

IN THE FOOTSTEPS

OF

FATHER DE SMET

(OR WHAT I VISITED BETWEEN
2006 AND 2018)

VICTOR DRIESSENS

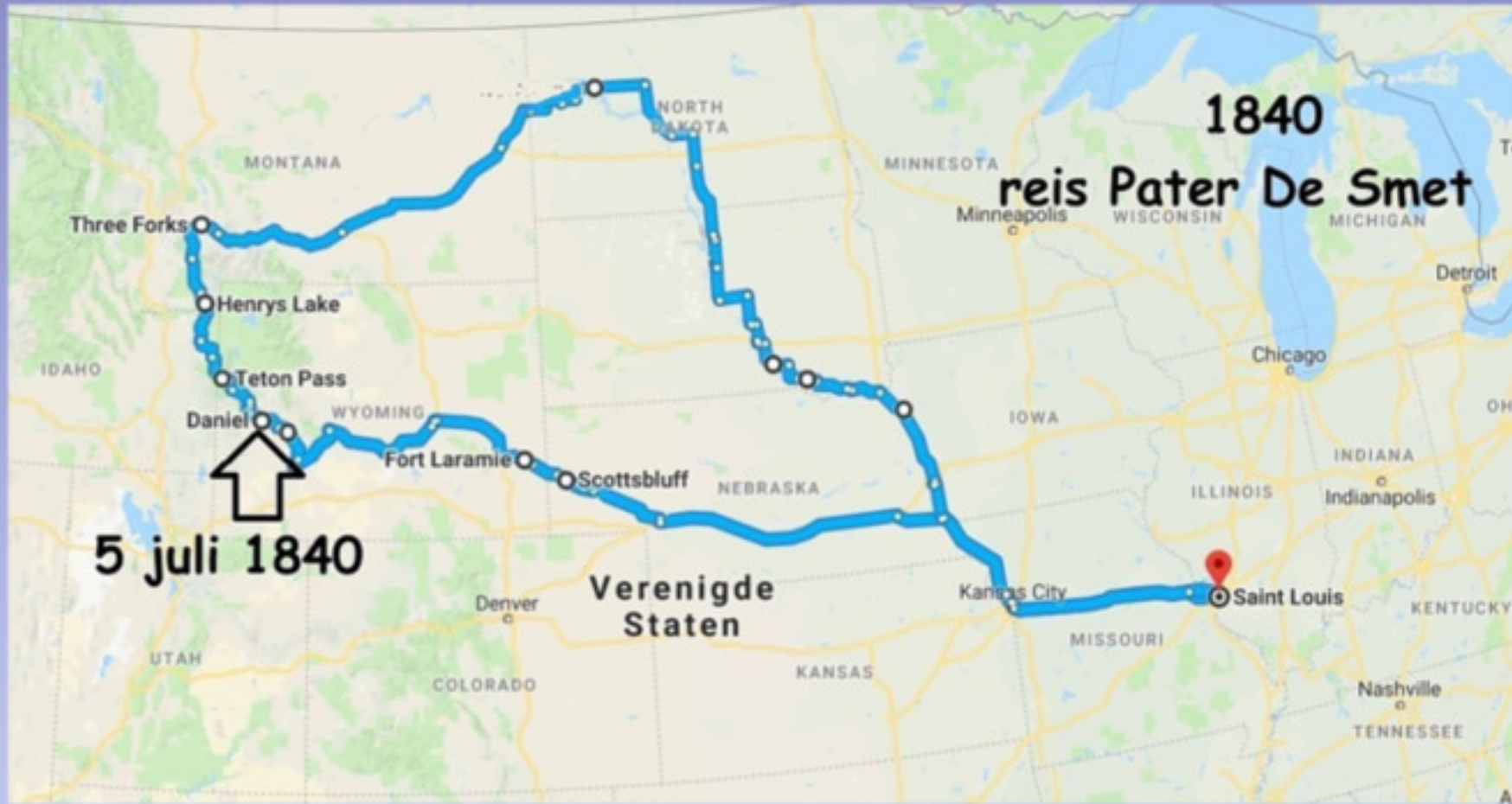
To the Rocky Mountains (1840 en 1841)

An encounter with the Mormons(1846)

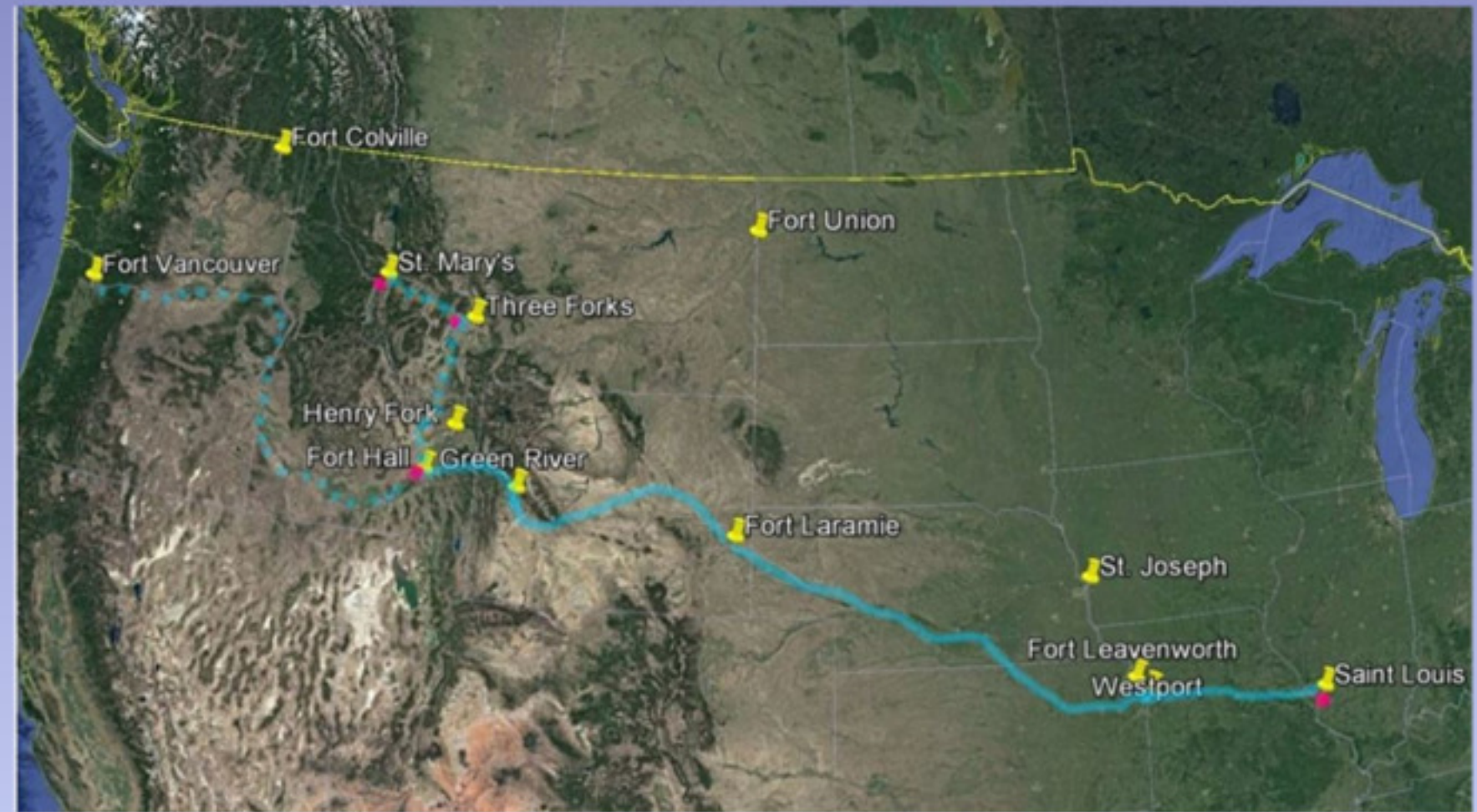
The Oregon Trail is a more than 3,400 km long route crossing the U.S. from east to west. It runs from Missouri to the mouth of the Columbia River. The route was used by pioneers who wanted to start a new life in Oregon. Fertile farmland was especially available in the Willamette River valley. The eastern portion of the Oregon Trail was also used by other westward routes such as the California Trail, the Mormon Trail, and the Bozeman Trail. The split to California was used intensively by the "forty-niners" after 1849, during the "Gold Rush". But when the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, the Oregon Trail diminished in importance.

In the 1840s, the idea that the Great American Desert was uninhabitable was still very much alive. It was also illegal to build settlements there. The prairie on the west side of the Mississippi and the east side of the Rocky Mountains was reserved for the Indians at that time. But from 1840 "Oregon" became known as a kind of promised land with very fertile soil and an excellent climate. Until 1846, the area was jointly owned by Great Britain and the United States. In 1840 the HBC had three forts on the Trail. Fort Hall, Fort Boise, Fort Nez Perce and Fort Vancouver. These forts became important support points for the travelers on the route.

To reach Oregon they had a number of options. One could sail around South America. A perilous undertaking. One could also get there via the Isthmus of Panama. But tropical diseases lurked there. One could also buy a steamboat ticket up the Missouri River to Fort Benton and from there negotiate the last obstacle, the mountain passes through the Cascades. Finally, one could also simply trek overland: the Oregon Trail, a route of more than 3000 kilometers. Some 400,000 pioneers ventured that trek. Pioneers usually tried to complete the trek in the warm season. The six month journey on the Oregon Trail was not an easy one. Most pioneers embarked on the journey with their wife and children, in more or less organized groups of dozens to sometimes hundreds of people. Many people died, not at the hand of hostile Indians, but because of diseases and accidents.



Itinerary of Father Desmet in 1840



Itinerary of Father Desmet in 1841

Oregon Trail

Oregon National Historic Trail/Missouri to Oregon

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Department of the Interior

Forest Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture



the Trail



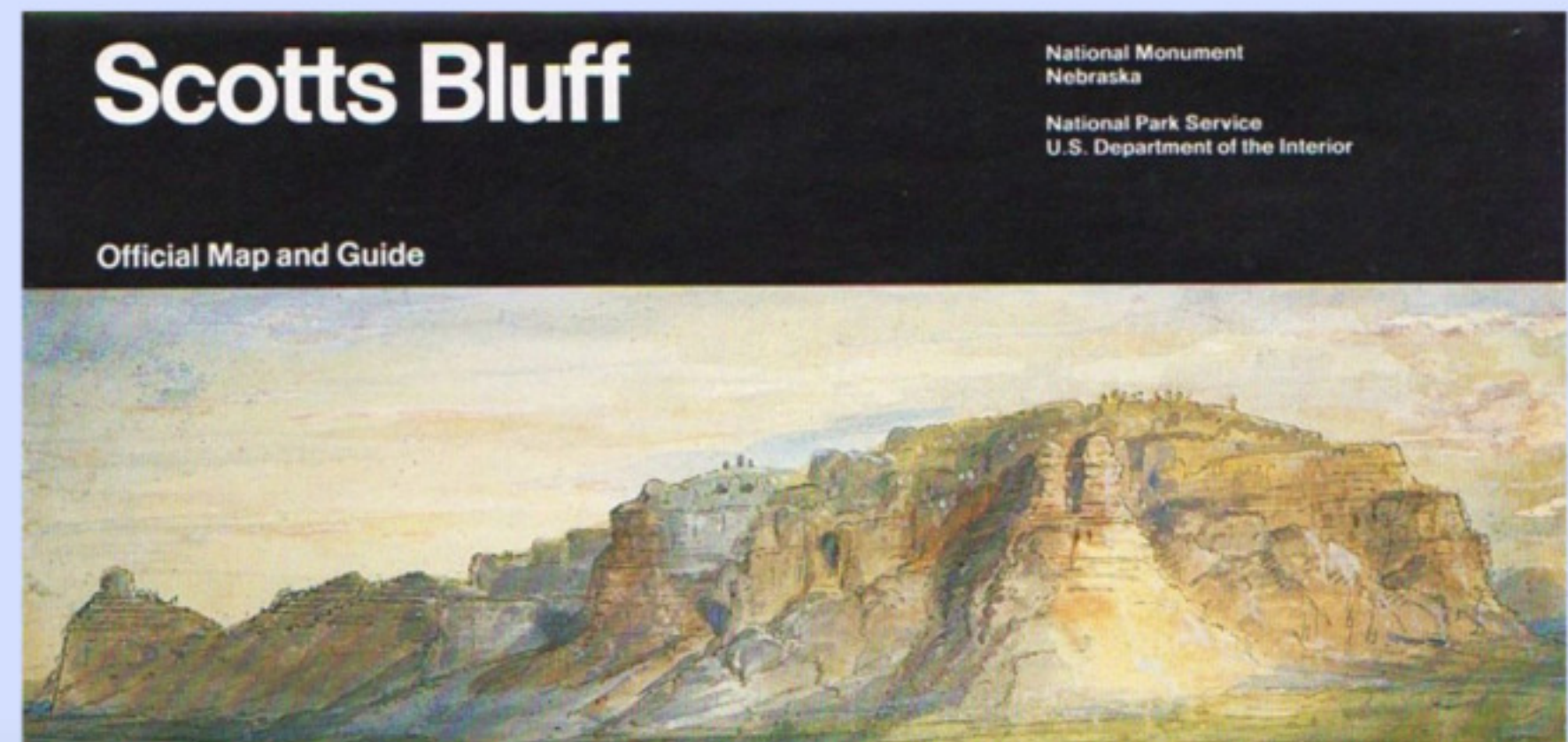
the Trail is still clearly visible (Nebraska)



the Platte River (Nebraska)



Chimney Rock (Nebraska)

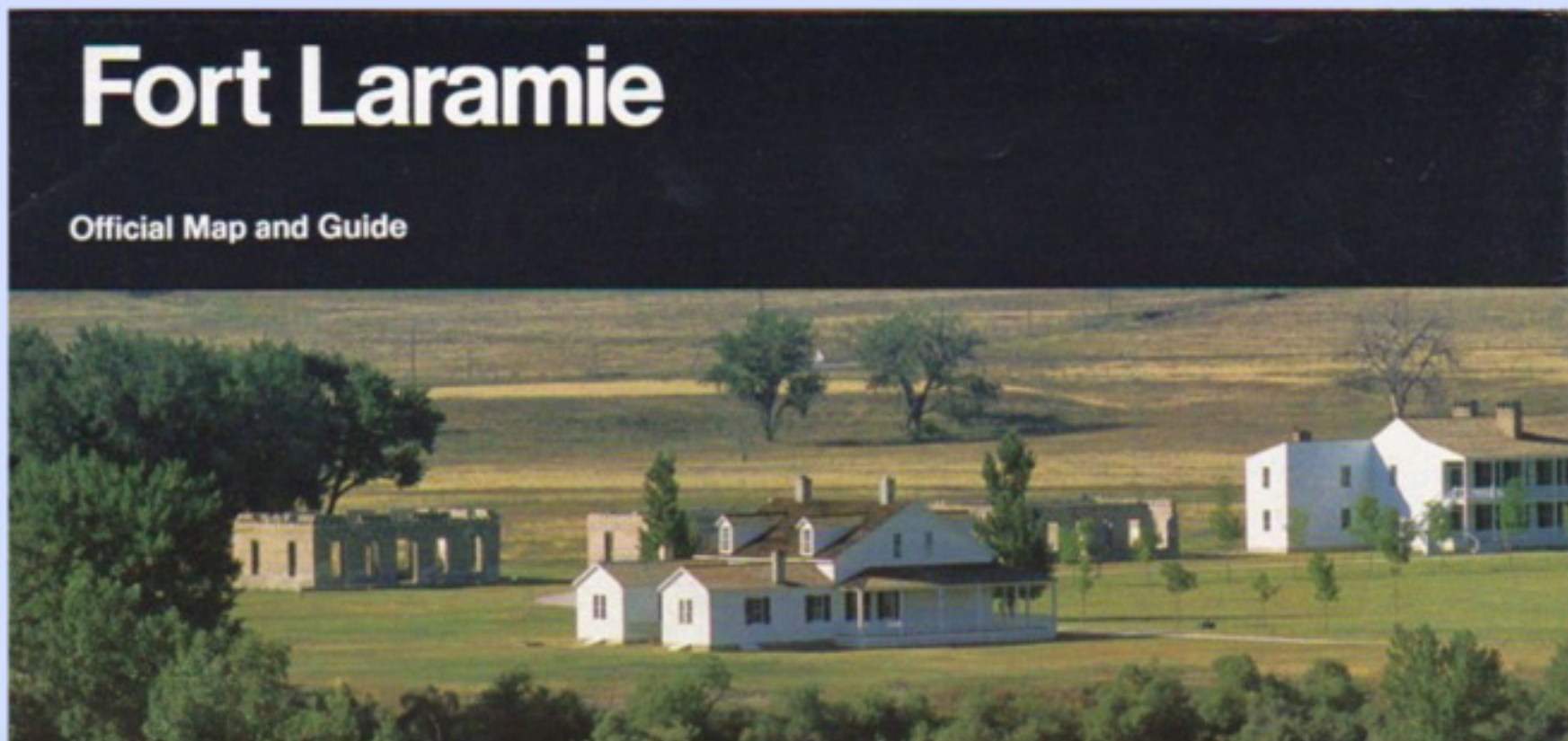




a signpost on the Trail for the emigrants ...



... Scotts Bluff (Nebraska)



Old Bedlam (Wyoming)



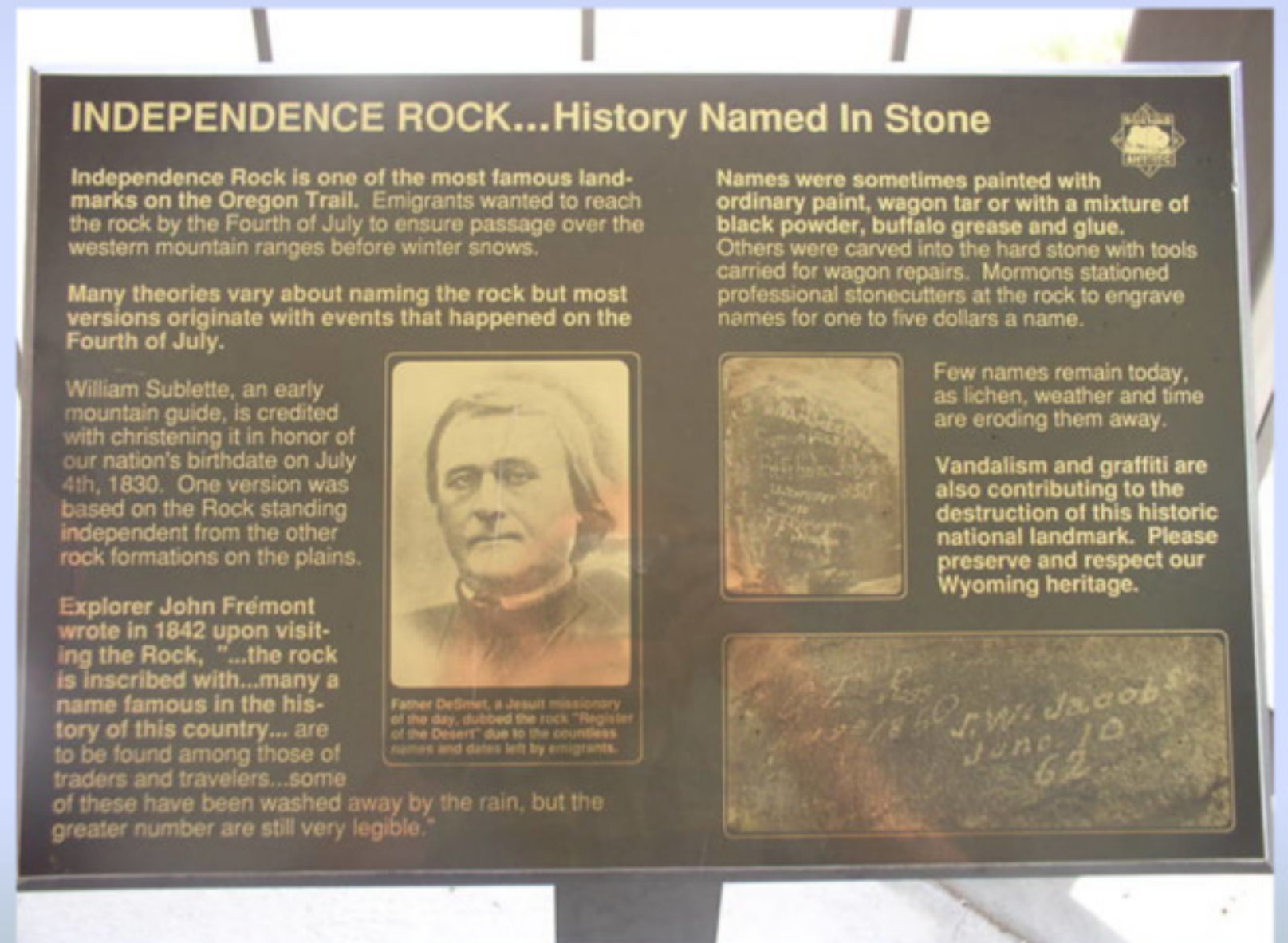
Oregon Trail Ruts : traces in the limestone



Ayres Natural Bridge (Wyoming)



Independence Rock (Wyoming)



INDEPENDENCE ROCK...History Named In Stone

Independence Rock is one of the most famous landmarks on the Oregon Trail. Emigrants wanted to reach the rock by the Fourth of July to ensure passage over the western mountain ranges before winter snows.

Many theories vary about naming the rock but most versions originate with events that happened on the Fourth of July.

William Sublette, an early mountain guide, is credited with christening it in honor of our nation's birthdate on July 4th, 1830. One version was based on the Rock standing independent from the other rock formations on the plains.



Father Delmet, a Jesuit missionary of the day, dubbed the rock "Register of the Desert" due to the countless names and dates left by emigrants.

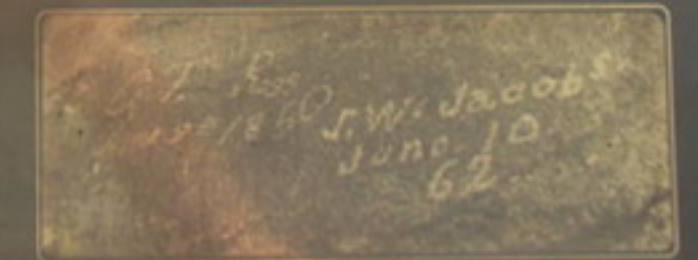
Names were sometimes painted with ordinary paint, wagon tar or with a mixture of black powder, buffalo grease and glue. Others were carved into the hard stone with tools carried for wagon repairs. Mormons stationed professional stonecutters at the rock to engrave names for one to five dollars a name.



Few names remain today, as lichen, weather and time are eroding them away.

Vandalism and graffiti are also contributing to the destruction of this historic national landmark. Please preserve and respect our Wyoming heritage.

Explorer John Frémont wrote in 1842 upon visiting the Rock, "...the rock is inscribed with...many a name famous in the history of this country... are to be found among those of traders and travelers...some of these have been washed away by the rain, but the greater number are still very legible."





Independence Rock (Wyoming)



next to it : the Trail



The Register ...



... of the Desert



Devil's Gate and the Sweetwater River (Wyoming)



the road to South Pass





the Sweetwater rivier (Wyoming)



still enough water



but then, the barren plateau



fortunately here is the Green River (Wyoming)



the Snake rivier (Idaho)



difficult to get to water



here were casualties



impossible to cross

Fort Hall (replica)



Oregon - California Trail

Fort Hall (Idaho), here some turned to California



Three Island Crossing (Idaho) : here one could finally cross the Snake River



and here too the trace remains visible



Farewell Bend (Oregon) ...



... here we leave the Snake River



the Blue Mountains (Oregon)



climbing through dense forests



finally, the Columbia River ...



... now Lake Wallula (Washington)



Oregon Trail IC - Baker City (Oregon)



this picture gives an idea



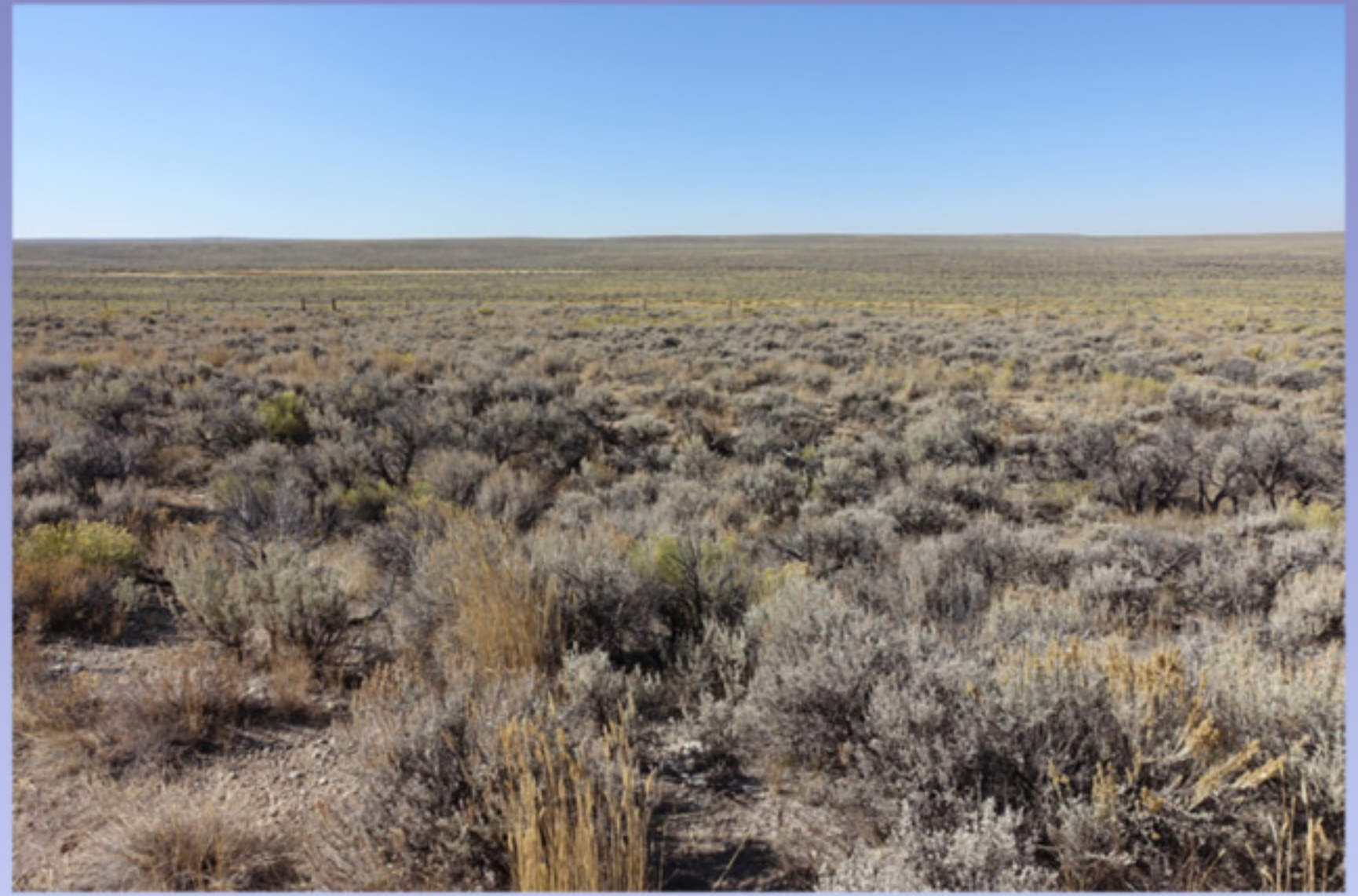
pioneers and ...



... Native Americans in the Museum



the Trail to the final destination ...



... but De Smet followed another trail,
through the high prairie ...



... to the north



the Big Sandy River (Wyoming)



The Prairie of the Mass ...



... in Daniel (Wyoming)



every year the first mass from 1840 is commemorated there ...



... and below, the place of the Rendezvous with the trappers



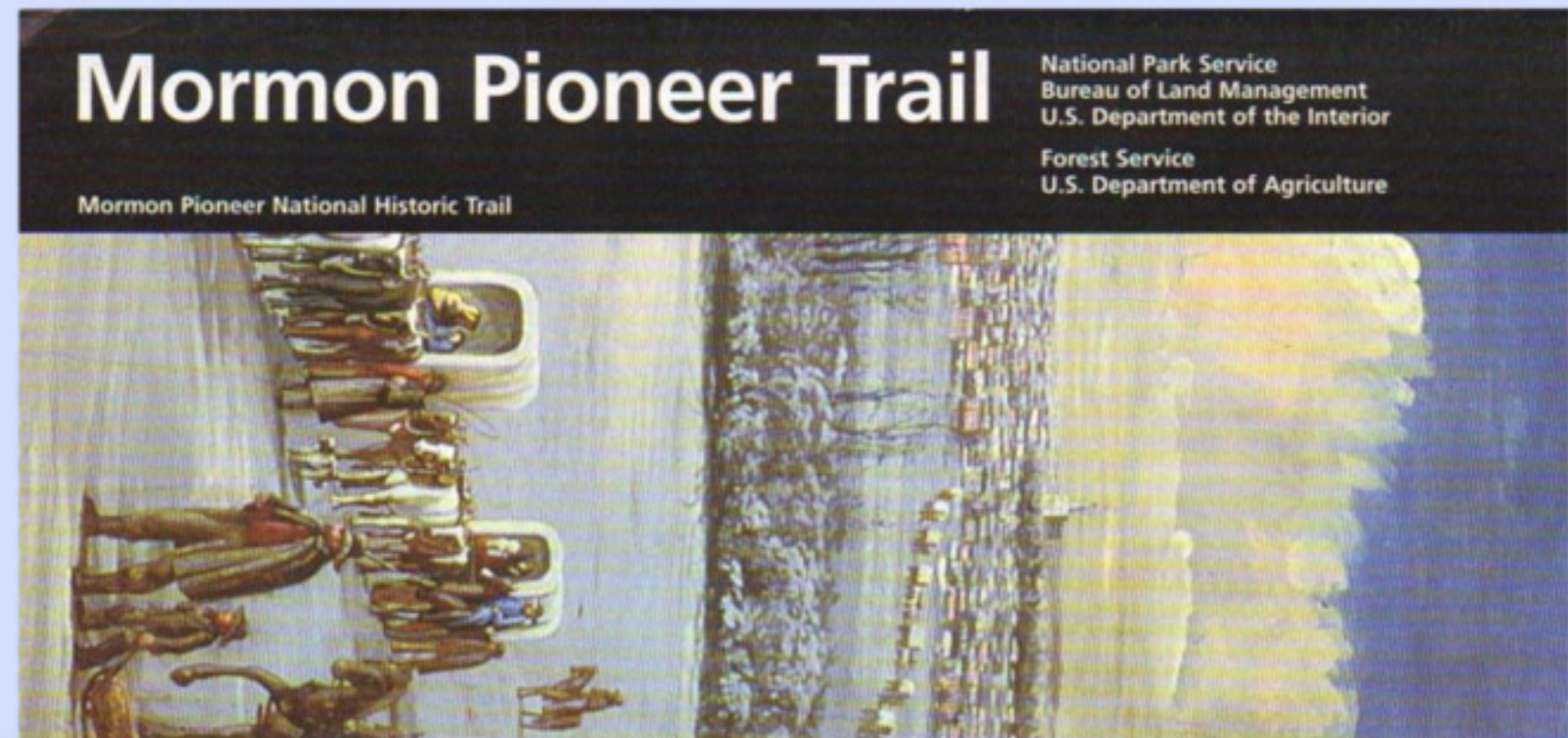
Henry's Lake (Idaho) ...



... next to Yellowstone National Park



the peaks of the Rocky Mountains



Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail



the route the Mormons took (the Mormon Trail)



This is the Place Monument - Salt Lake City (Utah)



Father De Smet commemorated



he showed the Mormons the way in Council Bluffs (1846)



the Salt Lake City area is beautiful

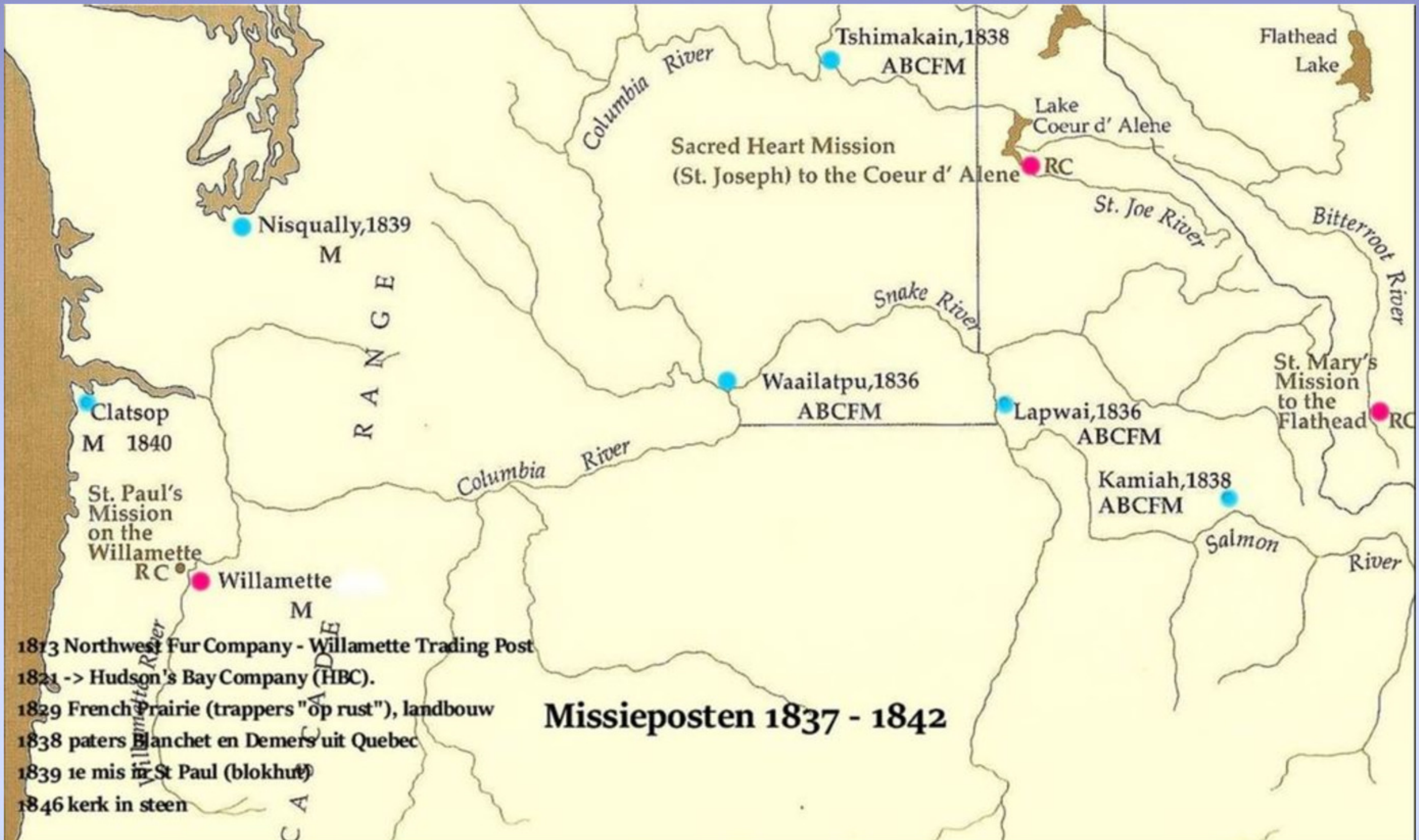
The Missions

In the year 1845, Americans first used the term "Manifest Destiny". By this they meant that it was the natural, God-intended task of the American people to take possession of the western part of the continent. In this context, we must also understand the migration to the northwestern United States.

As thousands emigrated west to build a new life, missionaries would follow. In 1834, Methodist Jason Lee founded a mission at The Dalles. In 1836, Henry Spalding and Marcus Whitman moved to Oregon with their wives. After his exploration in 1840, Father De Smet and a number of missionaries went with a first migrant group (the Bartleson-Bidwell Party) in 1841 to the northwest. His goal, like Spalding and Whitman, was to establish missions among the Indians. This time no Protestant but Catholic mission posts.

That was not an easy project because the Indians and the missionaries were not on the same wavelength. Marcus Whitman and his wife paid for that misunderstanding with their lives. Still, the Jesuits managed to establish a number of missions, several of which have survived to this day.

De Smet and his colleagues naturally wanted to convert the Indians to Catholicism. But De Smet also wanted to keep the peace and protect the Indians. He knew that mass white immigration would be a serious threat to their existence.



the first Protestant and Catholic missions (blue - red)

Whitman Mission

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
National Historic Site
Washington



near Walla Walla (Washington)



the mission of Marcus Whitman



tragedy in Waiilatpu, Marcus Whitman and his wife Narcissa ...



... were murdered by Cayuse Indians in 1847

Nez Perce



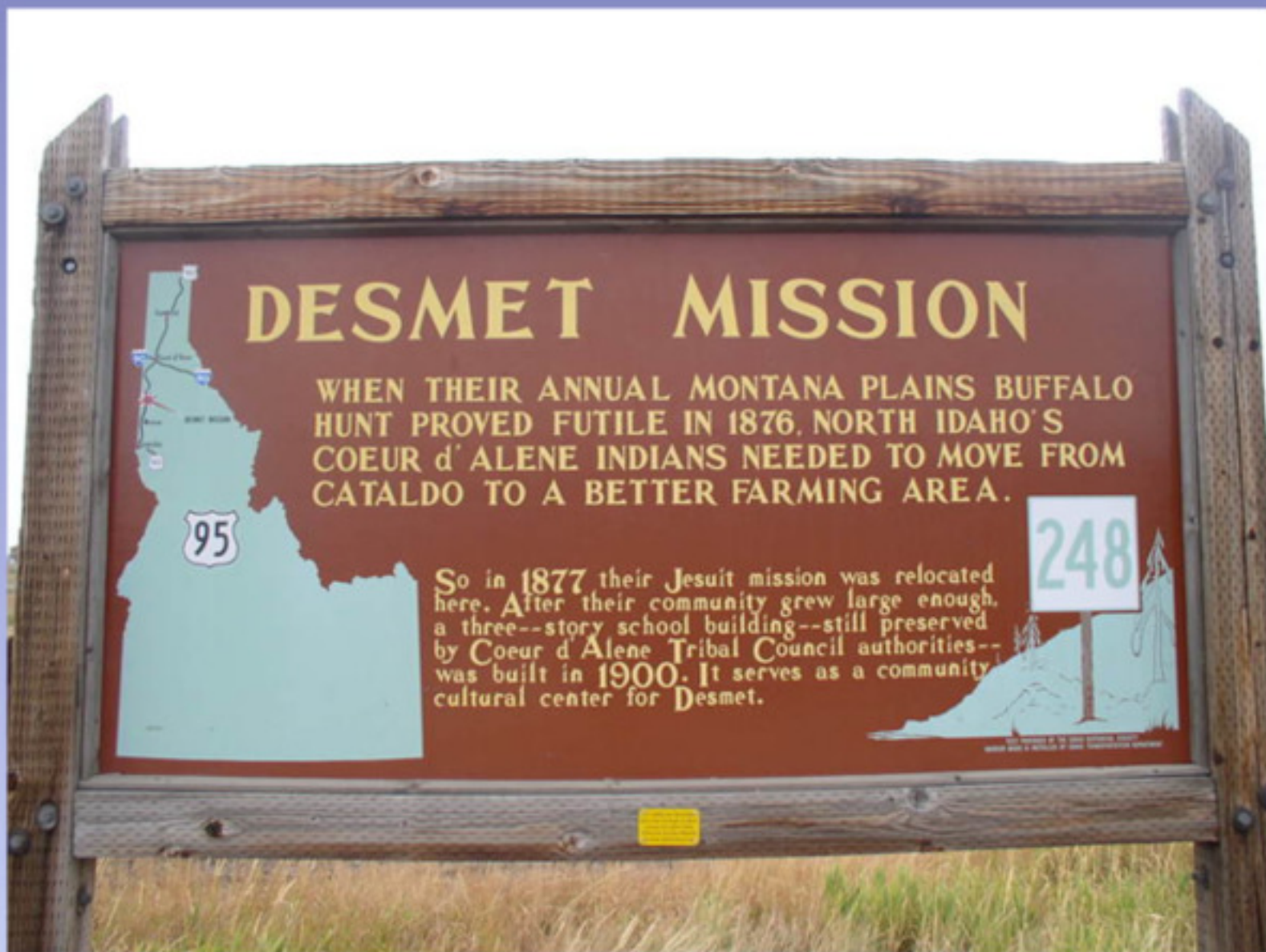
Lapwai Mission (Idaho)



Henry Spalding's Mission



the Nez Perce remained peaceful



the DeSmet Mission (Idaho)



the Mission today



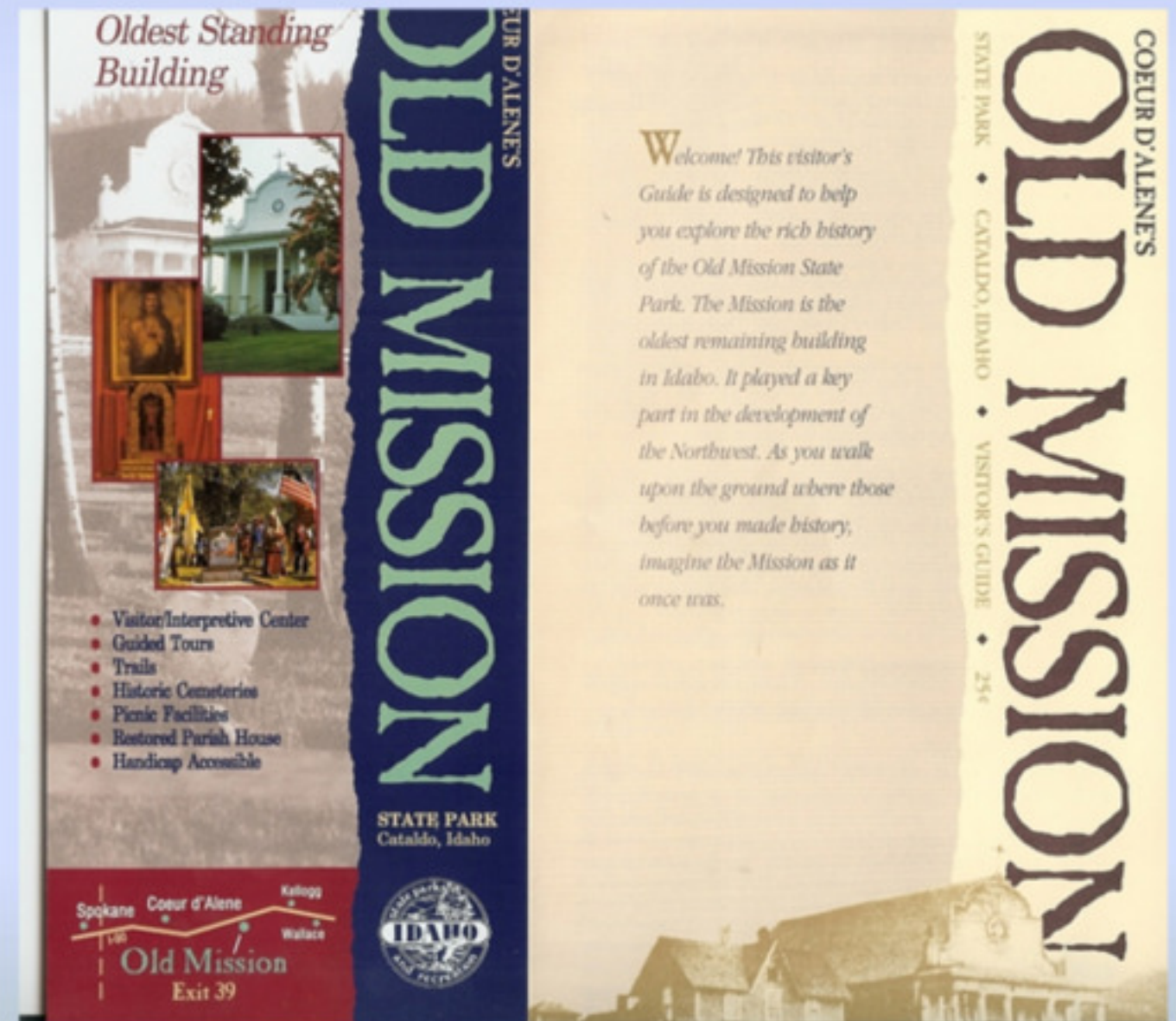
St. Maries on the St. Joe River (Idaho)



Saint Joseph Mission (Idaho)



Sacred Heart Mission (Idaho)



the oldest building in Idaho

Coeur d'Alene's Old Mission State Park *Idaho*



Coeur d'Alenes's Old Mission State Park (Idaho)



not a National Park, but an Idaho State Park ...



... with a very nice museum







built for and by the Coeur d'Alenes



the oldest building in Idaho (1850-1853)





Old Mission of the Sacred Heart (Idaho)



the Flathead Reservation (Montana)



overview of the reservation



started by Father De Smet



in their beautiful St. Ignace church



Fort Owen (Montana)



this is the place where the original St. Mary's Mission stood



in 1850 the mission was sold to Major John Owen



between 1850 and 1871 it was a trading post



the successor was St. Mary's Mission (Montana)



with a new church founded by Father Ravalli



the tomb of Father Ravalli (1812-1884)

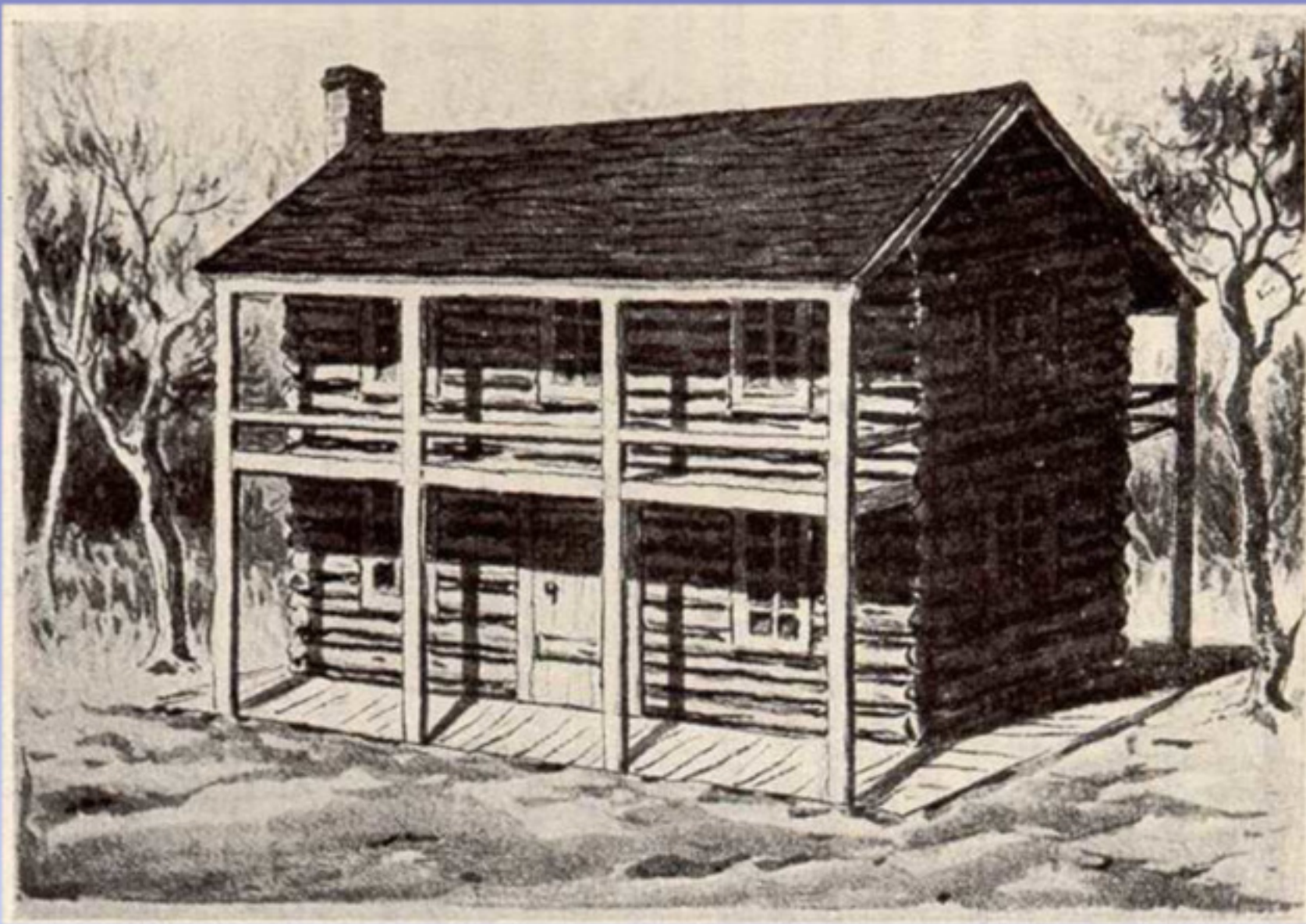


the Bitterroot River (Montana)

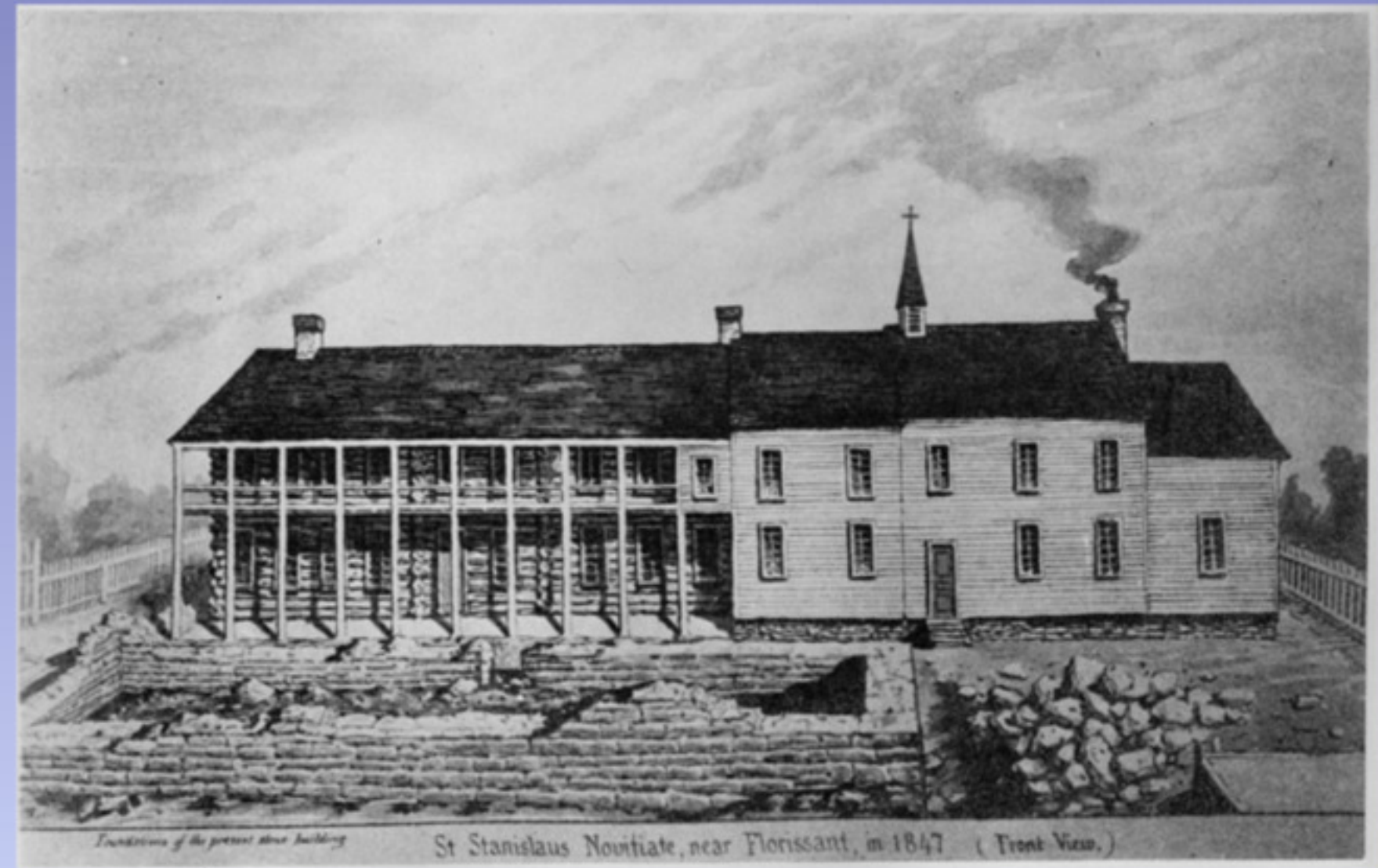
Florissant
and
Saint Louis

The French King Louis XIV stimulated colonization, also in North America. Thus Quebec and Louisiana were born. Quebec was conquered by England in 1763 and the rest of Louisiana fell into Spanish hands. Finally, the U.S. bought Louisiana in 1803 from Napoleon. Even after the handover to Spain, Spanish and French settlers continued to found cities along the Mississippi, such as Saint-Louis and Fleurissant. The population remained French-speaking and Catholic for a long time. Slavery was not abolished in Missouri until 1865. Thus, the role of slaves in building the economy in Missouri has long been very important, including for the Jesuits.

When the missionaries came to Missouri from the White Marsh plantation (in Maryland, another "slave state"), they brought some slaves with them. They had to help build the new plantation and seminary in Florissant. The 1823 "Saint Stanislaus Seminary" was just a log cabin. From 1840 to 1849, a limestone building was built. "Rock Building" still stands, but in 1971 the seminary was closed. Until 2001 one could visit the "Museum of the western Jesuit Missions". The entire contents were transferred to the "Museum of Art" in Saint Louis. The owner of this historic building is now the United Pentecostal Church International.

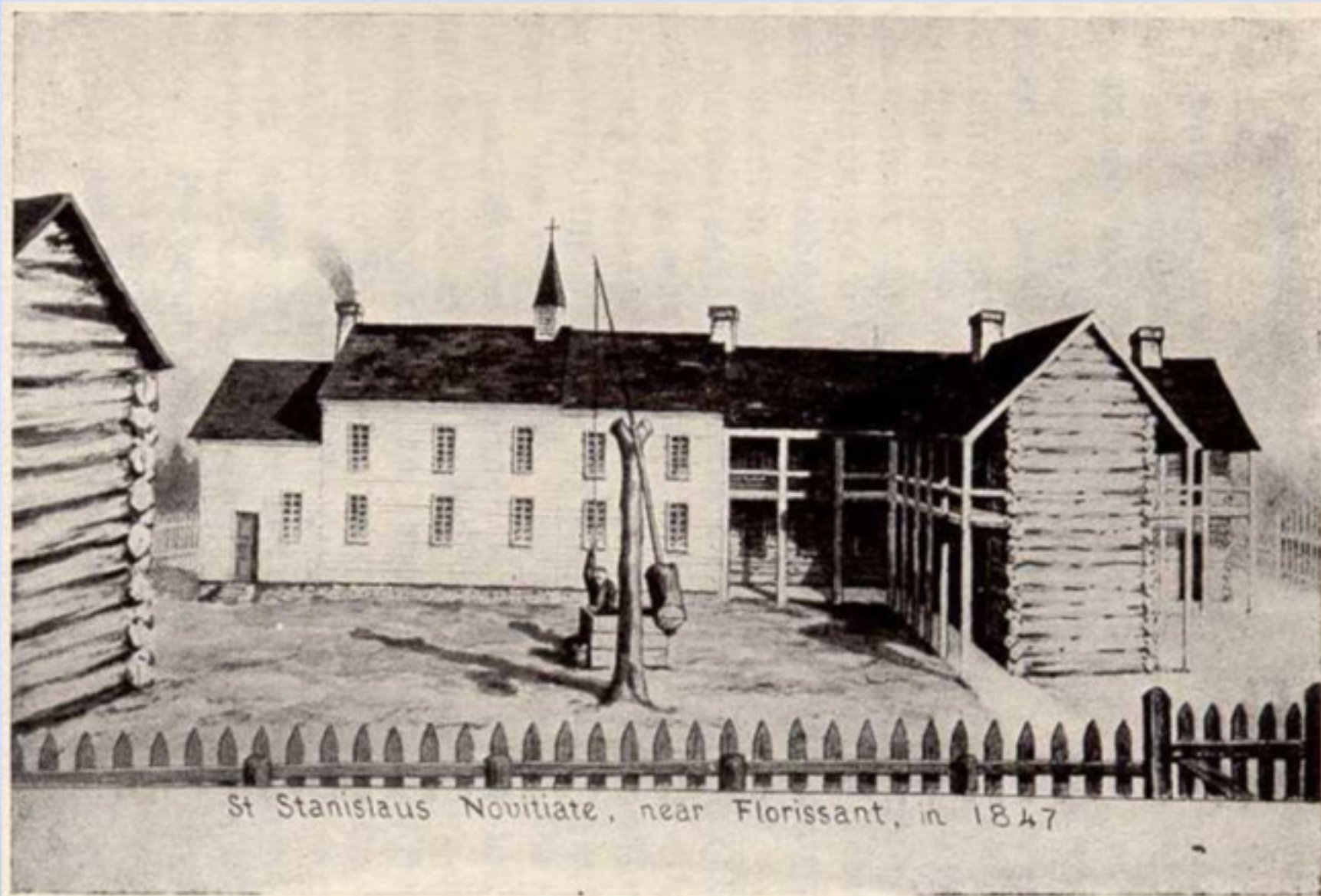


the first simple log cabin in 1823



Foundations of the present stone building
St Stanislaus Novitiate, near Florissant, in 1847 (Front View.)

c. 1847 (front)



St Stanislaus Novitiate, near Florissant, in 1847

c. 1847 (back)



next came Rock Building (with Maria)



but the seminary closed in 1971



Rock Building in 2007 (without Maria)

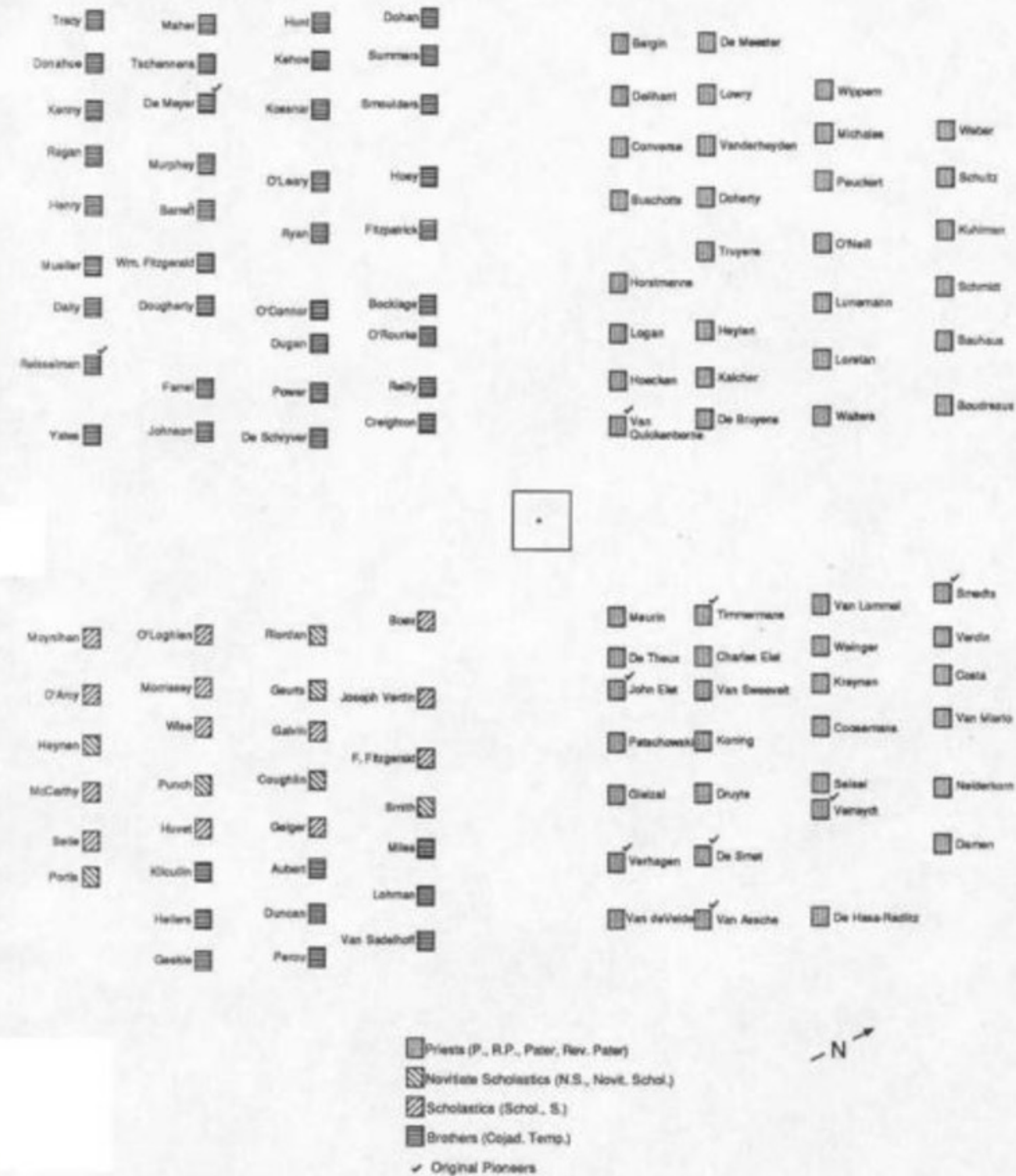


the old gravestone of De Smet ...



... in the cemetery of St. Stanislaus

ST. STANISLAUS CEMETERY



plan of the old cemetery



in 2003 they were all (carefully) exhumed



here, the result in 2007



the St. Ferdinand church - here De Smet was ordained in 1827



the St. Ferdinand parish, now in Florissant

Saint Louis was founded in 1764 as a trading post by Pierre Laclède Liguist and René-Auguste Chouteau from New Orleans. They chose this location because of its proximity to the major Mississippi and Missouri rivers. Most of the original inhabitants were of French descent. In the 19th century, Saint Louis developed into an important trade and industrial center. Many immigrants, especially of Irish and German descent, moved to the emerging city. Between 1840 and 1870, Saint-Louis grew to become the fourth largest city in the US.

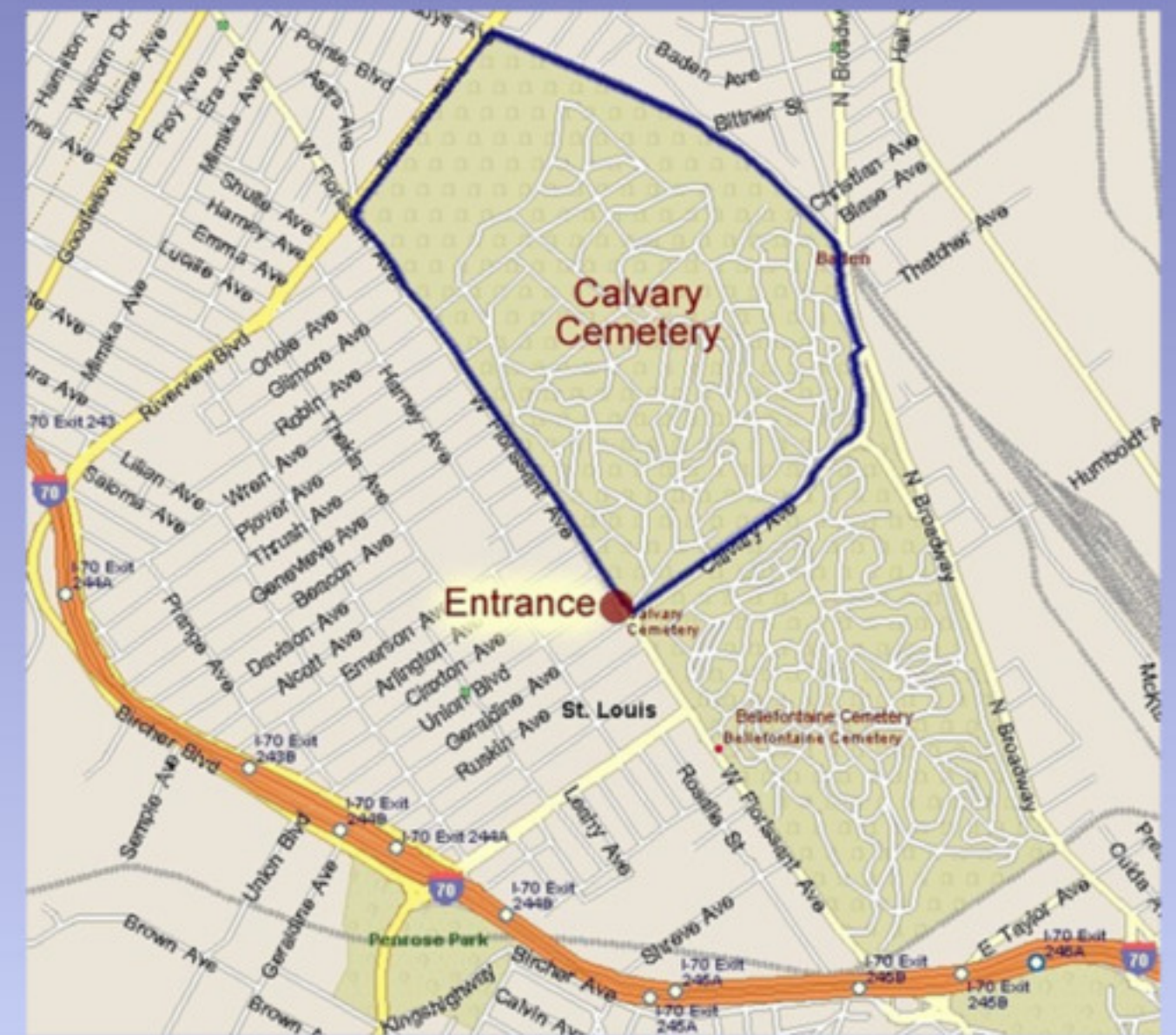
Saint Louis was considered the gateway to the west. One could easily reach Saint-Louis from New Orleans by ship. There were also good connections with the region around the Great Lakes. From the city you could travel via the Missouri River to Independence (MO) and from there on foot through Kansas with bullock carts. One could also board a paddle steamer up the Missouri to Fort Benton in Montana.

Traders, trappers, guides, shipmen, dockers and all kinds of adventurers came to in Saint Louis. It was important for the Jesuits to be present in this expanding city.

During the Civil War (1860-1865), Missouri was on the front line for a time. To make matters worse, some Native American tribes caused problems on the Oregon Trail and even along the Missouri River, so that the migration west via more southerly routes seemed more appropriate for some. The growth of the railroad network made Chicago postwar more important. And so Saint Louis was slowly dethroned "as the gateway to the west".

St. Louis
Missouri

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



the Catholic cemetery of St. Louis



the new resting place of Father De Smet



Verhaegen - De Smet - Van Assche - De Meyer - Verreydt



the slaves Tom en Polly - Moses en Nancy - Isaac en Succy



the many other Fathers and Brothers



an overview



the grave of Joseph LaBarge (a steamboat captain)



Thomas Fitzpatrick (trapper and guide)



William Clark (of the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1805-1806)



Robert Campbell (trapper and guide)



the confluence of ...



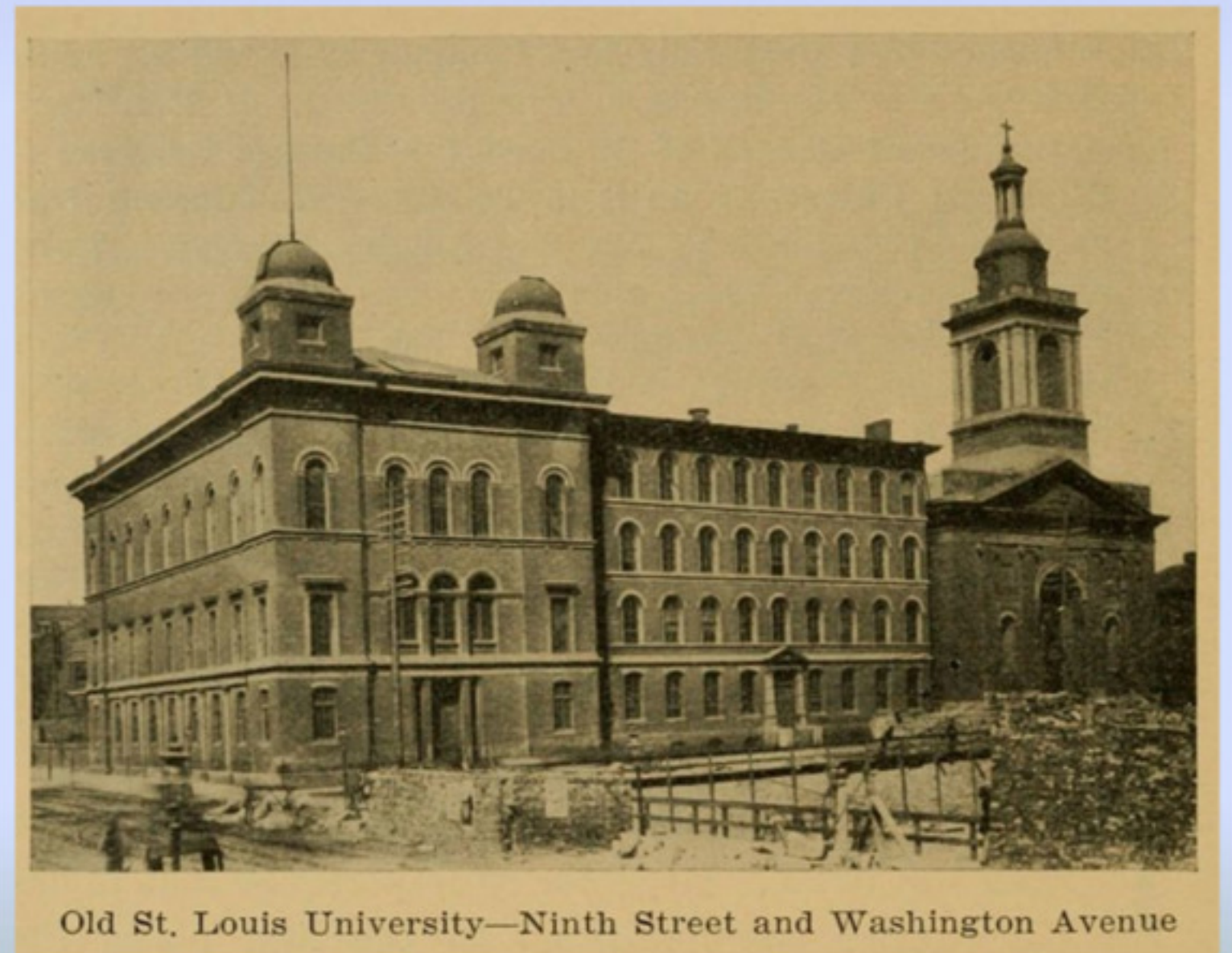
... the Missouri and ...



... the Mississippi Rivers in St. Louis (Missouri)



Gateway Arch (Gateway to the West - 193 m high)



Old St. Louis University—Ninth Street and Washington Avenue

the old university building (1841)



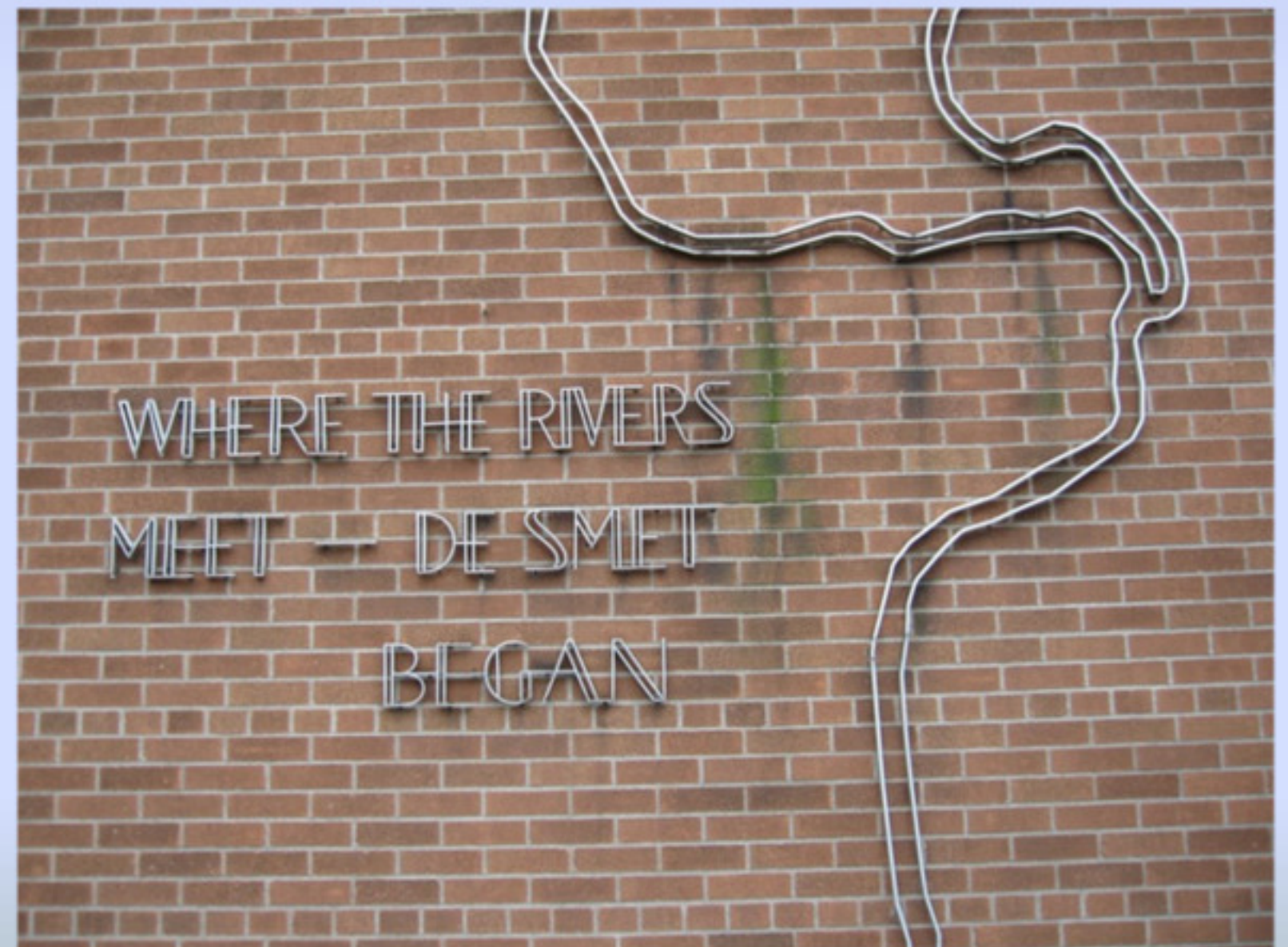
the new university (1884-today)



the founder remembered



the statue of De Smet was removed in 2015



modern iconoclasm



the Saint Louis University Museum of Art (SLUMA)



a globe by Willem Blaeu



Judocus Van Assche (1800-1877)



Collection of the Western Jesuit Missions



De Smet's mailbox



P.J. De Smet (George C. Eichbaum)





Black Robe



the Father's objects



wine was also made



a classroom ...



... in the novitiate



dinner is served



a small room

Fr. De Smet's Coat

Plains or Plateau, ca. 1849-1850. Indian tanned leathers, wool, silk, metal, thread, pigment.

The tribal origin of this European-style coat, reputedly made for De Smet, is a mystery. The painted vine and cutouts of leaves and berries, backed by green and red trade cloth, may have been adapted from a chalice design or the border of a stole worn by De Smet during mass. The cutouts suggest eastern Plateau, Métis, or Plains Cree manufacture.

(Sacred Encounters, 1993)



De Smet's coat



the Missouri River

the Yellowstone River

the De Smet Lake

The Missouri is a tributary of the Mississippi, but with a length of 4370 kilometers it is the longest river in North America. The Missouri has its source in the Rocky Mountains. There the river is unnavigable due to the many waterfalls and rapids. On the high plateau of Montana, the river flows in an easterly direction. Its main tributary is the Yellowstone. Fort Union stood at the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers. Both rivers converge in Saint Louis.

From the early nineteenth century, the river was an important thoroughfare to and from the West. When the ice melted it became possible to travel by steamer upstream to Fort Benton. The water level is mainly dependent on the meltwater from the Rocky Mountains, but in the summer there was sometimes insufficient water for shipping due to evaporation.

It was also a dangerous river because all kinds of debris were carried under the waterline. Many ships sank because they leaked on floating logs, because a fire broke out or because the boiler exploded. In the nineteenth century, a number of forts were built along the river, first for the fur trade, then for the American army. In the twentieth century, people wanted to control the flow of the unreliable Missouri with the construction of a number of dams. Today there is little shipping traffic on the Missouri.

Missouri River

Missouri National Recreational River



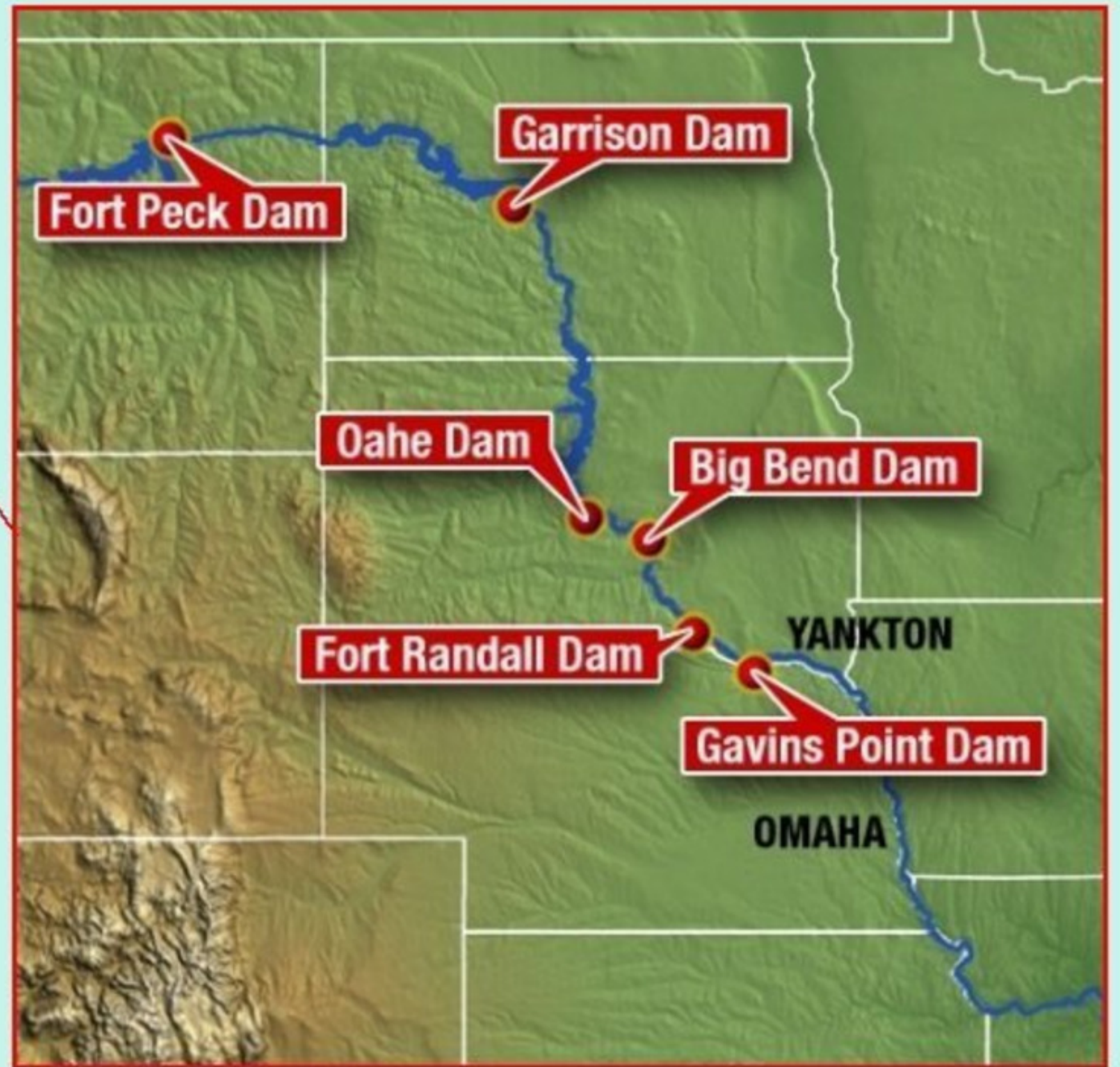
Mandan Village on the Missouri
by Karl Bodmer (1839)



the SS Yellow-Stone on the Missouri
by Karl Bodmer (1833)



the Missouri River



Missouri River Dams

the dams on the Missouri River



the Missouri River in White Cloud (Kansas)



shallow



dangerous



and difficult to navigate



the mouth of the Platte River (Nebraska)



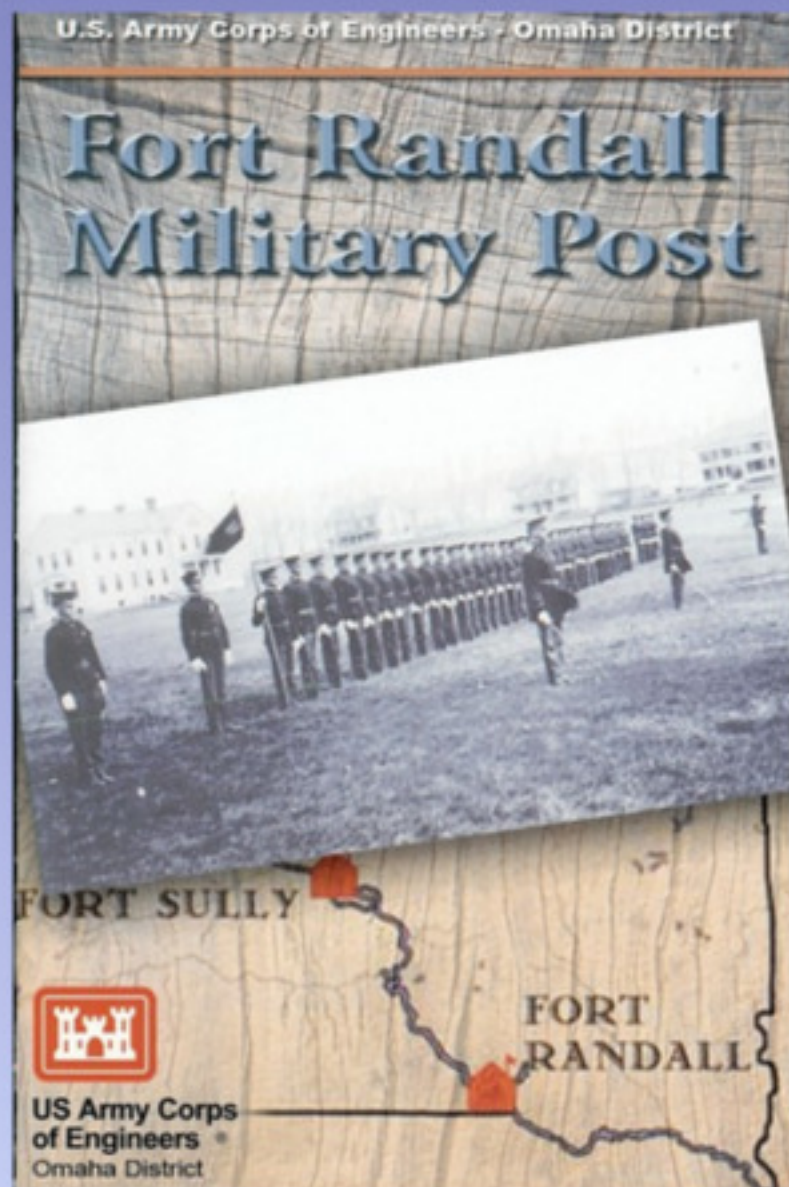
in the distance: the Missouri River



again the Missouri River



sandbars in the Missouri River



Fort Randall (South Dakota)



Fort Randall Church



the Missouri river (South Dakota)



in the distance, some bison



view of the prairie during the summer



the prairie borders the dammed Missouri



again, the Missouri



Fort Buford



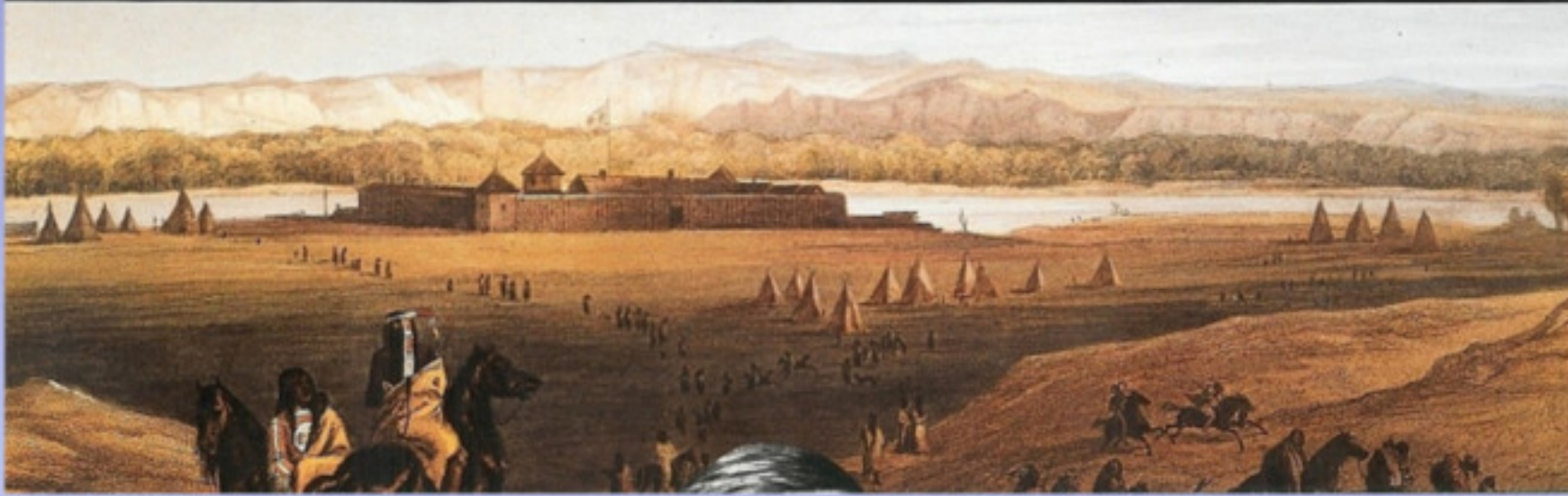
the empty prairie



here once stood a military fort

Fort Union Trading Post

Official Map and Guide



not far from the mouth of the Yellowstone River



Fort Union Trading Post (North Dakota)



the main building



ineers, a name
s adventures,
lso with much
untaineers
clothes made
d and fringed.
e, at sight;
nce they come.
they were bears.
rich Kurz, 1851

and the museum



the Missouri near Fort Benton



Old Fort Benton (Montana)



the Missouri in the vicinity of Fort Benton



the Yellowstone River (Montana)



on its way to the Missouri



Lake Desmet (Wyoming) - discovered by De Smet in 1851



De Smet monument on the lake

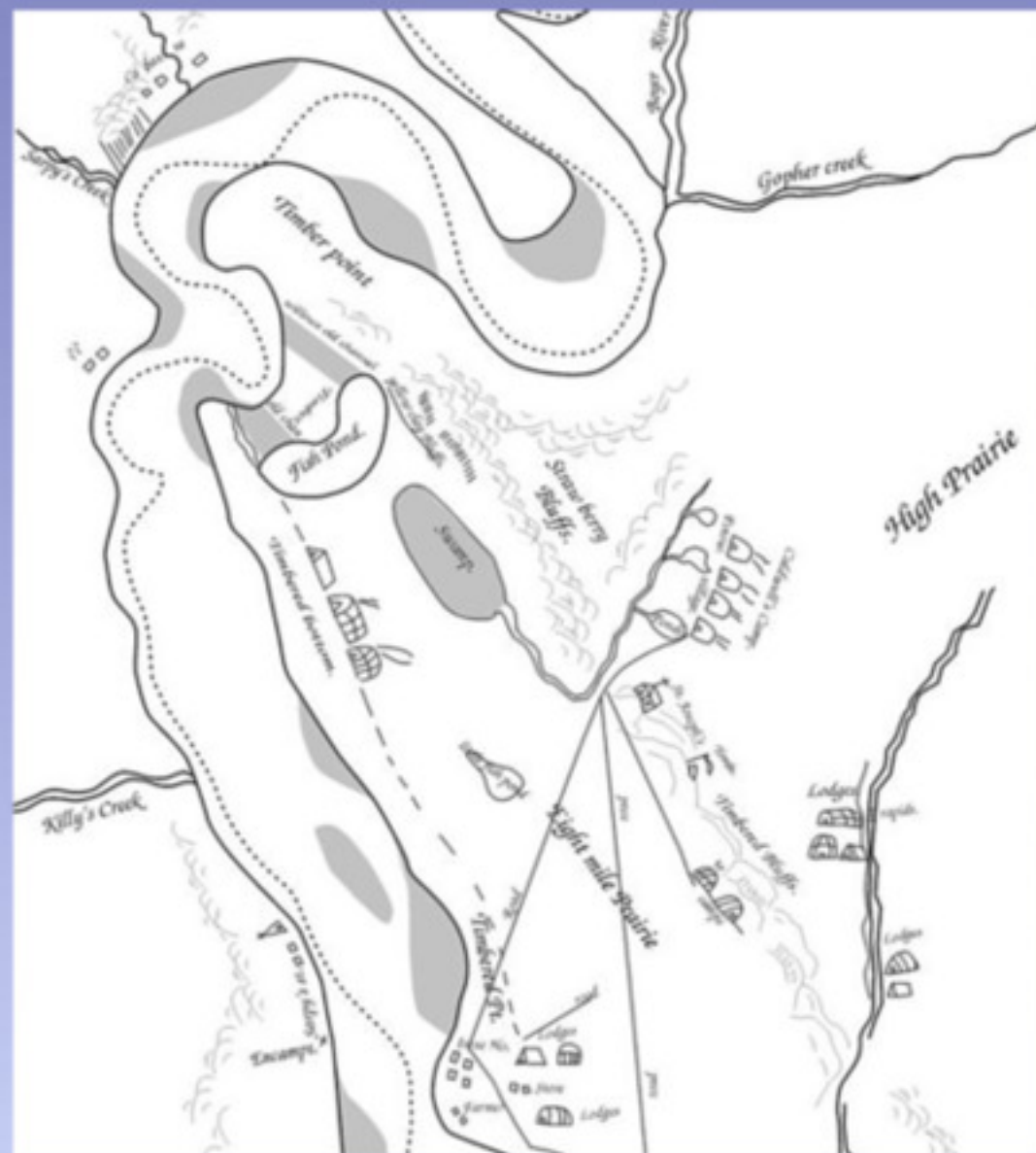
Council Bluffs
the Badlands
the Black Hills

In 1838, De Smet was commissioned to set up a mission with the Potawatomi Indians who had been expelled from Illinois. In Council Bluffs, the area where the Potawatomi had to settle, is located in western Iowa.

There were problems. The Potawatomi were addicted to "fire water". Hundreds also became fatally ill. The Potawatomi were also threatened by the other tribes. It is mainly the feared Sioux Indians who regularly made victims among the Potawatomi. De Smet decides to visit the most dangerous enemy, the Yankton Sioux. The Sioux listen politely to what De Smet has to say. He pleads for his Potawatomi Indians and the Yankton accept his peace proposals. Yankton oarsmen even escort De Smet back to Council Bluffs by canoe. But upon his arrival, it turns out that the Potawatomi have committed no fewer than 100 murders among themselves, all under the influence of the cursed firewater sold to them by a number of unscrupulous whites. In August, De Smet is desperate. He's considering closing down the St. Joseph mission.

On September 18, 1839, the fourth and final Flathead delegation docks at the mission. They're from the Rockies and are on their way to St. Louis to ask for a Black Robe. The Jesuits in Saint Louis arrange to meet a delegation of Flatheads on the banks of the Green River in the spring of 1840.

De Smet will regularly return to the place where the mission was. He meets Brigham Young, the leader of the Mormons who are looking for their promised land. He also travels to the "Bad Lands" with some Indians and through them he learns that gold can be found in the Black Hills (which he wisely keeps to himself).



Council Bluffs, De Smet's drawing



Mormon Winter Quarters on the Missouri (1846-1847) near Council Bluffs, Iowa (C.C.A. Christensen.)



wordless



the spot where Fort Pierre once stood

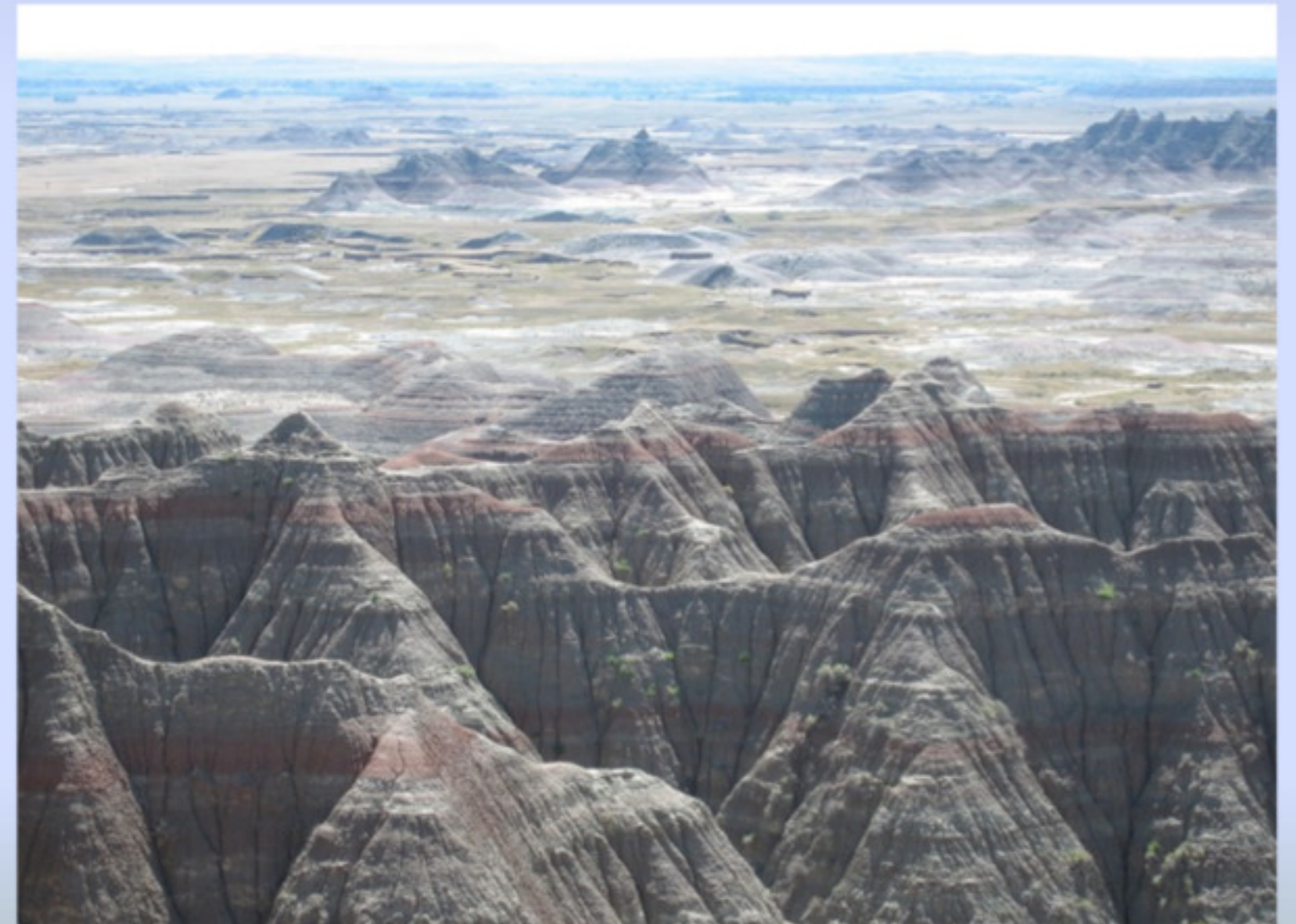
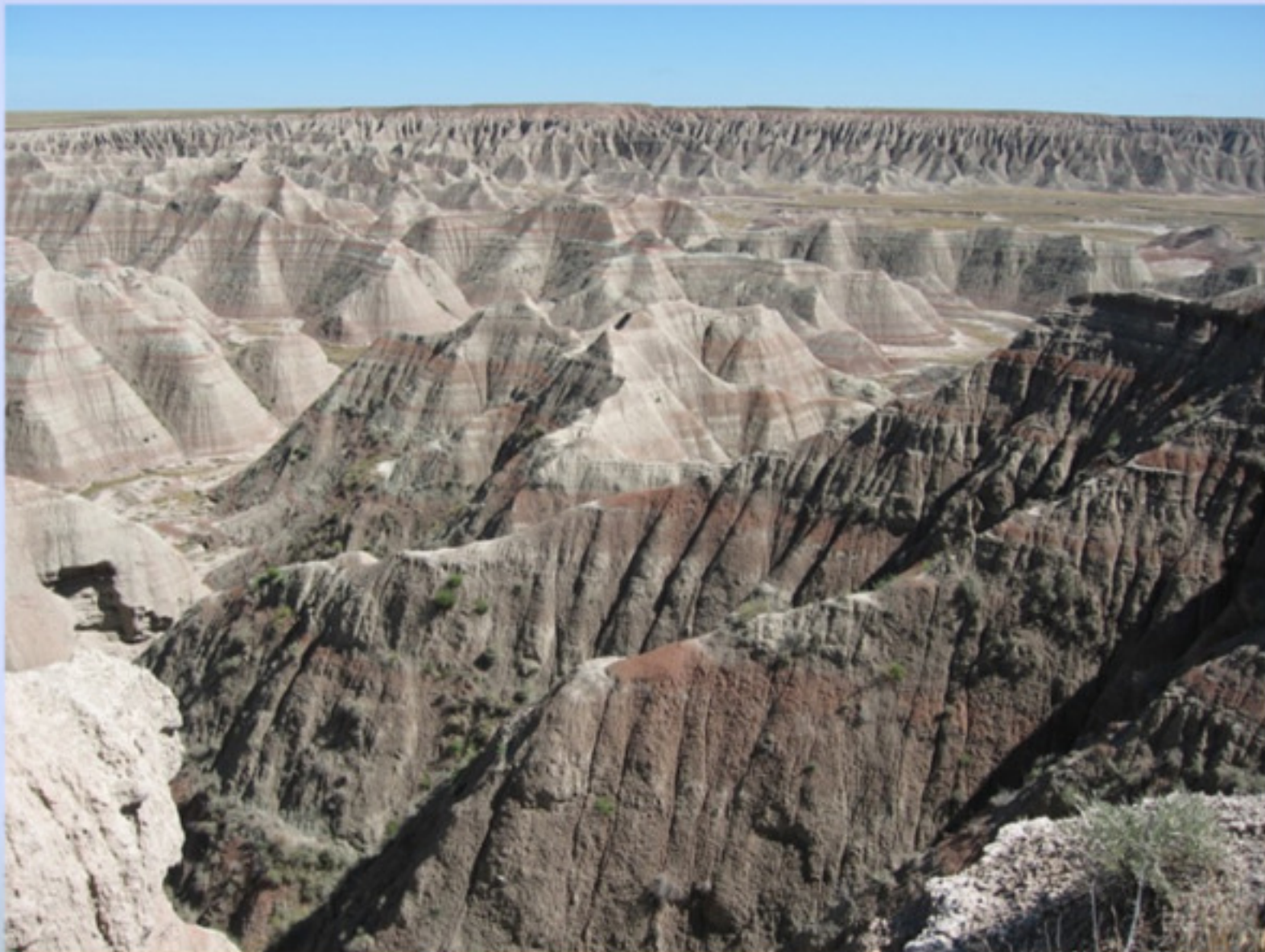
Badlands



very beautiful but barren



the Badlands (South Dakota)





large herds are long gone



the Black Hills (South Dakota)



French Creek, the first gold was found here



and so white people came here en masse to search for gold



Harney Peak

In search of the Blackfoot Indians

1845 - 1846

British Columbia and Alberta (Canada)

Due to the increasing aggression of the Blackfoot Indians, De Smet decides to contact this notorious tribe. He wants to talk to the Northern Blackfoot first because they have less contact with the Flathead.

De Smet travels across the Selkirk Mountains (in northern Idaho) to the Kootenai River. On September 4, 40 miles north of the current Canada-U.S. border, (the 49th degree of latitude), De Smet leaves the Kootenai River and goes to the source of the Columbia: Lake Columbia. On September 15, he climbs over the top of the Rockies via the White Man Pass, and then reaches the banks of the Bow River. He crosses the prairie and on October 4, De Smet arrives in Rocky Mountain House.

On October 25, 13 Blackfoot Indians suddenly appear at the trading post. They want to trade their furs. After some talking, the chief invites De Smet to come to their camp. On October 31, he goes looking for their base camp, but after a 10-day journey they have not yet found Blackfoot camp. Winter approaches and he heads north to Fort Augustus. This trading post is located next to Fort Edmonton on the Northern Saskatchewan River, where he will stay during the winter months.



Tobacco Plains (Montana)



the current border between the U.S. and Canada



entering British Columbia (Canada)



the Kootenay River



Mount De Smet towers over the Kootenay River



Canal Flats, the narrow divide between the Kootenay and Columbia rivers



Columbia Lake, the source of the mighty Columbia



the complicated course of the Columbia River



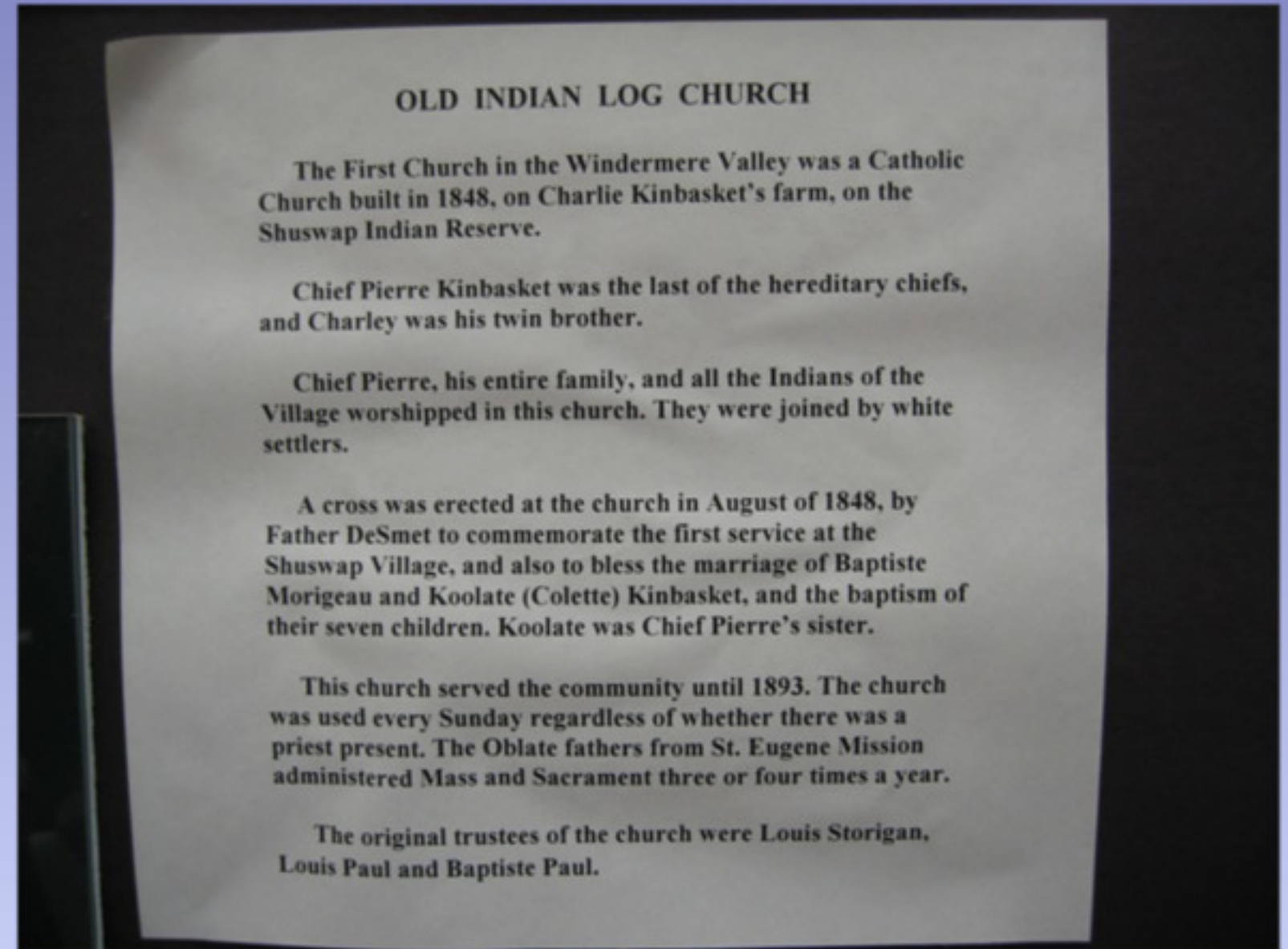
OLD INDIAN LOG CHURCH

The First Church in the Windermere Valley was a Catholic Church built in 1848, on Charlie Kinbasket's farm, on the Shuswap Indian Reserve.

Chief Pierre Kinbasket was the last of the hereditary chiefs, and Charley was his twin brother.

Chief Pierre, his entire family, and all the Indians of the Village worshipped in this church. They were joined by white settlers.

the first church from 1848



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A cross was erected at the church in August of 1848, by Father DeSmet to commemorate the first service at the Shuswap Village, and also to bless the marriage of Baptiste Morigeau and Koolate (Colette) Kinbasket, and the baptism of their seven children. Koolate was Chief Pierre's sister.

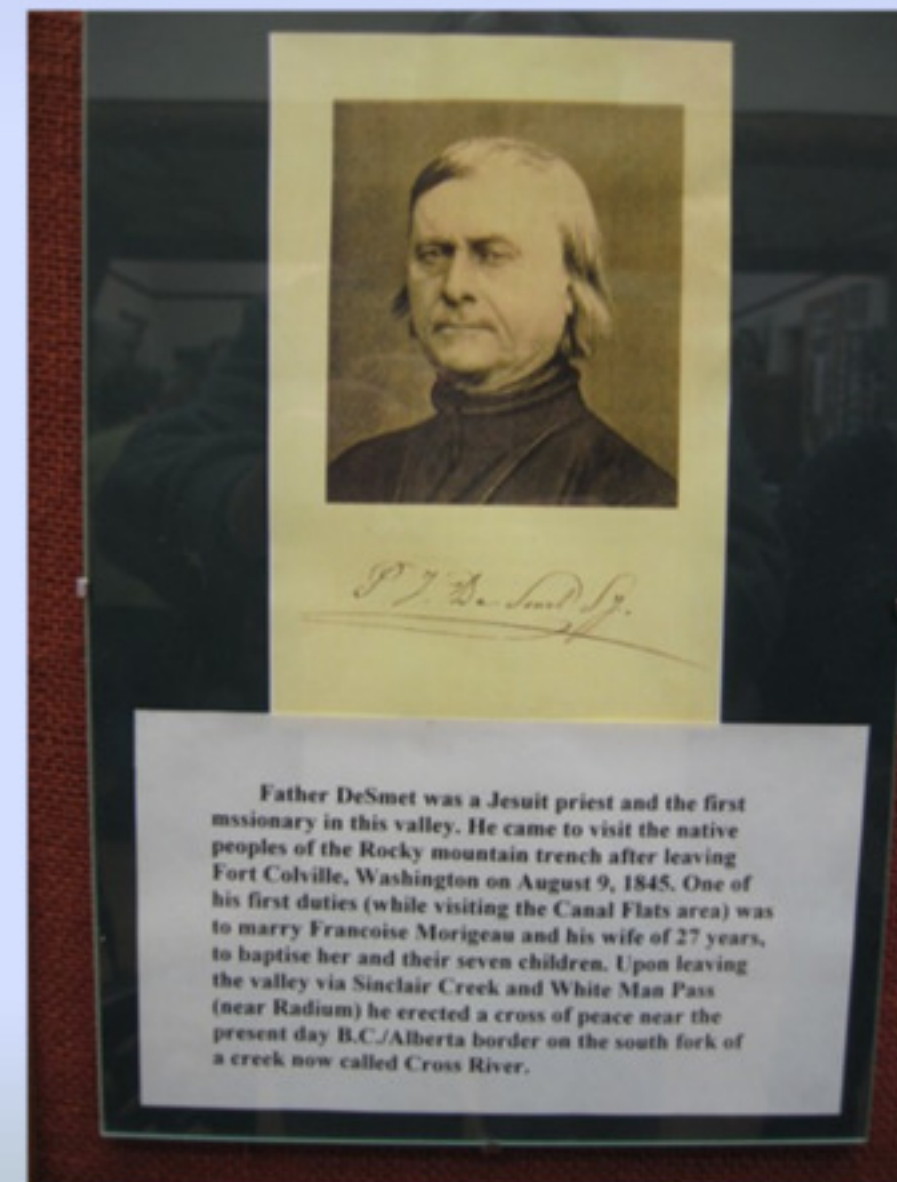
This church served the community until 1893. The church was used every Sunday regardless of whether there was a priest present. The Oblate fathers from St. Eugene Mission administered Mass and Sacrament three or four times a year.

The original trustees of the church were Louis Storigan, Louis Paul and Baptiste Paul.

the Shuswap Indians



remaining church in the Windermere valley



Father DeSmet was a Jesuit priest and the first missionary in this valley. He came to visit the native peoples of the Rocky mountain trench after leaving Fort Colville, Washington on August 9, 1845. One of his first duties (while visiting the Canal Flats area) was to marry Francoise Morigeau and his wife of 27 years, to baptise her and their seven children. Upon leaving the valley via Sinclair Creek and White Man Pass (near Radium) he erected a cross of peace near the present day B.C./Alberta border on the south fork of a creek now called Cross River.

Father De Smet was passing through



Sinclair Pass



the Kootenay River



fast flowing and azure blue



the Numa Falls



the Continental Divide - the border between British Columbia and Alberta



Vermillion Lake



the Bow River



Bow Falls in Banff



Hudson's Bay Company Fort, Rocky Mountain House, 1835-1861

HBC Rocky Mountain House (1835-1861)



the trading post on the N. Saskatchewan River



Rocky Mountain House in 1848 by Paul Kane



On March 12, he leaves his host in Fort Edmonton. He hurries across the frozen landscape on dog sleds. Six days later he reaches Fort Assiniboin on the Athabasca River. Then he covers 480 kilometers in 9 days over the frozen river to Fort Jasper.

On April 25, De Smet moves on to the Athabasca pass. Every year in spring, an HBC brigade uses the pass to cross the mountains from the west. De Smet decides to wait for these voyageurs. On May 6, the first travelers from the Columbia River basin arrive. The next day De Smet climbs the pass with his snowshoes via the "Committee's Punchbowl". On the way he meets more men from the HBC. De Smet is given permission to sail down the Columbia.

At "Boat Encampment" on the Columbia River, "a fleet" departs for Fort Colville. The Columbia is a dangerous river with its wild water and many rapids. At the end of May they reach Fort Colville and the St. Paul mission. From there De Smet can sail to Fort Vancouver without any problems.

Note: Today the Columbia River is dammed in many places. "Boat Encampment" has been under water for several years now. One can drive as far as the Mica dam, but watch out for bears!



Fort Edmonton in 1849 (by Paule Kane)

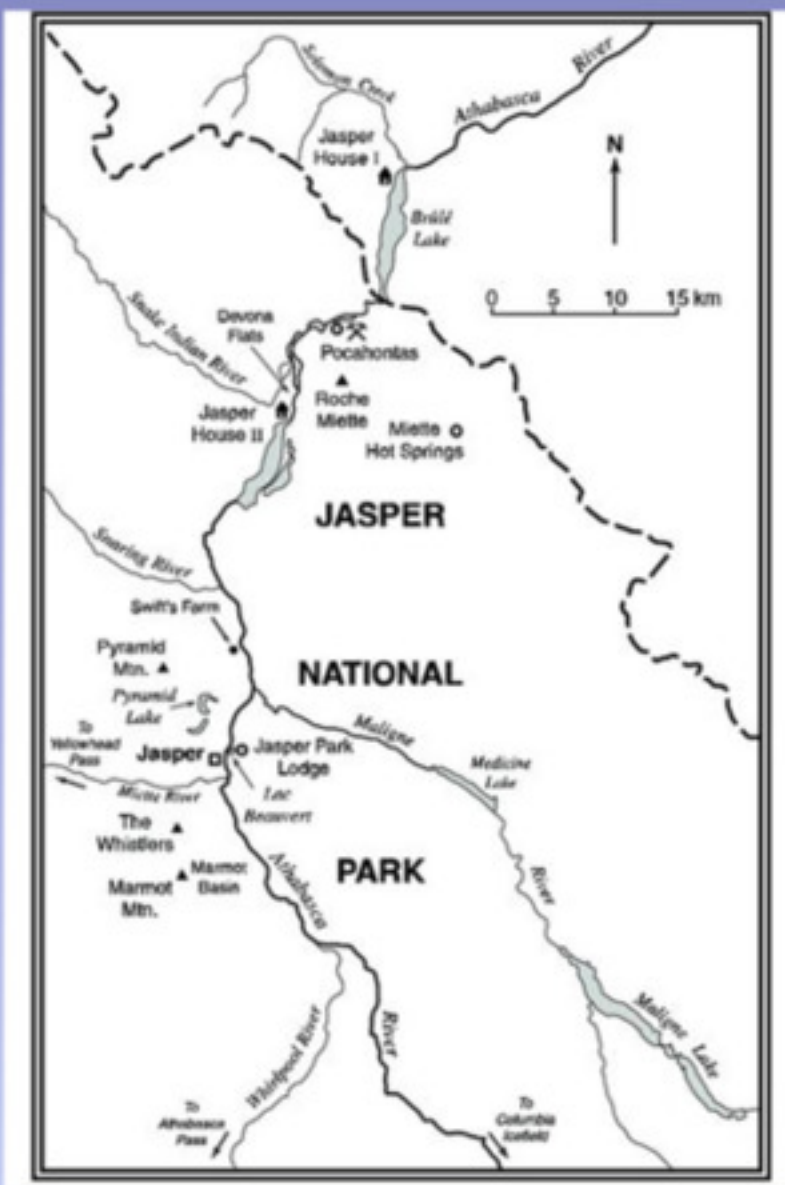


the old fort was located on the Saskatchewan River



map of the Saskatchewan River





map of the Athabasca River



the Athabasca River



here we can see the ...



... De Smet Range



the Athabasca flows between high mountains



the Maligne River



a difficult crossing



according to De Smet an evil river ...



... because crossing he fell several times



the beautiful surroundings of the Athabasca River



Jasper House in 1847 (Paul Kane)



Mount Edith Cavell



the famous Athabasca pass



entering the pass



and on the other side : the Columbia River



today Lake Revelstoke, as the river is dammed



Kettle Falls and the Colville River - the U.S.



this is where Fort Colville of the HBC once stood



St. Paul's Mission (Washington)



St. Paul's old mission church

White Marsh
and
Washington D.C.

In 1729, Archbishop John Carroll's nephew, James Carroll, donated the White Marsh plantation to the Maryland Jesuits. White Marsh was a plantation in Maryland that had long belonged to the American Jesuit patrimony. The novitiate, on the other hand, was quite new. It was only installed in 1819, before that the students stayed in Georgetown. A sober wooden building offered them the necessary comfort between the vast fields, vineyards and forests of the plantation. During the stay of Father De Smet (1821-1823), a church was built. It later burned down together with the buildings of the novitiate.

At the head of the entire company was thirty-three-year-old Charles Van Quickenborne from Petegem. At the end of 1817 this energetic Jesuit from Flanders had come to Maryland to lead the new novitiate. He was assisted by Pierre Timmermans from Turnhout, who had been recruited on Nerinckx's previous trip. Both Jesuits were not only responsible for the students, they managed the farm, managed a few construction sites and supervised about 270 slaves! They were also responsible for the care of the Catholic souls in the wider area.

The novitiate depended on the income of the plantation, but the soil had deteriorated sharply due to years of tobacco cultivation. The harvest was increasingly disappointing and the plantation faced serious financial difficulties. The survival of White Marsh with its novitiate for twenty students was uncertain. In 1823, Charles Neale decided to transfer the students elsewhere.

In 1836, Jesuit leader Jan Roothaan in Rome approved the sale of White Marsh's slaves. In 1838 they were handed over to planters in Louisiana!



White Marsh (Bowie, Maryland)



the Sacred Heart Chapel



White Marsh was in fact a plantation, with slaves



plaque commemorating John Carroll, the first Bishop in the U.S.



the rebuilt church from 1856



the cemetery from the 19th century



one now also found the place where slaves were buried



De Smet stayed on the plantation from 1821 to 1823

The White House



Washington D.C.



with a delegation of Indians at the White House in 1867



National Museum of the American Indian



Smithsonian



treaty of Fort Laramie (1851)



Father De Smet

Mitchell predicted that the treaty's pledges would "save the country from the ruinous and useless expenses of a war."

It did not turn out that way.



map of Indian territories by Father De Smet



The Columbia River

Hudson Bay Company - Fort Vancouver

The Willamette valley

The Columbia River flows through British Columbia and borders Washington and Oregon. The "Mighty Columbia" has a large volume. She is 2,044 km long. With 14 dams, today it is the most important source of hydropower in North America. The Columbia flows north from Lake Columbia in the Canadian Rockies, but then makes a sharp turn south to the U.S. After the mouth of the Snake River, the Columbia turns west and follows the border between the states of Washington and Oregon. Between The Dalles and Portland, the river flows through the Cascade Mountains. The river flows into the Pacific Ocean at Astoria in Oregon. The mouth of the river is very dangerous for shipping. Since 1792, about 2,000 ships went down in and near the estuary.

Meriwether Lewis and William Clark set out to explore Louisiana by order of President Jefferson. They also visited the lower reaches and mouth of the Columbia River. In 1805-1806 they wintered in the self-built Fort Clatsop, near Astoria, at the mouth of the river.

In 1844 De Smet became acquainted with the dangers of the estuary while on board the "Infatigable". He also sailed to Fort Vancouver via the headwaters of the river on a number of occasions. And that was not without danger either, because the Columbia was notorious for wild water and rapids. For the exhausted emigrants, the rapids of the "Dalles" were the last test. Fortunately, help followed in Fort Vancouver and the Willamette Valley.



the Columbia River



Mount Hood (Oregon)

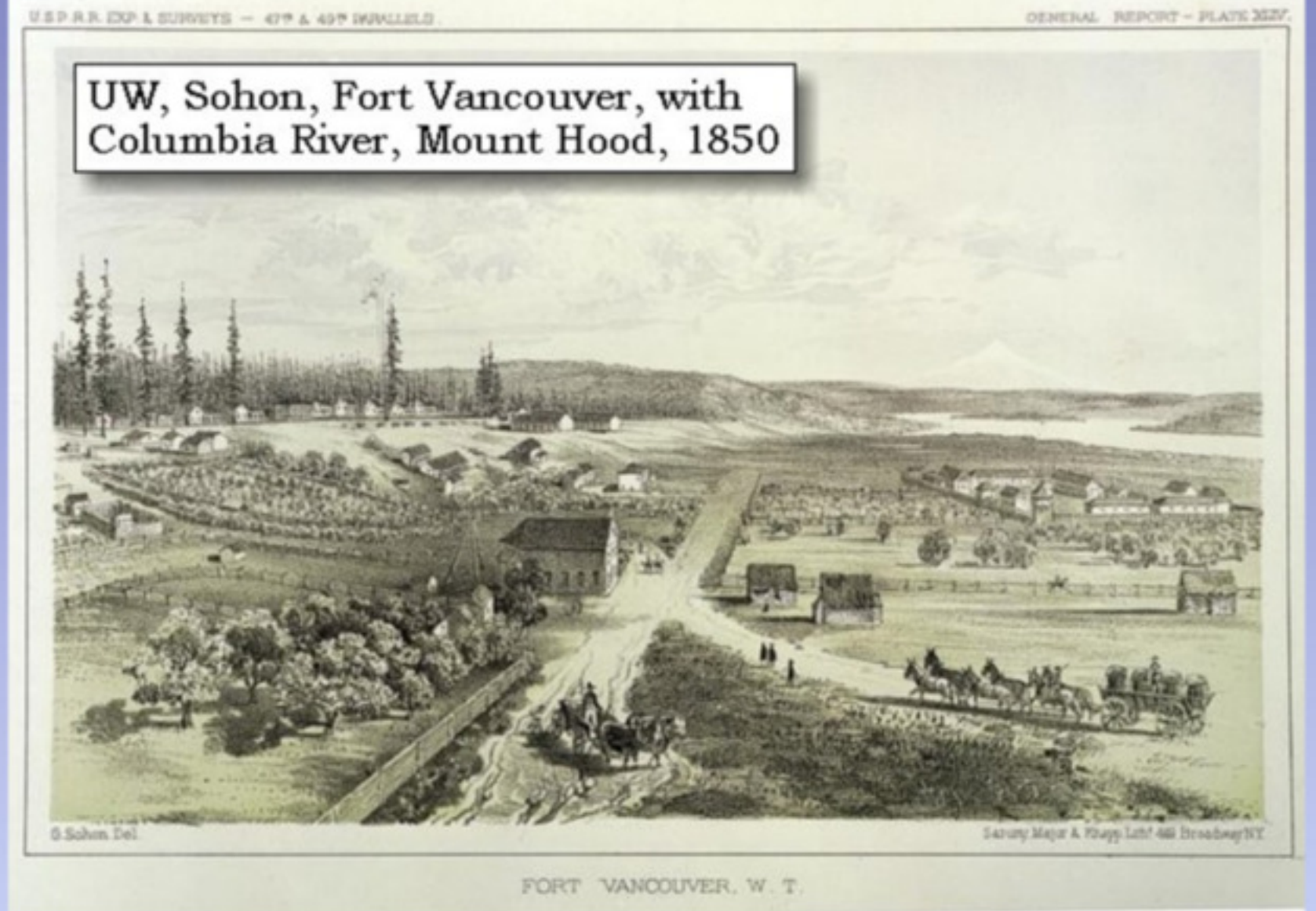


the Columbia River (The Dalles - Washington)



Multnomah Falls (Oregon)

Fort Vancouver



Fort Vancouver in 1850 - on the Columbia River



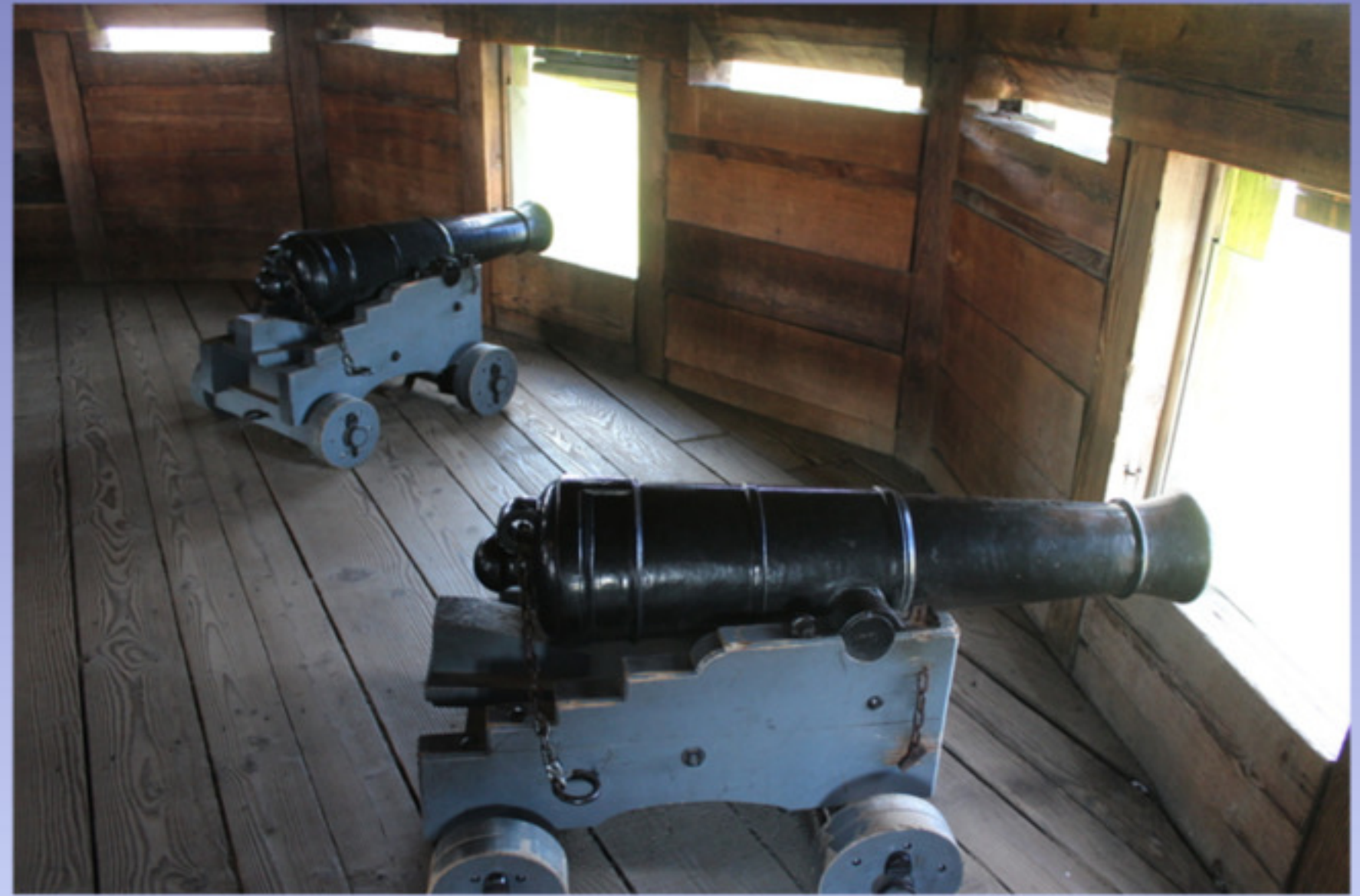
replica of the HBC Fort







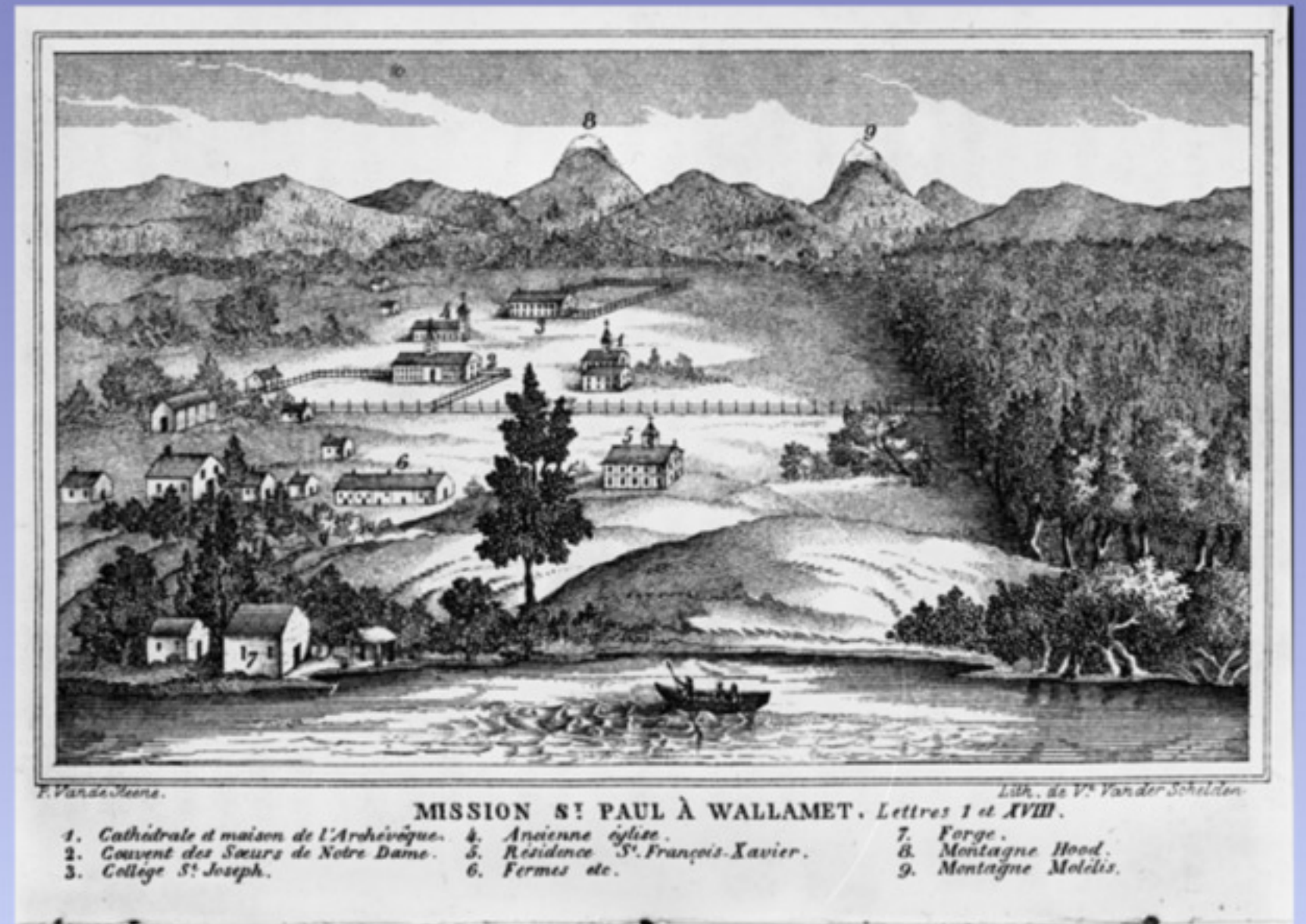








the fertile Willamette Valley (Oregon)



St Paul a Wallamet



founded in 1846



by Francis Norbert Blanchet



model of the first church (1836)



the first school was here (1844)

Father Nerinckx's grave
in Nerinx, Kentucky

Charles Nerinckx (Herfelingen 1761 - Ste. Genevieve 1824) was a priest from the Southern Netherlands. He is best known as a missionary in the US state of Kentucky.

He was the eldest of 14 children. From 1781 to 1785 he studied in the seminary of Mechelen. He was ordained a priest there in 1785. Until 1794 he was vicar of St Rumbold's Cathedral in Mechelen and then until 1797 pastor in Everberg and Meerbeek.

The French authorities wanted to arrest him, but he hid in Dendermonde for four years. In 1804 he came to the U.S. to (Alabama).

John Carroll, Bishop of Alabama, sent him to the state of Kentucky, where he arrived in 1805. It was a vast area and so he was obliged to visit his parishes on horseback. He was called "the apostle of Kentucky". In 1812 he founded the Order of Sisters of Loretto. Their assignment was to establish Catholic schools in Kentucky.

In 1816 and in 1821 he traveled to the United Kingdom of the Netherlands in search of priests for his missionary work. He made calls in newspapers and gave lectures. About 20 young people felt called. Among them was also Father De Smet.

Nerinckx went to the Indians of Missouri in the year 1824, but he died on the way at the age of 63 in Ste. Genevieve. His remains were transferred to the mother house of the Loretto sisters, where he now rests in "Nerinx", Kentucky.



Charles Nerinckx



the Monastery of Loretto (Kentucky)





the tomb of



Father Nerinckx





his first 'home' in St. Charles (Kentucky)



a statue for Nerinckx



in the church of the monastery

