. Their camp was on the bare knoll north of the old McColloch building site, the legal description, the southwest quarter of Section 14-147-60. Lt. Fremont named the lake for the lady whom he later married. Jessie Benton, daughter of Senator Thomas Benton of St. Louis, Missouri. It is said that the Senator did not approve of the proposed match and had a hand in sending the young lieutenant in to the wilderness hoping the romance would cool off. The two young leaders of this exploring party noted several landmarks by name which are still in use. Butte Michaude, on the Sheyenne north­east of Cooperstown (center of Section 35 Township 148 Range 59), Nicollet says the elevation was 1586 above the sea and 120 feet above the surrounding prairie. The name is supposed to have been taken from some old Indian leader buried in the artificial mound on the summit. The name being French would indicate that it originated after the Indians had contact with the whites. Metis hunters told me many years ago that on an occasion when they had a hunting camp in the vicinity, one of their men named Michaude became separated from the camp in a fog and was absent long enough so that his friends became anxious for his safety, after he was relocated they called the Butte Michaude or "the place where Michaude was lost".

On P. 155 of Upham's Glacial Lake (1887) Agassiz he says "another angle of the moraine is marked by the conspicuous hill called Butte Mashue, from the name of an Indian who was buried in the mound on its summit. This hill, situated in the east half of Section 35 Township 148 Range 59, rises 150 feet or 175 feet above the general level east and north, or nearly 350 feet above the Sheyenne River, which is only a mile distant to the northeast."

On Nicollet's map the name is spelled Michaux, they made the elevation 1386. Their map also gives the location of Horse Butte and Lake, also on the Sheyenne, on SW quarter of section 24 Township 147 Range 58, named from an Indian tra­dition. Farther up the Sheyenne the Beaver lodge creek and Poplar groves are located. Both are land marks from long ago, they are in Nelson County.

In the text of Nicollet's report, P. 138 he uses the name "Lake Jessie" with the French name (Lac des Bois or Wood Lake) he makes no further reference to Lake Jessie in the text.

The elevation in the text is given as 1586 for Butte Michaude possibly the 5 was originally 3 or 1386 feet elevation which would be nearer correct. He gives the water level of the Sheyenne at north of Beaver Lodge creek at 1328-the plateau 1486, this is some distance to the northwest up the Sheyenne Mouth of 1st Bald Hill creek (riverie aux Buttes Pelees)

47°-8'-47"; 94°-49'-30"

Lake Jessie (Lac des Bois) 47°-32'-32"; 98°-1'-45"

X at Beaver Lodge, level of plateau; 47°-46'-29"; 98°-13'-30".

General John Charles Fremont

Born of French parentage January 20, 1813 in Savannah, Georgia, his boyhood was rather turbulent, and his earlier attempts to settle down in a profession unsatisfactory. After acting successively as tutor on a private family, professor of mathematics on the United States Frigate Independence, and engineer on surveys in the southern states he accomp­anied Nicollet's expedition in its explorations between the Missouri and the British line. While thus engaged he received in July 7, 1838, a commission as 2nd Lieutenant in the corps of topographical engineers. While in Washington in 1840, engaged in a report of these expeditions, he met and became engaged to Jessie Benton, the daughter of Senator Benton of St. Louis, and this lady then only sixteen, he secretly married in October 19, 1841. In 1842 he started upon the famous "first expedition" to the Wind River Mountains, ascending Fremont's peak now know as Pike's peak, on August 15th. On his return to Washington the report of his expedition was laid before Congress, which brevetted him 1st lieutenant. The report attracted great attention, both at home and abroad, and young Fremont had the honor of high complimentary letter from Humbolt.

In 1843, he began his explorations beyond the Rockies. He returned to Kansas in 1844 and after preparing his reports was brevetted captain in 1845, and sent out on his third expedition to explore the great basin and the maritime region of Oregon and California. This was the most eventful of all his journeys. Threatened at Monterey by the Mexican government for his refusal to leave California, Freemont withdrew into Oregon, but meeting a 1846 dispatch directing him to watch over the interests of the United Sates, in California, there being reasons to apprehend that that province would' be transferred to Great Britain, he promptly retraced his steps. The American settlers, whom the Mexican government threatened to destroy, flocked to Fremont's camp and in a month, northern California was free. On July 4th, 1846, Fremont was elected its governor. In conjunction with Commodore Stockton he under­took to reduce the entire state, but the Mexican war interfered and at its close the territory was ceded to the U. S. by Mexico.

He was court-martialed in 1846 for some trouble in relation to the governorship and resigned from the service, refusing to accept a pardon from President Polk. He was afterward elected senator from California. In 1856 he became the "free soil" candidate for President. Soon after the outbreak of the Civil War he was made a major general: there were dif­ferences between him and the administration and he resigned. In 1870 he was made governor of Arizona.

General Fremont was outstanding as an explorer in the western areas of the United States and wee commonly called in his later life the "Path­finder" he was active in politics but less successful and had decided views on various matters which involved him in unpleasant situations and disputes.

He has been described as a slightly built man about 5' 9", very active and carried a himself lightly till in upper years when peritonitis attacked him about five days before his death which occurred in New York, July 14, 1890. The funeral was at the Episcopal Church, of which he was a member.

He left two sons and a daughter, besides the widow.

Fremont was a brown haired man; he never shaved, though he trimmed his beard neatly when and where he could. His eyes were large and blue, nose aquiline, his forehead high and capacious. He was a very modest man about his own accomplishments or plans. Such was the man who named Lake Jessie in 1839.