

Then the poles and the surrounding walls were covered with sod two or three feet deep, cut from the prairie near by, thus excluding entirely the rain and the air. When they left the place, William Ross, being the oldest man of the party, took the cane as a memento, but nothing else was touched.

"Who this officer was, from whence he came, what he was doing in this part of the country, what was the cause of his death, and when and by whom he was thus singularly entombed, has not, and perhaps never will be known. But he was supposed by many to have been a British officer, who, during the war of 1812, passed around by way of Canada into the Indian country, to incite the Indians against the whites; yet this is only conjecture, though those who discovered his body account for him in that way.

"Soon after this, Joseph Stephens, Jr., now living near Petersburg, on the O.V. & S.K. railroad, in company with James D. Campbell, went into that part of the country bee hunting, and visited the burial place of this officer. They found that part of the roof had fallen in and that the wolves had eaten all of the flesh off the body, so that nothing but the skeleton and clothes remained. Joseph Stephens took the epaulettes as a memento, but nothing else was disturbed. As his mother objected to his keeping the epaulettes, he melted them into a large ball, which was worth fifteen or twenty dollars, as it was solid gold. This description of the burial place and the mysterious, solitary inmate, was obtained from the last mentioned Joseph Stephens, and is correct and reliable, although several other and different accounts have been published." ~~*****~~

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One of these other accounts is the following, which appeared in The Western Intelligencer of July 9, 1816; published at Kaskaskia, in Illinois Territory:

"SINGULAR DISCOVERY

"We have been informed by a gentleman of respectability, that some two or three months since, several men started from the neighborhood of Boons Lick Settlement on a Buffalo hunt, and returning, about 25 or 30 miles from the settlement, they discovered a grave which they supposed contained the remains of some white man, as there was more pains taken with it than there is common to see with Indian graves, and determined to satisfy their curiosity by opening it and seeing what it contained; and to their astonishment and surprise, they saw the skeleton of a man dressed in uniform; he was buried sitting up with his sword cane between his legs which had as is supposed the initials of his name on it. Our informant is not certain whether it was J. M. C. or J. B. C., but thinks it was one or the other.

"About 2 years ago^[sic] a couple of men started from St. Louis in that direction for procuring fur, by the names of J. M. Champlain and _____ Williams, the former of which never returned. All the information^{that} his friends could get of him was from Williams, who said that they had separated some distance back, and had made an agreement that if either of them should fail in getting in, the other was to have the fur, which was worth near ~~4000~~ 4000 dollars. Now from this circumstance the most reasonable conjecture which can be formed of whom this person is that has been found is, that it is the same person that accompanied Williams on the fur expedition. And that after they had procured their load of furs and was on the return, he, Williams, who worshipped Mammon more than God, thought the opportunity very auspicious for speculation, and after they had progressed as far homewards as he thought it politic to do, putting as it seems the evil hour off as long as possible, in 25 or 30 miles from Boons Lick Settlement, he coolly and premeditatedly committed one of the most inhuman and outrageous acts of cruelty that the annals of history can produce, by putting to death the friend of his bosom for the sake of lucre! It is supposed that he either committed the ~~murder~~^{act himself or} employed the Indians in that quarter to do it for him. If it should be the latter, it is likely that the Indians who committed the atrocious act of cruelty would tell all about it, if an inquiry was to be made."

To the reprint of this story in Missouri Historical Collections, the editor thereof appends the two following footnotes:

1st The story of the opening of the grave and finding of the body of a white man is told in 1 Long's Expedition to the Rocky Mountains (Thwaites' Ed.), p. 151, with more detail than here and somewhat differently. It is there stated positively that the initials on the cane were J. M. C."

2nd "J. Bte Champlain fils ~~xxxxxx~~ [fac simile of autograph] was in St. Louis as early as 1800. He owned land in northeastern Missouri. He was a man of education, probably a European Frenchman. He went up the river with Lisa in 1807, and no mention has been found of his return."

In consequence of this perfidious and malicious attempt to make Captain Williams appear guilty of an atrocious murder, he published in The Missouri Gazette of September 14, 1816, the following letter—dated "Boonslick, 7th August, 1816"—as a defence of his innocence and integrity, thus ~~xxxxxx~~ vindicating himself and preserving to us an account of his Rocky Mountain adventures, written by his own hand:

"COMMUNICATION."

"Mr. Charles:

"I beg leave through the medium of your Gazette, to answer the enormous charges alleged against me by some unknown calumniator, published in the 'Western Intelligencer.' I am positively charged with the murder of Champlain, of which, together with every other fact alleged relative to the affair, I trust I shall be able to disprove to the satisfaction of a just people.

"In 1810 [1809] I went with the Fur Company up the Missouri, near the head of the river, where I hunted two years; there I first became acquainted with Champlain. In August, 1812 [1811] a party started to go towards the south to hunt; there were in all near twenty men, each man on his own footing except two who were in Champlain's employ; myself and Champlain were of the ~~W~~ Company. / Manuel Lisa, who was an agent of the Fur Company, ^{land} commanded a fort on the Missouri, from whence we started, promised to keep up the fort and a good understanding with the Indians, so that our return should not be cut off.* We

CONTINUED ON P. 8.

Manuel's Fort.(continued)

The trading Post from which the Williams-Champlain party started on its adventures in August 1811 was Manuel's or Lisa's Fort a post of the Missouri Fur Co. a few miles above the Minnetarees of the Knife River on the upper Missouri. Chittenden, The American Fur Trade, 119 "The post has since been variously known as Ft. Lisa, Ft. Manuel and Lisa's Fort. No relic of it has survived and the precise spot where it stood is unknown but to it belongs the honor of being the first American trading post on the upper river and the first building erected within the limits of the present state of Montana." Chittenden, 931. "It was situated on the right or south bank of the river some ten or twelve miles above the mouth of the Knife River near where the name Emanuel Rock and Emanuel Creek now are. The post was abandoned upon the breaking out of the War of 1812, but was occupied by Pilcher in 1822 or 1823 under the name of Fort Vanderburgh".

Missouri Historical Society Collections Vol IV, cites the following entry in the handwriting of Manuel Lisa, in an old book kept by him at that fort;

" 1812, 7bre 7. Pour serche les Chasseurs qui etet sur la Rre. des Esparnols et Arapaos.

"Paye M. Sanguinet.....	350
Ch. Latour.....	300
Cadet Chevalier.....	300
Total depance.....	\$1056

This entry shows that prior to September 1812 Manuel Lisa had sent out the three men named, to search for a party of beaver hunters that had gone to the "River of the Spaniards and Arapaos" - i.e. to the River Arkansas and that can hardly have been other than the 1811 party of Williams and Champlain; about whose return Lisa had about that time become seriously anxious. Whether the Sanguinet party penetrated as far south as the Arkansas Valley (Pike's Peak Region) is unknown.

In "Luttig's; Journal of a Fur Trading Expedition, 1812-1813" p. 76. There is an entry of Friday, 11th September, 1812. "friday the 11th early rise, the parties prepared to start. Mr. Sanguinette and 2 men with 5 horses for the spanish waters". This is an account of a fur trader's expedition up the Missouri and the daily events at Fort Manuel, kept by John C. Luttig in the employ of Manuel Lisa.

There is no doubt that Lisa wished to trade with the Spanish settlements of New Mexico. Hence Luttig makes a special note in his journal, p. 35. entry for June 4th 1812 tells of the presence at Ft. Osage of a party bound for Santa Fe. Miss Drumm identifies them with the Baird, McKnight Chambers party. Ft. Osage was situated on a bluff on the south side of the Missouri river a short distance from where the town of Sibly now stands in Jackson Co. Mo. This information led to the sending of the above party to the "spanish waters" and also the following letter which is printed in full in Miss Drumm's edition of Luttig's Journal. p. 142 (the original of this letter is in the Archives of Chihuahua and published for the first time by Herbert Bolton in the Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Vol. XVII. P. 61.)

Fort Manuel Sept. 8, 1812 /

To the Spainards of New Mexico;

My dear Sirs: Ever since my first journey among the forks of the Missouri, nine hundred leagues from my domicile, I have desired to find an opportunity to communicate with my (com)patriots, the Spaniards. I have had hunters to the number of twenty-three who have gone to the Arapaho nation. Last year they came to my port Mandanne, where I equipped them anew to return to the place whence they had come. They are the ones

who informed me that the Spaniards of Mexico were coming every year, to trade with the Arapahos. Therefore I gave to a certain ^{Juan Baptista} Jean Baptista Champlain, an honorable young man, and Juan Baptista Lafargue some goods for the purpose of trading with you, admonishing them that it must not be to the prejudice of the Government, nor contrary to its laws.

Since some of my hunters have come this year to meet me at this establishment on the Missouri, and since up to the present I have not had any news ^{of them}, I have decided to send one of my trusted servants, Don Carlos Sanguinet, with two engagés, to let them know where they should come out with their peltry; and for the same purpose, with the same Sanguinet, I sent ten men to the Petite Corne, which empties into the Rio Amarillo, and this into the Missouri, the entry of the Petite Corne being two hundred and twenty-five leagues from this establishment, with orders to establish ^{a post at} that place, as nearer for my hunters.

I have especially instructed Don Carlos Sanguinet to arrange that this letter of mine should fall into the hands of some Spaniard who may be worthy to communicate with me on ~~this~~ honorable principles, and in no other manner, my desire being to engage in business and open up a new commerce, which might easily be done. With this in view, and as a director of the Missouri Fur Company, I propose to you gentleman that if you wish to trade and deal with me, for whatever quantity of goods it may be, I will obligate myself to fill each year any bill of goods which shall be given me, and all shall be delivered (as stipulated) both as to quality and as to quantity, at the place nearest and most convenient for both parties, to your satisfaction, after we shall have agreed on the chosen place.

In case any of you should wish to come with Don Carlos Sanguinet to this my establishment to communicate and trade with me, you will be ~~re~~ received and treated with great pleasure and satisfaction, and assured of a sufficient escort, agreeable to you, up to the time you return to your country. I commend Don Carlos ^{Sanguinet} to you as a trustworthy and honorable man, and, if you are agreed, you may confide in him without any fear whatever; and in case you do not come in person, I shall be obliged to you if you will write to me. Meanwhile, awaiting you, I beg God to spare you many years.

Your most attentive and faithful servant,
Manuel Lisa (Rubric)

Triplicate

To note
to last line of preceding page.

*This fort of the ^{St. Louis} Missouri Fur Company, which Williams in his letter ^{one part of} calls "Manuel's fort," was on the right bank of the Missouri, about 7 miles above the "Third Village" of the Minnetarees, which latter was on Knife River. When John Bradbury, S.L.S., reached on the 22d of June, 1811, he found it in charge of Reuben Lewis, who was a member of the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company and a brother of Captain Meriwether Lewis. Mr. Bradbury, in the journal of his travels, under date of June 23d of that year, described this establishment (which he called only "the Missouri Fur Company's fort") as follows: "The fort consisted of a square block-house, the lower part of which was a room for furs; the upper part of it was inhabited by Mr. Lewis and some of the hunters belonging to the establishment. There were some small outhouses, and the whole was surrounded by a pallisado, or piquet, about fifteen feet high. I found attached to it a very pretty garden, in which were peas, beans, salad, radishes, and other vegetables, under the care of a gardener, an Irishman, who shewed it to me with much self-importance. I praised his management, but expressed my regret that he had no potatoes. 'Oh!' said he, 'that does not signify; we can soon have them; there are plenty just over the way.' I did not think the man was serious; but on mentioning the circumstance to Mr. Lewis, he told me that there really were potatoes at an English fort on the river St. Peters, only from two to 300 miles distant." Between the 25th of June and some time in October, 1811, Lewis divided his time between the Missouri Fur Company's posts on the upper Missouri - more of it apparently at Mackinac.

Manuel's Fort and other St. Louis

It was built in the fall of 1809, under the directions of Manuel Lisa, who was the Missouri Fur Company's general manager of forts and trade operations in the Northwest; Reuben Lewis being, at Manuel's Fort, the resident factor, in charge, ^{there} when Lisa himself was present.

Included in note P. 7.

post then at any other. He was at Manuel's Fort from the 25th of June till the 6th of July, as Bradbury records; and again at least for a while in August, as appears from Williams' letter. From the fact he kept at the fort, and in which he entered the account of the Sangre de Cristo river must have been at Manuel's Fort again during part of the month of September, and some prior month of 1812.

I. Ezekiel Williams.

we, [i.e., till late September or early October, 1811, and] journeyed south forty or fifty days, struck a river I since found to be the Arkansas, where we hunted the first fall unmolested. The next spring the Indians commenced robbing and harassing our company in every quarter. Some time in June, ^[1812] we all assembled on the head of a river since known to be the Platte, where we held a council and agreed to part. Eight or ten crossed the Rocky Mountains; about as many started southward along the mountains. Champlain and myself were with the latter party. We proceeded until we crossed the Arkansas, where we were informed by Indians that the fort on the Missouri was broke up; that Manuel Lisa had fell out with the tribes near there and that they were killing each other as they could find them. We now thought it impossible to return to the Missouri; we concluded to part again. Four of our company determined to find the Spanish settlement; six remained: Champlain, his two hired men, two other Frenchmen and myself. We then set out to hunt in October, ^[1812] in a cove in the mountain, ^[Presumably South Park, famous later on.] taking care not to go more than a few miles apart. About the first of November, ^[1812] we found three of our men killed; there now remained Champlain, one Porteau, and myself. We then took protection amongst the Arapahow nation of Indians; there we found the horses and equipment of our three men just killed. The head chief advised us as the only means to save our lives was to stay with him, which we did, and passed a wretched winter, ^[1812-13] filled with despair of ever being able to return home. The Indians told us that said Manuel's fort was broke up, and that if we attempted to go back that way we would certainly be killed. Champlain and Porteau insisted that we should stay with the Indians until some white person came there who would be able to give the necessary information respecting the Fur Company, or the place where we were and of the means of escaping from thence. I decided to find white people or some place of safety or to lose my life in the attempt. From the best information the Arrapahows could give me, the river that we were on lead into the country of a nation which from the description I thought to be the Osage, and [I] therefore determined to descend that river; my comrades assisted me to make a canoe, and on the first day of March [1813], according to our reckoning, I was accompanied by my two companions and a numerous band of Indians to the water side, where I took a final farewell of them. Champlain shook my hand and said farewell, the other turned his back and wept. A few minutes before we parted they told me they would start about three days afterwards. I have never seen them since. I promised them to inform the people at St. Louis of their situation if I should reach there before them; they made ^{me} a similar promise. I travelled down