On page 168 (ibid.) Boutwell refers to corn raising by the Indians at the Red Cedar Lake and says: “They originally obtained the corn, which they have cultivated here for many years, from Red River.”

The History of the Minnesota Agricultural Society (p. 11) says that at intervals between 1827 and 1838 the quartermasters at Fort Snelling bought corn from the northern Chippewas, and that in many instances the Indian women had carried the grain on their backs from their granaries to the shipping points on the upper Mississippi.

So that it is quite probable that the early settlers in the Polk County region raised corn, notwithstanding the difficulties of its cultivation, when it was subject to the injurious attacks of blackbirds, wild pigeons, and grasshoppers from its planting to its harvesting. The Selkirkers, in their settlement at Pembina, had these pests and other obstacles to contend against in their agricultural operations, and this was why so many of them left the country for the lower Minnesota districts, and other more favored regions. Some of the Red River refugees went as far as to Indiana.

**Selkirk’s Colonists First Polk County Settlers.**

The fact is not generally remembered that many of the early members of Lord Selkirk’s Colony settled in what is now Polk County prior to 1820, under the mistake that they were locating on British territory. They were quite excusable. They knew but very little about the boundary line between the United States and the British possessions, as established after the War of the Revolution by the treaty of Paris, in 1783.

As has been previously stated, the charter given the Hudson’s Bay Company by King Charles granted the Red River Valley to the company—at least as far south as to the Sioux Wood River. In 1811, when Lord Selkirk purchased the land for his colony from the company, the deed gave (in part) the boundaries of the grant as extending from the Assiniboine River “due south from that to the height of land which separates the waters which run into Hudson’s Bay from those of the Missouri and the Mississippi.” (Ross’s R. R. Settlement, p. 9.)

The “height of land” mentioned is equivalent to the watershed between Lake Traverse and the mouth of the Sioux Wood, in Traverse County, Minnesota, and Roberts County, South Dakota. This is more than 200 miles south of the 49th parallel, or the boundary line between Canada and the United States; and of course the Hudson’s Bay Company had no right to dispose of any land on American soil or below the boundary. But it seems that neither Lord Selkirk nor any one else in that quarter of Canada knew (and perhaps did not care) anything about the international boundary.

Selkirk (or Lord Thomas Douglas) was apparently innocent. He had paid a good round sum for the land of his proposed colony and he was determined to have a perfect title to it. He recognized the title of the Cree and Chippewa Indians to the country and he was bound to extinguish it so that there should be no cloud upon his own. So, at “the Forks of Red River,” July 18, 1817, he made a treaty with certain chiefs and warriors of the tribes mentioned by which they ceded to him their claim to the territory described as follows:

All that tract of land, adjacent to Red River and Assiniboine River, beginning at the mouth of the Red River and *extending along the same as far as the Great Forks, at the mouth of the Red Lake River,* and along Assiniboine River as far as Muskrat River—otherwise called Riviere des Champignons, [the River of Mushrooms] and extending to the distance of six miles from Fort Douglas, [near Winnipeg] and likewise from Fort Daer, [at Pembina] and *also from the Great Forks* and certain other parts extending in breadth to the distance of two English statute miles back from the banks of the said rivers, on each side, together with all the appurtenances whatsoever of the said tract of land, to have and to hold,” etc.

The consideration given the Indians was 200 pounds of tobacco, 100 pounds to each tribe, for the entire grant amounting to about 110,000 square miles. (Bryce’s H. B. Co., p. 207; but his “Romantic Settlement of Selkirk’s Colonists,” p. 42, says 116,000.)* The italicizing is by the compiler.