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Garrison Reservoir
to Fort Stevenson

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Elliott Coues, Lewis & Clark Expedition,
1893, Vol. I, NY, pp. 261-264.

- 261 April 9th. (1804). We set off as soon as it was light, and proceeded five miles to breakfast, passing a low ground on the south, covered with groves of cottonwood. At the distance of six miles we reached on the north a hunting-camp of Minnetarees, consisting of 30 lodges, built in the usual form of earth and timber. Two miles and a quarter further comes in on the same side Miry creek,¹³ a small stream about ten yards wide, which, rising in some lakes near the Mouse¹⁴
- 262 [or Souris] river, passes through beautiful level fertile plains without timber, in a direction nearly southwest, the banks near its entrance being steep and rugged on both sides of the Missouri. Three miles above this creek we came to a hunting-party of Minnetarees, who had prepared a park or inclosure, and were waiting the return of the antelope. These animals, which in the autumn retire for food and shelter to the Black mountains during the winter, recross the river at this season of the year, and spread themselves through the plains on the north of the Missouri. We halted, (p. 180) smoked a short time with the Minnetarees, and then proceeded on through handsome plains on each side of the river, and camped at the distance of $23\frac{1}{2}$ miles on the north side.¹⁵ The day was clear and pleasant, the wind high from the south; but it afterward changed to a western steady breeze.

The bluffs which we passed to-day are upward of 100 feet high, composed of a mixture of yellow clay and sand, with many horizontal strata of carbonated

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wood resembling pit-coal, from one to five feet in depth, scattered through the bluff at different elevations, some as high as 80 feet above the water. The hills along the river are broken, and present every appearance of having been burned at some former period; great quantities of pumice-stone and lava--or rather earth, which seems to have been boiled and then hardened by exposure--being seen in many parts of these hills, where they are broken and washed down into gullies by the rain and melting snow.

A great number of brants pass up the river; some of them are perfectly white, except the large feathers of the first joint of the wing, which are black, though in every other characteristic they resemble common gray brant. We also saw but could not procure an animal that burrows in the ground, and is similar in every respect to the burrowing-squirrel, except that it is only one-third of its size. This may be [is] the animal whose works we have often seen in the plains and prairies; they resemble the labors of the salamander [Geomys tuza] in the sand-hills of South Carolina and Georgia, and like him the animals rarely come above ground; they consist of a little hillock of ten or twelve pounds of loose ground, which would seem to have been reversed from a pot, though no aperture is seen through which it could have been thrown. On removing gently the earth, you discover that the soil has been broken in a circle of about an inch and a half diameter, where the ground is looser, though still no opening is perceptible. When we stopped for dinner the squaw went out, and after penetrating with (p. 181) a sharp stick the holes of the mice [gophers], near some

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264 drift-wood, brought to us a quantity of wild artichokes, which the mice collect and hoard in large numbers. The root is white, of an ovate form, from one to three inches long, and generally of the size of a man's finger, and two, four, and sometimes six roots are attached to a single stalk. Its flavor as well as the stalk which issues from it resemble those of the Jerusalem artichoke, except that the latter is much larger. A larger beaver was caught in a trap last night, and the mosquitoes begin to trouble us.

¹³Now Snake Creek, quite near the boundary between McLean and Stevens Cos.; R. Bourbeuse (miry, muddy, like Vaseuse) of some French maps. This is the only creek from the north or east which the text yields anywhere along here. Clark's map, 1814, and Lewis' too, 1806, have two, the upper and larger of these being the Miry or "Mirey." Lewis D 12 has: "N. 20 W. to the mouth of Miry creek stard. side, passing a small run and a hill called Snake den." Here is the first of these creek; also, the obvious origin of the modern name Snake for the second of them. There are in fact four, of which Snake or Miry in the second, and the fourth is called Douglass; between the third and fourth is Fort Stevenson. See next two notes.

¹⁴The Mouse or Souris river is the largest tributary of the Red river of the North in the United States, joining the Assiniboin in Manitoba, the

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Coues, Lewis & Clark Exp. 1893.

single river thus formed emptying into the Red river at a point where the latter is crossed by the Canadian Pacific R. R. The course of Mouse river is interesting. It heads wholly in the British possessions (north of 49°), west of 105° W. long., runs toward the 49th parallel (northern border of the United States), which it crosses near $103^{\circ} 30'$, runs in the United States nearly to 103° long., recrosses 49° lat., then courses north of and nearly parallel with 49° N. lat. to about 102° W. long., when it again crosses 49° lat., re-entering the United States, strikes south and seems about to seek the Missouri. It is "bluffed off" however, by the Coteau du Missouri, representing a general elevation of 2,000 feet, and separating the Missouri watershed from that of the Red river. Thus the Mouse river makes a long loop into North Dakota, and returns upon itself, once more recrossing the parallel of 49° N. lat., at about 101° W. long., west of Turtle mountain, and so on to its junction with the Assiniboin, at a town called Milford, in Manitoba. The southernmost point in the bight of this loop is in McHenry Co., about N.E. of Fort Stevenson on the Missouri, the future site of which the Expedition is now approaching.

15 Here the Expedition is past the present site of Fort Stevenson, on the north (left) bank of the Missouri, in Stevens Co. (see last two notes.) This fort was flourishing in 1873, in the autumn of which year I can down from the 49th parallel along Mouse river, by an easy wagon road to Stevenson, and thence along the north side of the Missouri to Bismarck.

MJM:fl

12/16/47