



Area Ceded to United States by Terms of Old Crossing Treaty

## Briefly, about the Treaty at Huot's Old Crossing October 2, 1863

By Dick Bernard, co-editor

We have all learned in our history about the Civil War. But fewer of us know much about the final conflicts which led to the final subjugation of the Indian tribes of Minnesota and what was to later become the Dakotas.

The hanging of 38 Sioux (Dakota) at Mankato in 1862; the imprisonment of 1600 Indians at Ft. Snelling that same year; the Whitestone Hill Massacre of hundreds of Indians not far south of present day-Edgeley ND in 1863 - all of these events, and many others, represented the writing on the wall for native American autonomy.

George Armstrong Custer's misadventure at Little Big Horn Montana in 1876 - "Custer's Last Stand" - was really the Native Americans last stand. His unsuccessful foray from Ft Abraham Lincoln at Mandan, ND, was a white man's loss, not a red man's

victory. And it was one of the few victories the red men could show for their efforts.

History, it can be said, is the creation of the victor, and not the vanquished.

The end, at Huot Crossing on October 2, 1863, was "negotiated" (the word in quotes, because it was not voluntary. The outcome was likely assured before the first words were spoken.) Regarding words, it is said that Pierre Bottineau, gifted in languages and relationships among the parties, was interpreter between the parties at the Huot gathering. It was here, perhaps, that he first thought of moving north from his then home in Osseo.

As described by John Saugstad in an article apparently written about 1933, and appearing in the 1976 history of Red Lake County MN, "an invitation was sent out from Washington to the Red Lake and the Pembina bands of the Chippewa Indians to assemble at the Old Crossing for a Pow-Wow where a treaty could be agreed upon whereby the said Indians would cede to the United States nearly all of that vast tract of land known as the Red River Valley of the North...

"At about the middle part of September [1863], the Red Lake bands of the Chippewa Indians assembled at the designated crossing and there pitched their wigwams. With them came U.S. Agent Morrill. To this same place came the official party with Alexander Ramsey, representing the U.S. Government, escorted by a small detachment of U.S. soldiers and pitched their tents on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of September. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of September the Pembina band of Indians arrived and the first session of the treat council was held on that day...

[U]ntil October second the chiefs and headmen bargained and discussed the terms of the treaty, always seeking better terms and conditions for their respective bands. On October first all the chiefs had agreed to the terms except Chief May-dwa-gun-on-ind of the Red Lake bands, who steadily opposed the terms... The following day, however, [without the dissenting chief and after three and one-half hours, six] chiefs, eight warriors, and one head warrior [signed the treaty as did] Alexander Ramsey and A.C.Morrill and witnesses....

Thus the Red Lake and Pembina bands of the Chippewa Indians ceded to the United States of America that most wonderful and fertile tract of land that has become known as the "bread and butter basket" of the nation, making it possible for thousands of families to acquire homes and happiness...."