W. RAYMOND WOOD

A Permanent Presence

The Family of Joseph Garreau and the Upper Missouri River Fur Trade

Although the Lewis and Clark Expedition is often thought of as marking the commencement of non-Indian activity in the West, white fur traders had been traversing the Missouri River region for nearly a century before the American explorers arrived. By the time Pierre Laclede and Auguste Chouteau established Saint Louis in 1764, French traders had already spread upriver to exchange their wares for the pelts of beaver and other furbearing game. Soon they were trading with tribes living as far west as the Pawnees in what is now eastern Nebraska. Some French traders had even reached the Arikaras as early as about 1700, though little is known of them. Furs could bring wealth to entrepreneurial adventurers, and they were sought both by individuals and by small companies of men sponsored by Saint Louis merchants. In 1770, the Spanish assumed control over what was known as the "Illinois Country," ruling nominally over its French residents. By the 1780s, some of the more daring of the traders began to expand into the Upper Missouri River into what is now South Dakota and North Dakota.

Among the many men leaving Saint Louis was Joseph Garreau, whose role in the Upper Missouri River fur trade—and those of his sons Antoine and Pierre—have never been the subject of serious study, though each man was representative of those who took part in the fur trade on the Northern Great Plains. The history of Joseph Garreau and his sons spans the recorded history of the fur trade on the northern plains, beginning in 1787 with his first trip up the Missouri River and ending with his son Pierre's death in 1881. The Garreau family story can be pieced together, though with many gaps, from myriad accounts by traders, explorers, missionaries, scientists, and other visitors to the Upper Missouri.[1]

1. Care must be used in reading many secondary sources—and some primary ones—for Joseph, Pierre, and Antoine Garreau are often mistaken for one another in historical ac-

Joseph Garreau was among the first of the brave, adventurous, and often deceitful men to attain a degree of notoriety in the trade that began with a trickle of men up the Missouri River from Saint Louis. Traders such as Garreau often took up residence in the Indian villages, many of them taking Indian wives, as he did. Tribesmen on the Upper Missouri were eager to gain the new goods—guns, ammunition, knives, mirrors, beads, and much more—offered by the traders in exchange for their furs. At the same time, they resented those who bypassed them with goods bound for their upriver allies or enemies, and who also eliminated them as middlemen in a lucrative and widespread intertribal trading network. French, Spanish, and later American traders used both diplomacy and force to ascend the river with limited resources until the advent of steamboats permitted the transport of goods by the ton. After 1822, corporations began to dominate the trade: the Columbia Fur Company and, later, the Upper Missouri Outfit of John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company were to establish posts along the river and compete with a host of lesser companies until furbearing animals and the bison had been driven to near-extinction.[2]

Joseph Garreau's history begins with André Fagot, a reputable and substantial French merchant in Saint Louis in the latter years of the eighteenth century.[3] Hoping to reap the rewards to be obtained by trading for furs, he is said to have sent a trading party up the Missouri in 1787. According to one account, some time that year Fagot sent twenty-three-year-old Joseph Garreau upriver to hunt and trap.[4] Nothing else is known of this expedition, for no documents that illuminate the trip, its destination, or its rewards have been discovered.

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counts. For example, F. F. Gerard's biographical sketches (a primary source) hopelessly confuse the three men. *See* Francois Jeannotte, "Gazetteer of Pioneers and Others in North Dakota Previous to 1862," *Collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota* 1 (1906): 363–64.

2. The history of the Upper Missouri River fur trade is well treated in David J. Wishart, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West, 1807–1840* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979).

3. Carl J. Ekberg, *Colonial Ste. Genevieve: An Adventure on the Mississippi Frontier* (Tucson, Ariz.: Patrice Press, 1996), p. 60.

4. John C. Luttig, *Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition on the Upper Missouri, 1812–1813,* ed. Stella M. Drumm (New York: Argosy-Antiquarian, 1964), p. 64n.97.

Attacks by Indians were one of many hazards fur traders faced on the Upper Missouri River. This dramatic illustration appeared in the 23 May 1868 issue of ***Harper's Weekly***.

Young Garreau must have been a resident of Saint Charles or, perhaps, Saint Louis at the time. His occupation is unknown, but it is likely that rubbing shoulders with the many wilderness traders (*coureurs du bois*) and common laborers (*engagés*) that populated both towns had given him at least a casual familiarity with the fur trade.

There are no solid clues as to the identity of Joseph Garreau's father, but suspicion rests on one Pierre Garreau of Saint Charles. Before the Louisiana Purchase, the residents of Saint Charles, in what is now the state of Missouri, consisted largely of French Canadians and their descendants. Among the town's settlers was a Pierre Garreau, whom historian Louis Houck listed among other citizens, "some of whom cultivated land in the upper and lower common-fields."[5] This Pierre Garreau is often cited as being the father of Joseph, although the two

5. Louis Houck, *A History of Missouri* (Chicago: R. R. Donnelley & Sons, 1908) 2: 85–87.

cannot be directly linked. The Saint Charles resident is the only Garreau recorded in the early histories of Saint Louis and Saint Charles, however, making him a plausible candidate.

Joseph Garreau's life and fortunes changed dramatically in 1793.[6] The previous year Jacques D'Eglise, a French entrepreneur and fur trader, returned to Saint Louis from a visit to the Mandan Indians, who were then living near the mouth of the Knife River in present-day North Dakota. D'Eglise was anxious to return to them, and sometime around March 1793 he struck back up the Missouri River with Garreau and two other men.[7] This expedition was a failure; he was stopped either by the Arikaras or the Sioux somewhere in present-day central South Dakota and suffered substantial losses. D'Eglise returned to Saint Louis, but Garreau chose to remain behind. He seems to have settled into life for several decades at the twin Arikara villages a few miles above the mouth of the Grand River in what is today northern South Dakota. Like many Frenchmen of the period, he integrated seamlessly into Arikara culture, taking several wives and fathering at least three sons and a daughter with them, thereby earning him the title, long after his death, of "first white man to make a permanent home in Dakota."[8]

D'Eglise's return to Saint Louis without Garreau prompted the lieutenant governor of Spanish Illinois, Zenon Trudeau, to write on 8 June 1794 that "Garrow who had been with him [D'Eglise] consumed one [equipment] of sixteen hundred pesos which *Monsieur* Collell advanced to him." He then "remained among the Ricara nation where he could not help but be very pernicious with his advice."[9] D'Eglise, referring to himself in the third person as the "deponent" or testifier,

6. Joseph Garreau's name is variously spelled in early documents: Garau, Garaua, Garaut, Gareau, Garon, and Garraut are phonetically equivalent; even Nourrow is a recognizable variant.

7. A. P. Nasatir, ed., *Before Lewis and Clark*: *Documents Illustrating the History of the Missouri, 1785–1804*, 2 vols. (St. Louis, Mo.: St. Louis Historical Documents Foundation, 1952), 1:82–93.

8. Doane Robinson, *History of South Dakota*, 2 vols. ([Logansport, Ind.]: B. F. Bowen & Co., 1904), 1:395. *See also* ibid., p. 83.

9. Trudeau to Carondelet, St. Louis, in Nasatir, *Before Lewis and Clark*, 1:233.

described Garreau's conduct more specifically in a document he prepared in Saint Louis on 19 June 1794.

He noted that each man had been in charge of a "pirogue loaded with the articles and oarsmen necessary for their enterprise." However, D'Eglise wrote, "The bad conduct of this Gareau, his turbulent and dissolute attitude[,] put the deponent in danger of losing everything completely among those nations, because he distributed the articles that were entrusted to him for trading to improper uses other than those intended. In this situation the deponent was obliged to return down stream to these settlements with the articles and furs he had been able to collect to satisfy his creditors."[10]

"It would only require," fur trader Jean Baptiste Truteau wrote, "a second Garaut and like companions to make these nations like all the others living on the Lower Missouri, which is to say crafty and bad."[11] Garreau is not known ever to have returned to Saint Louis. At least one historian has suggested that he chose to remain on the Upper Missouri "much to the chagrin of his numerous creditors in St. Louis and Canada,"[12] although this statement probably applied to D'Eglise, and not to an employee such as Garreau.

That fall, in October 1794, Canadian trader Rene Jusseaume left the North West Company's Fort Espérance in today's Saskatchewan and traveled south to the Missouri River, where he established a post, today called Jusseaume's Post, between the Mandan and Hidatsa villages at the mouth of the Knife River. Among the men accompanying him were Juan Fotman and Chrysostom Jonquard. In the Hidatsa villages they met a man named Loison, a servant of Joseph Garreau, who was then living downriver with the Arikaras. Fotman and Jonquard deserted Jusseaume and descended the Missouri, reaching Saint Louis in company with Loison and D'Eglise on 3 July 1795. The following day, the

10. D'Eglise to Carondelet, St. Louis, 19 June 1794, ibid., 1:234.

11. "Journal of Truteau on the Missouri River," ibid., 1:298.

12. Doane Robinson, "Lewis and Clark in South Dakota," *South Dakota Historical Collections* 9 (1918): 584. *See also* Donald D. Parker, "Early Explorations and Fur Trading in South Dakota," *South Dakota Historical Collections* 25 (1950/1951): 26.

two men met with Spanish Governor Zenon Trudeau, who recorded their account.[13]

Trudeau was alarmed by the knowledge of British traders trespassing on Spanish territory, and Spanish and French merchants in Saint Louis quickly formed the Missouri Company to combat this intrusion into their domain. This company sent an expedition up the Missouri that fall under former Canadian fur trader James Mackay with two objectives: expel the British from Jusseaume's Post at the Mandans and proceed on to the Pacific Ocean. That winter, Mackay established Fort Charles in what is now northeastern Nebraska and dispatched his Welsh lieutenant, John Thomas Evans, to fulfill these goals. On 19 February 1796, Mackay wrote a letter at Fort Charles to Evans in which he said, "You will give Jaque Deglise's compliments to Nourrow, who is at the ricaras & tell him that Jaque wants him to come down with the Company's cajons [boxes] in the spring."[14] We may reasonably identify Nourrow at the Arikaras as Joseph Garreau; he was one of only a few other Frenchmen on the river at that time, and the chances of Evans being with someone with a name phonetically similar to Garreau seem very low.

Another Frenchman, Pierre-Antoine Tabeau, aided by Garreau, lived and traded with the Arikaras at their Grand River villages from 1803 to 1805 for a Saint Louis merchant named Régis Loisel. When Tabeau was in danger of losing his goods because of hostility in the Arikara village, "Garau" served as his interpreter in a council before the leading men of the village and supported Tabeau's role among them.[15]

When Meriwether Lewis and William Clark arrived at the Arikara villages above the Grand River on 8 October 1804, they discovered two Frenchmen there: Pierre-Antoine Tabeau and his fellow resident trader, Joseph Gravelines, who also worked for Régis Loisel. Historian Annie Heloise Abel believes that Gravelines had by then succeeded Garreau in Tabeau's service.[16]

13. Nasatir, *Before Lewis and Clark*, 1:95. For Trudeau's document containing this information, *see* ibid., 1:330–35.

14. Ibid., 2:417.

15. Annie Heloise Abel, ed., *Tabeau's Narrative of Loisel's Expedition to the Upper Missouri* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1939), pp. 141–142, n. 114, 144.

16. Abel, ed., *Tabeau's Narrative*, p. 138n.109.

Tabeau and Gravelines appear to have translated for Lewis and Clark, but the captains assign no role to Garreau. Indeed, they never mention him by name at this time, though he may have been the "Spaniard" that Clark mentioned on their arrival.[17] Five months later, Garreau apparently visited the captains during the winter at Fort Mandan, where Lewis recorded that "Mr Gurrow a Frenchman who has lived many years with the Ricaras & Mandans shewed us the process used by these Indians to make beads."[18] What Garreau was doing at

17. Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, Vol. 3: *August 25, 1804–April 6, 1805* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), p. 151.

18. Ibid., pp. 313–15.

George Catlin depicted the Arikara village near the mouth of the Grand River during his trip up the Missouri River in 1833. Joseph Garreau lived at the village with his Arikara wife in the early 1800s.

Fort Mandan is unknown. As noted earlier, however, his "servant" Loison was living among the Hidatsas in 1794, and Garreau may have been seeing after some of his interests there. On the expedition's return on 22 August 1806, however, Clark refers to "the interpreter Garrow" being at the Arikara village.[19]

Garreau was likely also the "old Spaniard" who interpreted for Nathaniel Pryor's expedition at the Arikara villages in 1807 during Pryor's effort to return the Mandan chief, Sheheke-shote, to his home. Sheheke-shote had accompanied Lewis and Clark back to Washington in 1806 and had been promised a safe return, but Pryor's party was attacked at the Arikara village and driven back downstream. On his return, Pryor wrote a letter to William Clark reporting his failure, stating that "you probably may not have forgotten" the interpreter. Though Pryor had no confidence in the "Spaniard," he "was obliged to make use of him on this occasion from the absolute impossibility of obtaining another."[20] These references to a "Spaniard" are usually interpreted, likely correctly, as references to Joseph Garreau.[21]

The next mention of Garreau has him interacting with traders in 1811, the year Manuel Lisa and Wilson Price Hunt raced up the Missouri to see who could best the other in trading with the Indians first. Both parties carried with them naturalists, John Bradbury with Hunt, and Henry Brackenridge with Lisa. Each man commented on meeting Garreau at the Arikara villages on 12 June. Approaching the villages, they met a canoe carrying two chiefs and a French interpreter who Brackenridge said was an employee of Lisa's Missouri Company. The other naturalist, Bradbury, identified the interpreter as a Frenchman

19. Moulton and Dunlay, eds., *Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, Vol. 8, *June 10–Sept. 26, 1806* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), p. 317.

20. Nathaniel Pryor to Clark, 16 Oct. 1807, in Donald Jackson, ed., *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, with Related Documents, 1783–1854*, 2 vols. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 2:434–37, 438n4.

21. The Spanish sources provided by Nasatir in *Before Lewis and Clark* are sketchy, and traditional documentation for this period is rare. Nonetheless, secondary sources tend to identify him as Joseph. Because so few men were on the upper river at this time, the chance of him being someone with a name phonetically similar to Garreau seems unlikely.

who had lived with the tribe for more than twenty years, was married to an Indian woman, and had several children.[22]

Joseph Garreau was still living with the Arikaras in 1812 and 1813, for he is mentioned repeatedly in the journal of John C. Luttig at Manuel Lisa's Fort Manuel, built on the present North Dakota-South Dakota boundary for Lisa's Missouri Fur Company.[23] Lisa employed Garreau as an interpreter the day following his first appearance at the post, and the interpreter often visited the fort.[24] Luttig mentions "Garrow" (never with a given name) as having an Arikara wife. The sister of Chief Goshé, she came to the fort on 10 October 1812, intending to "shoot her husband." (She did not do so).[25] Garreau was a troublemaker for Lisa's traders, for in November Luttig reported that the Arikaras were "preparing to make war on us. Baptist Provost and Garrow had told them many Lies and roused the Chiefs and Nation against us."[26] Though nothing came of the threat, the fort was abandoned in 1813 because of Indian threats during the War of 1812. Why Provost and Garreau "roused" the Arikaras is never revealed in the journal, which is infuriatingly silent on such matters.

Garreau and his sons Pierre and Antoine all witnessed the signing of the 18 July 1825 treaty between the United States government and the Arikaras at their village during the Atkinson-O'Fallon Expedition, which had ascended the Missouri River to make peace with and among

22. Henry M. Brackenridge, *Views of Louisiana, Together with a Journal of a Voyage Up the Missouri River, in 1811* (Pittsburgh, Penn.: Cramer, Spear & Eichbaum, 1814), p. 224; John Bradbury, *Travels in the Interior of America in the Years 1809, 1810, and 1811* (London: Sherwood, Neely, & Jones, 1817), p. 110. *See* Washington Irving, *Three Western Narratives* (New York: Library of America, 2004), p. 343, for Irving's interpretation of this meeting and his description of Garreau as "one of those haphazard wights of Gallic origin, who abound upon our frontier."

23. Luttig, *Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition*, pp. 64, 68, 84, 90, 92, 93, 94, 97, 104, 107, 117.

24. Stella Drumm, in Luttig, *Journal of a Fur-Trading Expedition*, p. 64n97, reveals that the "Missouri Fur Company's books show that he was engaged by it from August 4, 1812 to May 11, 1813." The roster is reproduced on pages 157–58.

25. Ibid., p. 84.

26. Ibid., p. 92.

the tribes of the Upper Missouri. Each man signed with "his x mark."[27] Neither of the leaders of the expedition, Generals Stephen W. Kearny and Henry Atkinson, was impressed with Garreau's behavior; he had invited the generals to a feast in the Arikara village, but he became drunk and forgot about it on the way back to his lodge, and the generals returned to their quarters. Following the signing, the Garreau family came to bid the expedition "a parting respect."[28]

There is little physical description of Joseph Garreau, but his personality is often illustrated in reports that are uncomplimentary. Prince Maximilian of Wied, a German explorer and naturalist who visited the Upper Missouri in 1832–1833 with the artist Karl Bodmer, alluded to him in his reports as "Old Garrot."[29] In November 1833, Prince Maximilian mentioned "old Garrot" in the services of Sublette & Campbell at one of the Hidatsa villages. When Garreau came to visit Fort Clark, he always stayed with the *engagés*. His relations with the prince and Karl Bodmer were not cordial. Maximilian wrote that this "deceitful old man" asked a deaf-mute Mandan why he had permitted Bodmer to paint him in his warrior clothes, when everyone else had been painted in their finest attire. Bodmer surreptitiously made a copy of the drawing and threw it into the fire to pacify the offended man.[30]

The last reliable record of Joseph Garreau is on 2 January 1852, when artist Rudolph Friederich Kurz wrote that "old Gareau (Pierre's father) lost an arm" in firing a cannon at Fort Union, having "felt it was

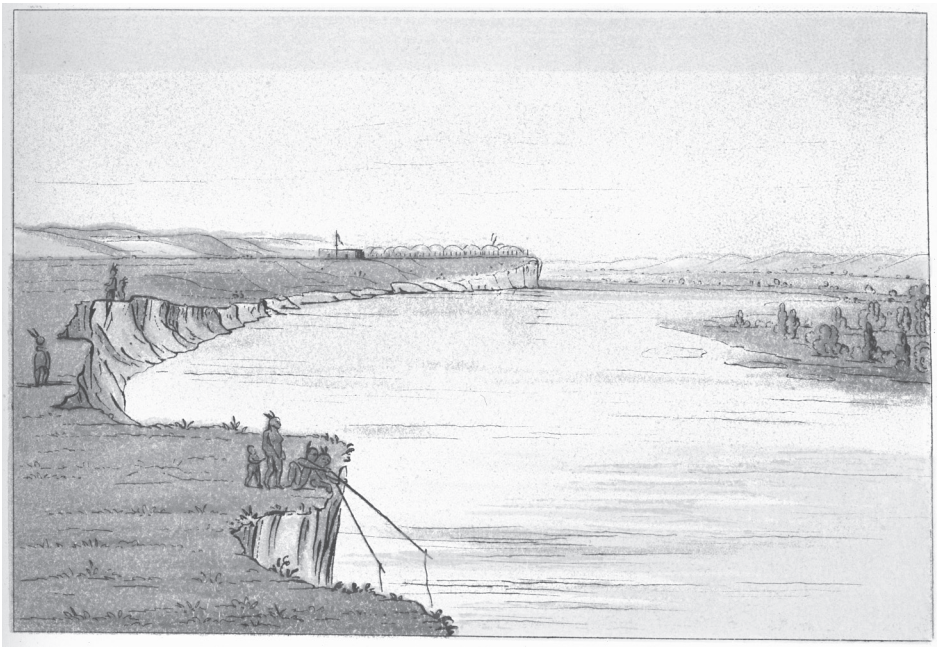
27. Charles J. Kappler, comp. and ed., *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, 5 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904): 2:239. *See also* Richard E. Jensen and James S. Hutchins, eds., *Wheel Boats on the Missouri: The Journals and Documents of the Atkinson-O'Fallon Expedition, 1824–26* (Helena: Montana Historical Society and Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 2001), p. 131.

28. Jensen and Hutchins, eds., *Wheel Boats on the Missouri*, pp. 128–29.

29. Stephen S. Witte and Marsha V. Gallagher, eds., *The North American Journals of Prince Maximilian of Wied*, Vol. 3, *September 1833–August 1834* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), p. 256.

30. Ibid., p. 256. *See also* pp. 87, 241.

(Facing page) Farther up the Missouri in present-day North Dakota, Catlin painted this distant view (top) of the Mandan village near Fort Clark, as well as a more detailed view (bottom) showing life within the village.



unnecessary, after having fired, to stop the vent while reloading."[31] If Joseph had been twenty-three years old when he went up the Missouri, he would have been eighty-eight years old at the time—a ripe old age, indeed, in those violent times. His death and its manner are not recorded. Nor is his final resting place known, and his unmarked grave is among the many of those who died on the Upper Missouri River in their quest for the pelts of its animal kingdom.

Only two of Joseph's children are known to have survived to adulthood to enter the historical record, sons Antoine and Pierre. Their birthdates and places of birth are not recorded, though one may reasonably assume that both were born at the Arikara village near Grand River. Nothing is known of a younger son who was murdered by an Arikara named Bear's Ear.[32] The best known of the sons is Pierre Garreau, who remained in the fur trade until his death, usually cited as occurring in 1881.

Antoine is lesser known, and no description, photograph, or other image of him exists. At some point, he married an Arikara woman named Josette, and the couple had at least one daughter, also named Josette, who married fur trader Andrew Dawson. Antoine had at least two grandchildren, James and Maggie Dawson.[33] Whether Dawson's wife Josette died or he abandoned her, he later married a Brulé woman (Mary Scot) and a Gros Ventre woman (Pipe Woman). Antoine figures in the narrative of mountain man James P. Beckwourth, who mentions a visit to Fort Clark where he met Joseph, Pierre, and Antoine.[34]

31. *Journal of Rudolph Friederich Kurz*, trans. Myrtis Jarrell, ed. J. N. B. Hewitt, Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin no. 115 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1937), p. 257.

32. An account of this unnamed brother (perhaps named Joseph) and his death is given in Lucille M. Kane, trans. and ed., *Military Life in Dakota: The Journal of Philippe Régis de Trobriand* (St. Paul, Minn.: Alvord Memorial Commission, 1951), pp. 291–92.

33. Warren L. Hanna, *Stars over Montana: Men Who Made Glacier National Park History* (West Glacier, Mont.: Glacier Natural History Association, 1988), p. 188. Hanna errs, however, in stating that Josette married Antoine Garreau. Annie Heloise Abel, editor of *Chardon's Journal at Fort Clark, 1834–1839* (Pierre, S.Dak.: Department of History, 1932), p. 283n288, wrote that Antoine was Dawson's father-in-law.

34. James P. Beckwourth, *The Life and Adventures of James P. Beckwourth*, ed. Charles G. Leland (Williamstown, Mass.: Corner House Publishers, 1977), pp. 213–14, 313–14.

Two strikingly different scenarios cloud Pierre's parentage. The one most commonly accepted was recorded in a journal in 1858 kept by his trading friend, Henry A. Boller, at Fort Atkinson, Dakota Territory, in which Joseph Garreau is identified as Pierre's stepfather, rather than his biological father. According to Boller,

> Pierre is a full blooded Aricara; he, singular enough hates Indians "like the very devil." His mother being a very handsome squaw was "married" to a man named [Joseph] Garreau shortly after her Indian husband died, & bearing a child a couple of months after, Garreau adopted him as his own and gave him his name, hence the mistake that some have fallen into of calling him a half-breed. When a young lad he was sent below to learn a trade, and was placed with Page, a ba[n]ker, since head of the celebrated banking house of Page, Bacon & Co. He remained several years below & all he cares for now is to have fine running horses! He is between 50 & 60 yr's old.[35]

When Boller published his journals in 1867 he modified his remarks, stating, "Pierre generally claims to be a half-breed, but such is not the case. He is a full-blood Arikara Indian, and has passed his entire life in the service of the American Fur Company as interpreter." Joseph Garreau "adopted as his own the child . . . and afforded him every possible advantage. When a lad, he sent him to St. Louis and had him apprenticed to one Page, a baker and confectioner, with whom he lived, as he expressed it, 'four years in the brick houses,' and thoroughly learned his business."[36] Pierre's apprenticeship to a banker is entirely implausible as stated in the earlier account, for he could neither read nor write, and if he indeed lived four years as an apprentice to a baker, that experience is not known to have carried over into his activities on the Upper Missouri.

An Arikara origin for Pierre Garreau is contradicted elsewhere. In a footnote to Ethel Collins's account of Pierre at Fort Berthold, the

35. W. Raymond Wood, ed., *Twilight of the Upper Missouri Fur Trade: The Journals of Henry A. Boller* (Bismarck: State Historical Society of North Dakota, 2008), p. 214. Page, Bacon & Co. was a prominent banking firm in Saint Louis at the time. Pierre's Indian background is supported by the fact he does not appear in the federal censuses between 1860 and 1880.

36. Henry A. Boller, *Among the Indians: Eight Years in the Far West* (Chicago, Ill.: R. R. Donnelley & Sons, 1959), pp. 187–88.

editor, historian Orin G. Libby, writes, "He [Pierre Garreau] claimed to have been of mixed blood, the son of a Turtle Mountain Frenchman and a Cree woman[37]. . . . According to his own account he was born in the Turtle Mountain country about 1798 and lived there until his father's death [when] he persuaded his mother to go with him to the Missouri river, where they lived with the Arikara and his mother was married to a warrior of this tribe."[38]

Given the record we have of the Garreau family on the Missouri, this account must be dismissed, despite its having originated with Horatio H. Larned, who associated closely with Pierre, the interpreter at Fort Berthold between 1868 and 1870.[39] Washington Matthews, an army surgeon who spent time at Fort Berthold and also knew Garreau, wrote, "Many of the old settlers said that my man was a full-blooded Arickaree, and only a stepson of the elder Garreau," though he doubted this because of his "Gallic features."[40]

There are several accounts of Pierre's appearance and characteristics. While we may dismiss Ethel Collins's version of his parentage, she goes on to say that he "was a man of good habits, [and] a devout Catholic."[41] She quotes Horatio H. Larned, who described Pierre Garreau as "a fine specimen of manhood. . . . He was five feet ten inches in height, his chest girth measured forty-six inches and he weighed two hundred twelve pounds." His size apparently allowed him to "perform remarkable feats of strength with the greatest ease. Among the shipments of goods received at the fort were kegs of what were called trade balls,"

37. Editor Orin G. Libby, in Ethel A. Collins, "Pierre Garreau at Fort Berthold," *North Dakota Historical Collections* (1925):39n34, states, "In a letter of December 1, 1823, H. H. Larned quotes Garreau's own word as to his parentage and gives his own impressions of this remarkable man." The author has been unable to locate this letter.

38. Collins, "Pierre Garreau at Fort Berthold," pp. 39–40. The date of 1798 as a birthdate would have made Garreau eighty-three years old at his death if he died in 1881.

39. Ethel A. Collins, "Pioneer Experiences of Horatio H. Larned," *North Dakota Historical Collections* 7 (1925): 35.

40. Letter cited in Charles Larpenteur, *Forty Years a Fur Trader on the Upper Missouri: The Personal Narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833–1872*, ed. Elliott Coues, 2 vols. (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1898), 1:125n11.

41. Collins, "Pioneer Experiences of Horatio H. Larned," p. 29.

Collins relates. "These came in 300 pound kegs and it required two men to put one of these kegs on a wagon. But Pierre with apparently little effort would handle one of these kegs alone."[42]

Apparently basing her account on a letter from Larned, Collins wrote that sometime after Fort Clark was established in 1831 Garreau was a member of one of the keelboat crews that carried pelts and robes downriver to Saint Louis. He went on several of these trips "and was fond of telling of his visits to the 'Brick Houses,' as he called Saint Louis."[43] Following one of these trips, he was said to have remained in the city for a few years and worked in a bakery but eventually returned to the Upper Missouri.[44] This story echoes the one related by Boller, but Garreau's purported keelboat experience is not documented in any other source.

In July 1836, Francis Chardon, the director of Fort Clark, sent Pierre Garreau from Fort Clark to Fort Pierre, writing to trader Pierre D. Papin there that he took Garreau "to be a trust worthy man, and any thing that you may trust to his care. I have no doubt but that it will be well taken care of." Chardon continued, "I think him honest, and can be trusted with the Horses and Merchandise that you send me. a few good flattering words to him goes very far—therefore I beg of you to spare a few for him—his time with the Compy is not as yet expired—but he has promised me for next year—he is engaged as clerk and enterpreter—and considers it as an honor to eat at the table—or as they say—*Mangér à Table*—."[45]

While his father was working for Sublette & Campbell and meeting Prince Maximilian and Bodmer, Pierre Garreau was employed at Robert Campbell's Fort William, a post in opposition to the Upper Missouri Outfit's Fort Union, where Campbell mentioned him in November and December 1833. On 7 December, Campbell wrote that Garreau

42. Collins, "Pierre Garreau at Fort Berthold," p. 40n36.
43. Ibid., p. 40.
43. Ibid., p. 40.
44. Ibid.
45. F. A. Chardon to Pierre D. Papin, 17 July 1836, Chouteau Papers, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, Mo.

had "asked me privilege to purchase a squaw by doing which he would overrun his account. I allowed him to do so as I am desirous of having him learn to speak the Asssinaboin tounge."[46]

This employment ended by mid-1834, when he was back in the employ of the Upper Missouri Outfit, and both Pierre and Antoine Garreau are mentioned in Chardon's journal at Fort Clark between August 1834 and March 1838. The journal contains no less than forty-six references to a Garreau; only six of them refer specifically to Pierre. In her index to the journal, Annie Abel attributes no less than thirty-eight of the references to Antoine, though no given name accompanies the entries she cites for him. How she so identified them is unknown, though most of them refer to hunting. Three of the incidents she attributes as involving Antoine deserve mention: the revenge for the murder of one of Chardon's men, John Cliver, though the killing usually is said to have been done by Pierre; the death of a young Arikara, a nephew of Garreau; and the entry for 24 March 1838, when "Garreau turned his wife off for infidelity, poor thing."[47] This latter action is more reminiscent of Pierre who, as we shall see, did the same thing at Like-a-Fishhook Village in 1872.

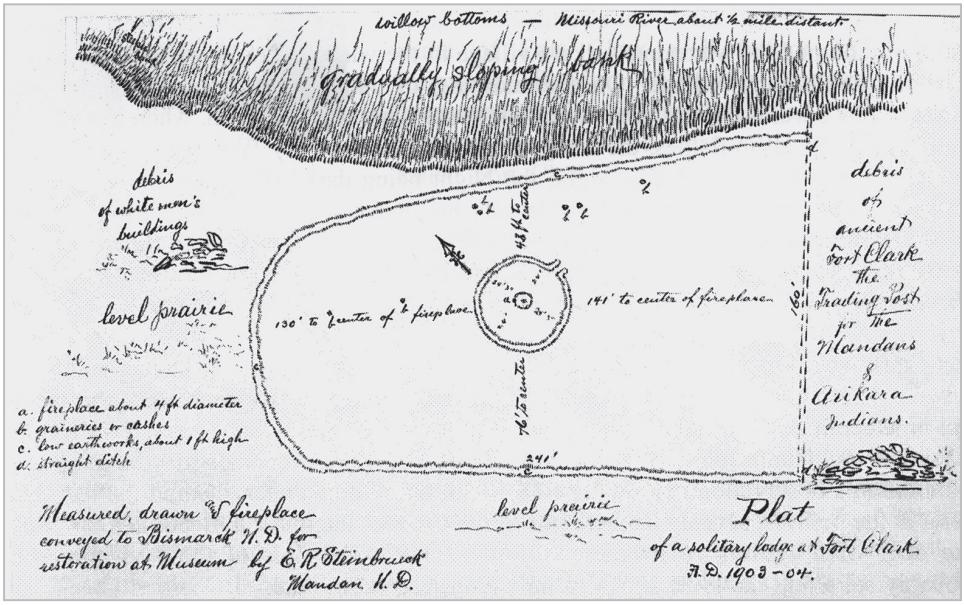
An unusual feature built at some time on the north side of Fort Clark is traditionally attributed to Pierre Garreau, though there is no documentation to support this identification. It consists of a U-shaped earthen embankment that originally outlined a post palisade that adjoined the fort. It contained a single earthlodge, some drying racks, and storage pits. If it indeed contains Garreau's earthlodge, it was built after the Arikara confiscated the Mandan village in 1838 following the 1837 epidemic that nearly obliterated the Mandans.[48]

General Philippe Régis de Trobriand, commanding general at Fort Stevenson, some twenty miles east of Fort Berthold, provided further information on Pierre Garreau in 1867. He wrote that Garreau was a

46. Robert Campbell, "The Private Journal of Robert Campbell," ed. George R. Brooks, *Missouri Historical Quarterly Bulletin* 20 (1963): 45, 57, 83.

47. Abel, ed., *Chardon's Journal at Fort Clark*, pp. 128–29, 132, 154 (quotation).

48. It is reproduced in W. Raymond Wood, William J. Hunt, Jr., and Randy H. Williams, *Fort Clark and Its Indian Neighbors: A Trading Post on the Upper Missouri River* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011), p. 178.



In 1903–1904, archaeologist E. R. Steinbrueck drew this plan of the enclosure that may have contained Pierre Garreau's earthlodge at Fort Clark.

mixed-blood, past sixty, "but whose vigor and energy belie his age." Though he erred in stating that Garreau's father was Canadian, he provided a vivid physical description, writing, "His black hair, worn the ordinary length, is sprinkled with threads of gray. His brick-red complexion could be attributed to the effects of the sun. . . . His features are striking, his eyes dark and intelligent, and his wide mouth, well supplied with small, closely set teeth, has some resemblance to that of a bulldog."[49]

Washington Matthews stated in a letter to historian Elliott Coues that Garreau was "dark as an Indian" and "was courteous in his manners, very intelligent, and was highly esteemed by all his associates, white and Indian."[50] Matthews also noted that Indians often called

49. De Trobriand, *Military Life in Dakota*, p. 90.
50. Letter cited in Larpenteur, *Forty Years a Fur Trader*, 1:125n11.

whites by translations of their Christian names or surnames. Therefore, "Pierre Garreau is called [in Hidatsa] mis (Englished, Meesh or Beesh), from mi', *a rock*."[51] Horatio Larned claimed that Garreau's Dakota Sioux name at Fort Berthold was "Arikara white Man (Padani Wasecun)." Larned went on to say that Garreau was "exemplary in his personal habits, strictly temperate, moral and honest. He was entirely without education and could not even write his own name. He was a devout Catholic and frequently wore a rosary which he said he had received from his father when a boy. Very often when sitting by the fire he was observed counting the beads of his rosary and repeating some formula with each one."[52]

Pierre Garreau was not, however, universally admired. He had a succession of Indian wives, with whom he fathered three sons whose deaths in 1858 are well documented. According to Henry Boller, the youngest son was named John. One of the sons may have been named Paul, for at Fort Clark on 4 July 1840, Jesuit Father Christian Hoecken baptized "two children of Pierre Garreau, Paul, eleven, and Rosalie, seven."[53] There is no later mention of Rosalie, who must have died at an early age.

In 1849, trader James Kipp and his nephew Joseph Desautels were on their way up the Missouri. Kipp was on his way to Fort Cass, and Desautels was to take over as director at Fort Clark but became desperately ill at Fort Pierre and died there on 15 November. In his will, Desautels bequeathed his possessions to his friends and family, among them Pierre Garreau, who was to receive his "Double barrel Gun." He also left money for his wife, Mary Garreau, the daughter of Antoine and Josette Garreau.[54] Joseph Desautels left two fatherless children,

51. Washington Matthews, *Ethnography and Philology of the Hidatsa Indians* (U.S. Geological and Geographical Survey, Miscellaneous Collections 7:55. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1877.

52. Collins, "Pierre Garreau at Fort Berthold," p. 43.

53. Gilbert J. Garraghan, *The Jesuits of the Middle United States*, 3 vols. (New York: American Press, 1938), 2: 474n89.

54. Missouri State Archives, Missouri Judicial Records, Probate Court, St. Louis, Case No. 03571, Microfilm Roll C 30883. *See also* Abel, ed., *Chardon's Journal at Fort Clark*, p. 283, n. 288; and W. Raymond Wood, "James Kipp: Upper Missouri River Fur Trader and Missouri Farmer," *North Dakota History* 77 (2011): 2–35.

not named in his will. Mary's sister, Josette, married trader Andrew Dawson.

Pierre Garreau spent much of his later life as a trader and interpreter among the Hidatsas and Mandans and, later, the Arikaras. This was after the construction of Fort Berthold in 1845, the Upper Missouri Outfit's post at Like-a-Fishhook Village, the last such village on the Missouri River. He lived in an earthlodge there with at least two wives. He is often mentioned, sometimes in unflattering entries, in the journal kept there by Rudolph Kurz. Garreau, Kurz said, could "neither read nor write. Neither does he know how to enter on the books sales to the Indians and to the employees, nor to credit the amounts that are received."[55] Nonetheless, Garreau offered Kurz good advice on his relations with an Indian girl who was often seen in Kurz's company, and Kurz traded goods to Pierre in exchange for "a woman's shirt-dress made of two whole bighorn pelts."[56]

Ethel Collins relates a story about a time when Garreau and some companions went out to hunt bison near Dog Den Butte, a prominent feature east of Fort Berthold. A band of Assiniboines captured them, but with the aid of a concealed gun Garreau not only managed the group's escape but captured the Indians' horses, as well.[57]

Henry A. Boller often mentioned Pierre Garreau in the journal he kept in 1857 and 1858 at Fort Atkinson, a trading post maintained on the south side of Like-a-Fishhook Village by Frost, Todd and Company. Though Garreau was an employee of the Upper Missouri River Outfit at Fort Berthold with which Boller's firm competed, the two men were friends and often hunted together; it was on one of these excursions that Garreau told Boller of his early life. They often participated in racing horses, a favorite recreation at Like-a-Fishhook.

In October 1858, Pierre Garreau came back from a trip to Fort Clark to accompany the Hidatsas to their winter quarters on Lucky Mound Creek, some twenty-five miles upstream from Like-a-Fishhook. Boller, leading an opposition party to the same camp, overtook him, and they traveled together in a friendly manner together with Garreau's three

55. *Journal of Rudolph Friederich Kurz*, p. 79.
56. Ibid., pp. 93, 96–97.
57. Collins, "Pierre Garreau at Fort Berthold," pp. 41–43.

The Swiss artist Rudolph F. Kurz sketched these portraits of Pierre Garreau (see detail) while working at Fort Berthold as a clerk for the American Fur Company in 1851. Kurz often produced composite images such as the larger one, which depicts Garreau and several other individuals above a scene recorded near Fort Berthold.

sons. Sometime later, the three were waylaid, killed, and scalped by the Sioux one night as they returned from a hunt. Only the youngest son, John, is named. Garreau buried his sons in a temporary grave, sent word to his Arikara relatives, and gave away most of his possessions. "His two wives, although not the mothers of the deceased, cut their hair in token of grief," Boller related. "Pierre was soon recalled to Fort Berthold, his great affliction rendering him totally unfit to remain in camp as a trader."[58] The boys were later reinterred at Like-a-Fishhook. Later, the Hidatsas killed three Sioux and wounded another, celebrating their victory that night and the next day. "Pierre Garreau's sons were avenged," Boller concluded.[59]

Garreau served as a translator for two United States government expeditions. On 21 August 1860, the report of Captain William F. Raynolds, who was to explore the Yellowstone country, noted that Little Elk, a Sioux chief, delivered a speech in a room at Fort Clark "in small parcels, frequently repeated, and interpreted to me in French, for our interpreter's English was more unintelligible than the original Sioux. I mean by this no disrespect to the worthy Mr. Garoux."[60]

Together with traders Charles Papin and Charles Larpenteur, Pierre Garreau also interpreted for an agreement made at Fort Berthold between United States officials and the chiefs and headmen of the Arikaras on 27 July 1866. Embedded in the agreement was the stipulation that "in consideration of the long continued and faithful services of Pierre Garreau to the Indians of the aforesaid [Arikara] tribe and his efforts for their benefit, the United States agree to give him, out of the annuities to said tribe, the sum of two hundred dollars annually, being the same amount as is paid the head chiefs as aforesaid."[61]

There were many other occasions, some of which surely remain undocumented, in which Pierre Garreau interpreted for private as well

58. Boller, *Among the Indians*, pp. 249–51.

59. Ibid., p. 322.

60. H. E. Maynadier, "The Journal of H. E. Maynadier: A Boat Trip from Fort Union to Omaha in 1860," ed. Elmer Ellis, *North Dakota Historical Quarterly* 1 (2 Jan. 1927): 44.

61. Kappler, *Indian Affairs*, 2:1054.

as government meetings with the Mandans, Hidatsas, and Arikaras.[62] Not all of his efforts were appreciated. At a meeting at the recently abandoned Fort Clark on 12 June 1861, attorney John Mason Brown complained that the "round about way of interpretation from Ree into French by old Pierre Garreau and from French into English by Mr. Chouteau made the speechifying rather tedious."[63] Garreau's mastery of language is best summed up by the Reverend Charles L. Hall, a long-time missionary on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation: "Although he was said to speak seven different languages, it was hard to understand him in any."[64]

The Sioux often came to trade at Forts Pierre and Berthold. Indeed, Sitting Bull himself was said to have bought furs for the Upper Missouri Outfit, acting as an emissary to the Hunkpapas. Pierre Garreau was "influential with his people," Sitting Bull is reported as saying, "and could make good trades." The relationship lasted two years, until Garreau neglected to pay the agreed amount, "and Sitting Bull quit."[65]

There are two accounts of Sioux threats to Fort Berthold in which Garreau played a significant role. The first, which took place in December 1862, has been told many times, and while the details vary, major features remain much the same. As Horatio Larned related it, a war party arrived at the fort while the residents of Like-a-Fishhook were upriver in their winter quarters. They fired some fort outbuildings and planned to torch the village and attack the fort under cover of the smoke. Garreau, stationed on the upper floor of the fort's northwest blockhouse, saw a warrior named Grey Wolf approach the fort with a firebrand. Once the warrior was beneath the blockhouse, Garreau

62. *See*, for example, Orin G. Libby, "The Arikara Narrative of the Campaign against the Hostile Dakotas, June, 1876," *North Dakota Historical Collections* (1920):42.

63. John Mason Brown, "A Trip to the Northwest in 1861: The Diary of John Mason Brown, May—November 1861," *Filson Club History Quarterly* (1950), pp. 24 (2), 124.

64. Rev. Hall Scrapbook, in C. L. Hall Papers, State Historical Society of North Dakota, quoted by Roy W. Meyer, *Village Indians of the Upper Missouri* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1977), p. 130.

65. Robert M. Utley, *The Lance and the Shield: The Life and Times of Sitting Bull* (New York: Ballantine, 1993), p. 48n13, citing an interview with a reporter during a tour with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. *St. Louis Critic*, 3 Oct. 1885. I have not been able to locate a copy of this article.

dropped a noose around him, drew him up, cut his throat, and scalped him. The remaining warriors retreated without further threat.[66] In the second encounter, sometime in 1866, Garreau is alleged to have boldly strode into a group of Sioux warriors who had surrounded the fort—they were said to be preparing to storm the post—and dared one of them to engage him in a knife fight. No one accepted the challenge, and the party mounted their horses and left.[67]

When the Jesuit missionary Pierre-Jean De Smet stopped at Fort Berthold in June 1864, the Arikaras pleaded for him to pray for rain to alleviate a drought that was destroying their crops. He suggested instead that they pray, and the priest offered a mass. The following day a heavy rain fell, cementing the priest's reputation among the Indians. At the same time, the missionary acknowledged the generous assistance of Pierre Garreau.[68] Captain Joseph La Barge offered Hiram M. Chittenden a footnote to this story. According to La Barge, Garreau went to the captain and asked for his help in approaching the Jesuit. He wanted to know how De Smet had made it rain, saying, "I will pay a good price if he will tell me. I will give him ten horses." De Smet himself, however, told Garreau to be a good Christian and pray; if he deserved it, rain would come. La Barge reported that Garreau went away disappointed, believing "the father had some secret art by which he produced so signal a result."[69] It is difficult to say how much credence may be placed on La Barge's anecdote.

General Régis de Trobriand offers the next insight into Garreau's life and activities. The general visited Fort Berthold II (the former Fort Atkinson) in September 1867 for a council with the Mandans, Hidatsas, and Arikaras. He began a tour of the village with "Pierre Gareau or Garaut, the indispensible man *par excellence*," who lived in an earth-

66. Collins, "Pierre Garreau," pp. 46–48; De Trobriand also relates the story as he heard it from Garreau himself in *Military Life*, pp. 90–93, and it appears in numerous other sources.

67. Collins, "Pierre Garreau," pp. 44–46.

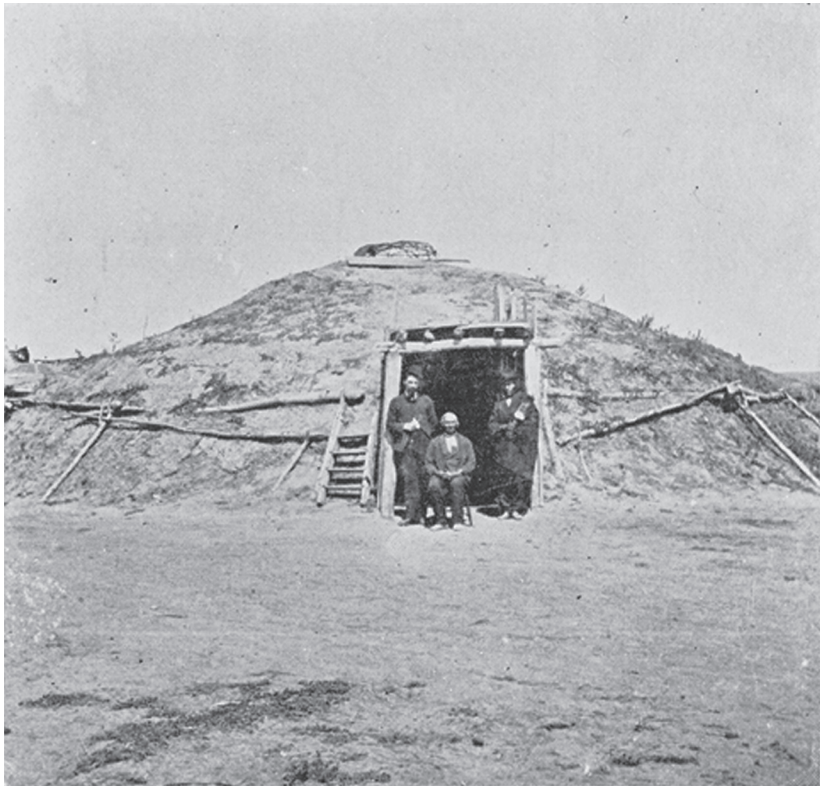
68. Hiram Martin Chittenden and Alfred Talbot Richardson, *Life, Letters, and Travels of Father Pierre-Jean De Smet*, 4 vols. (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1905), 3:830–31.

69. Hiram Martin Chittenden, *History of Early Steamboat Navigation on the Missouri River: Life and Adventures of Joseph La Barge*, 2 vols. (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1903), 1:197–98.

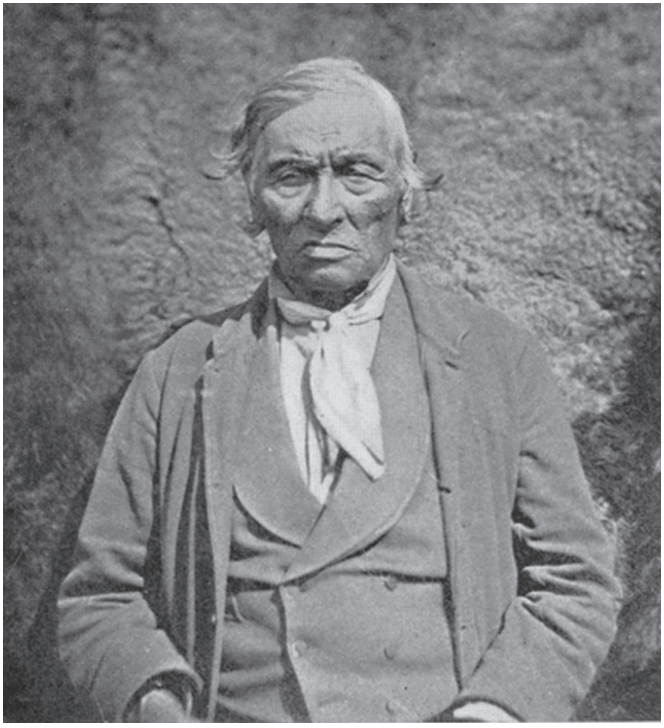
lodge with his two or three wives.[70] De Trobriand also noted that Garreau translated Hidatsa (which the Mandans understood) and Arikara in councils for the general, who commented that Garreau knew French a great deal better than he did English.[71]

The resident Mandans, Hidatsas, and Arikaras dominated the trade at Fort Berthold, but significant numbers of Sioux came there to trade. Horatio Larned wrote that it was customary for the chief and his principal men to come into the fort. Garreau would take them into the

70. De Trobriand, *Military Life*, p. 87. *See also* ibid., p. 89.
71. Ibid., pp. 103, 107.



Bismarck photographer Orlando S. Goff likely took this photograph of Pierre Garreau seated at the door of his earthlodge at Like-a-Fishhook Village around 1881. The other two individuals are unidentified.



This portrait of Pierre Garreau was probably also taken by Goff at Like-a-Fishhook Village around 1881.

"Indian room" and give them coffee and hardtack. A pipe would then circulate for an hour or two before the participants got around to the matter of trade. "Pierre would tell them what the company was paying for robes and after a final cup of coffee the Indians would go to their camp. The next morning the trade would begin," Larned related, with Garreau interpreting for them.[72]

Pierre Garreau appears to have had more than one wife for most of his life. At Fort Berthold he "divorced" one of them. Resident Ferdinand A. Van Ostrand reported that on 29 March 1872, there was a "case of scandal—Old Pierre's big woman having been guilty of conjugal infidelity he shipped her off box and baggage—He is well rid of her it is to

72. Collins, "Pioneer Experiences," pp. 32–33.

be hoped and may he give up his 'Mormon proclivities' and cleave unto one squaw."[73]

Pierre Garreau died at Like-a-Fishhook Village in 1881.[74] Washington Matthews commented in a letter to Elliott Coues, "When I knew him he had no children left; all were dead."[75] Given Garreau's many brushes with death on a violent frontier over the years, his demise is ironic. Living alone in a cabin at Like-a-Fishhook Village, the old man was suffocated by smoke when the cabin caught fire one night and he was unable to escape. He was probably interred near Like-a-Fishhook Village and Fort Berthold, both of which now lie deep beneath the waters of Lake Sakakawea.[76] Shortly before Garreau died, Bismarck photographer Orlando Scott Goff recorded his portrait at Fort Berthold.[77] Another photograph, of his earthlodge at Fort Berthold, shows him seated in a chair between two unidentified individuals. Details of Pierre's clothing suggest that Goff took this view at the same time as the first portrait.[78]

73. Ferdinand A. Van Ostrand, "Diary of Ferdinand A. Van Ostrand," Part 3, ed. by Russell Reid, *North Dakota Historical Quarterly* (1943): 10 (2): 107.

74. If we accept Larned's date of his birth as 1798, he would have been eighty-three years old at the time of his death (Collins, "Pierre Garreau," p. 40).

75. Larpenteur, *Forty Years a Fur Trader*, p. 125, n. 11.

76. His death and its 1881 date are recorded in Collins, "Pierre Garreau," p. 48; and in Larpenteur, *Forty Years a Fur Trader*, below his photograph opp. p. 124.

77. No. NAA INV 01221300, OPPS Negative No. 47,053, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Museum Support Center, Suitland, Md. Notes accompanying the image state that the photograph was taken "before May 12, 1881, when the print was sent to Pres. James Garfield." I have been unable to determine why this image was sent to the president. Garfield, earlier a United States senator, had long been interested in Indian affairs and had been a leader of legislative efforts to reform the corrupt Indian service, but his relations with North Dakota groups remain obscure. Oliver W. Holmes, ed., "Peregrinations of a Politician: James A. Garfield's Diary of a Trip to Montana in 1872," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 6 (Autumn, 1956), p. 37. This image is reproduced with the date of August 1879 in Larpenteur, *Forty Years a Fur Trader*, opposite page 124.

78. *Monthly South Dakotan* 3 (Nov. 1900): frontispiece. The same photograph appeared in Washington Matthews, "The Earth Lodge in Art," *American Anthropologist* 4, no. 1 (1902): 4, with a caption stating that Garreau used the lodge between 1870 and 1880.

Even though the Garreau family played intriguing roles in the fur trade on the Upper Missouri River, there are no monuments to Joseph Garreau or any of his descendants. Nor are there any towns, streams, or other geographical features named after them. Nonetheless, the name Garreau lives on with Antoine's numerous descendants who still reside on the Northern Great Plains.